

## Lopez Island Elementary School

Lopez Island Elementary School is a modest, yet focused facility dedicated to the children of the community. Located on Center Road in the middle of Lopez, the school provides a productive, comfortable environment for children to learn and grow in an important stage of life. This section showcases our elementary school: its tight-knit young community, schedule and classes, and enrichment courses.

Having a community is a having a strong backbone, regardless of the situation. One aspect I respect, and have found to be unique to Lopez Elementary, is our first through fifth grade community. Each day of the week the schedule holds a class titled “Homeroom,” a first through fifth grade class devoted to the bonding and well-being of elementary students. “Homeroom will be our time to catch our breath, build relationships, focus on learning to listen and have conversations with students older and younger, and build empathy,” said principal Lisa Shelby.

Our schedule also includes annual fourth and fifth grade trips: each year fourth graders take a trip to Olympia, while the fifth graders go to Islandwood, a beautiful, non-profit outdoor learning facility on Bainbridge Island, Washington. These trips unite classes and create strong bonds going into middle school.

Our elementary school has a practical, well-organized schedule planned with balance in mind. The morning schedule consists of three 80-minute academic blocks (language arts, math, and science/social studies) and a refreshing 30-minute Homeroom class, which I mentioned before. Our school believes in three mid-length, mindfully timed recesses each day on the energetic, south-facing playground; this releases students’ energy in a well-timed fashion. For the remainder of the day students have the choice of various enrichment courses.

Enrichment courses range from music, where students receive attentive lessons in percussion, marimba, and strings; to physical education, where Coach, Berg gets kids fired up. The Enrichment program includes; art, music, garden, P.E., and wellness courses. The recently brought back “wellness” course teaches students about health, nutrition, and both physical and mental balance.

Since my days in the elementary school things have only gotten better: new classes, all new garden facilities, even an awesome playgroup equipment upgrade including new swings; jungle gym, and covered basketball/recreational courts. Things look nice on the elementary side, nice enough to sneak over for a swing or fresh carrot when I can. I’ve found our elementary to be a positive and dedicated environment for the children of the island; and I can only watch as kids blossom and learn around me.