



# First Grade

## Grass Lake School

### 2019-2020 Classroom Information

#### Language Arts Instruction

Language Arts is comprised of students reading, writing, studying phonics and having meaningful conversations about various topics on a daily basis. Through whole group, small group, and individual learning, students will participate in a variety of daily activities in their classroom. There are opportunities for technology and digital media throughout the lessons. First graders will be working with a variety of literature, videos, and text pieces, and will be reading both fiction and nonfiction texts.

#### **Whole Group Reading:**

During whole group reading, students will be exposed to integrated cross-curricular units which put emphasis on speaking and listening skills. These units are meant to be engaging and fun for the students, and a wide variety of rich literature will be used as springboards for instruction. These whole group reading units address Common Core State Standards and integrate Science and Social Studies Standards and concepts to create meaningful learning experiences for first grade students.

#### **Phonics Instruction:**

This year we are beginning our first full year with our new phonics program called Reading Horizons. This phonics instruction will allow students to explicitly study phonemic awareness and phonics rules to help them better understand words and spelling rules. The interactive teaching and learning style of this program makes it fun and interesting for the students. We will study vowel sounds, consonant sounds, syllabication, and regular and irregular phonics rules. Increased phonics awareness will allow students to more easily decode text to increase reading comprehension. There is a digital student clubhouse where through learning activities they earn points to win fun challenges or items for their digital world. I can't wait to see the powerful impact direct word study will have on student progress.

#### **Guided Reading/Writing Groups:**

Guided Reading groups are an essential component of our literacy program. This small group reading instruction allows the teacher to instruct and support developing readers at their approximate reading level and provide additional work on specific skills. As the leveled text becomes easier for students and strategies are used more independently, the teacher can introduce increasingly difficult levels of text. Guided reading time is

spent reading texts, learning about reading strategies and skills, writing, and responding to the texts - all the components of whole group instruction but in a much smaller setting. We typically have groups three days per week, with multiple teachers and groups working all at the same time.

While learning about reading, we will discuss a variety of strategies. We encourage the children to use all word, context, and picture cues. When your child comes to a word they don't know at home, you might use some of the following prompts:

- *Can you sound it out? (Remember, many words do not follow phonics rules)*
- *How does the word begin? Can you think of a word that begins that way that makes sense? Now, look at the words and see if the letters match.*
- *Do you know part of the word?*
- *Go back to the beginning of the sentence and read it again. Do you know the word in context?*
- *Check your picture. Does it help you figure out the word?*

If your child is still struggling, tell your child the word and have him/her look at it and repeat the word. Then have your child reread the entire sentence correctly.

### **Writing:**

First grade will be writing every day. **Being a Writer** is the program we use for writing instruction. The curriculum uses anchor texts as great examples of writing skills, and then gives the students an opportunity to write using the same skills. The students will practice writing skills in whole group and small group during the week, and then will use the skills to complete a small projects or published written pieces. I will work with the students to develop their ideas, practice their conventions, and add details to their writing.

### **Journals:**

Students will have the opportunity to write in their own personal journals throughout the week. The journals are for enjoyment and practice; they are not graded or assessed for content.

## **Mathematics**

### **Model Math Curriculum:**

Our curriculum consists of Common Core Standards based math which is taught in

depth. We will be covering 6 mathematics units over the course of the year.

- Measurement, Counting and Data
- Addition and Subtraction within 10
- Addition and Subtraction within 20
- 2-Digit Place Value
- Addition and Subtraction within 100
- Geometry and Time

The lessons utilize many different modalities of learning, and are well differentiated for students at different levels. Some lessons use the Smartboard with digital presentations, while other lessons include games, and hands-on materials, helping students to gain understanding and mastery of the target skills. We also use other resources during our day to teach and use math across the curriculum.

## Science/ Social Studies

### **Pearson Interactive Science:**

Our science program implements the new Next Generation Science Standards. These standards have outlined the Big Ideas and concepts that are to be taught at each grade level. The first grade students will be learning about Patterns in Space, Light and Sound, and Plants and Animals. We will be studying these ideas throughout the school year, in correlation with our whole class reading units. In addition, we may have studies on seasonal or student-inspired topics.

### **Scholastic News:**

The Pre-K through third grade students use the Scholastic News magazine to help address the science and social studies topics popular in our grade. The weekly magazine addresses Common Core Standards for reading and speaking/listening, as well as the new Social Studies Standards and Science Standards. Scholastic News also has an online component in addition to the paper magazine which you will see come home. The students will enjoy using their Chromebooks for reviewing the magazines and videos at home or in the classroom.

### **Studies Weekly:**

This weekly magazine is aligned to the new National Social Studies Standards. Each week your child will be immersed in rich discussions about our country, our world, and our history. We study Citizenship, America, Explorers, and Maps. The Studies Weekly

program also incorporates Common Core Standards for Reading Informational Texts, Reading Foundational Skills, Writing, and Speaking and Listening Standards. It has many literature links and leveled readers to help stretch student interest. The online presentation includes many videos and questions to promote critical thinking skills.

**Calendar and Seasonal/Holiday Study:** We do daily calendar activities during the first part of our day. The students will complete many different activities which reinforce our reading and math concepts. We also address the seasons and holidays through calendar and various literature based activities on those topics.

## Handwriting

**Handwriting Without Tears:** We are using the **Handwriting Without Tears** program to aid in teaching appropriate printing skills. You will find a copy of appropriate formation of letters and numbers in this packet. These are reference sheets for your child to use at home. The sheets demonstrate the proper formation for all of the capital and lowercase letters, and numbers 1 through 10. It is also important for your writer to have correct pencil grip.

## Contact Me Any Time!

I welcome questions, concerns, or feedback any time. We can communicate through email, or I can meet with you in person after school any time! Please let me know of any concerns so I can help your child be happy and successful at school.

Please feel free to send a note or an email, or call my classroom phone. I cannot always answer the phone, but I try to check email frequently. I will try to always get back to you in a timely manner. On occasion, if I am not in the building for a training workshop, it may take me up to a full day to respond.

You can always call the office if you need to get a message to your student. Please always contact the office if you have an emergency or a transportation change for the same day.

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