

Ness Students Enjoy Challenging Enrichment

Because we now hold the view there are multiple kinds of intelligences, students today require opportunity to explore the world through multiple enrichment education choices. At Ness Middle School we have programs that involve students extending their learning beyond curricular outcomes in arts, technology, leadership, and in core content areas.

Arts

JAZZ BANDS are auditioned groups who meet twice weekly at 7:30 in the morning. Students in these ensembles perform music that is challenging beyond their grade level. Jazz projects and assignments throughout the year complement this music.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE at Ness is open to all percussion students as well as any Grade 8 students by audition only. Our ensemble meets every Friday morning at 7:30 throughout the year. Last year, instead of using traditional percussion equipment, the percussion ensemble used kitchen utensils for one of their pieces and performed a glow-in-the-dark selection with much success.

ROCK SCHOOL meets on Fridays to explore contemporary music in a “jam” setting. Rock Band provides an outlet for all aspiring rock ‘n rollers, and serves as an effective mechanism for student voice.

DART, Improvisation, mime and other dramatic skills are applied to a broader context with an integrated focus on music, dance and technology. Our DART group, (drama and art) meets at lunchtime.

PROJECT is a vocal ensemble comprised of auditioned grade six to eight students. Project is a choral program in addition to Vocal Jazz and Concert Choir. These selected students rehearse two times a cycle (on a pull-out basis). The students’ musical skills such as tuning, rhythm accuracy, sight-reading, vocal tone and inflections, are developed in much greater detail. Not only does Project allow students to develop musically, but the experience also develops team and leadership skills. Recently, Project had the honour of performing at the Division Retirement Banquet.



Ness students enjoy the challenge of canoeing during the first week of school.

Technology

GRADE EIGHT ENRICHMENT students participate in technology-based enrichment learning new software and testing out new hardware in the computer lab. The students use a wide variety of technologies in making the grade eight farewell DVD. The DVD encompasses all of the events of their final year at Ness as well as some of their favourite experiences from the past three years. The culmination of the students’ hard work and creativity is a DVD, including case and cover, for each grade eight student to take with them. Students also work on small claymation videos and splicing audio songs using iStop Motion and Garageband. Students learn to independently solve problems using online tutorials as well as work productively in a non-traditional learning environment. These are skills that are important as the world and its technologies continue to move forward.

Leadership

In addition to Ness student leadership committees such as Student Government, Peer Support, Peer Mentors, Safe Schools and Peer Tutors, the Ness Phys-Ed department pushes student leaders beyond curricular outcomes. Student leaders coordinate school wide activities for the school and officiate regular programs such as club sports, intramurals and other, special events that occur. They may also act as role models in classes by working with small groups of students or partners to assist with skill practice and encourage active physical fitness.

Content Areas

In classrooms students experience enrichment through cooperative learning groupings, experimenting with new, unfamiliar writing genres, and by having students re-teach an essential learning outcome to others. In Math independent student inquiry is used to enrich problem solving. Technology is used by students in all content areas to enhance learning.

Students at Ness have the opportunity to attend grade level outdoor education trips where canoeing, wall climbing, hiking and skiing and other enrichment activities take place.

In the diverse Middle Years classroom, honoring individuality, choice, and authentic inquiry can lead to meaningful learning. When appropriate, enrichment projects for individuals and groups help to meet the needs of all learners.

Submitted by the Ness Leadership Team