

# Curriculum Night

## Wednesday, September 10, 2008

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### Reading/Writing

The 4<sup>th</sup> grade Houghton-Mifflin text series and three trade books will be used throughout the year for whole group reading instruction within our homerooms. A rotation between the Houghton-Mifflin units *American Stories*, *Problem Solvers*, and *Nature: Friend and Foe*, will alternate with the trade books Sarah, Plain and Tall, Because of Winn Dixie, and West-Side Kids.

Houghton Mifflin utilizes the balanced literacy approach and includes eight components:

- shared reading: the teacher reads the text with help from the class (choral)
- small group instruction: reading, phonics, and comprehension strategies are modeled and completed with small groups
- independent reading: students read independently at their instructional level
- independent writing
- writing workshop: teacher models strategies and techniques and students learn to develop their writing skills
- shared writing: teacher writes the text and shares the pen with the students
- write aloud: teacher models writing to the students
- read aloud: teacher reads stories to the class

Students will also receive small group instruction during writer's workshop and Rocket Reading (small group learning instruction). Students are placed in groups according to their reading levels and needs for guided reading.

# Spelling

**Mon:** Students are given the pre-test at school. A list is given to each child to take home to practice each day. Students were given a placement test the third week of school. Their score determined the number of words they will spell each week.

**Tues-Thurs:** Students should practice their spelling words each day at home.

**Fri:** Students are given the Post-test. Results are recorded and sent home.

## Ideas for practicing spelling words at home:

- spelling words on paper or aloud
- making a word-find
- playing games
- writing the words in sentences
- writing words in sand, sugar, or flour
- cutting letters out of a magazine or newspaper to form spelling words
- write a story using all spelling words
- create a letter code and write spelling words

# Homework

**Reading/spelling homework** is sent home each Monday in your student's purple Take Home folder. It is due on Thursday.

**Math homework** is sent home periodically throughout the week and is usually due the next day.

Occasionally, students will have **Social Studies or Science** homework; they are responsible for writing the due date at the top of the activity.

Students should spend a total of 30-40 minutes each day completing homework and/or reading "just right" books. If your student is not completing homework on a regular basis, then you will receive a notice at the end of the month. This should be signed and sent back to school.

# Math

Our school district uses Everyday Mathematics materials to help students reach grade-level goals. This is a research-based program designed to capitalize on student interest and maximize student learning. A typical math period includes the following:

- Mental Math and Reflexes: quick practice of math skills at three levels of difficulty
- Review Home Link (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)/Study Link (4<sup>th</sup> grade): discuss selected homework items
- Math Message: question that gets the students thinking about the day's concepts/skills
- Lesson: new concepts/skills are introduced
- Ongoing Learning and Practice: review skills through Math Boxes and partner games
- Assign Home Link/Study Link (on blue paper): reinforces the day's concepts/skills

At the beginning of each unit, we will send home a "Family Letter" that explains important ideas and vocabulary. It also includes an answer key for that unit's homework to help you assist your child. Students and families can access the Student Reference Book (SRB) and Everyday Math Games through the internet. Login/password information will be sent home with students within the next few weeks. Please check out these sites; they contain resources valuable for all students. The last lesson of each unit is a Progress Check. Part A contains topics taught for mastery; Part B contains more difficult topics introduced during the unit without the expectation of mastery.

## Third Grade Math

<b>Unit 1:</b> Routines, Review, and Assessment	<b>Unit 5:</b> Place Value in Whole Numbers and Decimals	<b>Unit 9:</b> Multiplication and Division
<b>Unit 2:</b> Adding and Subtracting Whole Numbers	<b>Unit 6:</b> Geometry	<b>Unit 10:</b> Measurement and Data
<b>Unit 3:</b> Linear Measures and Area	<b>Unit 7:</b> Multiplication and Division	<b>Unit 11:</b> Probability; Year-Long Projects, Revisited
<b>Unit 4:</b> Multiplication and Division	<b>Unit 8:</b> Fractions	

## Fourth Grade Math

<b>Unit 1:</b> Naming and Constructing Geometric Figures	<b>Unit 5:</b> Big Numbers, Estimation, and Computation	<b>Unit 9:</b> Fractions, Decimals, and Percents
<b>Unit 2:</b> Using Numbers and Organizing Data	<b>Unit 6:</b> Division; Map Reference Frames; Measures of Angles	<b>Unit 10:</b> Reflections and Symmetry
<b>Unit 3:</b> Multiplication and Division; Number Sentences and Algebra	<b>Unit 7:</b> Fractions and Their Uses; Chance and Probability	<b>Unit 11:</b> 3-D Shapes, Weight, Volume, and Capacity
<b>Unit 4:</b> Decimals and Their Uses	<b>Unit 8:</b> Perimeter and Area	<b>Unit 12:</b> Rates

# Science

Students will learn important science content and develop essential skills that include making predictions, testing ideas, recording observations and data, explaining results, and working cooperatively in a team.

- **Structures of Life**

Students develop an attitude of respect for life and gain experience with organisms, both plants and animals. They observe and record crayfish and Bess beetle structures and behaviors while observing the growth of hydroponic plants. Students also take responsibility for caring for the organisms and learning about their habitats.

- **Human Body**

Students discover how bones, joints, and muscles work together. They build skeletons, study their stimulus response systems, and see what it's like to perform routine tasks with certain joints immobilized.

- **Physics of Sound**

Students learn that sound originates from a vibrating source, that individual sounds can be discriminated and matched, and that sound can travel through solids, liquids, and gases. They also have experiences that help students see that the pitch of a sound is related to the physical properties of the sound source.

- **Water**

Students perform activities that look into this all-important substance necessary for life on Earth. Students observe water as a liquid and a solid, and investigate evaporation and condensation.

# Social Studies

*Social Studies Alive! Our Community and Beyond* broadens students' awareness about the local and global communities in which they live. They learn the basics of geography in order to locate communities on a globe as well as learn how to use a map. They learn about different cultures and how their contributions have been important to America. They also learn about public service roles and what it takes to make a community work cooperatively along with how to make a positive difference. Through activities such as forming human statues to commemorate contributions of community members, students solidify their grasp of the responsibilities within communities. Students fill out ideas and reflections in their Interactive Student notebooks following each lesson.

# Ways to Stay Green

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Consistent, carefully-planned classroom management maximizes instructional time and student achievement. Students begin each day with a GREEN card on the class chart.

From GREEN, students may move down to BLUE (reminder), YELLOW (loss of a recess), and RED (loss of a recess and student-written note home with parent signature requested). Up to five students in each class can move up to PURPLE cards, which stand for an exceptional day!

Students will record the color they received for the day on the date in their planner. Student expectations are phrased positively...

- Follow morning routine responsibly
- Bring your signed planner to school every day
- Have all required materials ready for class
- Turn homework in on time
- Follow teacher's directions cooperatively
- Raise your hand and wait to be called on
- Listen silently when someone is speaking
- Keep desk closed while someone is talking
- Follow the line procedure (voice off, face forward, hands to self)
- Stay in your seat during whole group instruction
- Use independent work time wisely
- Keep hands to self

## Six Pillars of Character

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**Trustworthiness   Respect   Responsibility   Fairness   Caring   Citizenship**

In order to keep students on the right track, Van Allen incorporates the Six Pillars of Character into daily lessons. These Six Pillars represent the behavior expectations for all students at Van Allen Elementary. In order to teach students these pillars, to enforce appropriate behavior, and to hold students responsible for their actions, classrooms discuss what each pillar means and how to demonstrate this behavior. Students may earn a Rocket Booster for displaying behavior that shows one of the six pillars.

**Thank you for everything you do to help your child experience success in school!**

**Team 3 Teachers**