BARSTOW KINDERGARTEN

"We want them to be sponges. We want them to want more. That's the goal."
— Kim Vasquez, kindergarten teacher

Igniting the Passion

Beginning at the very earliest years and building with each and every class, grade level, extracurricular activity, service opportunity and leadership role, The Barstow School curriculum is about feeding a child's insatiable curiosity for life. We bring the world into our classrooms, and take our student out into the world to experience learning. We help children of all ages gain the confidence needed to take intellectual risks.

Focusing on critical thinking, collaboration, communication, cosmopolitanism, creativity and character, we guide students in their acquisition of the 21st century skills needed to be passionate, productive global citizens.

Fueling the Fire

As a child grows with us, we build on students' previous experiences to both broaden and deepen their knowledge. Most importantly we help students take that knowledge and apply it in real world settings. Teachers across all subject areas and grade levels, from preschool through twelfth grade work together to create a progression of learning. It might be a fifth-grade student who spends the year developing their leadership skills as they examine democracy through a study of U.S. government which culminates in a grade level trip to Washington D.C. Or it could be an upper school student, passionate about global education, who puts her passion to work building schools in rural China. Or another Barstow student who used the Barstow Service Learning program as a springboard founded her own nonprofit to bring much needed food and supplies to children in Haitian orphanages.
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KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

Mathematics
How does a kindergartner build the knowledge necessary to reach a high level of success? A child’s success in math is based on having a clear understanding of number sense. Once a student has an intuitive feel for numbers and a common sense approach to using them, the foundation is set and the building blocks for future success are easier to achieve. Concrete mathematical skills are developed, which allow students to become abstract thinkers and problem solvers. Through the use of hands-on manipulatives and iPads, students strengthen their skills in number patterns, making number comparisons, place value, addition, estimation, subtraction, coin calculations, measurement, geometry, telling time, creating graphs and recording data.

Social Studies
A kindergartner’s world revolves around their experiences. Our goal is to take those personal experiences and expound upon them to help students make new connections with the world around them, whether in their own community or abroad. Rich experiences and connections encourage students to think, investigate and explore. It inspires them to research and read, verbally express their knowledge and promotes writing as documentation of their understanding. We build from a kindergartner’s perception, beginning with who they are in the world, their family and their school community. We extend the learning as the students explore the culture and history of Native American life. The Barstow social studies curriculum extends students’ understanding of their immediate environment through the exploration of history, geography and world cultures.

Language Arts
Becoming a fluent reader is essential to academic success. At Barstow, we dive into reading and writing on the very first day of kindergarten. Literacy skills are the centerpiece of the kindergarten curriculum. Many components are involved in becoming a confident reader: letter recognition, phonics, sight words, decoding and blending. Building strong phonemic awareness skills leads to confident readers. Emphasis is placed on phonics instruction with the Jolly Phonics curriculum. This synthetic phonics approach systematically introduces students to letter sounds with a large emphasis placed on decoding and blending. With all these components in place, a kindergartner can become a confident, fluent reader that comprehends texts and enjoys the world of books.

A variety of reading strategies are taught to increase fluency, use of expression and comprehension of texts. These skills are modeled and practiced at a level that is appropriate for each learner. Reading is taught through a combination of group instruction, small group guided reading, and individual reading with the teacher. Whether a beginning or advanced reader, each student’s progress is assessed through both formative and summative evaluations, which includes anecdotal notes, sight word recognition, running records, reading responses and fluency checks.

Science
Kindergartners are a curious bunch and our science curriculum allows the children to explore the world around them with engaging experiments and activities. The kindergarten science program is designed to engage students in an experiential exploration of the world around them. Our students explore leaves, trees, apples, bears, and a plethora of other living and non-living areas of our world. Our activities allow children to learn scientific concepts and critical thinking. The students are encouraged to engage in higher order thinking and utilize and refine their science skills through observations, hypotheses and recordings.

SPECIAL CLASSES

World Languages
In lower school, students engage in the study of Spanish or Chinese language and world culture. This complements their classroom study of global awareness and prepares them for virtual field trips to partner campuses around the world.

Technology
Students rotate through three trimesters of learning focusing on digital citizenship, coding and maker work.

Physical Education
In keeping with Barstow’s mission of symmetrical development of mind, body and character, Barstow students have P.E. every day through grade 8.

Music
Twice weekly music classes transform lower school students into performers through study of music literature, theory and music history. Weekly group guitar instruction begins in grade 3.

Art
Two times each week students create their own masterpieces while studying artists and art history.