The Link School Course Catalog 2015-2016

The experiential education at The Link School has five key components:

Academics - a variety of learning opportunities includes an innovative blend of small group and individual instruction taught by dedicated Christian Scientist faculty members who hold advanced degrees appropriate to their subjects; intensive block courses conducted by visiting instructors; state-of-the-art online courses which allow students to earn credits outside of the Link curriculum; and interdisciplinary learning opportunities in an unparalleled natural setting of rivers, mountains and canyons which stretch out from the school's backyard.

Expeditions – field programs each month encourage character development, leadership, writing, and natural sciences education in backcountry settings.

Individually Mentored Projects – projects broaden knowledge and skills in areas of the students' interests with instruction and oversight from a mentoring adult.

Service Work – service opportunities include daily chores and responsibilities at home in the Lodge and projects that extend out into the greater community.

Spiritual Development - purposeful spiritual exploration and community investment in living our faith deepens students' "link" with the Divine.

Academic Plan

The academic program is designed and taught by the school's faculty. Courses are taught in multi-age settings with grade-appropriate assignments, resources, and assessments. Link School courses are experiential by design and include a wide variety of assessments, including, but not limited to, portfolios, presentations of learning (POLs), field experiences both local and abroad, fieldwork, blogs, group problem-solving, and authentic assessments such as writing for publication. Extensive use of technology is a critical component of the curriculum.

Students pursue Student Academic Plans (SAPs), individual projects and group activities. Some credits are earned through successful mastery of college preparatory core subjects; others by self-directed student explorations. In general, for three weeks of each month, students will work on their SAP though Link's project based courses and then have time in the afternoons for personal projects, and group recreation and service activities. The other week of each month will be spent on a wilderness expedition.

Student Assessments & Placement

The Education Director and Academic Advisor work together with each student and his/her parents to review their previous work and determine appropriate course

placements at start of term. Standardized tests may be used to assist in appropriate placement.

Student Academic Plans - SAPs

SAPs are developed for each student based on their grade, previous course work completed, and goals for either a college prep track or aiming for high school graduation and then vocational courses.

Transferring Link Credits to other High Schools

The Link School is fully accredited with the North Central Association, recently re-named AdvancED.

Standardized Tests

Standardized testing: Freshmen through juniors will register to take the PSAT (Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test) in October. This preliminary exam gives students practice in taking standardized tests before results from such exams become part of their record for college. Students and faculty receive detailed PSAT score reports. As part of the college admission process, upperclassmen will also take SAT and/or ACT exams, depending on the requirements per college. Students are responsible for SAT/ACT test fees.

On-line Research

Students gain access for on-line research sites through Bill Fabian, the librarian at Buena Vista High School, and our Social Studies & History teacher.

Academic, College and Career Advising

Link teachers meet with students one-on-one at least four times a year to discuss academic progress, and academic goal setting, done both at the beginning and middle of each semester. We focus on each student's goals, whether those be to attend college, a vocational school, or begin work, and how Link can support each student. In addition, each senior is guided through the college application process, including all support necessary for taking standardized tests.

A letter will be sent to parents of Juniors and Seniors outlining the steps Link's College Advisor will be taking with the student and the role parents can play in college preparation.

Project Based Learning (PBL) Overview

The Link School works to ground academic learning in real life experiences and employs PBL as a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.

Auditing

From time to time students may audit a class for no grade or credit.

Academic Load:

Standard course load is 5.5 core courses at Link. Students may petition to drop a class if they are on a graduation trajectory and don't need that particular subject. Students must carry at least 4 core classes on their academic schedule. If a student petitions to drop a second class, it must be replaced by an approved independent study or online course.

Assessment - Grading:

Assessments are done in a narrative fashion and "A," "B," "C," "D," and "I" letter grades. Assessments are developed appropriate for the student's skills and grade level. "I" represents an Incomplete and students are given the opportunity to complete their work and earn a passing grade.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance: Attendance requirements at The Link School are equal to or greater than the minimum number of days and hours required by the state of Colorado, which is 1056 hours and 160 days (Title 22, Colorado Revised Statutes: Education Article 33, School attendance Law of 1963, Section 104).

Excused Absences include all absences for reasons beyond the control of you or your family, such as illness/injury, appointments, or a family emergency. If you are not able to get or complete work from the teachers to do while you are away from school, it is expected that the work will be made up within a period of time no longer than the time missed from school. Teachers will determine when missed exams are to be made up.

Parents may also request from time to time for students to miss class time for family events or trips, but such absences should not be a regular occurrence due to the stress it can put on a student's academic responsibilities.

Unexcused Absences are defined as absences from class or school without proper authority from home or the school. Parents or legal guardians will be notified immediately of any unexcused absence. The academic penalty for an unexcused absence will be a daily grade of "0" in every class missed, with no makeup privilege. Additional consequences may include disciplinary action – probation, suspension or expulsion.

Block Courses

From time-to-time, Link courses are instructed in blocks. On those days, rather than rotating from class to class each hour, students spend the entire day, or multiple days, on one interactive subject and corresponding project.

Presentations of Learning – POLs

Students conclude each term with Presentations of Learning that display to the community the students' knowledge and development in a given subject area, or from their project work.

Whole School Learning Community – WSLC

Link staff do not view students as empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge by teachers. Link teachers facilitate and teach, but also openly join students as learners and coconspirators in the quest for understanding. Link staff also share what they are working on professionally and personally through POLs. Lastly, staff work to honor students' input by engaging students in academic and community problem solving and not just imparting solutions.

Graduation Requirements

The graduation requirements listed are minimum requirements. Students interested in attending highly selective colleges are expected and encouraged to complete more academic coursework.

English	4 credits
Mathematics	3 credits
Modern Languages	2 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies/History	3 credits
Electives/Enrichment Courses	8 credits
Physical Education	1 minimum
Total	**23 credits + 1 PE** (a minimum for graduation)

Course Requirements for an Academic Year at Link

English	1 credit
Mathematics	1 credit
Spanish	1 credit
Science	1 credit
Social Studies	1 credit
Electives/Enrichment Courses	1 or more credits
Physical Education	1 PE credit
Total Credits	**6 (minimum) + 1 PE**

Portfolios

Students prepare a portfolio of completed work as a key graduation component including: course work, photos, writing samples, projects, expeditionary accomplishments, service work, personal code, athletics, entrepreneurial work, & presentations of learning (POLs).

Diplomas

High School diplomas are awarded to students who have completed graduation requirements.

AP (Advanced Placement) courses
Courses are available and offered on request as independent study.

College Courses
Courses are available through a local satellite of Colorado Mountain College.

Academic Integrity
The Link School cultivates honesty in every area of a person's life. Academic integrity means that the student or teacher guarantees that work turned in as his or her own is in fact original, unless properly cited.

Any instance of academic cheating, copying other's homework, or plagiarism is a serious offense. Copying and pasting information is common, but the student is responsible for learning proper methods of paraphrasing or citing information so that another's ideas are not represented as one's own.

Consequences for academic dishonesty are a grade of zero on the assignment and, if the situation continues, possible suspension from school.

The Link School Course Catalog For 2015/16, Year 8

English, taught by Emily Wheeler
Contributing citizens of the 21st century must be able to think and communicate clearly. Guided practice in analytical reading, and writing and speaking for various audiences, gives students the tools and confidence to share their ideas with others. Much of Link's writing instruction is on a one-on-one, coaching basis.

English I-IV and Honors
Two Semesters, one credit
English for Year 8 will be a survey of British and American Literature, with a focus on the question, "How do literature and society interact?" In particular, students will discuss how literature is a vehicle for examining the question, "What is healthy community?" Students will journey through different literature periods—Renaissance, Romanticism, Transcendentalism, Modernism, and Post-Modernism—which will be the platform for exploring how society has changed over the years, as reflected in literature. This will take students right up to present-day United States, where students will discover how literature has a direct relation to their own lives. Students will be able to choose their own reading books within each literature period, and they will pick from a number of projects and activities to complete, based on their books. They will also set writing goals throughout the year and complete several different writing projects—including creative, expository, and persuasive writing—through independent work, writing workshops, and peer critiques.

Mathematics, taught by Bryan Reed
Mathematical reasoning, skills and principles play an ever-increasing role in our digital society. Colleges expect students to complete four years of high school level math starting with Algebra I.

Algebra I
Two semesters, one credit.
Algebra I is a comprehensive, standards-based coverage of Algebra I and its prerequisites. Students study arithmetic readiness, real numbers and linear equations, functions and systems of equations, polynomials and quadratic equations, rational expressions and proportions and exponents and square roots. If time allows, students also study introductory lessons on geometry, trigonometry, data analysis and probability and other topics.

Algebra II
Two semesters, one credit.
Algebra II is a comprehensive, standards-based coverage of Algebra II and its prerequisites. Students study arithmetic readiness, real numbers and linear equations, functions and systems of equations, polynomials and quadratic equations, rational expressions and proportions and exponents and square roots, exponential and logarithmic functions. If time allows, students also study introductory lessons on conic sections, trigonometry, data analysis and probability and other topics.

Geometry
Two semesters, one credit.
Students study algebra and deductive reasoning, lines and angles, triangles, polygons and circles, similarities and transformations, volumes and surface areas and coordinate geometry.

Pre-Calculus
Two semesters, one credit
Throughout this course students study functions and graphs, polynomial and rational functions, exponential and logarithmic functions, trigonometry, systems of linear equations and matrices, sequences, series, and probability, conic sections and limits and continuity.

Trigonometry
Two semesters, one credit
This course covers functions and graphs, quadratic functions, unit circle and right triangle trigonometry, trigonometric graphs and inverse function, trigonometric identities and equations and applications of trigonometry.

Calculus
Two semesters, one credit
The Calculus course is a comprehensive look at the study of differential and integral calculus concepts including limits, derivative and integral computation,

linearization, Riemann sums, the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus, and differential equations. Applications include graph analysis, linear motion, average value, area, volume, and growth and decay model.

Math Studies I
Two semesters, one credit
This course uses the ALEK math suites. It focuses on identifying appropriate level math concepts for students to review and improve on. Concepts covered will include whole numbers and integers, rational numbers, measurements, proportions, percents, probability, variable expressions and equations, functions and graphs, geometry, and various other topics. To provide deeper understanding in some of these content areas, practical application of these concepts will be presented using a Project Based Learning model.

Business Math
One semester, one half credit.
Students review fundamental Algebra I skills including whole number calculations, fractions, decimals, statistics, and percents. Students apply these skills in real-world business transactions such as discounts, markups and markdowns, payroll, property and sales tax calculation, simple interest, and compound interest. Additionally, students study personal and business finance with topics in banking, home ownership, insurance, stocks, inventory and overhead, and interpreting financial reports.

High School Prep for Statistics
One semester, one half credit.
Students progress through an introductory statistics course, advancing specific skills developed during Algebra I and Geometry. Topics include: integers, decimals and percents, algebraic expressions, linear equations, lines in a coordinate plane, descriptive statistics, and counting and probability.

Modern Languages, taught by Megan Wills
Study of a second language opens windows on the world. Students become comfortable standing in another person's shoes. Language study includes an appreciation for and understanding of other cultures. It also heightens awareness of one's native tongue of English through emphasis on speaking, listening, reading and writing. The Link School offers Spanish language study for its practical application in the U.S. and as preparation for the extended field program in Spanish-speaking countries and the intensive language studies we undergo while there.

Should you want to take a language course in addition to our Spanish courses, we can make those available. Please contact the Education Director for more information.

Spanish I
Two semesters, one credit.

Spanish 1 gives students a firm foundation in listening, speaking, reading and writing the Spanish language as well as provides them a basic introduction to Hispanic culture. Specific attention is paid to the terms students need while traveling to Guatemala in January and to the Guatemalan and Mayan cultures. By the end of the school year students are able to communicate in the present, future and past tenses on a rudimentary basis.

Spanish II
Two semesters, one credit.
In Spanish 2 students take the firm foundation they made in Spanish 1 and expand their listening, reading, writing and speaking skills in the target language. They begin to use the language to explore the world they live in more in-depth and be able to use their language to discuss and write about the program activities they do here at Link including the January trip to Guatemala. Students obtain a much broader breadth, understanding and familiarity with the multiple manners in which they can convey future and past events while reviewing the present tense and learning how to give commands to various individuals and groups of people. Students begin to understand the use of prepositions and conjunctions in Spanish while expanding their ability to describe people, places and things.

Spanish IV
Two semesters, one credit.
Spanish 4 reinforces every concept learned in levels 1-3. Students have the opportunity to discuss and learn about economics, history, politics, and social issues with a special focus on Guatemala in all of these topic areas. They study fine arts and the universe. Students also learn advanced travel and technical vocabulary that they can use while out on field programs.

Science, taught by Bryan Reed.
AP Chemistry
Two semesters, one credit.
AP Chemistry provides rigorous coverage of chemistry topics that are typically included in a university-level General Chemistry course. This course includes the built-in ALEKSpedia, which is a General Chemistry Primer, making the ALEKS AP Chemistry course your chemistry solution. This course can also be used to help students achieve better results on the AP Chemistry exam.

Environmental Science, taught by Jon Bernhard.
In the 21st century, the environmental sciences will continue to play a powerful role in transforming our society and our place in the universe. Stewardship for the natural environment is an Intended Outcome of The Link School. Environmental Science courses develop that sense of stewardship as humanity makes progress towards sustainability.

Community Ecosystems Dynamics

Two semesters, one credit
Community Ecosystems is a course intended to expose students to processes in natural environments. This course coincides with a program wide focus on healthy communities in and around The Link School. Course content is comprised of introductory skills components, field experiences, biodiversity assessments, along with ornithological interactions within communities. Link School students will be engaged in a yearlong process of developing ecosystem function in multiple settings; including the Upper Arkansas Valley, Utah deserts, & regions throughout Ecuador.

Social Studies/History

Social studies courses help students meet many of The Link School's Intended Outcomes, including a compassionate and respectful relationship with others, service to their communities as informed citizens and prospective voters, and making a difference for good through prayerful and informed action.

Western Civilization and Current Events
Two semesters, one credit, taught by Bill Fabian
Where did Western ideas about government, economics, religion, and scientific and moral reasoning come from?

Through this course, we explore the roots and development of Western culture – our culture, starting with the ancient civilizations of the Babylonians, the Persians, the Israelites, the Greeks and the Romans. We study the growth of Christianity and Islam, the Middle Ages, the Crusades, and the flowering of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. We look at several democratic revolutions, including the Magna Carta and the American, French, and Russian Revolutions. We consider events and ideas from the 20th Century that help us understand who we are as citizens of the 21st.

There is no textbook for this class. Instead, we observe and discuss the evolution of Western culture through videos, both documentaries and movie theater films. We also utilize current articles in the printed press and on the Web, with emphasis on articles from *The Christian Science Monitor*. Through research projects, students learn to identify reliable Web sites, mine commercial databases for additional information, properly cite information, and paraphrase in their own words. Projects and discussions will focus on Link's theme of "What makes a healthy community?" Research topics include the ancient Israelites of the Old Testament, aspects of Greek and Roman society, the multi-religious progressive society of Cordova, Spain in the 1100s, and the rescue of Jewish children from Nazi soldiers, among others. To make this sweep of history more personal, we study inspired individuals whose contributions still impact us today. Current events discussions include a focus on our American society and whether we live in a healthy society -- or not.

Throughout the year, students participate in preparing historically themed dinners that give us a literal "taste" of the people and places we study.

The Collapse of Societies
Two semesters, one half credit, taught by Bobby Lewis.
This course will explore what historically has led to the failure of societies, and is designed as a compliment to the Year 8 study of what makes communities healthy. The classes will be reading and discussion based and will include a speaker series, case studies, and field components.

Enrichment – 1-1.5 credits per year

Enrichment Courses at The Link School are designed to support the living and learning experience of each student. Many of the skills and dispositions cultivated in these courses are integral to the underlying educational philosophy of the school, but do not fit cleanly in more traditional coursework.

Service Learning & Stewardship
Two semesters, one-quarter credit.
Service work in support of the school and local communities includes forestry work, trail work, projects with the Division of Wildlife, construction of an additional building at Link to house our workout equipment and additional offices, animal husbandry, and work in our greenhouse and garden.

Leadership Seminar and Field Programs
Two semesters, one-quarter credit.
Leadership skills are taught, in particular, in preparation for and during expeditions. Students earn various levels in relation to communication skills, small group leadership skills, small group participation, expedition mentality, outdoor skills, & environmental awareness. Expeditions during Year 8 include backpacking in the Sangre de Cristo mountains, horse packing in the San Isabel, Mountain Biking in Colorado and Utah, Hiking through mountain and canyon settings in CO and UT, an international trip to Ecuador, a mountaineering trip to The Lost Wonder Hut, and a variety of shorter weekend trips.

Creative and Industrial Arts, & Computer Workshops
Two semesters, one-quarter credit.
Students have the opportunity throughout the year to develop artistic skills and abilities in photography, fine arts, music and handcrafts. Students receive basic instruction and have the opportunity to work on projects in carpentry, auto mechanics, pottery, and metals. Students also have the opportunity to become proficient in a variety of computer applications, including blogs, video and photo editing, web page design, Skype, video conferencing and other skills useful in presenting POLs.

Culinary Arts & Sustainable Foods
Two quarters, one-quarter credit

Students learn the practical art of planning nutritious, well-balanced meals from local food sources, shopping, cooking and meal presentation. In addition they participate in cooking classes taught by local chefs, in food related activities with the local farmers' market, and learn about sustainable ways to produce food as well as the resources available on a local level, including working in our own garden.

College Prep for Juniors and Seniors
Two semesters, one-quarter credit
Students focus on the college search process, including college essay writing and SAT/ACT practice, review, and testing.

Global Traveler: Ecuador
One semester, one half credit.
In January, Link students and staff depart Colorado for a 3 ½ week international field program in Ecuador. Students experience language immersion through language studies, cultural immersion through visits with local artisans and community leaders, and will continue their zonation studies from science. Study of a society that chooses to have all leadership positions held by women will compliment our year-long theme asking "What is healthy community?"

Community presentation wrap-up: To synthesize the lessons learned and experiences gleaned from this trip, students prepare a multi-faceted presentation for members of our community here in Colorado. This is designed by the students and staff at the conclusion of the trip and brings home valuable lessons learned.

Physical Education

Two semesters, one credit
Students engage in daily workout routines and spend one week each month on a physically demanding expedition. For independent work out time, students are required to do 15 minutes of aerobic work and 15 minutes of strength work – at a minimum.

Senior Project

Credit varies - maximum .5 credit

Seniors who qualify may choose to engage in a self-directed project during their final semester at Link. Qualification will be based on 1. having completed core course work necessary for graduation and then 2. being in good standing in the community.

Projects may range in length from a week to a few weeks and are usually set up for the end of April and early May, once finals for seniors are complete. The specific window for YR8 seniors is April 30th – May 17th 2016.

A staff member will work as a project mentor with each student on his or her project.

Senior projects culminate with a POL and should focus on Link outcomes – ie. Service-work, career development, spiritual growth, backcountry skill development, an expedition, etc. You may also introduce what you are doing with a spring POL.

International projects need to be in the western hemisphere and in a stable location.

Projects will be assessed by staff on a Pass/Incomplete basis.

Application Process:
Students who would like to be considered for a senior project should submit a written proposal by end of February of their senior year. Staff will then review the proposal and help the student come up with a firm plan.

The written proposal should include:

- Description of the project (one page on the project content)
- Assessment of qualification (in terms of showing you have or will have the credits to graduate)
- Explanation of how it will fulfill Link School Outcomes of some nature
- Length of time for the project & proposed dates
    - Project timeline for key components
- Budget for the project (up to $50/day is available from Link for senior projects – beyond $50/day the student will need to have a plan to cover).
- Presentation of Learning POL plan
- Communication plan once on the project
- Emergency & Evacuation plan developed with the staff mentor if the project is international

Block Courses:

Block courses fit into the overall academic program as enhancement. The instructors work with Link staff to accomplish established objectives and meet planned benchmarks. Whenever possible, block courses are project based and employ the PBL approach coordinated by James Orlet. Time blocks for these courses is often the afternoons but sometimes is all day.

Faculty and Adjunct Faculty List for 2015-2016

- Bobby Lewis – Link Director, cell: 719-395-7704,
  email: Bobby@TheLinkSchool.org

- Natalie Lewis – School Administrator, Instructor, cell: 719-395-7411,
  email: Natalie@TheLinkSchool.org

- James Orlet – Education Director, cell: 510-508-5608,
  email: James@TheLinkSchool.org

- Emily Wheeler – English and Field Writing Instructor, cell: 513-479-7830,
  email: Emily@ TheLinkSchool.org

- Bill Fabian – Social Studies/History Instructor, cell: 719-239-1617,
  email: marshallpoint@hotmail.com

- Megan Wills – Spanish Instructor, cell: 314-601-4520
  email: Megan@TheLinkSchool.org

- Bryan Reed – Math Instructor, cell: 360-461-0007,
  email: Bryan@TheLinkSchool.org

- Jon Bernhard – Science Instructor, Tutor, Program support, cell: 719-239-1301
  Jon@TheLinkSchool.org

- Portia Benson – Math Tutor, Bookkeeper, cell: 720-232-8312
  email: Portia@TheLinkSchool.org

- Jeff Strickland – Resident Assistant, Tutor, cell: 949-690-6300,
  email: Jeff@TheLinkSchool.org