

# Primary & Intermediate School Programs

FIRST THROUGH FIFTH GRADE



## Our Approach

At Baker, we know the elementary years of education are key to laying a foundation for a lifelong love of learning. Students are growing by leaps and bounds — academically and social emotionally — and beginning to come into their own as individuals. With our child-centered curriculum, students learn through hands-on experiential lessons that incorporate collaborative problem-solving, empathetic thinking, and connections to real-world situations.

## Our Outcomes

Children who move from Baker's Primary and Intermediate programs to sixth grade are prepared for more challenging academics and the larger course load that comes with Middle School. Students transition into Middle School with tangible skills and a strong sense of community.

# Our Primary School

## Grades 1-3

Our Primary School program is designed to engage students in a wide range of inquiry-based experiences. Experiences are interdisciplinary and child-centered. Our teachers build the foundation for reading and mathematics through interdisciplinary lessons that incorporate not only math and language arts, but also social studies and science.

At Baker, we invite primary-age children into an active role in the learning process. That means first identifying their interests, including them in the process of creating learning experiences, and then helping them discover how it all connects to key academic concepts and skills in math, science, reading, writing, art and music. Units are developed around key concepts and skills the interests of students and driven by their passion for the subject matter.

Our teachers build community, in the classroom and among the three grades. Students learn the importance of collaboration and empathy as they deepen their understanding of themselves and each other.

## Examples of Our Primary School Curriculum

In **first grade**, our teacher adapted the study of physics concepts of sound and light around the students' love of fantasy and created the School of Dragonology. Together, they created a world based on real science in which they could study these concepts not in a science lab, but in dragons out in the wild!

**Second-graders** explore states of matter, getting hands-on with the earth to answer questions about what everything — trees, gorges, mountains, and our planet — is made from.

In the **third-grade** Engineering and Design unit, students transform into environmental engineers and architects to tackle the design of a Chicago bungalow for a sustainable future.

# Our Intermediate School

## Grades 4-5

As Baker students move into the fourth and fifth grades, they become more empowered to use their voices and ingenuity to become agents of change. As they grow and change, our curriculum adapts to their learning needs.

Our teachers incorporate student leadership through a thematic approach that offers students the opportunity to take the lead in solving real scientific and social problems, utilizing math, language arts to find creative solutions and grow as citizens. Students continue to build on their studies of history, language, arts, science and math while exploring these subjects more in-depth.

Our fourth- and fifth-grade classes often collaborate on lessons, creating a unique experience for students. Students at this developmental stage are ready to tackle bigger questions. They begin to see more of the world, its diverse perspectives, cause and effect over time and contemporary systems of impression, which leads to the profound question — “What can we do to change the world?”

## Examples of Intermediate School Curriculum

In the immersive **Baker Business School**, fourth- and fifth-grade students design a product they believe the world needs, and then spend a year going through the entrepreneurial business cycle, from development to marketing and sales. Students hone their leadership skills and take a dive into design-thinking in their entrepreneurial roles.

The **National Parks unit** gives intermediate students the opportunity to get hands-on with the natural world, as they analyze the impact of climate change, create advocacy projects and design artificial systems and structures modeled after biological ones. This exciting unit also includes a field trip to an animal refuge.

As part of our signature **Buddy Program**, intermediate students discuss important issues with children from lower grades. They meet together in “buddy classes” during, before or after assemblies.