



MANZANITA SCHOOL

AT A GLANCE

Manzanita School & Institute, founded in 2013, is an independent, non-profit, coeducational day school, with an enrollment of 145 students in grades K thru 12. We are located on 21 acres in the rugged and bio-diverse Topanga Canyon, north-west of Los Angeles. Currently in our ninth year, with a program emphasizing human ecology and land stewardship, we received our 6-year accreditation renewal from The Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC) in January 2020.

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Manzanita School & Institute

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CEEB Code: 050398

SCHOOL PROFILE 2022-2023

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Manzanita's Kindergarten through High School program recognizes that young people need educational models which meet them at each formative period in their lives. We are especially sensitive to supporting the healthy transition for adolescents from age 9 to 15, by offering a learning context in which adults serve as both teachers and mentors. We know that the healthy maturation of our youth depends upon a strong connection to the natural world, and an academic program that provides intellectual understanding of one's emerging intimacy with the natural world. We understand that learning must include academic rigor, physical challenge, experiential components, and social-emotional development. By high school, Manzanita students have gained a perspective on their growing connection to the natural world, and understand it as having a historic precedent via our long ancestry as nature-based peoples. We support our students in applying their gifts and competencies towards a lifelong advocacy for the wellbeing of their fellows and for the earth. This is the commitment of Manzanita School.



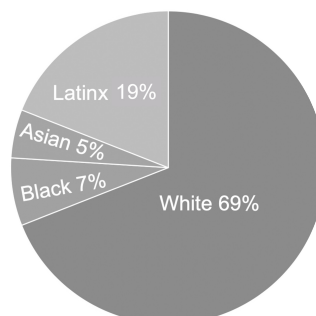
FACULTY & ADMINISTRATION

Terminal degrees for the 31 members of the faculty and administration: bachelor's degrees -19, master's degrees -11, doctoral degrees -1. Manzanita School maintains a robust professional development schedule for all staff, which includes four weeks of summer training emphasizing applied human ecology, curriculum development, and program planning.

OUR PROGRAM

At Manzanita, we emphasize experiential learning in the natural world, applied earth stewardship, and the rigorous study of contemporary social and environmental issues. Our youngest students in the Forest Kindergarten and 1st grades, spend all their time outdoors, with an emphasis on child-driven, exploratory play. Second graders have unstructured time outdoors each day, and students in grades 3 through 12 spend fourteen days in the classroom each month, studying Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Visual Art, and Humanities, and six days in nature, engaged in conservation and nature connection activities.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



For 2022-23, 51% of students are receiving financial aid, with 29% of total tuition covered by financial aid.



CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ~ CLASS OF 2023

As a small school in its ninth year of operation, Manzanita high schoolers do not take traditional electives, but have a rigorous sequences of courses and curriculum designed to support them in developing a rich intellectual understanding of human ecology and environmental science, deep personal connections to the natural world, strong capacities in numeracy and literacy, and broad skills in the creative arts. All graduates in the Class of 2023 have completed a minimum of 280 credits from the courses shown below, meeting the required years of study in each subject. Manzanita does not have AP or Honors courses at this time, and our transcript GPA's are therefore not weighted.



<p><u>LANGUAGE ARTS</u> (4 years required) English 1 English 2 English 3 English 4</p>	<p><u>SCIENCE</u> (4 years required) Earth Systems Science Atmospheric Chemistry Holistic Science: Botany & Plant Apprenticeship Environmental Science: California Field Ecology Biology: Quantum Applications in Life Systems</p>
<p><u>MATHEMATICS</u> (3 years required) Algebra I Algebra II Geometry Life Skills Math</p>	<p><u>FOREIGN LANGUAGE</u> (2 years required) Spanish I Spanish II</p>
<p><u>EMBODIED LAND STUDIES</u> (4 years required) Applied Human Ecology: Nature Connection Applied Human Ecology: Survival Skills Applied Human Ecology: Tracking & Bird Language Applied Human Ecology: Wildcrafting *Stewardship: Leadership & Mentoring (4 years)</p>	<p><u>VISUAL ARTS</u> (4 years required) Studio Art 1 Studio Art 2 Studio Art 3 Studio Art 4</p>
<p><u>HUMANITIES</u> (4 years required) World History: History of Empires U.S. History: Indigenous Resistance History in U.S. Contemporary Culture Studies Humanistic Studies: Gender and Race Relations Econ & Gov: Consumerism and Colonialism</p>	<p><u>EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING</u> (3 years required) Expeditionary Learning I Expeditionary Learning II Expeditionary Learning III Expeditionary Learning IV</p>
<p><i>*Stewardship is an applied land-studies course in which our high school students mentor younger students (grades 3 through 8) via projects on our 21-acre chaparral campus & our permaculture farm.</i></p>	<p><u>INDIVIDUAL PASSION PROJECTS</u> (2 years required) Individual Passion Project I Individual Passion Project II Individual Passion Project III Individual Passion Project IV</p>

GRADING SYSTEM

In addition to a comprehensive narrative report card system, Manzanita provides letter grades based on student performance on formative and summative assessments. Our letter grade system is as follows:

A	4.0	C+	2.33
A-	3.67	C	2.0
B+	3.33	C-	1.67
B	3.0	D+	1.33
B-	2.67	D	1.0
		F	0

CLASS RANK & GPA

Our high school has 20 students, and we are not ranking our few graduating seniors. Classes that meet between 180-200 minutes per week (for the 18-week semester) receive 10.0, 5.0 or 2.0 credits. Our interdisciplinary core meets 450 minutes/week, and is disaggregated on our transcript into several 2.0 to 5.0 credit courses.

MANZANITA'S CORE HUMANITIES/SCIENCE BLOCK IN GRADES 2 through 12

In response to a growing body of research demonstrating the power and efficacy of interdisciplinarity and the study of 'epiphenomena' in lieu of discrete subject matter (see Finland), Manzanita School's humanities/science core course provides scoped and sequenced studies in Earth Systems Science, Cultural Change, and Big History. This course is taught daily for 90-minutes, throughout the year. It covers a range of topics from Environmental Ethics, to Atmospheric Chemistry, Human Prehistory, History of Science, Systems Theory, Plant Botany, Indigenous Systems of Thought, and Environmental Science. Manzanita's full instructional team meets for six weeks each summer to scope and sequence this unique curriculum. This core humanities/science block is supplemented by more traditional courses in Literacy, Numeracy, and the Creative Arts.

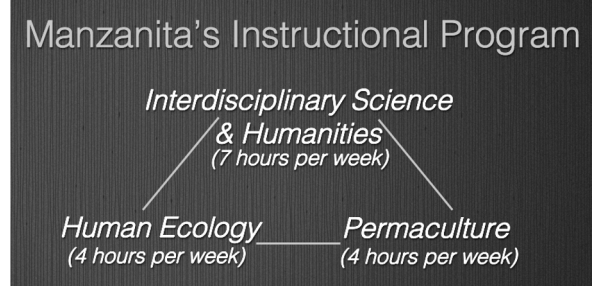
WHAT IS 'APPLIED HUMAN ECOLOGY'?

Human Ecology is an interdisciplinary study of the relationship between humans and their natural, social, and built environments. At Manzanita, we offer a nature-connection curriculum we term 'Applied Human Ecology.' This experiential program draws from the work of numerous Wilderness Awareness schools that have been teaching nature connection for decades. Our twice-weekly program offers experiential study of bird language, tracking, primitive skills, mental mapping, sit spots, flora and fauna, ecology, animal behavior, and other practices that give students a direct experience of intimacy with the *more-than-human* world. This work fosters an embodied (versus intellectual) sense of 'belonging' to nature, activating what eco-psychologists call 'the ecological unconscious,' and the knowledge that they are a part of nature, responsible for its wellbeing.



EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

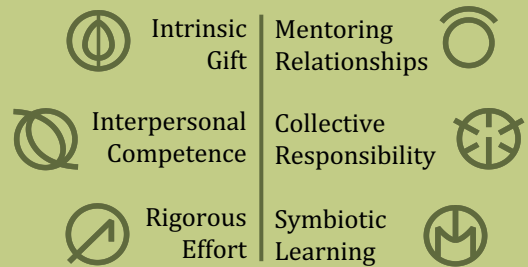
At Manzanita, our high school students participate in four expeditions each year. These rigorous 5-10-day trips include both experiential components, such as hiking and backpacking, as well as academic components, such as the study of California ecosystems and geology. One expedition each year emphasizes service. For 2021-22, the students lived for 8 days in Black Mesa, Arizona, supporting a group of Navajo elders by gathering firewood, and helping herd their flocks of sheep. The associated academic course was "U.S. History: Indigenous Resistance History."



WHAT IS 'APPLIED PERMACULTURE'?

Permaculture (from 'permanent' + 'agriculture') is the practice of restoring a healthy human-to-nature interface, aimed specifically at systems of agriculture. It is about designing sustainable and bio-diverse food production systems that help build soil and minimize waste, while increasing yields and ethical stewardship of plants and animals. At Manzanita, students work twice-weekly in cross-grade-level teams to advance permaculture principles on our 21-acre site. Our high schoolers develop important leadership and mentoring skills as a part of this 4-year program.

OUR 6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES



MENTORED 'PASSION' PROJECTS

'Inductive Learning' is premised on the understanding that the deep study of any area of personal interest can inherently lead to the exploration of multiple academic disciplines *from within*. Each year, students at Manzanita are paired with an adult mentor on staff, who supports their pursuit of a passion project for several hours each week. Numerous evaluative rubrics are deployed throughout the process to ensure rigorous work by both mentors and mentees. Culminating presentations are shared with the entire community, inviting students to answer the questions of "Where have I come from?" and "Who am I?" from the perspective of their individual projects.

"The programs at the school are rigorous academically, physically challenging, experiential, and grounded in social-emotional learning."

~WASC Visitation Team, 2019



COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL

All Manzanita students meet daily in 'council,' the practice of sharing personal stories in a circle. An extensive body of research demonstrates the efficacy of this social-emotional tool in building strong interpersonal competence, reducing bullying and cliques, and fostering a commitment to collective responsibility. Manzanita maintains a teacher-to-student ratio of 4 to 1, and an average class-size of 14 students. The intimacy of our community compels students to become authentic, articulate, impassionate young leaders and respectful self-advocates. We are confident that Manzanita students will do meaningful things in the world and in their lives.



COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES THAT HAVE ACCEPTED MANZANITA'S GRADUATES

American University
 American University of Paris
 Bard College
 Bennington
 California Lutheran University
 *California Polytechnic State University
 California State University Channel Islands
 California State University East Bay
 California State University Los Angeles
 California State University Monterey Bay
 California State University Northridge
 Champlain College
 College of the Atlantic
 Colorado State University
 Connecticut College
 Evergreen State College
 *Galen University
 Goucher College
 Hampshire College
 Hawai'i Pacific University

Hofstra University
 Ithaca College
 John Cabot University Rome
 *Lewis and Clark College
 Marymount Manhattan College
 Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
 Merrimack College
 Muhlenberg College
 *Oberlin College & Conservatory
 Oregon State University
 Pacific Lutheran University
 Portland State University
 Prescott College
 Purchase College SUNY
 Reed College
 *Sarah Lawrence College
 Seattle University
 Sonoma State University
 Southern Oregon University
 St. Mary's College of California
 Sterling College
 Suffolk University
 SUNY College of Environmental Science

SUNY Purchase
 *Syracuse University
 Texas Tech University
 Trinity College
 University of California Davis
 University of California Irvine
 University of California Merced
 University of California Santa Cruz
 *University of California, Berkeley
 *University of Colorado Boulder
 University of Denver
 University of Massachusetts Boston
 University of Massachusetts Lowell
 *University of Puget Sound
 University of Southern Maine
 University of the Pacific
 University of Vermont
 *Wagner College
 *Warren Wilson College
 Whitman College
 Whittier College
 University of Maine
 Willamette University

**Colleges attended by our 2018-22 graduating classes*