

Curriculum Night

Dear Fifth Grade Parents:

Our fifth graders are off to a fantastic start. We are excited about the possibilities for building a strong cooperative team of students and teachers as we prepare for the transition to sixth grade. We would like to highlight the curricular areas we will focus on this year.

- Science: The fifth grade science curriculum includes ~ LIFE SCIENCE: Human Senses; PHYSICAL SCIENCE: Electricity and Magnetism and Tools to Enhance Our Vision, and EARTH SCIENCE: Earth, Sun, and Moon. An inquiry-based approach to these units of study will be emphasized.
- Health: Health instruction includes the continuation of the Town wide nutrition unit “Heart”, health topics as they relate to the introductory unit on Human Growth and Development which includes lessons on Changes in Puberty and the Male and Female Reproductive Systems, as well as discussion of appropriate emotional and social issues for fifth grade students through the Second Step program.
- Social Studies: Citizenship, Geography, History, International issues, and recognition of religious holidays are all part of the social studies curriculum. Using maps, charts, tables and graphs help develop an understanding of natural and cultural features of the world. We study the colonization of North America, causes and effects of the Revolutionary War as well as fifth grade appropriate aspects of the ratification of the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the major branches of the government. In addition, our students will receive the periodical *National Geographic Explorers*, a rich resource of information from the fields of science, geography, technology, and history. We will continue to learn new vocabulary and practice comprehension strategies while we explore and enjoy this interesting informational text.
- Reading: Our fifth grade reading program includes *Story Town*, a research-based developmental reading and language arts program. This program is founded on children’s literature as well as informational texts. Included in this program is instruction in phonics, vocabulary, spelling, fluency, grammar, comprehension skills and strategies, and writing. Students will be introduced to strategies and skills through direct and small-group instruction. Guided practice as well as time for independent application of skills will be provided. Individual book choice and independent reading will always be encouraged.
- Spelling and Vocabulary: Our students will continue to strengthen word-building skills by spelling words accurately and by developing a spelling conscience. Phonetic rules will be reinforced and reviewed through the *Story Town* spelling program. Increasing vocabulary is pivotal to fifth grade reading comprehension and writing proficiency. The *Story Town* reading program includes a three-tiered

- approach to building vocabulary.
- Grammar: The ability to communicate with purpose, on a variety of topics to varied audiences, is an essential skill. We spend a great deal of time encouraging our students to orally express ideas through many avenues such as debates, class discussions, book reports, book talks, and project presentations.
 - Written Communication: Our students will further develop and refine expository writing skills this year. Emphasis will be on organizational structure, elaboration, use of sensory imagery, and writing with voice. We will practice prompt writing and analyze our pieces through direct and small group instruction. Students will write about a variety of topics in a journal. They will also have the opportunity to explore word choice and imagery by creating their own book of poems and illustrations. We will express our thinking processes as we write about problems we solve in math, share our “I wonders” in science, and our ideas in social studies.
 - Mathematics: This year students will receive math instruction that is based on the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. As children study mathematics, they must adhere to certain basic mathematical practices. Students will be able not only to find the correct answer to mathematical problems, but also to explain their process of reasoning verbally and in written form. Students must: make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure, and look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning. These mathematical practices will be employed as we explore units covering: Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Number and Operations with Fractions, Measurement and Data, as well as Geometry. Throughout the year, fifth graders will develop key fluencies resulting in multiplication of multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm.
 - Research and Technology: Our students love to visit the Media Center! The children have opportunities to use applications such as *Inspiration* for organizing information and *PowerPoint* for presentations. We also use a variety of software to meet the needs of our students. The *Internet* is used for research to support social studies, science, and book report projects. Learning *The Big Six Skills* helps us gather and organize information for research topics.
 - French: Our students participate in French class twice a week. Students continue to expand their knowledge of conversational French. We participate in activities for learning to read and write French accurately. In addition, students will study the culture and geography of the country. Homework and long-term projects support class work.
 - Progress Reports: Report cards are used three times a year to keep families aware of student progress. Grades for November’s report card are similar to the fourth

grade report card format. However, the report cards for the second and final terms add letter grades for expressing progress in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The home-school partnership is a valuable one. Conferences are the perfect time to discuss celebrations and concerns. However, if a concern arises during the school year, please contact the classroom teacher.

- Homework: Homework in fifth grade is a key part of the transition process. As we strive toward independence, students become responsible for recording their own assignments in their homework planners. Students will practice managing their time by completing short and long term assignments at home. Homework may include independent reading, instrumental and/or vocal practice, French review as well as classroom assignments. Students are encouraged to review the day's activities as part of our emphasis on study and organizational skills. In the case of illness, homework may be requested for students absent in excess of three days. It can be difficult to provide assignments in advance for families planning trips during days when school is in session. A Trip Journal is available upon request.
- Transition: Preparing students for a successful transition to sixth grade and Middle School is our goal! Work towards this goal begins in September and continues through the year. Students are given a variety of short and long-term assignments. They learn to balance nightly responsibilities with home schedules. Opportunities for listening to and following directions are built into daily work. Activities that encourage sequencing and following written directions are used throughout the year. A variety of study skills and organizational strategies are also taught and practiced. Our students *DO* become more responsible, independent workers, thinkers, and problem solvers.

Each teacher has a way of making the curriculum come alive using his or her own personal style as well as his or her own way of managing the classroom. Each fifth grade teacher will make sure particular expectations and responsibilities that relate to each individual fifth grade classroom are communicated.

Here's to a wonderful and exciting year!

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