



September 17, 2018

Dear Fourth Grade Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Welcome to grade four! Students in fourth grade participate in a variety of classroom experiences to expand their love of learning and develop their academic, social and physical skills. The following descriptions present a brief overview of the comprehensive program.

Language Arts: Students in fourth grade continue to develop and expand their literacy skills in word knowledge, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, speaking, and listening by engaging in a variety of lessons and activities based on the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards and the Anne Arundel County Literacy Curriculum. Fourth graders independently demonstrate and apply a variety of reading strategies as they engage in fluent reading and comprehension of complex materials with literary and informational texts. They strive to construct meaning, monitor and check their own understanding, and engage in collaborative discussions of what they have read. Students are required to respond to text-dependent questions and write to source in all areas. Technology skills continue to develop during the fourth grade year. Students become more independent in using online resources and computer applications to support their learning in all curricular areas. As writers, they focus on opinion, informative, and narrative writing. Students learn to organize and develop complex ideas to compose pieces that include a variety of sentence structures, word choices, and language conventions to enhance their writing. Students continue to practice handwriting skills through writing.

Mathematics: Students develop mathematical thinking through the integration of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practice. These standards and practices require students to demonstrate skills and persevere when solving problems, explain their reasoning to others, choose appropriate mathematical tools, and be accurate with representations and explanations. The Standards for Mathematical Practices are incorporated into daily lessons and promoted through student discourse during lessons. The MCCR 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. The mathematical concepts taught in Grade 4 include:

- Number and Operations – Foundations of multi-digit multiplication and division
- Number and Operations - Fractions
- Operations and Algebraic Thinking
- Geometry
- Measurement and Data

A variety of resources are employed to teach the mathematical skills that include, but are not limited to, *Ready Common Core*, *Teaching Student Centered Mathematics*, *Mastering the Basic Facts*, *Number Talks*, *Hands-On Standards*, web based resources such as Learn Zillion, and computer programs such as *First In Math*. The computer program, *First in Math*, is designed to assist students with basic fact retention in an engaging manner.

Students will acquire mathematical concepts and be able to apply them to various real-life situations. District assessments are given in conjunction with frequent checks for understanding and teacher observation, to determine the mastery of these skills and practices. Parents may assist in their child's success in mathematics by checking homework and communicating regularly with the classroom teacher.

Social Studies: Through the study of Maryland, students apply the concepts of geography, economics, civics and history that they have learned in Grades 1-3. Students build their knowledge of their own communities by learning about the history and government of Maryland. Students continue to practice the skills of social studies by sequencing events, analyzing cause and effect, and analyzing perspective. They read primary sources, and are expected to read and write independently. They complete writing assignments and research projects. They also read and construct maps, charts, tables and graphs. The units studied are:

- Maryland: First Settlers
- Maryland: The Colony to State
- Changing Maryland
- Modern Maryland

Science: Through exploration of the Next Generation Science Standards curriculum, students engage in the process of scientific inquiry. They generate questions around real-world science phenomena, and develop investigations to find the answers to these questions. Students make measurements, collect data, and analyze information to find solutions to scientific problems. Patterns and relationships among the domains of science will be studied, and students learn to construct arguments in response to claims using evidence.

The topics are:

- Structure and Function of Organisms
- Use of Patterns in Transferring Information
- Interpreting Maps of Earth's Features
- Developing Models of Wavelength and Amplitude of Waves
- Weathering and Erosion
- Forms of Energy & Energy Transfer
- Effect of Fuels on the Environment
- Engineering Design

Environmental Literacy: Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards are integrated into curriculum through engaging units that connect students with their local natural world. Students will answer the question, how has human activity affected Maryland's living things? Students conduct investigations and collect data through their science curriculum and field experience at the school system's Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center to complete Project Based Learning action projects. Students come to Arlington Echo for a unique day or an overnight experience shared with parent volunteers. Depending on when students come to Arlington Echo, their focused topic relates to their science units. Students conduct background research on their topic, investigate and collect data at Arlington Echo, and analyze and take actions back at their school. They learn that when humans change environments, organisms are not always able to adapt and may not survive. With a particular focus on their local Chesapeake Bay environment, students learn and understand issues affecting the Bay and how they can make a difference.

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.

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 a year of learning for your fourth grader. If you desire additional information, please contact your child's teacher.

Sincerely,
Tracey L. Ahern
Principal

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