

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

In fourth grade, students follow the language and literacy framework during Language Arts. This provides a structure to help students construct meaning in their lives through reading and writing. We use *Wonders*, by McGraw-Hill, as our core English-Language Arts program. Using a rich range of diverse print and digital media, *Wonders* provides the instructional support and materials to teach the rigor, intent, and depth of the new Pennsylvania Core Standards.

Skills that are taught in fourth grade include: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words; Read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension; Refer to details and examples in text to support what the text says explicitly and make inferences; Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in grade level text, including figurative language; Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text; Cite relevant details from text to support what the text says explicitly and make inferences. Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently; Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly; Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic; Write opinion pieces on topics or texts; Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely; Demonstrate a grade appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

The English Language Arts program in Wissahickon is an intensive exploration of oral, visual, and technological communication.

MATHEMATICS

Wissahickon Mathematics is a dynamic curriculum following the Common Core Standards edition of the *Everyday Math 4* program developed at the University of Chicago. Students in fourth grade are taught the following concepts: Use the four mathematical operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic up to 1000; understand fractions to show equivalence and ordering; connect decimal notation to fractions, and compare decimal fractions; develop and/or apply number theory concepts to find factors and multiples; classify two-dimensional figures by properties of their lines and angles; measure angles and use properties of adjacent angles to solve problems. To help develop students' mathematics fact competency, Wissahickon subscribes to *First in Math*, a web-based program that encourages students to practice basic mathematics facts while also honing their problem solving skills.

ENCORE SUBJECTS

Fourth grade students also study Health and Physical Education, Art, Music, and Library. Students attend these encore classes on a weekly basis. Encore teachers often get to know children during a student's entire elementary school tenure. Fourth graders who wish to begin instrumental instruction may play a string or band instrument. This musical instruction is also reflected on the progress report.

Encore subjects are graded on a four-level continuum of Exceeding, Meeting, Approaching, and Beginning. Students are graded in all three trimesters for Encore subjects.

Wissahickon School District



2017-18 Elementary Curriculum Information For Parents

GRADE 4 THIS YEAR

Fourth Grade is an exciting time for students. There are multiple learning opportunities offered throughout the school day with a strong emphasis on developing the whole child; academically, socially, and emotionally. We also provide recess before lunch as much of the current research states that when recess is held before lunch, students are less likely to waste food and classroom performance increases. The classroom schedules have been designed to create large, uninterrupted blocks of instructional time; in addition, the 30-minute "Practice, Intervention and Enrichment", known as PIE time, will allow for further differentiation and individualization of instruction for all students.

In order to achieve the goal to increase services for students, the K-5 schools will follow a 12-day rotation cycle for the special area classes (called "Encore"). Art, Music, Health and Physical Education, Library, and Guidance will not be on a specific day of the week. This alleviates the concern that classes on Mondays and Fridays were frequently missed due to holidays and in-services.

The 12-day rotation has been routine for classroom teachers for a few years now and they will post the schedules and keep families informed so as to minimize confusion. If you have any questions regarding your child's educational program, please contact your child's teacher for more information.

STANDARDS-BASED REPORTING

The Wissahickon School District follows a standards-based curriculum. Standards are specific learning goals designed to provide targets for all students. As a school district, Wissahickon is accountable for helping our students achieve proficiency on the Pennsylvania Core and Academic Standards. To that end, we use a K-5 standards-based progress reporting system that clearly defines students' academic responsibilities.

Standards represent the expected proficiency levels for all students. The Wissahickon K-5 report card places the focus on student performance. We gain a more realistic insight into students' capabilities through collected demonstrations, performances, and series of assessments that show evidence of work over time.

Although progress reports are important, they are only one part of a larger reporting system. We encourage parents to meet with their children's teachers during conferences and look for ongoing information in the form of classroom communications. To preview progress reports please visit www.wsdweb.org and under the *Departments* tab click on *Curriculum and Instruction*.

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is the state's method of measuring student proficiency in relation to academic standards. They are a once-a-year "snapshot" of student learning, at the elementary level, in grades 3-5. Within Wissahickon, teachers use ongoing assessments to develop appropriate feedback for students and design effective differentiated instruction to meet their needs. To learn more about the PA Standards, visit www.pdesas.org/standard/views

REPORTING AREAS

A standards-based progress report indicates a child's progress towards proficiency in the academic standards established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The progress report also communicates how well a student is progressing toward the defined year-end learning goal as set forth by specific grade level Standards.

In the following sections, each area of the progress report is described in terms that are aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards. Teachers use scoring guides and rubrics to assist in their assessment for each subject area.

QUALITIES OF A LEARNER

The first section of the progress report outlines the behaviors that directly impact a student's ability to learn; becoming a self-directed learner, a productive learner, a collaborative worker, and respectful citizen, are important life skills we want all students to develop. In the Qualities of a Learner Section, students are assessed on a three-level continuum as follows:

M: MEETS EXPECTATIONS: The student consistently and independently demonstrates grade level expectations for learning behaviors.

A: APPROACHING EXPECTATIONS: The student sometimes demonstrates grade level expectations for learning behaviors.

B: BELOW EXPECTATIONS: The student is not yet performing at grade level expectations for learning behaviors.

ACADEMIC SECTIONS OF THE PROGRESS REPORT

The following sections of the progress report cover the four major disciplines: Social Studies, Science, English Language Arts, and Mathematics. Progress report descriptors are drawn directly from the Pennsylvania Core and Academic Content Standards and are based upon established expectations for all students living in the Commonwealth.

Students are assessed on a four-level continuum as follows:

4: EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS: The student independently and consistently demonstrates a thorough understanding beyond the expectations for the grade level year-end Pennsylvania Core and Academic Standards. Student performance requires little to no teacher support and guidance.

3: MEETING EXPECTATIONS: The student demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the expectations for the grade level year-end Pennsylvania Core and Academic Standards. Student performance requires minimal teacher support and guidance.

2: APPROACHING EXPECTATIONS: The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the expectations for the grade level year-end Pennsylvania Core and Academic Standards. Student performance requires teacher support and guidance.

1: BEGINNING EXPECTATIONS: The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the expectations for the grade level year-end Pennsylvania Core and Academic Standards. Student performance is often inconsistent even with teacher support and guidance.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Students in fourth grade study the history, geography, economics, and civics and government throughout the five main regions of the United States as well as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Students will examine topics such as Exploring the US Regions: *The Southeast, The Northeast, the Midwest, The Southwest* and *the West*. A unit of study on Pennsylvania will also be explored. During Social Studies, students are involved in classroom discussions, simulations and explorations, literature selections, digital learning, as well as reading and writing assignments.

SCIENCE

Wissahickon fourth graders study a dynamic Science curriculum based on three hands-on kits: Electricity, Watery Earth, and Nature's Recyclers. During these explorations, students act as scientists following the scientific process, making hypotheses, and testing their conjectures. They revise their thinking based on experiments, collecting and organizing data, and then analyzing that data to develop new understandings. It is a dynamic program supplemented by both related literature and informational texts.