



September 17, 2018

Dear Kindergarten Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Welcome to Kindergarten! This will be an important and exciting year for you and your child. Your child will be involved in a wide variety of engaging learning experiences that will nurture academic and social development. In AACPS, Differentiated Instruction is an initiative at all grade levels. Our classrooms are highly diverse and teachers plan strategically in order to meet the needs of ALL learners. Your child's instructional program will include the following elements:

Language Arts: Reading, writing, listening, and speaking: The Kindergarten Language Arts program is based on the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards for reading, writing, listening and speaking. Objectives related to reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, reading strategies, and reading comprehension are taught during both large group and differentiated small group sessions. A variety of texts are used to support the establishment of reading for beginning readers and expand the reading skills of children who enter kindergarten as more advanced readers. Kindergarten writing instruction focuses on the conventions of writing as well as writing to communicate by writing narrative, opinion and informational pieces. Children learn to use writing to communicate ideas by participating in shared writing experiences with their teacher and by writing throughout the day in small instructional groups or independently during workshop periods. Throughout each day, children are involved in listening to stories, songs and poems that expand oral language and in retelling and discussing what they have learned and comprehended. The progress of students toward literacy objectives is evaluated routinely through teacher observation and periodic assessments.

Mathematics: The Anne Arundel County Public Schools Kindergarten Mathematics Program is based on Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards for Mathematics and focuses on establishing and extending understanding related to number, quantity, addition, subtraction, geometry, and measurement. Students will participate in both large and small group instruction that will help them acquire and extend their understanding of mathematical concepts and improve their ability to apply their new understandings to real life situations. Additionally, there is an emphasis on the development of proficiency for all students related to the Standards for Mathematical Practice. The Standards for Mathematical Practice promote student efficacy in math while helping teachers to ensure that students see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile. Teachers will routinely assess student progress and differentiate instruction based on extending skills that have been learned, and improving skills that are not yet mastered.

Science and Social Studies: The Science and Social Studies learning block is designed to help realize a vision for education in the sciences, engineering and the social studies in which students actively engage in interdisciplinary applications and learning. Using the platform of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Social Studies C3 standards students develop questions and investigate inquiries as scientists, social scientists, environmentalists, engineers, and informed citizens. Throughout the learning block of Science and Social Studies students are encouraged to observe, collect and evaluate data and evidence to communicate conclusions and take informed action about topics being studied. All lessons are designed to investigate, study and answer a daily Exploration Question. Other MSDE Standards/lessons being addressed within the Science and Social Studies block are: Health, Guidance and Counseling, Financial Literacy, Environmental Literacy and the MSDE Primary Talent Development Lessons.

English Language Acquisition Program (ESOL): English Language Acquisition (ELA) classes comply with the requirements of Title III of ESSA. The goal of English Language Acquisition instruction is to enable English Learners to construct meaning from oral and written language, express complex ideas and information, as well as access instruction. In order to accomplish this goal, the ELA curriculum is based on WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards:

- Social and Instructional Language
- The Language of Language Arts
- The Language of Math

- The Language of Science
- The Language of Social Studies

While the ELA teacher is responsible for English Language Development according to the WIDA ELD standards, the Maryland State Standards for College and Career Readiness, as well as National and State Content Standards, are the context used for teaching the language. All students who have been identified as eligible to receive English Language Acquisition services will take WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, the annual assessment to measure English Language Proficiency.

Environmental Literacy: Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards are integrated into curriculum through engaging units that connect students with their local natural world. Anne Arundel County Public Schools provides authentic environmental learning experiences for all kindergarten students which focus on how trees are essential to our environment. As part of the early childhood and environmental literacy curriculum, students take part in a field experience to Camp Woodlands, an outdoor educational facility in Annapolis where they engage in hands-on learning about how "Trees are Terrific!"

Visual Arts: Anne Arundel County Public Schools provides pre-K through grade 5 students with a variety of experiences including drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture. Skills, concepts, and experiences are presented within a differentiated visual arts framework that exposes children to a variety of tools, techniques and master exemplars. Visual Arts classroom experiences tap heavily into brain-based learning strategies and 21st century skills. In addition, Common Core State Standards and Practices, Arts Integration and STEM practices are embedded in instruction. All factors combine to offer students in all grades a balanced, total program in a visual arts education.

Additionally, Health, Art, Music, Physical Education, Library Media and Technology activities are incorporated in the kindergarten curriculum.

We are looking forward to a year of learning for your child. If you desire additional information, please contact your child's teacher.

Sincerely,
Tracey L. Ahern
Principal

WRL/jlk