



Telluride Mountain School is a non-profit independent school located in the San Juan Mountains of southwest Colorado. Mountain School offers a traditional Montessori program for preschool through kindergarten, a Montessori-inspired program in grades one and two, and a student-centered, dynamic, college-preparatory program from grades three through twelve. Students develop critical thinking, aesthetic expression, and ethical behavior through the academic curriculum, supported by a vanguard experiential learning program and values-based education. Serving approximately 130 students pre-k through twelve, Mountain School is an innovative learning community where strong academics, enriching experiences, and meaningful relationships develop confident, curious students who passionately contribute to the world. Mountain School is accredited by the Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS), the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and International Baccalaureate World Schools (IB).

The Lower School Program at Telluride Mountain School

1st - 6th Grades

The Holistic Curriculum at TMS

The word *curriculum* at the Telluride Mountain School encompasses the content, skills, and attitudes that we communicate to students through all of our programming. This includes learning in the academic classroom and extends to outdoor, experiential, and winter sports programs, morning meetings, and all-school lunch recesses. In all of their interactions, we strive for Mountain School students to embrace the School's four core values: respect, responsibility, integrity, and love of learning.

Mountain School's curriculum for grades one through four helps students transition from the hands-on approaches of the early childhood program to the more abstract, active learning approaches of middle childhood. Students continue to thrive in child-centered classrooms that serve two grades in multi-age groups. With the support of literacy and math specialists, a core teacher provides instruction in language arts, social studies, math, and science. Language, visual arts, and music specialists provide

expertise, inspiration, and instruction in art, music, and foreign language classes.

In grades five and six, Mountain School prepares students with the academic, social, and personal skills necessary to thrive with the increased independence inherent to middle school. Passionate subject-specific teachers specializing in STEM or the humanities instruct math, science, humanities, foreign language, and the arts.

Throughout the lower schools, classrooms are active, student-centered spaces where children are supported and challenged in their academic growth. Emphasis is placed on developing study, organizational, written, oral, observational, and computational skills. Low student-to-teacher ratios, small class sizes, individual attention, and talented teachers and specialists allow us to meet students' individual and collective needs.

To assess students' academic growth, we use a range of formative and summative assessments combined with in-house progress monitoring for core skills.

Teachers also consider data from annual ERB standardized testing, an assessment designed for high-performing independent schools.

Arts, Music, and Foreign Language

Telluride Mountain School values areas of study complementary to core academics. Students in grades one through six participate in visual art, physical education, and Spanish language instruction. Students participate in the Rock and Roll Academy for music education, a student-driven, innovative music program founded on building social-emotional intelligence through creating, practicing, and performing in bands. We provide multiple opportunities for children to cultivate individual interests and talents, make connections among subjects, communicate in various ways, and develop a lifelong love of learning across disciplines.

Sports and Physical Education

Lower School students participate in physical education classes that emphasize team sports and group games, sportsmanship, and basic athletic skills in the fall and spring. For after-school athletics, Mountain School students participate in community clubs and on community teams. Beginning in sixth grade, students can participate in the Mountain School's after-school Mountain Bike Club.

Winter Sports Programs

In the winter, lower school students participate in the school's Winter Sports Program that takes advantage of the region's natural and recreational resources and emphasizes fun, community, and safety. In small, supervised instructional groups, lower school students ski one afternoon a week from early December to April. As students progress through the lower school ski PE program, they improve their foundational skills and abilities to navigate the entire mountain, including hike-to terrain and terrain parks. Competitive skiers may elect to train with the Telluride Ski and Snowboard Club (TSSC) during ski pe. In addition, students have opportunities to skate, snowshoe, and cross-country ski.

Experiential and Outdoor Education

Beginning in first grade, students participate in outdoor education, service learning, and experiential learning trips. Children move through a progression of activities and trips that build the skills, attitudes, and interests for safely experiencing the natural world, providing service, and opening the doors to community, regional, and global awareness. Outdoor activities include hiking, gardening, canoeing, rafting, camping, and exploring local environments. Experiential learning trips explore anthropology, paleontology, geology,

and environmental, historical, and cultural topics specific to the West.

The fifth and sixth-grade program expands opportunities for student learning outside of the classroom. Fall outdoor education trips feature three to four-night expeditions to explore the region's diverse ecosystems. Winter excursions include training with the Telluride Adaptive Sports Program, serving as assistant ski instructors for disabled Navajo students. The spring's celebrated experiential learning trips take students out of the classroom for a week to explore culture, history, science, and different environments throughout the western United States.

Immersion Studies

First through sixth grade, all lower school students choose a topic of interest to research and present to the community inspired by and directly connected to their spring experiential trip. As students progress through the lower school, they build foundational research, writing, and presentation skills. Project areas include dinosaurs, desert animals, botany, American historical figures, western expansion, Native culture and tribes, and other topics specific to the American West.

Values Education

Mountain School is a small community where children are known, supported, and connected. Part of the school's responsibility is overseeing its children's social, emotional, and ethical development. Students start their day with a morning circle or homeroom check-in.

Additionally, teachers participate in professional development in social, emotional, learning, and student well-being. They incorporate strategies across all programs to bolster students' self-awareness, self-efficacy, resilience, and self-management. Additionally, Mountain School works with certified school counselors to meet with students individually and local and national organizations to provide programming in age-appropriate topics specific to student well-being. These include making friends, conflict resolution, expressing feelings, and mindfulness.

School Community

Mountain School is a first through twelfth-grade program that promotes multi-age learning and interaction. There are formal and informal opportunities for students across all grades to interact. It's a school where a senior knows the name of a first-grader and fifth graders play with eighth-graders at recess. The entire school community gathers weekly for Morning Meeting, a gathering where every community member has a voice. All students are also part of a Mountain School family that includes members from every grade. Families participate in orientation activities

together, have weekly lunches, and engage in friendly competitions, art activities, and social events.

The TMS Commitment to Progressive Teaching and Learning

At Mountain School, we understand that teaching is a dynamic profession, that research around educational best practices is continually evolving, and that an ever-changing world significantly influences student needs. To offer the most effective and relevant program year after year, we strive to be resolute in our values, reflective in our practice, and flexible to adapt to the constantly changing educational landscape.

We believe our curriculum guide is a living document, and we engage in iterative and collaborative curriculum review throughout the year. We consistently ask: *What do we keep? What do we get rid of? What do we change? How does the content we teach blend foundational and classical knowledge with contemporary events, issues, conflicts, and innovation across all subject areas?*

As a teaching faculty, we are also committed to remaining current in our pedagogy. We are not prone to adopting every new educational trend but instead intentionally partner with progressive professional development programs that match our mission, both in specific subject areas and schoolwide. Schoolwide partnerships relevant to teaching pedagogy, mind-brain education (MBE), and social-emotional learning (SEL) include work with EL Learning, the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning, NeuroTeach Global, Positive Discipline, Panorama, and The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).