



6-8 Expansion FAQ

Why is Cliff Valley School expanding?

We have heard for some time that our parents and the community want "more Cliff Valley," and we are excited about this important step in our school's growth. Our Board of Trustees included expansion through 8th grade in Cliff Valley School's five-year strategic plan that was approved in May 2009.

When will expansion begin?

The program expansion will begin in August 2011 with the launch of 6th grade. We will add 7th grade in the fall of 2012 and 8th grade in the fall of 2013.

The facilities expansion will begin with the goal that new facilities are complete by the fall of 2012. We are currently working with architects to design the next phase of construction for our campus that includes plans for classrooms, a science lab, a music room, and a gym with a stage for performing arts. More details and information about facilities expansion will be available throughout this spring.

Where will 6th – 8th grade classes be?

For at least the first year, the 6th grade class will be upstairs in our current facility. This will require that we repurpose some of our current classrooms both upstairs and down. Grades 6-8 will be in new classroom space following the facility expansion.

Is Cliff Valley adding a Middle School?

No, Cliff Valley is extending its programs to become a preschool through grade 8 school. Although programs will be different and developmentally appropriate for grades 6-8, those classes will not be considered a separate middle school.

What is influencing the design of the 6th – 8th grade program?

Our new programs will be consistent with our current mission and philosophy. In addition, research and best practices on quality programming for adolescents (ages 10-15) from sources like the National Association of Middle Schools will guide decisions and practices.

Will there be sports?

Yes. Our goal is to offer lacrosse, soccer, tennis, ultimate Frisbee, flag football, basketball, volleyball, and cross country once we have enough students and interest to support these sports. Our students will compete with other schools and we will also explore partnerships with other organizations for sports like soccer, tennis, and swimming.

Who will teach those grades?

Teachers in our 6th – 8th grade program will be content specialists – teachers who specialize in math, language arts, science, and social studies. Cheryl Keshner, our current 5th grade teacher, is a middle school content specialist with experience teaching at that level, and she will teach in grades 6-8. New teachers hired for this program will be experienced content specialists who understand our mission and philosophy and are dedicated to providing high quality instruction for adolescent students. Head of School Michael Edwards will be the lead administrator for grades 6-8 during the expansion, and he is a content specialist for grades 5-12 and has experience teaching those grades as well.

What will the curriculum be like?

The curriculum will be college preparatory and designed to prepare students for top independent and public high school programs. It will be based on national and independent school standards, differentiated to meet students'

academic needs, and implemented in small groups. Students will have regular access to their teachers after school for academic support.

Students in grades 6-8 will continue to have the outstanding enrichment programs offered in grades K-5: music, art, Spanish, PE, and Outdoor Classroom. They will have drama experiences as well, both musical and theater. Enrichment classes will continue to be highly integrated with academic studies.

How will students in grades 6-8 use technology?

Students in grades 6-8 will use laptop computers in their classes for work and research. They will develop skills in software applications and have opportunities to learn introductory computer programming skills.

Where will students go after they graduate from Cliff Valley School?

Cliff Valley School students and families receive individualized outplacement support. Head of School Michael Edwards works closely with families to find the best school for each child. He also works with area schools to ensure that Cliff Valley understands their expectations for quality applicants and that the schools understand Cliff Valley's curricula and programs. Michael's ongoing connections with admission offices and his proactive advocacy for students ensure successful outplacement for graduates.

What will be the tuition for grades 6-8?

Tuition for grades 6-8 will be approximately the same as the tuition for grades K-5.