

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Mercer Education's *LEARNING CAMP* for students entering grades 3 through 9 meets remotely via Zoom Monday through Friday for 1 hour, 2.5 hours or 3.5 hours per day depending upon which "modules" the student enrolls in, for a total of 20, 50 or 70 hours\* of instruction and exercises over the course of four weeks. Students may sign up for Language Arts only (2.5 hours), Mathematics only (1 hour) or both (3.5 hours). There are two one-month sessions, and students may attend just the first session, just the second session, or both sessions. For students attending both sessions, the second session – using different teaching materials – builds upon what they have learned in the first. Curricula at each level also alternate yearly, so students can attend for two years at the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade, 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade or 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade levels without repeating any materials. Students are assessed prior to the start of camp and scheduled in groups of approximately the same age (generally "rising" 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> graders) and of similar proficiency. Small classes not exceeding six provide students with plenty of individual attention and opportunities to participate in discussion and activities.

While extensive in its scope and goals, the course is paced in such a way that assignments never seem intimidating or overly time-consuming. Our instructors are experienced professionals who bring the course material to life with interesting activities, supplementary materials, and proven teaching techniques that lead to quality results. The instruction includes an academic focus (reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, critical thinking, word problems, algebra, geometry, etc.), preparing students both for standardized tests and for school.

## LANGUAGE ARTS (2.5 HOURS PER DAY; TOTAL 50 HOURS\*\*)

The language arts component (or "module") of the Learning Camp is 2.5 hours per day, five days a week with focus on reading (generally one book per week) and writing. Materials and assignments are designed to prepare students for the coming school year. They keep daily journals, engage in group discussions, write and give oral presentations, and help each other to gain a better understanding of fiction and non-fiction texts. Activities include both individual and group projects that push students to use the critical thinking skills necessary to do well on assessments such as the ISEE and SSAT, and they receive instruction in strategies specifically for tackling sentence completion, analogy, and reading comprehension questions.

\* See page 1 of the camp application to select enrollment options for just Language Arts, just Mathematics or both the Language Arts and Mathematics "modules."

\*\* The camp sometimes meets one less day in Session I because of ME's closing for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, thus affecting total hours, but the curriculum and tuition are the same.

The focus on the program is to help students make use of critical thinking skills to complete objectives in the areas of reading comprehension, writing, grammar, and vocabulary according to the Washington State Standards as listed by Seattle and Bellevue School Districts. Engaging and fun lessons encourage students to read and respond to grade-level appropriate literature, use different forms of writing to articulate their thoughts, and express themselves using their newly acquired knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

Instructional materials include a wide range of established texts that clearly present techniques proven to raise scores on standardized tests. Course materials include age-appropriate novels (generally reading one book per week), short stories, articles and poetry that provide the foundation for learning vocabulary and honing reading, writing, and analytic skills.

### **MATHEMATICS (1 HOUR PER DAY; TOTAL 20 HOURS\*\*)**

The math component (or “module”) of the learning camp is 1 hour per day, five days a week. Students exercise problem solving skills, logical reasoning, and written and oral communication to explore problems that involve number sense, measurement, geometric sense, probability and statistics, and algebraic sense. Unlike the Language Arts portion of the camp, in which students discuss texts that the entire class has read, the mathematics component is more customized for each student, both in terms of texts and assignments. Student assessment continues during the first few days and beyond to precisely pinpoint students’ strengths and weaknesses, and parents are surveyed regarding specific learning objectives and the materials we will be using as well as optional homework assignments.

Students engage in a variety of fun activities that prepare them for the coming school year with a focus on objectives identified by Washington State and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Activities include both individual and group explorations to challenge students to develop and explain problem-solving strategies in writing and through oral presentations. These activities also prepare students for the type of basic skills and problem-solving skills measured by standardized tests such as the ITBS, ISEE, SSAT and SAT.

### **LEGO ROBOTICS - TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC**

After the WA State lockdown in 3/2020, we had to adjust the Learning Camp for remote instruction and suspended the Lego Robotics component, though we hope to bring that back in the future when we resume classes in person. For now, Learning Camp is conducted remotely via Zoom and includes a *Language Arts* component, a *Mathematics* component, or both. See the Summer Camp Application and the Calendar page of our website for details about Learning Camp options.

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