



September 17, 2018

Dear First Grade Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Welcome to First Grade! Students in grade one will participate in a variety of classroom experiences designed to foster their love of learning and help develop their academic, social and physical skills. The following is intended to be a brief overview of the comprehensive program that is offered in grade one.

Language Arts: First grade students continue to hone their reading skills by listening to and joining in the shared reading of big books. They learn the common letter-sound relationships and how to blend them into words during phonics instruction. Students practice their early reading skills using a published reading series and leveled books. They develop oral and written expression skills. Students write the letter-sound relationships they know by using them in words, sentences, messages, and their own stories. Students use language to respond to text-dependent questions, write to source, and engage in collaborative discussions about a text.

First grade students use basic punctuation and capitalization and apply knowledge of phonics to spell independently. Students acquire the skills needed to form manuscript letters and numerals. They prewrite, write a first draft, edit/proofread, and publish. By the end of first grade, students will have produced a variety of types of compositions including opinion, informative and narrative pieces.

Mathematics: The Anne Arundel County Public Schools Integrated Mathematics PreK-5 Program has implemented the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards through the new transdisciplinary curriculum. These standards are a set of high-quality academic goals which provide rigor, focus, and coherence to prepare our students to be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school. Instruction will include these mathematical domains:

- Number and Operations – Develop understanding of and relationships of addition and subtraction
- Measurement and Data
- Geometry
- Operations and Algebraic Thinking

The transdisciplinary curriculum includes number sense routines and problems to introduce daily lessons that engage students in the learning. Lessons are designed to be hands-on to develop conceptual understanding. Teachers will use a variety of resources such as *Teaching Student Centered Mathematics*, *Hands-On Standards*, *Mastering the Basic Facts*, *It Makes Sense!*, *Number Sense Routines*, web based resources such as Learn Zillion, and computer programs such as *FASTT Math*.

The Standards for Mathematical Practice encourage students to persevere when solving problems, explain their thinking, and use a variety of strategies to make sense of the mathematics they are learning. In addition, STEM connections are integrated throughout the curriculum as seen in our Artful Thinking routines.

Students will acquire mathematical concepts and be able to apply them to various real life situations. Periodic district checkpoint assessments will be administered to determine the mastery of these skills, along with the use of formative assessments and observations by the classroom teacher. Parents may assist in their child's success in mathematics by checking homework and communicating regularly with the classroom teacher. *FASTT Math* will be available to Grade 1 students in January, and the Stretch to Go Games are accessible from home.

Science and Social Studies: The Science and Social Studies learning block is designed to help realize a vision for education in sciences, engineering and 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.

Environmental Literacy: Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards are integrated into curriculum through engaging units that connect students with their local natural world. Students will be using the Monarch butterfly as a context for learning environmental issues, math, science, social studies and language arts. Students raise these amazing insects in the classroom and release them in the fall, learning about their lifecycle, migration, plant growth and how humans impact them. They will then care for their Monarch milkweed gardens in the spring.

English Language Acquisition Program (ESOL): English Language Acquisition (ELA) classes comply with the requirements of Title III of the ESSA Act. 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.

Technology: Students increase their creativity, communicate and collaborate with others and gather, evaluate and analyze information and data using computers. They solve problems and make decisions in a manner that demonstrates their understanding of the social, ethical, and human issues related to technology.

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

Sincerely,
Tracey L. Ahern
Principal

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