A Parent's Guide to Curriculum

Fourth Grade

Bensenville School District 2
Mission Statement

The purpose of Bensenville Elementary School District 2 is to prepare each student for a world of opportunities as a responsible citizen.

The Primary Goal of District 2 is:
To have staff members who each and every day work to give children a foundation for success so that they may achieve academic excellence and reach their full potential as responsible citizens.

Strategies

1) Create a safe, trusting, secure and orderly school learning environment.
2) Achieve a greater understanding of each other and the world around us.
3) Teach children and adults to manage conflict in a responsible manner.
4) Build partnerships to unite schools, families, community members and businesses that create a community of life-long learners who support and take pride in District 2.
5) Establish recognition for all members of the learning community - students, parents, teachers, volunteers, staff members and community partners - so that excellence is recognized and rewarded.

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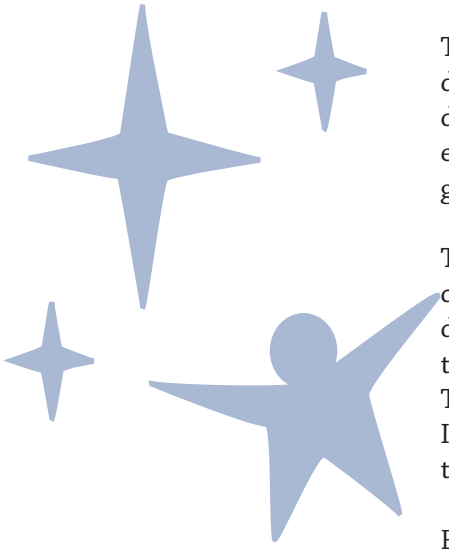
Program of Studies



The elementary faculty meets regularly to discuss important areas of student development. Our collaboration includes discussing what we teach, studying child development theory and practice, looking at how to build on the rich background established in our primary programs, and determining how our program meets the goals of District 2.

There are many important growth issues that must be addressed in the fourth grade classroom. Fourth grade is usually the time when students become aware of boy/girl differences and experience very strong feelings toward those they "like" and those they "dislike." Fourth graders are very concerned about issues of rules and fairness. They are also very occupied with questions related to friendship and their peer group. Interactions between fourth grade girls and boys become very complex because all these issues and concerns are constantly overlapping.

Fourth graders need to feel secure, confident, and comfortable with themselves. They must be able to negotiate, compromise, and mediate differences with their fellow students in acceptable ways. They have to learn to exercise appropriate emotional control when dealing with other students, teachers, or other adults. Because these concerns are so vital to fourth grade children, the fourth grade classroom must incorporate ways of helping children develop the social skills necessary to cope with all these social-emotional issues.

Fourth graders possess many distinctive and important cognitive skills. They have an irrepressible enthusiasm for learning. They are comfortable working independently or with others in small groups. They have the emotional maturity to take responsibility for their own learning: to try to do their best work, complete assignments on time, handle homework independently, and use their work time well. They are developing the ability to pursue projects on their own, gather and organize information they find, and present their findings in a clear and interesting way. Fourth graders are also expected to handle transitions from one subject to another without losing concentration. Fourth graders need classroom structure which will help them develop a sense of personal and social responsibility, refine their social skills, polish their work habits, and support their innate thirst for knowledge.

Fourth Grade Developmental Overview

As children move into the middle years of childhood, "there is a qualitative change in the way they organize their thinking, their feeling, and their social relating...they begin to construct a concrete world that conforms for the first time to the laws of nature, and they are interested in the limits and possibilities within that world" (1). This new-found ability coupled with "an evolving capacity to grant to themselves and to others a separate mind and a distinct point of view" has profound academic and social implications. (2)

An expanding view of the world continually brings into consideration more people and places, more time and more ideas. A child's success during this time can be measured, in part, by his/her ability to perceive "how they should function in these varied contexts (people, place, time, and idea) and some of the rules that govern these perceptions." (3)

Peer relationships take on an added dimension and are crucial to development. Friendships contribute to the development of social identity, the sharing of norms of social behavior, the practice of social skills and the establishment of social structures. (4) The inherent conflicts that arise enable peers to exchange different viewpoints, goals, and desires and then work together towards solutions. The success of this stage depends largely on a child's sense of competence and mastery regarding the tasks placed before him with respect to academic challenges, socialization and peer relationships.

1 Robert Keegan, In Over Our Heads, The Mental Demands of Modern Life. Harvard University Press, 1994.
2 Greenspan and Pollock, The Course of Life, Vol.III Middle and Late Childhood, International Universities, Inc., 1991.
3 Ibid.
4 Kevin Durkin, Developmental Social Psychology, 1995.

Curriculum Overview

Language Arts

The District 2 Language Arts program reflects the belief that literacy is a communication process that includes the academic areas of reading, writing, spelling, grammar, listening, speaking, and information processing. Program goals are based on the Illinois State Goals and Standards for Learning for Language Arts and the current best practices in the area of language arts.

The goal of the Fourth Grade Language Arts program is to develop high achieving students who exhibit the following literary behaviors*:

1. Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. Draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
2. Read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among the texts are fictional and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions, media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique and discuss print and nonprint texts.
4. Use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes and for the exchange of information.
5. Use a variety of technological and informational sources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

*Adapted from the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers' of English Standards for the English Language Arts.

Throughout fourth grade your child will spend his or her time building on the solid academic base established in the primary years. The following is a list of skills your child should master prior to their entrance into fifth grade. We highly encourage a continuation of skill development in these areas at home.

Reading

- Learn grade-level high-frequency words*
- Recognize word endings and classify words
- Use syllables to decode words
- Understand and use possessive nouns
- Identify schwa sound
- Understand basic figures of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb)
- Distinguish between synonyms and antonyms
- Understand that some words have multiple meanings
- Understand analogies
- Demonstrate an understanding of context clues
- Look up words alphabetically
- Understand the use of a glossary
- Locate information in a glossary, dictionary & thesaurus
- Use semantic word maps
- Use information to form questions ad verify predictions
- Make text-to-self and text-to-text connections
- Activate prior knowledge to make connections
- Identify realistic fiction, personal narratives, journal/diary, biography, mystery, essay, persuasive essay, research report and poetry
- Recognize miscues that are inconsistent with visual cues
- Apply reread strategies
- Utilize visual and context cues
- Answer questions asked prior to reading
- Utilize brainstorming and self-questioning techniques
- Utilize text features to determine importance
- Compare and contrast materials to clarify meaning
- Make and check predictions and inferences
- Cite word referents
- Identify characters, sequence of events, author's ideas, illustrator's ideas, cause and effect
- Utilize prior knowledge
- Utilize charts, tables, diagrams, headings, captions, pictures, maps and graphics to clarify meaning
- Extend ideas beyond the text
- Identify author's message and purpose
- Draw conclusions
- Compare and contrast two books with the same theme
- Compare and contrast setting, characters & plot
- Organize information using main ideas and supporting facts, sort information into categories and identify important information
- Differentiate one's own ideas from those in the text
- Summarize by identifying key elements
- Identify how illustrators use pictures to express ideas
- Use information presented in graphics to form opinions

- Interpret tables, maps and charts
- Apply appropriate strategies and skills to comprehend
- Answer questions using information from text
- Give and support an opinion
- Infer author's message, theme and purpose
- Identify plot beginning, middle, & ending
- Recognize setting, characters, problem, & resolution
- Locate and identify the table of contents, illustrations, picture captions, title page, author/illustrator page, and jacket information
- Describe and utilize rhythm
- Utilize reader's response writing techniques
- Relate characters, setting and plot to real-life
- Listen to a teacher read aloud from a variety of genre
- Identify and recommend a favorite book and author
- Develop strategies to select reading materials, read a variety of genre and select text based on personal interest
- Participate in book discussions
- Read student/class produced books

Writing, Spelling, Grammar

- Spell grade-level high-frequency words correctly
- Know and write telling, asking and exciting sentences
- Understand and use nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verbs
- Indent at the beginning of a paragraph
- Correctly capitalize book titles
- Recognize declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative sentences
- Develop legible cursive writing
- Use resources to correct spelling
- Write for a variety of purposes
- Recognize writing for information, writing that explains, writing that entertains and persuasive writing
- Utilize expository, narrative and persuasive writing
- Utilize idea maps and graphic organizers
- Write a story that includes a beginning, supporting details and re-statement of main ideas
- Write multiple expository/persuasive/narrative paragraphs
- Narrow in on one topic
- Utilize graphic organizers and transitions
- Establish central ideas, logical order, and chronological order
- Write letters
- Use basic components of the writing process
- Develop reading responses
- Create documents involving pictures and written work

Listening and Speaking

- Respond politely and appropriately
- Ask and answer questions and share opinions
- Differentiate between a statement and a question
- Ask what, when, where, why, how, could, should, and did when responding to questions
- Demonstrate understanding, sequence events and make predictions
- Listen for a variety of purposes
- Follow sequential, chronological and logical oral instructions
- Complete a 3-step task based on oral instructions
- Demonstrate the ability to stay on topic
- Stand independently and speak in complete sentences
- Actively participate in whole group, small group and one-on-one discussions

*Indicates skills that surpass state requirements
(*Standards Updated and Revised 7-14-2004*)

Mathematics

The District 2 mathematics program enables children in the elementary grades to learn more mathematical content and become life-long mathematical thinkers. The math program is aligned to the Illinois Standards for Learning and the National Council of teachers of Mathematic Standards.

The goal of the fourth Grade Math Curriculum is to develop high achieving students through:

1. High expectations for all students
2. Development of problem solving strategies and mathematical concepts built on a strong computational skill base
3. Emphasis given to establishing links from past experiences
4. Interaction and practice with concrete materials, pictures, verbal statements and symbolic arithmetic statements.
5. Balance among the mathematical strands of Numeration & Computation, Measurement, Algebra, Geometry, and Data Analysis & Probability.
6. Collaborative learning in partner and small group activities.

While in fourth grade students will solidify their foundation for future academic success. Throughout this year your child will spend his/her time beginning the development of many new skills, along with revisiting the long list of skills introduced in primary grades. While many skills will be introduced and developed, the following is a list of skills that you child should be secure in by the end of 4th Grade. Reinforcement and continuing development of these skills at home is highly encouraged and recommended.

Numeration and Computation

- Read and write numbers to millions and 2-digit decimals
- Order 4-digit numbers and decimals with up to 2 places
- Order fractions with unlike denominators up to twelfths
- Compare 6-digit numbers, decimals with up to 2 places and fractions with unlike denominators up to twelfths
- Count by 100s, 1,000s, and 10,000s
- Identify place value in numbers to millions, prime numbers through 50, the whole for fractions, fractional parts of a region and/or set and fractions and decimals on a number line
- Add multiples of 100, 4 or more multi-digit numbers and 1- and 2-digit decimals
- Subtract multiples of 100 and 5-digit numbers
- Identify the perfect square numbers through 49 and relate these to their respective prime factors
- Solve multiplication number stories
- Know Basic Facts - Division (0-12)
- Divide by 1-digit numbers (long division)
- Solve division number stories
- Use the inverse relationship of multiplication and division to compute and check results
- Count numbers smaller than zero
- Round whole numbers up to the 7th digit
- Estimate to check reasonableness of an answer

Measurement

- Measure to the nearest 1/4 inch
- Choose the appropriate scale to measure length
- Identify customary and metric units of length and weight
- Choose the appropriate unit of measure for time
- Convert US customary and linear metric measurements into larger or smaller units with a conversion chart
- Solve money number stories
- Make change (up to $100.00)
- Order objects by weight
- Estimate and compare distances
- Develop and use formulas to determine the area of squares, rectangles and triangles
- Find the area of regular shapes
- Create figures with a given perimeter

Algebra

- Write number sentences with missing factors
- Demonstrate equality of two expressions with variables
- Describe a pattern, verbally and symbolically, given a table of input/output numbers
- Solve open number sentences
- Explore number properties
- Create a table that describes a function rule for a single operation
- Apply the relationship of multiplication and division fact families to solve for an unknown quantity
- Solve problems with whole numbers using appropriate field properties
- Evaluate algebraic expressions for given values
- Write number sentences with missing addends
- Solve number sentences with missing factors

Geometry

- Identify, name, draw and label line segments, lines, rays and angles
- Identify and label radius and diameter of a circle
- Name and label triangles and quadrilaterals
- Draw quadrilaterals and polygons
- Investigate and predict the results of putting together and taking apart two- and three- dimensional shapes
- Identify, sketch, and build 2- and 3-dimensional shapes given attribute clues
- Identify perpendicular lines and line segments
- Draw parallel lines
- Model intersecting lines on a geo-board
- Identify and name intersecting lines, right, acute, obtuse, straight and reflex angles
- Relate turns to angles
- Make turns and fractions of turns
- Model clockwise and counterclockwise turns/rotations
- Identify lines of reflection
- Identify images resulting from translations (slides), reflections (flips), and rotations (turns)
- Read and plot ordered pairs of numbers in the positive quadrant of the Cartesian plane
- Identify 3-dimensional shapes and their characteristics
- Identify faces, edges, vertices, and bases of prisms and pyramids
- Compare polygons and non-polygons
- Classify quadrilaterals according to side and angle properties

Data Analysis & Probability

- Represent data using tables and graphs
- Represent data using a stem and leaf plot
- Read, interpret, infer, predict, draw conclusions and evaluate data from graphs, tables and maps
- Identify different representations of the same data
- Make predictions and justify conclusions based on data
- Collect data from a map and compare two sets of data
- Find and use the range and median
- Describe the probability of an event
- Explore fair and unfair games
- Calculate the probability of simple events
- Communicate and display results of probability events in order to make predications of future events
- Create, perform and record the results of a probability experiment

(*Standards Updated and Revised 5-24-2007*)

Science

The District 2 Science Curriculum is a student-centered program focusing on hands-on activities, ongoing assessment, and integration into other content areas expanding learning across the curriculum. The District's Science program is aligned to the Illinois State Standards for Learning and the National Science Teachers Association.

The goal of the Science program is to develop high achieving scientifically literate students who will:

1. Have an understanding of the process of scientific inquiry.
2. Understand the key concepts and principles of life, physical and earth sciences.
3. Recognize the relationship among science, technology, and society.
4. Become familiar with the reading skills necessary to decode and understand non-fiction reading.
5. Interpret and create graphics relevant to activities and text.
6. Have the ability to apply the scientific method to learn scientific concepts and vocabulary.
7. Investigate scientific principles as they apply to a contemporary technological society.

While in fourth grade students will begin to develop a solid scientific foundation for future academic success. Throughout this year your child will spend his/her time continuing the development of many concepts, of skills introduced in primary grades. During the month of March, every fourth grade student in the State of Illinois is required to take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in science. While many topics will be covered, the following highlights the main concepts that students should be secure in before entering fifth grade.

Life Science

- Plant and animal cells have similarities and differences, as do cells of all the kingdoms. Fossils attest to changes in organisms over time. In all ecosystems, matter cycles between living and nonliving things. Changes in ecosystems can be beneficial or harmful. Humans contribute to these changes, often causing problems.
- The basic structures of plants enable them to produce food and to reproduce. The wide varieties of plants have many differences in the way they carry out these basic life processes.
- Animals are grouped according to their shared characteristics, such as physical traits, how embryos develop, and the chemicals present in their cells.
- Backbones provide increased mobility and protection. Most animals without a backbone are limited to life in water or in living hosts.
- An animal's body consists of interacting organ systems that work together, coordinated by the nervous system.
- Body systems are part of the overall adaptation of an animal to its environment.

Physical

- Matter has observable properties. Matter exists in different states with particles that make up matter in different amounts of motion in each state.
- Matter is classified into elements and compounds. Mixtures are combinations of matter than can be separated by physical means. Elements are the basic substances that make up all matter.
- Forces affect the speed and direction of motion. Work is done when a force makes an object move. Energy is needed to do work.
- Electric charges can build up and discharge suddenly. They can also flow through circuits. Circuits require a complete path through which the charges can pass.

Earth Science

- Rocks and fossils provide clues about living things and processes of change. Minerals provide information on how rocks were formed. Fossils provide clues about life and the environments of the past.
- Earth's surface has been shaped over time into a variety of features. The surface is still being shaped, due to interior forces, weathering, and erosion.
- The motions of the Earth and moon, with respect to each other and the sun, produce patterns of apparent change.
- The planets and other objects of the solar system have unique characteristics.
- The sun is only one of billions of stars, which are a great distance far beyond the solar system.
- Water covers about 7% of Earth's surface. It can be found in different places on the surface and the atmosphere.
- Weather conditions include air pressure, temperature, humidity, wind (speed and direction), cloud cover and precipitation. Climate is a pattern of weather changes over a period of time.

(*Standards Updated and Revised 7-14-2004*)

Social Science

The District 2 social science curriculum is aligned to the Illinois State Goals and Standards for Learning and the National Council for Social Studies. The goal of the social science curriculum is to develop high achieving students who exhibit the ability to think critically and understand the following themes:

1. Political Systems- Through the study of various forms and levels of government and the documents and institutions

of the community, state and county, students will develop the skills and knowledge that they need to be contributing citizens.

2. Economy- People's lives are directly affected by the economies of cities, states, nations and the world. Students will understand that all people engage in economic activity including but not limited to: buying, selling, trading, producing, and consuming. With this knowledge students will be able to make more informed choices, use resources appropriately, and function as effective participants in the world economy around them.
3. History- Students who can examine and analyze the events of the past have a powerful tool for understanding the events of today and the future. They develop an understanding of how people, nations, and interactions have led to today's realities. As a result, they can better define their own roles as participating citizens.
4. Geography- Students must learn about and understand the world's physical features, how they blend with social systems and how they affect economies, politics, and human interaction. The combination of geographic facts and broad concepts provides a deeper understating of geography and its effects on individuals and societies.
5. Social Systems- There are two important aspects that help people understand their roles as individuals and members of society. The first aspect is culture consisting of language, literature, arts, and traditions of various groups of people. The second aspect is the interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

The scope and sequence is as follows:

4th Grade: Geography and Development of the U.S.

Rules

- Explain the significance of rules and responsibilities that students share within the school
- Predict consequences of people not acting reasonably
- Compare motivations for the behavior of an individual or a group

Citizenship and Government

- Explain the difference between citizenship by birth and naturalization
- Discuss the importance of living in a democracy and having certain freedoms
- List reasons for forming a government
- Summarize the functions of the 3 branches of government and their responsibilities
- Identify political symbols (bald eagle, statue of liberty, liberty bell, etc.)
- List the contributions of significant people in history

Voting and Laws

- Describe how a law is formed (process: bill to law)
- Explain how voters decide who to vote for
- Describe how candidates campaign
- Identify major political parties
- Identify important historical events that earned people the right to vote
- Discuss the foundation of the American political system

Economics & Regions

- Identify resources, products and services
- Explain how regions are industrial or agricultural and how they affect the U.S economy
- Identify human, natural and capital resources
- Explain how the use of technology has influenced our nation's economy
- Discuss cultural differences in various geographic regions of the U.S.
- Name at least two taxes students or adults pay
- Explain how the government use taxes
- Define "entrepreneur" and identify examples of entrepreneurs in the community, state or world
- Discuss differences between producers and consumers
- Describe historical trends using data supplied on a graph or a chart
- Describe the differences between a barter and monetary system
- Identify the division of labor in a simple production process
- Explain how wages and salaries act as an incentive
- Compare urban and rural communities
- Describe how importing and exporting of resources, goods and services influences the U.S. economy

Map Skills and Geography

- Locate other countries on a map
- Locate the principal parallels and meridians on maps • Distinguish the purpose of using certain types of maps
- Locate on maps major bodies of water and river systems in Illinois, U.S. and the world

Current Events

- Tell/talk about current events

(*Standards Updated and Revised 7-20-2005*)

Physical Development and Health

The District's Physical Development and Health program is based on the Illinois State Goals and Standards for Learning. The program is designed to develop in students the desire to acquire and maintain a strong and healthy body. The District believes effective human functioning depends upon optimum physical development and health. In District 2, physical education provides students with the knowledge and attitudes necessary to achieve healthful living throughout their lives and to acquire physical fitness, coordination and leisure skills.

The Physical Health and Development program in District 2 is one phase of the total educational program which enables students to safely develop physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally to their maximum capacity according to their individual abilities.

At the intermediate level, students meet three times each week to participate in a variety of physical activities. Emphasis is placed on safety, fitness, skill development, good sportsmanship, and active participation. The activities the students will be involved in include: individual sport skill development, team sport skill development, lead-up games e.g. kick ball, low-organized games e.g. freeze tag, basketball, floor hockey, stunts and tumbling, volleyball, rhythms, fitness activities, relays, soccer, flag football, softball, track and field, and jump rope activities.

Physical fitness testing is administered in the spring. The results will be sent to parents at the end of the school year.

(*Standards Updated and Revised 7-20-2005*)

Fine Arts

The District 2 Fine Arts program is based on the Illinois State Goals and Standards for Learning as well as the National Standards established by the Music Educators National Conference, the Illinois Music Educators Association, the Illinois Art Education Association, and the Illinois Theater Association.

The goals of the Fine Arts program are to develop high achieving students who will:

- understand the elements, processes, tools, and the unique qualities of the arts.
- demonstrate and apply the skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in the arts.
- recognize significant works in the arts and how they reflect various cultures and civilizations past and present.
- nurture talents and abilities that will continue throughout their lives.

The K-8 discipline-based curriculum is designed to build upon the knowledge, understanding, and skill development from the previous year(s). It contributes to creative development, self-discipline, critical thinking, and self-esteem of every child. Whenever possible, the arts are integrated into the other areas of learning.

Music

Elements: Students will continue the development of the following elements tempo: fast/slow; dynamics: loud/soft; patterns: rhythm/beat; direction: up/down; form: same/different while integrating age-appropriate reading skills.

Performance: may include playing the recorder, performing on pitched and non-pitched instruments, singing, and movement.

History and Culture: patriotic songs, holiday songs, composers, band and orchestral instruments.

Visual Art

Students at the intermediate level will expand on instruction offered at the primary grades by continuing to experiment with line, shape, color, value, texture, and pattern. Students will also expand on the materials and techniques used at the primary level to include sculpture and printmaking. Students will learn to express themselves through analysis and reflection on their own works of art. Whenever possible, art will be integrated into the whole school curriculum.

(*Standards Updated and Revised 7-20-2005*)

Library Media Centers

The purpose of the K-8 Library Media Center program is to support all areas of the curriculum by:

- providing students and staff members with quality print, electronic, and telecommunications resources and providing guided access and instruction in their use.
- assisting classroom teachers in planning and implementing expanded curriculum opportunities for identified gifted students.
- supporting and connecting with other community resources, e.g. the Bensenville Community Public Library.
- teaching students to select, evaluate, interpret, record, and organize information.
- supporting the development of life-long reading and learning in all students by exposing them to a variety of literature, authors, and illustrators.