

West Marin-Inverness School (wmis.shorelineunified.org)

2015-2016 Parent & Student

HANDBOOK

Inverness Campus: K-1st

(415) 669-1018

1 Forres Way, Inverness CA 94937

West Marin Campus: 2nd-8th

(415) 663-1014

11550 State Route One, P.O. Box 300,
Point Reyes Station CA 94956

Introduction

This Handbook is intended to give parents, students, and community members a detailed overview of the current programs, academics, and social life, as well as the policies and practices of West Marin-Inverness School. Please contact any staff member if you have questions or feedback regarding this Handbook, or if you would like more information about our school programs.

Inverness School Bell Schedule

8:40am Instruction begins for kindergarten and 1st
10:35-10:55am Recess
12:25pm Lunch
1:10pm Instruction resumes
2:40pm Dismissal
12:15pm *Minimum day dismissal*

West Marin School Bell Schedule

8:30am Instruction begins for 2nd-8th
10:45-11:00am Recess
12:30pm Lunch 2nd-8th
1:05pm Instruction resumes for 6th-8th
1:10pm Instruction resumes for 2nd-5th
3:00pm Dismissal
12:30pm *Minimum Day Dismissal for 2nd-8th grades*

West Marin-Inverness School Mission Statement

In a safe and supportive environment, students will become life long learners. They will value and take responsibility for acquiring academic and social skills. They will also appreciate diversity in others and uniqueness in themselves as they contribute positively to their school, local, and world communities.

Shoreline Unified School District Mission Statement

The Shoreline Unified School District, in partnership with the home and our richly diverse community, will prepare students for their future, assist them in becoming lifelong learners and enable them to reach their full potential as responsible, productive, and contributing members of society. The District will provide a safe educational environment in which students are actively engaged, excellence is expected, and differences are respected and valued.

Table of Contents

PART I: West Marin-Inverness School General Information	Page
Teachers and Staff.....	3
Attendance and Transportation.....	3
Health & Safety.....	4
Parent Participation & Volunteering.....	5
PTSA, ELAC, School Site Council.....	5
School Breakfast, Lunch & Nutrition.....	6
Social Climate.....	6
Discipline.....	7
Concerns and Complaints.....	7
PART II: Academic Core Curriculum	
Curriculum Overview.....	7
Academic Assessment.....	9
PART III: Academic Programs and Enrichment	
Physical Education (PE).....	10
Libraries.....	10
Technology.....	10
Field Trips.....	10
Art, Music, Drama.....	10
Environmental Education.....	11
Gardens.....	11
Spanish.....	11
PART IV: Academic Student Support	
Student Study Team (SST).....	11
Literacy Intervention.....	11
Special Education.....	11
PART V: Counseling and Social Support	
Marin Community Foundation Grant.....	12
Counseling.....	12
Family Life.....	12

Part I - Guide to West Marin-Inverness School

Staff (*Inverness staff, ** West Marin & Inverness staff)

Office Staff

Matthew Nagle** Principal
Nancy Crivelli Admin Secretary
Linda Borello Admin Secretary

Enrichment Programs

Colleen Conley** Art & Library
David Whitney** Music
Chris Eckert* Physical Education

Classroom Teachers

Melissa Riley* Kindergarten
Dee Lynn Armstrong* 1st Grade
Luis Burgos 2nd Grade
Judy Van Evera 3rd Grade
Anne Halley Harper 4th Grade
Esther Underwood 5th Grade
Chris Eckert 6th Grade
Vanessa Staples 7th Grade
Julie Cassel 8th Grade

Instructional Assistants

Dolores Gonzalez * Classroom, PE, library
JoAnn Kempf* Classroom
Karen Koehler-Craig Classroom

(Instructional Assistants and Paraeducators also support electives, physical education, and yard supervision.)

Academic Support Staff

Erin Montoya** Spanish
Kelsy Henke** Special Education
Emilie Klein RSP

Counseling, Outreach, Health

Steffan O'Neill** Counselor
Anne Spitler-Kashuba** Speech & Language
Laurie Rubin English Learners
Lenora Kwok** Nurse

Maintenance and Grounds

Gilberto Rodriguez** Skilled Maintenance
Aracely Rodriguez** Food Service/
Custodian
Carlos Gamez Night Custodian
Marilu Mora* Night Custodian

Family & Student Support

Kimberly Harvell** Family Coordinator

Shoreline Unified School District Personnel (707) 878-2266

Nancy Neu Interim Superintendent
Bruce Abbott CBO
Jeannie Moody Admin Secretary
Angelique Borges Accounts Payable
Becky Evenich Payroll

Transportation

George Borges Director (707) 878-2221
Dan Wood Bus Driver

Shoreline Unified School District Trustees

Tim Kehoe Jane Healy Kegan Stedwell (Avito Miranda 2016)
Jim Lino Jill Sartori Monique Moretti (TBD 2016)
Clarette McDonald

Attendance

School Absence: It is important for every child's educational progress and success to **attend school every day and to arrive on time.** If your child arrives after the start of school he/she must get a yellow tardy slip from the office. If a child is tardy more than 30 minutes a parent must check him or her into the office. Please contact the school office when your child will be missing part or all of their regular school day. If phone contact cannot be made, upon return to school the student should bring a note that contains the child's name, date(s) of absence, reason, and parent signature.

By state law (Education Code 48205) and local school board policy, student absences are considered excused for these reasons: 1. Personal illness or injury, quarantine 2. For the purpose of having medical or dental services 3. Immediate family member funeral, court appearance or religious holiday

When a parent must take a child from school during the school day, they need to check out at the school office and ask for a green Exit Slip, and check back in upon the child's return to school. Please try to make appointments outside of the school day. Please make every attempt to make plans with your child before school regarding after school activities. Parents may contact the school office to leave messages, but please call before 2:00pm to ensure there is time for your child to receive the message.

Campus Supervision for Arrival/Departure: West Marin School students should arrive at school no earlier than 8:15am, when a supervisor is on duty. Inverness School students can should arrive no earlier than 8:30am at Inverness, or they can take the bus from West Marin by arriving there at 8:15am. Students are expected to leave within 15 minutes of the end of the school day unless they are participating in a supervised activity.

Closed Campus Policy: West Marin and Inverness are both “closed campuses.” Students must stay on the school grounds during the school day. Students who need to leave school before dismissal should bring a written parental request to the teacher or the office. State law requires that students will be released only to a parent or guardian unless specific arrangements have been made with the office to release the child to another adult. All visitors are required to sign in and out in the school office.

School Closures—Emergencies: If school must be cancelled, a staff person will try to contact you, either through SchoolMessenger or telephone. Listen to local radio stations for up-to-date information. Children will only be released to those adults listed on the emergency card on file in the office. **Please keep your emergency card up-to-date.**

Transportation

Walking to School: It is very important that all children know and use safety rules when walking to and from school. When possible, cross any streets by using the crosswalk, and look both ways before crossing.

Riding the Bus: Bus transportation is available to all students living in the Inverness, Point Reyes, Olema, and Marshall areas. Please consult the bus schedule, or ask at the office for a list of specific pick-up and drop-off times. Students who ride the bus should arrive at the designated bus stop at least five minutes early and should wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the door to completely open before approaching it. Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege, not a right. It is important to remember that the *bus drivers are in complete charge of the students on their buses and their instructions must be followed at all times.* Improper conduct on the bus may result in that privilege being denied. Please read the *Transportation Guidelines*, (sent home at the beginning of the school year), and go over them with your child; doing so will ensure a safe and orderly environment on the school bus. If your child is not regularly scheduled to ride the bus or if you wish your child to take another bus or get off at another stop, you must send a note giving permission. No student will be allowed to get on another bus or get off at a stop other than his or her own, without permission. If you have any questions regarding bus schedules or behavior guidelines, please contact George Borges, Transportation Director, at 707-878-2221.

Inverness School Bus: The bus departs from West Marin School every morning between 8:20-8:30am. When Kindergartners and 1st graders are dismissed (2:40pm) from Inverness School, they can be bussed to Papermill Creek Children's Corner or to West Marin School. The bus will not stop at Papermill Creek in the mornings.

Bicycles: Children riding bicycles to school must know and use safety rules, and wear a helmet. Bicycles are to be parked and locked, and are not to be used until dismissal. The school is not responsible for any damage or theft while bicycles are parked in the racks.

Skateboards, roller blades, and roller skates are not permitted on campus.

Health & Safety

Illness: While school attendance is very important, children who are ill should remain at home. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether or not a child is well enough to attend school. In general a child should remain home if he/she has: 1) A temperature over 100°, 2) Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours, 3) Sneezing, runny nose, or coughing that won't stop, 4) Consistent or severe pain. Keeping an ill child at home allows him or her to recover comfortably, and protects others from becoming ill. A licensed school nurse is available to help with health issues, to identify health problems that interfere with the learning process, and to assist families with resources to resolve these problems. The nurse is available one day per week, usually Wednesdays.

Accidents & Illnesses: In case of sickness or serious injury to a student while at school, the parents of the child will be notified immediately. **Please keep your emergency information up-to-date with your current phone number.** Every accident occurring on school property or during an athletic event attended or sponsored by the school must be reported immediately to the person in charge and to the school office. **In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be contacted and paramedics from the local firehouse will respond.** For non-emergencies, the nurse provides care and first aid when on site. All classified staff is trained in CPR and First Aid. Other school personnel will provide first aid and care when the nurse is not present. Illnesses should also be reported to the person in charge and to the school office.

Students will be referred to their parents or guardians for additional medical help when necessary.

Student Medication: A student who needs to take prescribed medication while at school must submit a written statement from the physician and a parental/guardian request. Medication is to be sent in the original container labeled with the name of the student, name of prescribing physician, name of medication and instructions. The "Authorization to Administer Medication" form must be completed and included with the medication. It is the parent's responsibility to update this form annually (Ed. Code 49423). All medication must be picked up at the close of the school year.

With the written consent of the parent, the school nurse may communicate with the physician and may counsel with school personnel regarding the possible effects of medication on the child's physical, intellectual, and social behavior, as well as possible behavioral signs and symptoms of adverse side effects, omission, or overdose, (Ed. Code 49480). Medication should be left in the school office.

Immunizations: All children entering a public school in the state of California must show proof of polio, DPT or DT, chickenpox, measles/mumps/rubella, and hepatitis B immunizations. If for personal or religious reasons a parent elects not to give their child immunizations, they will be required to sign a waiver. Students will be excluded from school if documentation or waivers are not on file. In the event of an outbreak, a non-immunized child may be asked to remain at home until the reasonable risk of exposure has passed.

Health Screenings: During the school year the school nurse conducts periodic screenings for vision, hearing, scoliosis, and head lice. A child may be exempt from physical examination whenever a parent files a written statement with the school principal stating that they will not consent to routine physical examination of their child. Dental screenings are recommended for incoming kindergarten and 1st grade students.

Contagious Diseases: Please do not send your child to school with the flu or other contagious diseases such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, or strep throat. If your child has attended school with a contagious disease, please call the office so that the school may send home notices to alert other parents of their child's exposure.

Head Lice: Head lice checks will be conducted from time to time during the year. Please notify the school office immediately if you find your child has head lice. Children may return to school as soon as they have been treated and all nits are removed. If you have questions about how to identify head lice, please call your doctor or the school office.

Dogs, cats, and other pets: Though we mourn the 2014 passing of our unofficial cat mascot, Tigger, pets are not allowed at West Marin-Inverness. There are NO PETS signs at both schools to remind the public.

Parent Participation & Volunteering

PTSA: Parent Teacher Student Association: As a member of the West Marin-Inverness School Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), your family can play a direct role in supporting your child(ren) and the staff. The agenda for each meeting is prepared by the president and reviewed at the start of the meeting. It is highly recommended that requests for additions to the agenda be made at least 2 days prior to the meeting. PTSA meetings follow the *Robert's Rules of Order* procedure. All dues-paying members are entitled to vote on motions made. Joining and supporting the PTSA benefits the entire school community. The PTSA coordinates many of the school's fundraising efforts including field trips, classroom supplies, gardens, and many other programs.

The PTSA recommends the following to stay informed about the curriculum:

- 1) *Attend* the Back to School Night Thursday, August 27th.
- 2) *Read* the material provided by your child's teacher in the Thursday envelopes.
- 3) *Volunteer* in your child's classroom and/or attend class field trips.
- 4) *Ask* teachers for supplemental information, or request translations when needed.
- 5) *Attend* Open House, held in the spring.
- 6) *Attend* the SSC, ELAC, PTSA, and/or School Board meetings.

ELAC: English Language Advisory Committee: The English Language Advisory Committee, is designed to give parents input and advice regarding the needs of children learning English as a second language. ELAC meetings are often held on the second Thursday of each month at 6pm. They provide parents with an opportunity to get more information about school programs, curriculum, and test results. Parents often bring questions, concerns, or suggestions to discuss. The ELAC meetings are conducted in Spanish, and translated into English. Childcare is provided.

School Site Council: The West Marin-Inverness School Site Council (SSC) is a school advisory group made up of parents and staff. Parent representatives and staff members are elected, and serve two-three year terms. The School Site Council oversees the development and implementation of the School Plan. The SSC reviews curriculum, programs, budgets, surveys,

and school test results. All meetings are open to the public. Parents, students, and/or community members are invited to attend and/or speak at SSC meetings. Please call ahead in order to be placed on the agenda for the meeting you plan to attend. Meetings are usually held on a Thursday of each month at 3:15pm at West Marin School.

Volunteers: Volunteer opportunities are ongoing throughout the school year. There are many enrichment programs on the West Marin and Inverness School campuses that can benefit greatly from consistent volunteer efforts. These include the school library, English Learner program, gardens, lunch program, art, and playground support. If you would like to be a parent volunteer please contact your child's teacher.

West Marin Field Committee: The Field Committee is involved in making improvements to the athletic fields. Over the years the committee has made many improvements including installation of the snack shack, irrigation, bleachers, batting cage, backstops, field leveling. The Committee has purchased basketballs and nets, track uniforms, water fountains, and bike racks. The sale of advertising signs displayed around the baseball field is one of the largest fundraisers.

Marin County School Volunteers: If you do not have a child enrolled, but are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact the Marin County Volunteer Coordinator. The Coordinator, Anne Kellogg, communicates directly with the teachers to determine classroom needs, and then matches volunteers. *All volunteers are required to go through a screening process. This includes an application, an interview, fingerprinting, and TB clearance prior to starting.* The volunteers participate in a general orientation and receive a volunteer handbook that covers general classroom expectations, as well as tips for working with children.

School Breakfast, Lunch & Nutrition Programs

As a school community, we believe that healthy food grows healthy children. The staff encourages all families to help their children understand the importance and the relationship between health practices and learning. Proper rest and nutrition are vital to a child's educational and physical development.

Parents may purchase school breakfast and/or lunches for their children or fill out a form to request free lunches. Milk is available through this program, and may be ordered separately. Forms will come home in your child's first day packet and are available in the office. If your child is bringing a lunch from home, we ask that you do not send soda, candy, junk food, or sugary foods. We invite all families to make environmentally responsible and healthy choices when packing their children's lunches, and request that each child brings reusable utensils and containers. **Do not send glass containers to school. Gum is not allowed at school.**

Student Lunch and Recess: Lunch and recess are viewed as times to socialize and exercise as well as to eat. During recess, the primary students at West Marin may have 5-10 minutes to eat their snack in the courtyard before being dismissed for a 5-10-minute recess, or they can choose to play for 15 minutes. For lunch, students sit at the tables near the gym to eat and are then dismissed to the big playground for recess. Parents are invited to have lunch with their children. Lunch costs \$3.25, breakfast costs \$1.50.

Supporting our Healthy Lunch and Nutrition Efforts: Healthy snacks provided during STAR testing week and after school classes are provided through the efforts of the PTSA, the SSC, and parent volunteers. We hope you will join us in offering your time to keep these programs in place. Some parents like to send a snack to school in celebration of their child's birthday. If you would like to do this, please check first with your child's teacher, and send only a healthy snack.

Social Climate Guidelines

West Marin-Inverness School Rules:

- **Respect yourself**
- **Respect others**
- **Respect property**
- **Do all your work to the best of your ability**
- **Be responsible for your own behavior**

Of utmost importance is that each student feels safe and secure at school, so that he/she can comfortably learn and grow. Students are expected to show courtesy, good manners, and consideration for others. Students must be respectful of teachers and others in authority.

Teasing, harassment, bullying, fighting, or any other intimidating or threatening behavior will not be tolerated. The use of profane or vulgar language is not permitted. The goal is to gently guide students toward fulfilling their potential. Within the framework of the school's guidelines, individual teachers develop guidelines and rules. Peer programs implemented by the School Counselor are oriented toward peer support of the behavioral expectations. A copy of the Board Policy regarding anti-bullying was sent home on the first day to the parents of each student in the packet that goes home on the first day of school.

Student Dress: Student dress should be comfortable and well suited to school activities. Shoes must be worn at all times, and closed shoes are encouraged because sandals are not

safe for P.E. and recess. Undergarments and stomachs should not be seen. Clothing that disrupts the academic atmosphere is not permitted. Any jewelry or clothing with decorations, logos or words that promote alcohol, tobacco, drugs, gangs, profanity, violence, bigotry, religious or ethnic slurs, or sexual connotation are not allowed on the school premises.

Discipline

Maintaining a safe, structured, and calm environment conducive to learning is a high priority. If you have concerns about your child's behavior, please make contact with the teacher. Following is a description of the discipline process.

Step 1 – The teacher will use normal classroom interventions such as verbal reminders, and may ask the student to privately discuss the behavior. Ninety-five percent of all discipline issues end at this point.

Step 2 – The student and teacher meet with the principal and/or parent. Repeated disruptive behavior may require the development of an **Action Plan**.

Step 3 – The student is referred to the principal if the behavior continues. The principal will confer with the student and review disciplinary consequences.

Step 4 – The teacher refers the student to the principal with a recommendation. The principal confers with the student and informs the student and parents of consequences. Consequences may be: detention, loss of privileges, work service, in-house suspension, or suspension from school. Serious behavior problems will be directly referred to the principal. Students may be suspended or expelled for violations under California Education Code 48900. A listing of these is available in the office.

Concerns and Complaints

Concerns regarding your child's academics, behavior, and/or social-emotional health should be directed to the teacher. Parents and teachers work as partners to discuss the needs of the student. You may also set up an appointment to meet with the principal if additional support is needed.

School Board Policy 1312 states, "The Governing Board welcomes constructive criticism of school policies, programs, or personnel when it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational process and to assist the schools in performing their tasks more effectively." If a complaint is concerning school personnel, parents are encouraged to attempt to resolve concerns with the staff member personally and at the informal level. If the complaint is not resolved at this level, the parent should contact the principal. When necessary, district administration shall assist in the preparation of a written complaint, or in resolving the concern.

West Marin-Inverness follows the **Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures**:

- 1) There should be sufficient textbooks and instructional materials for each pupil. Students must have textbooks or other instructional materials to use in class and to take home.
- 2) School facilities must be clean, safe, and in good repair.
- 3) There should be no teacher vacancies or misassignments. Teachers should have proper credentials, and certification to teach English Learners.

Sexual Harassment: The School Board prohibits the unlawful sexual harassment of any student by any employee, student, or other person. A copy of the Board Policy is sent home to the parents of each family in the packet that goes home the first day of school. Teachers shall discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways. Any student who engages in sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any employee who permits or engages in sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The Board expects students and staff to immediately report incidents of sexual harassment to the principal or other District administrator. If a situation involving sexual harassment is not promptly remedied by the principal or designee, a complaint of harassment can be filed in accordance with Board Policy. The District prohibits retaliatory behavior in the complaint process. Each complaint of sexual harassment shall be promptly investigated in a way that respects the privacy of all parties involved. Complete copies of all complaint procedures are available in the school office.

Part II: Academic Curriculum

Overview for K-8th: As a California public school, West Marin-Inverness School is required to incorporate guidelines and mandates set forth by the State of California Department of Education (CDE). The fundamentals, the subject matter covered, and to some degree, the methodology of our K-8th curriculum is mandated by state standards. West Marin-Inverness School staff support individual teacher's professional and creative strengths, enabling them to bring their own enhancements to the mandated material. Teachers attend professional

development to keep their practice current. Each grade's curriculum is the culmination of a great deal of thought and planning that engages the teacher's vision, as well as the collective guidance of the principal, colleagues, and district goals.

Kindergarten & 1st Grade

Spring Pre-registration: Registration for kindergarten takes place at West Marin School. All prospective students and their parents meet the teacher, the school nurse evaluates each child's hearing and vision, and the speech therapist evaluates speech and language.

Jumpstart Program: The Jumpstart Program takes place at Inverness School before the start of kindergarten. It is a three-week program that prepares incoming kindergarten for their first academically-rigorous year.

Kindergarten & 1st Grade: In kindergarten and 1st grade the children learn in a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment. Enrichment programs in music, library, art, and drama provide opportunities for academic, emotional, social, and physical development. Children tend their own garden while learning about health and the environment. Spanish language instruction begins in Kindergarten while English Language Learners are receiving English Language Development instruction.

In kindergarten, children learn the letter-sound relationships and begin to write. In 1st grade, students take the next step by learning the mechanics of reading, identifying words, and understanding word meaning. In math, manipulatives are used to learn number concepts.

The homework experience includes practicing the routine of taking work home and bringing it back. Homework is designed with the expectation that parents will work side by side with the child to complete the work. Nightly math and reading homework in 1st grade will help children practice what was learned in class.

2nd & 3rd Grades: 2nd grade students attend West Marin School. They now have access to the gym, the computer lab and a set of iPads, the art room, and the library. Many activities, such as P.E., library, field trips, social studies, and writing, may be coordinated so that 2nd and 3rd grade students work together.

In 2nd grade, students employ language skills to learn more about the world in a rigorous program that emphasizes comprehension and the ability to write about what's been read. California standards in math, reading, and writing set the pace for the school year as students are challenged to rise to their fullest potential. With a foundation in environmental literacy, our 2nd graders can now build their scientific understanding of the natural world.

In 3rd grade students learn to analyze more complex, multi-syllabic words. Students practice reading with fluency and study comprehension strategies such as inference and cause and effect. They also practice writing from personal experience as well as learning to write to inform or describe. Multiplication is a big focus in mathematics. A strong academic program in these beginning years provides the foundation for success in the years to come.

Highlights of science are studying about matter, light, energy and the moon. As students learn about different environments, they have a chance to experience our own National Seashore. The focus in social studies is our community. Students look at how communities are formed and how they change, including the Native Americans who lived in our area.

4th & 5th Grades: In 4th and 5th grades, students enjoy greater independence and challenges, as personal responsibility for academics and social behavior is emphasized. During these years there is a shift to content-based curriculum. Students are given their first independent long-term assignments and are introduced to research and library skills.

Comprehension strategies and reading fluency move toward mastery in 4th grade. Vocabulary study becomes more in-depth as students learn the academic vocabulary of specific subject areas. Students respond critically to what has been read through a variety of writing assignments. Fourth grade includes a four-day program, developed with the Tomales Regional History Center, that aligns California history with local history.

In 5th grade students continue to focus on developing academic vocabulary to assist them in comprehending more challenging expository texts. Students learn to use graphic organizers, take notes, and think critically about what they've read. They are taught research and note-taking skills to assist in writing independent reports. Emphasis is placed on the writing process: planning, researching, organizing, writing, editing, and rewriting. Rubrics are used regularly in every subject area so that students have a clear understanding of expectations. A week-long study at Walker Creek Outdoor School reinforces the study of the scientific method. The focus in social studies is the early history of the United States.

6th, 7th & 8th Grades: In the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, students are becoming independent learners who take responsibility for their academic success. As part of this responsibility students in the middle school are assigned lockers. Accountability is a common theme. Students may have their grade level teacher for English language arts, history, and science. Students may have a different math teacher as math classes are assigned by ability level. The goal in math is to have all students pass Algebra 1.

Electives: Students and parents are able to select a specific elective for most days. These electives may include band, art, technology, sewing, and sports. Study hall may also be available during the elective period.

6th Grade: Students will experience a very structured environment in the classroom. The reading of age appropriate novels as a class and in small groups is a requirement. Students read two to three hours per week in class, and are expected to do the same at home.

Students will compose and answer questions, based on the assigned reading, that spiral from basic comprehension to detailed analysis. A focus is placed on analyzing short stories through critical thinking. Students should own the writing process (from prewriting to publication) in 6th grade, as it will be incorporated into all the writing assignments. A goal for all 6th graders is to master the persuasive essay!

An in-depth Earth science program provides students with the opportunity to explore their natural environment in the field as well as through hands-on activities and experiments in the classroom. The social studies program in 6th grade is based on cooperative learning and student centered, hands-on activities. Students explore the ancient past by recreating and reenacting important historical events.

7th Grade: Solid reading habits are essential in the seventh grade. Students are responsible for reading ten class novels. Titles include: *Tom Sawyer*, *Treasure Island*, and *The Pearl*.

Students read additional novels in small groups called "literature circles." The integrity of the writing process is something that is enforced throughout the year. Students produce a prewrite and multiple drafts for each writing assignment. These assignments include: narratives, response to literature, persuasive writing and the "I-Search." The I-Search is an interview/research investigation of a social issue of the student's choice.

The focus in science is life sciences, and is hands-on, lab/project-based learning. The implementation of the scientific method and the development of critical thinking skills are stressed throughout the year. Field based research, collaboration with scientists, and field trips contribute to a meaningful study of the scientific world. In history, critical thinking and technology are applied to the study of different societies. Discussions, debates, dramatization and projects for each unit happen throughout the year.

8th Grade: Eighth grade curriculum prepares students to be independent learners in high school and beyond. Reading and writing are the focus, and assignments in all subjects tie directly to these foundations. Literature genres vary from nonfiction articles to novels, and writing assignments include everything from poetry to research reports. Special emphasis is placed on note taking skills, essay writing, and textbook comprehension. Both history and science programs are activity and inquiry based, with group work playing an integral role.

Not all of 8th grade is seat work however! There are several traditional field trips and activities designed to build teamwork, independence, and confidence, such as the ropes course in the fall and the Sacramento field trip in June. The June trip serves as a culmination to all the fun and learning the students have shared with one another in their elementary school years. The upper grade teachers work closely with the Tomales High School counseling staff to make sure students are prepared for the next stage of their education. THS staff holds several orientations throughout the year for 8th graders and their parents.

Academic Assessment

Grading: As part of the transition to the Common Core State Standards, West Marin-Inverness will continue its piloting of new report cards at some grade levels. Our current report card reflects the outgoing California State Content Standards. Your child will receive a report card three times a year. For K-3rd, grading is based on a number scale and a mastery of subject scale. Both scales are described within the report card's format, and may be further explained by your child's teacher during parent-teacher conferences. For 4th-8th, grading is based on a letter system, and a grade point average, as follows: A = 4 points, B = 3 points, C = 2 points, D = 1 point, and F = 0.

Honors and Acknowledgements: If your middle school child has a 3.0 grade point average, he/she will be placed on the *Honor Roll*. A 3.5 grade point average designates *High Honor Roll*, and 4.0 grade point average means being placed on the *Principal's List*. Each month, the School Board honors *Students of the Month* for excellence in citizenship and academic endeavors. The selected student is presented to the members of the School Board by his or her teacher and is given a medal and certificate of recognition.

Standardized Testing: West Marin School participates in yearly school-wide testing. The California Standardized Testing and Reporting System (STAR) tests are only administered to the 5th and 8th grades, which take the California Standards Tests (CST) in science. Results are mailed to parents, and may be reviewed during conferences. They are one of many measures used to review a student's progress towards the standards. All 3rd-8th grade students will take the Smarter Balanced Assessment in the spring.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Parent-Teacher Conferences take place in October and March. Your child's teacher will let you know if your child should be present at these meetings. Spring conferences are on an as-needed basis. Teachers will inform you as to how conferences will be scheduled. *Look for scheduling information in your Thursday envelopes.* It can be helpful to make a list of your questions and/or concerns to give to the teacher ahead of time so they can be effectively answered during the meeting. Some teachers give out mid-term Progress Reports to let you know how your child is doing. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

Part III: Academic Programs & Enrichment

Physical Education (PE)

Physical education, or PE, is taught to all students by the PE instructor. Activities include skill building, physical games, and team sports. Please make sure your child is wearing appropriate shoes for P.E. activities. Game-oriented exercise, physical skills, and collaboration are emphasized.

West Marin-Inverness School Libraries: The library program includes lessons collaboratively developed with staff on knowledge of books and print, authors and illustrators, and research and information gathering. Both parents and students are able to check out books.

Point Reyes Station Library: Many students go to the Point Reyes Library after school for research projects, pleasure reading, and to do homework. Hours are: Mondays 10:00am-6:00pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00-9:00pm, and Fridays and Saturdays 10:00am-2:00pm.

Technology Program: West Marin students receive regular computer training in the classroom using iPads and iMacs. Electives for grades 6th-8th give students the opportunity to increase learning using computer resources. Staff members are encouraged to integrate use of technology in the curriculum. The school has enough iPads so that all 2nd-8th grade students have their own while at school. Students will have the opportunity to take home the iPad to complete homework or projects.

Field Trips: In all grades students will take a variety of field trips, both in West Marin and in the greater Bay Area. These trips may fill part or all of a school day. A permission slip for each trip will be sent home with your child. Permission slips are not required when students are on an off-campus field trip that is within walking distance. Students participate in grade-specific field trips that may also include overnights. For most trips, school buses or vans transport your children, but occasionally parents are asked to volunteer to drive. If you plan to drive for a field trip you must register **in advance** in the school office by completing a form, and providing your driver's license and proof of insurance. Copies will be kept on file for subsequent trips, and will require renewal annually and/or when a new vehicle is purchased.

Art: West Marin-Inverness School has a part-time art teacher. There is an art room at West Marin School, where students can paint, draw, block print, letterpress print, sew, weave, and sculpt with clay or found materials. Technique is taught in a context that encourages personal artistic expression. An introduction to art history is offered. The program is closely dovetailed with themes of study for each grade, thus enabling art to become a tool for deepening students' understanding of the educational topics that are addressed in the curriculum. Students are encouraged to browse books from the art room library to further develop their interest in all aspects of art. Art classes are also offered as electives. Children's artwork is displayed throughout the year in the classrooms, the art room, and the community. Families are invited to attend Family Art Night with their children. During the first weekend of December at the Dance Palace Craft Fair, West Marin School student volunteers sell cards, wrapping paper, and handmade gifts that they have created at school. Proceeds from the Fair are used to purchase art supplies for the school.

Artists in the Schools: The Artists in the Schools Program sponsored by Gallery Route One brings working artists, poets, and scientists into a collaboration with the classroom teachers to focus awareness on environmental issues. Students participate in a broad theme that reaches far beyond the school campus. The students' visual and literary expressions are included in a culminating installation at an art gallery in Point Reyes Station.

Music Instruction: Building a love of music in every child, fostering self-esteem through accomplishment and performance, and teaching the fundamentals of music are the core aspirations of the music and band programs. Professional experts and volunteers work directly with classroom teachers to provide music instruction at many grade levels. Simple instrument and vocal instruction begins in Kindergarten and continues through 5th grade. Fourth and 5th graders are introduced to the basics of rhythm and meter through hand drumming. African hand drumming is the main focus of this performance ensemble. South American and Caribbean rhythms are explored as well. Students learn to play a variety of hand drums as well as various percussion instruments. The students will participate in a number of performances throughout the school year, both on and off campus.

Rock Band: Rock Band is a middle school elective. Genres of music played in the Rock Band include rock and roll, blues, surf, soul, and funk. Students must demonstrate a basic proficiency level on their instruments that includes voice, guitar, bass drums, percussion, horns, etc. Students are encouraged to interpret music from an emotional standpoint (their ears) vs. an intellectual approach (reading notes on the page). All students are encouraged to work hard on their parts that contribute to the whole band. Many students have significantly benefited from this approach and have gone on to form bands and continue to play music through high school and beyond.

Drama and Theatre: The philosophy of the school's theatrical experiences is to use drama exercises, storytelling, and performance to create and encourage not only the individual's talents, but also to give each student a sense of being part of the whole. Emphasis is on the process being a positive experience for all involved and having each student contribute in his/her own way. Each year the staff makes decisions about performances.

Environmental Education: There is a strong interdisciplinary aspect to the opportunities provided in environmental education. The school gardens program, grade-specific curriculum in science, natural, and local history, Artists in the Schools, and the visual arts program engage local resources on many different levels to enrich students' understanding of the natural world on both a local and global scale.

School Gardens: Both campuses provide all students with hands-on learning opportunities on a regular basis in their respective school gardens. The gardens serve as the physical location and focus of an on-site, outdoor, classroom curriculum. Cultivating, observing, harvesting, and eating the fruits of their labor are all integral to the garden curriculum. As they learn about and interact with the natural phenomena, topics as diverse as pollination, composting, tool safety, pesticide-free pest management, organic farming, and aquatic life are introduced in grade-specific sessions. The gardens were redesigned and replanted in 2014.

Spanish: The credentialed Spanish teacher teaches the Spanish language to native English speaking students. The Spanish teacher and classroom teacher may also collaborate on Spanish and English language opportunities to support all of the students. The program was redesigned last year to support all students K-8.

Part IV: Academic Student Support

Student Study Team: The school staff meets regularly in order to make recommendations for any child who would benefit from specialized support. The following staff specialists may participate in this process: School Counselor, Resource Specialist, Literacy Intervention Teacher, Family Advocate, Speech and Language Therapist, School Psychologist, Principal, and Teachers. Parent input is critical to the process. Parents do not have to wait for an SST to get help for their child. Please contact the classroom teacher to partner and discuss the needs of your child.

Intervention Program: All K-5th grade students will be assessed at the beginning of the year with DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), and all students will take a variety of assessments to determine academic progress and intervention needs in both English language arts and mathematics. DIBELS provides a set of brief, individually administered tests that may be given three times a year. The goal of DIBELS is to identify children who need early intervention or extra support. Students who need additional support in phonics instruction, reading fluency, or comprehension will be placed in intervention groups and monitored more frequently.

Special Education: Our school has a full time Resource Specialist teacher and a full time Special Day Class teacher who work together to ensure that students in the Special Education Program have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to be successful learners. Identified students will be provided with an I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan). This is the plan that will be followed by the teaching staff. The RS and SDC teachers and the instructional assistants help students with specific skill-based work that is aligned with their curriculum. Every effort is made to keep children with I.E.P.s moving with their peers, socially and academically. The RS and SDC teachers work primarily in the learning center, but may also work with small groups or individuals in the regular classroom.

The Speech and Language Therapist assists students who qualify for services due to communication difficulties such as articulation, fluency, voice or overall language delays. As with students in the Resource Specialist or Special Day Class programs, an IEP is established with goals for remediation.

A School Psychologist is available to assist with assessment of students with learning difficulties. The Psychologist may make recommendations to staff and/or parents to support the student.

Part V: Counseling and Social Support

Marin Community Foundation Grant: West Marin and Inverness Schools have received a 5-year grant from the Marin Community Foundation. The purpose of the grant, the PreK-3rd Initiative, is to provide all children with equitable access to learning opportunities by partnering with and supporting families, schools, and communities. Partners with the school include Papermill Creek Children's Corner, the Dance Palace, West Marin Community Services, Coastal Health Alliance, Marin County School Volunteers, Marin Literacy, and Marin County Library. We meet monthly with our partners to increase the number of low income and students of color who are prepared for academic success in school through an investment in quality early learning experiences, parent involvement, and extended learning time.

School Counseling Program: The counselor is responsible for coordinating, developing, and directing a multifaceted program of social education and peer support for students. All aspects of the counseling program are dedicated to the social and emotional enrichment, support, and education of children and families. Counseling is available for any child who demonstrates a need to receive counseling and support services. Referrals may come from a staff member, a parent or guardian, or a student may ask directly for support. Confidentiality is always maintained for families and individual children. The programs described are largely presented during class meetings. The format and the topics covered are designed to be developmentally appropriate for each age group.

