

Practical Courses at CB West

The reading and math instruction provided in classes designed specifically for students who take the PASA are focused on the PA Alternate Eligible Content for English and Math standards, at grade 8 for middle school, and grade 11 for high school. The science and social studies instruction is a modified version of topics covered in general education. Employability and Independent Living are special education electives.

Practical English

Students will continue to build comprehension and critical thinking skills along with reading fluency, writing, and independent reading instruction. These reading skills are practiced and applied through traditional and practical reading sources as well as sources for current events.

Comprehension: Students will practice applying their skills to leveled, high school appropriate, practical print found in the real world. A variety of topics as well as fiction and non-fiction sources will be used.

Vocabulary Development: Students will increase everyday vocabulary used in the home, community, work, and leisure environments, to be successful in real world, day-to-day experiences. Focus comes from a variety of everyday texts, such as communication and technology, menus, labels, and bills.

Writing: Students will practice expressing, through writing, how to make or do something, invite someone to something, or tell what happened in a specific situation. They will learn and practice skills like how to complete various applications, compose e-mails, write thank-you notes, and keep a journal.

Practical Math

Students will build math skills and understanding to enhance the practical skills and abilities they need to take an active and responsible role in their communities, everyday life, the workplace and educational settings. Students will explore math concepts that connect to real-world, authentic experiences including but not limited to budgeting, banking, money, managing schedules, and telling time as well as reading, adjusting and making recipes.

Practical Social Studies

This instruction mirrors three core historical time periods that are also taught in the general education social studies classes – US History and Government, World History, and World Geography and Cultures which will occur in a 3-year cycle.

Year One – US History and Government: instruction begins with the First Americans and covering to present day history including the development of our government, history of political parties, and the branches of government.

Year Two – World History: covers 8,000 years of our world history, starting with early civilizations and ending with the present world history.

Year Three – World Geography and Cultures: explores the diverse physical geography, people, environments, cultures, politics, and economics of the world through the five themes of geography including: place, region, location, interaction, and movement.

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Practical Science

As with social studies, this instruction mirrors three core science topics that are also taught in the general education science classes – Earth Science, Physical Science, and Life Science which will occur in a 3-year cycle. Embedded within are essential science concepts that are presented with illustrations and text. Students are actively engaged in instruction, labs, socialization, hands on activities, and physical movement.

Year One – Life Science: includes ecology, evolution, cell biology, and human body systems.

Year Two – Earth and Space Science: presents key earth and space science concepts including but not limited to three layers of earth, minerals and rocks, weathering, erosion, and soil, the atmosphere, water ecosystems, pollution and destruction, and the solar system.

Year Three –Physical Science: umbrellas important life science concepts including but not limited to matter, motion and forces, work and energy, heat, light, electricity, sound, and magnetism.

Employability Elective

This course focuses on skills needed for successful employment, and also reinforces application of practical reading, writing, and math skills. Topics include applications, resumes, cover letters, and paychecks. Interview skills are also practiced. A significant portion of this class allows for real-life practice of employment skills within the school building as well as in the community. There is a high degree of reinforcement of transferrable soft skills relating to independence, accepting constructive criticism, social communication, problem-solving, following directions, self-advocacy, responsibility, and quality of work.

Independent Living Elective

In this course, students will learn critical skills required for living as independently as possible, as well as receive reinforcement of practical reading, writing, and math skills. Focus on money and time management, cooking and food shopping, safety at home and in the community, reading package and medicine labels, managing health and nutrition, caring for self, healthy relationships and development, and understanding maps and schedules allow students to develop independence in a safe environment. Community-based instruction provides students the opportunity to realistically apply these skills and experience a real result, which hopefully is successful! If not, the continued practice allows students to build on their current skills and analyze what is needed for more success in the future. Problem-solving is a key component across the instruction in this course.