

Here are some common questions we have heard from families over the years. We are always thrilled to share information about Syringa so please reach out to us if you have questions that aren't answered below or plan to attend one of the scheduled "Ask Me Anything" sessions!

- **What does "Waldorf-inspired" mean at Syringa?**
 - Syringa is a Waldorf-inspired public charter school. That means that our approach to education is guided by core principles of Waldorf education as we also blend the state-required standards into our curriculum.
 - Each student learns through Main Lesson, which includes an art-focused Main Lesson book, play (theater) block, story-telling, and gathering as a class each morning for Circle, which includes verses, music, and movement activities to get the brain going.
 - Each student explores nature through outdoor education (hike days and overnight trips).
 - Arts are integrated throughout subject areas.
 - We focus on whole-child development (education beyond traditional subjects).
 - Our community celebrates the changing of seasons and child development through festivals and rites of passage ceremonies.
 - The Farm + Garden program teaches science through hands-on-learning.
 - Other elements of Waldorf-inspired education include: handwork, music class, family-like school community, and developmental awareness/intentionality with introducing concepts based on developmental stages.
- **What are the guiding principles of Syringa?**
 - Students deserve public education choice.
 - A whole child and Waldorf-inspired approach to education helps students thrive in school and beyond.
 - Our job is to maintain, uncover, remember, and grow each student's curiosity and creativity by creating educational experiences that meet the students where they are while preparing them for the future.
 - We inspire students to think critically, explore creatively, engage confidently, embrace challenges, and lead impactful, purposeful lives. Knowing that learning happens everywhere, not just at a desk in a classroom, we engage our students with a wider view beyond the classroom walls.
 - Outdoor learning experiences facilitate learning through observation that just isn't possible in the classroom.
 - Create space through observation for the child to learn in a way that suits their learning style.
- **How is Syringa different from Blaine County elementary schools?**

- Focus on the whole child
- Outdoor education, including Friday outdoor/hike day starting in kindergarten and multi-day class trips starting in 4th grade
- School community: class gatherings, festivals
- Farm and Garden program
- Students create their own textbook through the creation of a Main Lesson Book
- **What is handwork?**
 - Using both hands **simultaneously with yarn or fabric to create hats, socks, quilts, bags, etc.**
 - The rhythmic action strengthens hand-eye coordination and concentration.
- **What happens on hike day?**
 - Students go out into nature to work their brain by exploring, observing, and wondering while breathing fresh air.
 - Goals/intentions are set at the beginning of the day in order for the child to make the best of the day for themselves.
 - Grades 5-8 do multi night camping trips that align with their block of study while learning “Leave No Trace” and other skills.
- **What “specials” are offered at Syringa? (Click each link to meet the teacher leading each “special.”)**
 - [Music](#)
 - [Farm and Garden](#)
 - [Spanish](#)
 - [Library](#)
 - Games (led by classroom teachers, this is Syringa’s version of Physical Education class)
- **Does Syringa participate in state testing?** SMS is a public charter school so all students must participate in the statewide testing.
- **How do Syringa’s students fare on testing compared to Blaine County schools?**
 - We recognize that state-wide testing is only one measure of the learning our students experience at SMS. With that said, we our students are academically successful. In 2020-21, our students scored above Blaine County School District students in both math and English Language Arts.
 - SMS teachers provide an integrated approach to academic, ensuring that students will have the tools and skills needed to thrive academically and beyond.
- **What curriculum does Syringa use for literacy and math?**
 - Math: Dimensions Math, which is a Singapore Math curriculum

- Literacy: Sound to Spelling K-2, Words their Way 3-4th, & Waldorf Road Map to Literacy K-8th.
- **What are the expectations for fundraising or parent involvement?**
 - Fundraising: Syringa receives a small fraction of the public funding other Blaine County elementary schools receive, and fundraising is essential. There are typically 2-3 major fundraising events during the school year, including a spring raffle.
 - Volunteering: All charter schools rely on parent involvement, but the time commitment varies from parent to parent. Syringa cultivates a strong sense of community, and parent volunteers play a huge role in contributing to that community! Volunteers can help out in the classroom, join hike days or other field trips, do light admin work, plan or volunteer time or goods for festivals and fundraisers, etc.
- **Does Syringa offer transportation to and from school?**
 - Syringa students receive a full Mountain Rides pass, and many students utilize the public buses to and from school. The bus stops are close to school and a staff member supervises the students before they get on the bus. A Syringa staff member rides the Hailey bus with students. The Mountain Rides bus stops at the BCRD for those students attending after-care programs.
- **How much time does my child spend outside?** Compared to traditional elementary schools, Syringa places a high value on children's time spent outside. Research shows that playing outside benefits children in significant ways: outdoor play positively impacts learning, social-emotional development, and physical development.
 - Kindergarten students start their day outside in the Magic Forest every morning after drop off.
 - Kindergarten students participate in a daily nordic ski program in January and February
 - Every Friday is outdoor/hike day for K-4th grade students. 5th-8th grade students go on multi-day outdoor trips throughout the year.
 - Two twenty-minute recesses per day on the beautiful outdoor play area at Syringa
- **Is there a lunch program?**
 - Syringa does not have a cafeteria or a lunch program, so students must bring their own snacks and lunches each day. The Syringa curriculum emphasizes the importance of nutrient-rich foods for developing brains and bodies, starting in kindergarten with a unit of study on nutrition and continuing with the Farm and

Garden program. Families are encouraged to send healthy food with their students.

- **How will parents be notified in case of a school closure or safety school wide emergency?**
 - We will send an email from info@syringamountainschool.org (please add this to your contacts)
 - Check Syringa Mountain School's Facebook page
 - We will also share a ringless voicemail through Slybroadcast from 208-806-2880 (this enables us to contact all parents at once with the latest information)
 - In care of snow or sickness closure, we will post on KMVT posting
- **What time does school start and end?**
 - School hours
 - Kinder - 8am -2:30pm
 - 1st- 8th - 8am-2:45pm.
- **What is the best way for me to reach the school?**
 - If it is time sensitive (related to transportation plans or delivering a message in a timely manner), please call the front desk. Otherwise, please email your student's teacher and they will respond as they are able.
 - Please remember that the teachers are focused on providing the best learning experience for your student(s). As such, it may take them some time to get back to your email. Please do not call or text teachers on their personal cell phones unless they specifically invite you to do so. Many teachers do not use their personal/cell phones for work matters.