

THE 4TH GRADE STUDENT

The 4th grade year is one of exciting, new experiences and opportunities. Many children approach the year with trepidation, but quickly adapt as they become comfortable with being an intermediate student.

The 4th grade student is a child of contrasts, alternating between extreme optimism and deep disappointment. The children are eager to progress fast and can be disappointed when they don't get instant results.

The state of 4th graders is beautifully represented by the battles between the Israelites and their enemies as they struggled to conquer the Promised Land - alternating between confidence and despair. Like the children of Israel they gradually come to appreciate that they will only be successful if they are willing to put in a sustained effort. They vacillate between wanting to do a good job and becoming discouraged or even giving up.

To meet this state we give the children challenges that they can succeed in, by not putting the goal so far away that they give up. When 4th Graders say, "I don't get it," they often mean, "this is too difficult."

Socially the 4th Grader is developing fast and becoming more peer conscious. Many opportunities are provided to work with a partner, a small group or the whole class so they can practice these social skills stressing charity and respect for others.

COMMUNICATION

The success of a child's school year is directly related to the closeness between their two environments - home and school. We will communicate with you (1) formally at report times and October conference; (2) informally when anything unusual occurs, e.g. outstanding behavior or work; problems with behavior, social relations or academics, etc.

We hope parents will also communicate freely so that potential problems can be dealt with early rather than developing into larger ones. Email is a great way to communicate any time of day. We encourage parents to call between 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

CURRICULUM

We integrate as many courses as possible in our curriculum. This helps the children see the whole picture and their enthusiasm for one subject spreads to others. For example the history unit on the Middle Ages involves writing, reading, drama and art projects. The Polar Regions unit includes map work, reading, writing stories, making a mural or other art form, and leads into science units on light and heat.

Here is an outline of the main units taught in 4th grade:

Religion: The Land of Canaan, Joshua, Judges.

Mathematics: Rocket Math: memorizing multiplication math facts. Envision math program: extends skills in basic computation, fractions, decimals, estimation, beginning algebra, measurement, geometry, statistics and problem solving. Focus on understanding how numbers work and how we use them in our lives.

Geography: Continents, Oceans, Deserts, Polar Regions, Rain Forest, Australia and map skills.

History: Medieval Times and Vikings.

Science: Trees, seeds, mammals, sun, heat, light, digestion, and nutrition.

Reading: Students learn to read in the primary grades and that learning continues in fourth grade. Fourth grade is all about reading! We read a tremendous amount. Our goal is to nurture a love of reading and help students improve their reading skills and strategies. Many books are read aloud and students choose much of their own literature at their own level. We read a few novels and non-fiction books in class.

Reading Skills: Dictionary use, decoding, homophones, sequencing, fact and opinion, cause and effect, drawing conclusions, quotation marks, and following directions.

Handwriting: Fourth graders continue to write in cursive. They review how to form lowercase and capital letters in cursive and they use cursive whenever they write sentences and paragraphs.

Spelling: Our spelling program is multifaceted. The fourth grade portion of BACS core words (the most frequently used words in the English language) are reviewed. We also focus on spelling skills and patterns in spelling. We encourage children to pay attention to their spelling and attempt to spell correctly in their written work.

Writing skills: The Writing Process and 6 plus 1 traits of writing. Creative writing: stories and poems; organized paragraphs; topic, main idea, details, as well as reports: note-taking, first drafts, final copies. Written responses to reading and other questions.

Grammar: We familiarize the students with the vocabulary and some identifying the parts of speech in sentences.

Computer Skills: Keyboarding, completion of Type to Learn program, beginning word processing and PowerPoint. Computer assisted instruction in math, etc. Limited use of internet for research.

Speech and Listening: Play readings, drama, story readings, discussions, choral work, impromptu and rehearsed reports.

Independent Reading: Animal Stories, Biography, Mysteries, Poetry, Fantasy, Science, Fairy Tales, Factual, etc.

Art: Elements of art; line, value, color, texture, form and space in the context of art skills acquired through various applications.

Music: Rhythm, melody, harmony and pitch.

P.E.: Rhythm, dance, gymnastics, physical fitness, introduction to lead-up games for team sports.

HOMEWORK

Homework is given to:

- a. provide an opportunity for the student to develop responsible study habits, including time management.
- b. practice skills learned in class.
- c. make creative responses.
- d. provide extra reading time.

It is strongly recommended that each student has a study time at home for homework to develop good home study habits. They should plan to spend 40-45 minutes per night on homework, **including reading**. If your child is consistently spending more than 45 minutes on homework, please contact their teacher.

INDEPENDENT READING

The students are expected to read independently for a minimum of 15 minutes per night. This can be beneficial if done properly. Independent reading books should be chapter books that the student has not previously read. We have practiced with each child how to choose a “good fit” book that is just right for them.

Once a term, usually at the end of the term, each child will be expected to complete a book report on a book they have read independently.

Students are responsible for handing homework in before school in neat form. Failure to do this means the student will be required to do it during morning recess, unless they bring a note from a parent, in which case they will have 24 hours to hand it in. If the child had difficulty with the assignment, received significant help, or had a legitimate reason for not doing it, please send a note.

LIBRARY

Students are given brief units on using the library. They may use the library during or after school as arranged by the teacher. There is a charge of 5 cents a day for overdue books in the Intermediate Grades.

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

In 4th Grade the student is with the classroom teacher for the majority of the school day but also has the benefit of having specialist teachers for some subjects - Religion, Science, Art, Music, and PE. These teachers work closely with the homeroom teacher and also value communication with parents.

EVALUATION

Reports are sent home three times a year and involve effort, academic and behavior marks. The emphasis should be on the effort and behavior grades. Generally a good effort grade means that the student is achieving at his/her own potential. Grades are based on classroom performance as well as tests. Brief interim reports are sent home at mid-term. In addition, Cognitive Ability and Iowa Achievement Tests are administered each year.

Please note that fourth grade is the first year students receive grades. This can sometimes cause anxiety for students. We work hard with the children to help them understand grades and the grading system.

SNACK and RECESS

Every day at 10:00 the children have a 15 minute break when they can eat a snack that they have brought from home and enjoy some down time with their classmates.

ARRIVAL TIMES

Students should not arrive before 7:45 in the morning. Students should be in the classroom by 8:00 in the morning. Students who arrive after these times are marked late. They should pick up a pass from Mrs. Lambertus if they are late.

Absences: If your child is not in school you must phone the school office (215-947-4086) or send an email to **Natalie Lambertus** and your child's teacher. This is for your child's safety. Please send a written note or an email to the classroom teacher when your child returns explaining his/her absences.

Snow Number 411

BULLYING

BACS participates in a school wide program against bullying. There are four simple rules.

1. We will not bully.
2. We will help bullied students.
3. We will include students easily left out.
4. We will tell an adult at school and at home.

We will implement this in the classroom with class meetings and discussions.

We hope your children will have a happy year in 4th Grade as they continue to grow emotionally, socially, academically and physically as they take one more step toward a useful life in the natural world that will lead to Heaven.