



MAP Fundamentals

Why MAP?

The Multi-Age Program (MAP) strives to help each child acquire the tools of learning in a way that fosters a love of learning.

- ❖ MAP focuses not only on the academic, but also the emotional, social, and physical development of each student.
- ❖ Classes have two grade levels in each classroom working from a common curriculum. Students typically stay with the same teacher for two years.
- ❖ The curriculum in a multi-age classroom is flexible and open-ended enough to address the wide range of developmental abilities, learning styles, and interests of students while meeting state grade-level standards.
- ❖ Basic skills in language arts and math are taught and reinforced using work that has inherent interest to the children whenever possible.
- ❖ Peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, and cooperative and independent learning are all emphasized.
- ❖ Teachers function as highly motivated guides, facilitators, and coaches.
- ❖ Teachers strive to provide an engaging, creative, informal atmosphere that nurtures community and a spirit of collaboration.
- ❖ MAP values quality time spent at home. Homework is rarely given in K/1 and becomes more frequent as students progress through the program. Reading and/or being read to on a daily basis is always encouraged.
- ❖ MAP encourages students to make their own choices and take responsibility for the consequences of those choices. Competition is deemphasized and cooperation is emphasized.
- ❖ Parents are partners in the development of MAP. Through the MAP Advisory Board and its subcommittees, parents participate in philosophy and policy development, program promotion, program evaluation, and hiring.



History of MAP

MAP is a K – 5 program of choice in the Ross Valley School District with voluntary enrollment. MAP holds a lottery in March to determine enrollment for the following fall.

MAP was founded in 1996 by a group of parents who saw a need for more educational choice in the district. Parents were deeply involved in forming the approach to the curriculum, establishing the structure, and hiring the initial teaching staff.

Parents, teachers, and administrators continue to work together to strengthen the program and respond to the needs of the students, staff, and community.

MAP has been located at the Manor campus since its inception. MAP parents, teachers, and students actively participate in and benefit from the Manor community activities and programs including enrichment classes, assemblies, Site Council, PTA, YES Foundation, and Manor social events.

The principles and practices given here represent the collective position of the MAP teaching staff and community. The MAP Fundamentals serves three purposes:

- ❖ To educate the parents of prospective and current students about the basic principles upon which the program is based
- ❖ To guide the MAP staff and Advisory Board in solving problems and making decisions
- ❖ To clarify the distinctive aspects of the MAP program for the school district community



Teaching the Whole Child

MAP values social, emotional, physical, and academic growth equally.

Teachers, parents, and staff work to create a nurturing, non-judgmental environment that supports each child's unique developmental learning process. Research shows that a child learns best in an environment in which he or she feels safe and emotionally connected.

Practices

- ❖ MAP's environment encourages each child's emotional growth and confidence.
- ❖ Teachers and parents encourage core values of responsibility, compassion, initiative, and community in the classroom and beyond.
- ❖ Social development is addressed in the classroom through collaborative projects and lessons, and group problem solving. Community events and cross grade buddy programs provide additional opportunities for social interaction
- ❖ Class meetings, conflict resolution, and modeling are all used to teach children how to respect differences, negotiate conflicts, develop self-control, and understand how to take responsibility for their behavior.
- ❖ Opportunities are provided for students to teach and perform for each other. Teachers include movement activities that promote physical awareness and enhance fine motor skills.
- ❖ Teachers, in-class parent volunteers, and peers address students' individual learning needs.
- ❖ Art, music, and movement are included within the self-contained classroom.



Guiding Principles for Teaching

MAP believes that curriculum and instruction need to be relevant and meaningful for students to experience and acquire a love of learning.

MAP encourages intellectual risk-taking and questioning.

Practices

- ❖ Teachers encourage students to make responsible choices regarding which areas of study to emphasize, which resource materials to use, and how to evaluate their learning.
- ❖ Teachers help students set appropriate goals and provide students with a structure to support student planning and achievement of those goals.
- ❖ Teachers honor and weave children's ideas into the classroom experience.
- ❖ Teachers support student-initiated projects. Some projects are undertaken with a class-wide theme, while others are done individually or in small groups. Students must balance time spent on projects with other curricular demands.
- ❖ The curriculum emphasizes experiential learning and supports the integration of more than one academic subject into lessons whenever possible.
- ❖ Teachers collaborate on curriculum and instruction practices to ensure continuity over the six-year program. Subject matter and skills are revisited continually throughout all grades.
- ❖ Teachers organize activities so that students learn to cooperate and encourage one another. Teachers devote instruction time to developing positive, productive human relationships.
- ❖ Teachers are responsible for teaching state standards and have the freedom to choose and develop their own curricular materials and pursue subjects in-depth. Parents are not involved in this curriculum development.



Learning Environment

MAP strives to provide a nurturing environment that empowers students to make decisions, explore their own interests, and take intellectual risks. MAP believes learning should be a lifelong process, which extends beyond the classroom.

Practices

- ❖ Classes have multi-age groupings, which typically allow students to be both the younger and older student over a two-year period.
- ❖ Teachers use a combination of whole class, small group, and individual instruction to meet the students' needs.
- ❖ Multiple subjects are integrated throughout the day to provide choice and opportunities for children to take responsibility for their learning. Experiential learning is emphasized.
- ❖ Learning is embedded in all experiences, and is not always obviously academic by traditional standards.
- ❖ Teachers allow students to initiate and develop their own activities while serving as facilitators and guides in this process.
- ❖ Teachers design activities to provide children with the opportunity to cooperate and support each other's learning.
- ❖ Daily classroom volunteers – aides, older students, peers, parents, and community members - are an integral part of this unique learning environment.
- ❖ Class meetings allow students to participate in addressing concerns, planning their learning, and celebrating social and academic progress.
- ❖ Collaboration and mentorship among teachers provides familiarity and continuity for students throughout the K-5 experience.









Climate of Trust

MAP believes that a trusting relationship among all members of the school community - students, teachers, parents, and administrators - is integral to MAP's success.

The MAP environment allows students to develop a positive attitude toward learning and encourages them to be a part of the learning process. Students learn to respect individual differences and develop the ability to work together.

Practices

- ❖ MAP encourages each child's emotional growth and confidence through risk-taking, exploration, and the acknowledgement that mistakes create opportunities to learn.
- ❖ Students and teachers mutually determine classroom agreements each year.
- ❖ MAP encourages students to make choices and take responsibility for the outcomes of their choices.
- ❖ MAP expects positive, productive relationships in the classroom and beyond. We employ several strategies to help children meet this expectation including:
 -  Individual conferences
 -  Classroom meetings
 -  Group discussions
 -  Role playing
 -  Opportunities to express feelings verbally and in writing
 -  Conferences with parents



Community and Governance

MAP is a partnership of teachers and parents who work together to educate children.

The success of MAP depends upon parent commitment in the classroom and collaboration with staff in program development and management. For this reason, we request that parents volunteer in the program eight hours each month.

Practices

- ❖ Parents work in the classroom on a regular and scheduled basis supporting daily classroom learning.
- ❖ Teachers collaborate with parents to share parents' talents and expertise with the students. Teachers use parents to support classroom projects and activities. Many parents do this outside of school hours.
- ❖ MAP is governed by an Advisory Board comprised of teachers, an administrator, and parents. As per District Board Policy 6181, the decision-making process for the governance of MAP differs from the processes used in other district schools.
- ❖ Active family participation creates strong personal relationships among students, parents, teachers, and administrators.
- ❖ Children learn to adapt to and respect multiple adult role models throughout their educational experience.



Staffing MAP as an Alternative Program

MAP believes that the staff's understanding of and commitment to our educational philosophy is critical to the quality of the MAP program.

The District School Board has authorized MAP as an alternative program under State Education Code 58500 and District Board Policy 6181. Under this code, the alternative program is operated to, among other things, maximize the opportunity for teachers, parents, and students to cooperatively develop the learning process and its subject matter. This opportunity shall be a continuous, permanent process.

Practices

- ❖ The District selects MAP teachers and staff who support the beliefs and practices expressed in this MAP Fundamentals booklet.
- ❖ When filling teacher vacancies, both parents and teachers are included on the interview committee.
- ❖ MAP recognizes and fully supports the teachers' need to improve teaching practices through collaboration, mentoring, visiting other multiage classrooms, and in-service programs.
- ❖ Teachers meet regularly with each other to collaborate on curriculum and instruction.
- ❖ MAP teachers may have mentoring and in-service programs and schedules that are distinct from the traditional program.
- ❖ The multiage faculty works as a team and works together to mentor new faculty. This mentoring will include regular meetings and observation of each other's classrooms.
- ❖ If the MAP staff and Advisory Board find that there are school district objectives and activities that are incompatible with or have undesirable consequences for the development of MAP, this will be worked out with the District Staff and Trustees.



Achievement and Assessment

MAP views assessment as an on-going process of observation, reflection, goal-setting, and change. We focus on individual growth and open lines of communication among parents, students, and teachers.

Practices

- ❖ MAP uses assessment tools that evaluate a student's unique academic, social, and emotional development over time.
- ❖ Daily classroom work is the basis for evaluating student achievement.
- ❖ Regular parent-teacher conferences, portfolios, and progress reports replace letter grades.
- ❖ Standardized tests are used only when mandated.

California state law authorizes all school districts to provide for alternative programs. MAP operates under the sanction of the Ross Valley School District Board Policy 6181 which includes language from California Education Code 58500. The following language from the California Education Code has been adopted by the Ross Valley School District as Board Policy:

California Education Code 58500 defines an alternative program as a school or separate class group within a school which is operated in a manner designed to:

- a) Maximize the opportunity for students to develop the positive values of self-reliance, initiative, kindness, spontaneity, resourcefulness, courage, creativity, responsibility, and joy. Recognize that the best learning takes place when the student learns because of his desire to learn.*
- b) Maintain a learning situation maximizing student self-motivation and encouraging the student, in his own time, to follow his own interests. These interests may be conceived by him totally and independently or may result in whole or in part from a presentation by his teachers of choices of learning projects.*
- c) Maximize the opportunity for teachers, parents, and students to cooperatively develop the learning process and its subject matter. This opportunity shall be a continuous, permanent process.*
- d) Maximize the opportunity for students, teachers, and parents to continuously react to the changing world, including, but not limited to, the community in which the school is located.*