



Darien Public Schools

Elementary Curriculum Overview



September 2011

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Open House! This evening you will meet your child's teacher and learn about the challenging, engaging educational program planned for this year. This brochure provides an overview of the philosophy and key components of each content area. It also presents general information about what will be taught during this important year in your child's education.

All current curriculum information is in the K-5 Parent Wiki on the Darien Public School website at www.darienps.org. Click on the *Parent Info* heading. You are encouraged to access this site for additional information.

On behalf of all of our professional staff, I wish you and your child a wonderful, productive school year.

Sincerely,

Judith Pandolfo

Judith Pandolfo, Ph.D.

Assistant Superintendent, Elementary

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Literacy

The goal of the K-5 Literacy Program is to nurture students to develop as readers and writers who practice their literacy skills with competence, ease, and joy. A comprehensive literacy model allows teachers to draw upon a range of research-based practices to adapt the learning environment, materials and methods to student needs.

- Students read and write for authentic purposes using "just right" materials in literacy-rich classrooms.
- Teachers get to know their students' abilities and needs and monitor their progress through on-going formal and informal assessments.
- A scope and sequence of literacy skills in reading, writing, and word study guide students' growth through the elementary grades.

To see the units of study in reading, writing and word study for your child's grade level, please visit the Darien website, Parent Info, K-5 Parent Wiki. www.darienps.org.



Mathematics

As with literacy, the goal of the K-5 Mathematics Program is to develop students as mathematicians with a strong knowledge about numbers and operations and the ability to apply them in real life situations. The program follows a constructivist model of instruction that builds on a child's knowledge base to create new conceptual understanding. **Growing With Math (GWM)** is the foundation program used to implement the Connecticut Grade Level Expectations for Math.

Mathematical concepts are taught in 4 areas of understanding that expand and deepen in each grade:

- **Algebraic Reasoning** with a focus on patterns & functions,
- **Numerical Reasoning** with a focus on numerical relationships,
- **Geometry and Measurement** with a focus on measurement of shapes and structures, and
- **Data and Probability** with a focus on data analysis.

To see the mathematics scope and sequence for your child's grade level, please visit the Darien website, Parent Info, K-5 Parent Wiki.

www.darienps.org.

Science-Health

The Darien Public Schools K-5 Science Curriculum is designed to guide students to develop age-appropriate scientific knowledge and skills through the investigation of authentic problems in real-world settings. Students take an active role in creating and testing hypotheses through scientific exploration using appropriate technology. The curriculum is student-centered, inquiry-based, and employs hands-on experimentation at all grade levels.

Grade Level Content Focal Points

- K** Properties of Matter, Life Cycles and Changes, Seasons and Weather, Shelters
 - 1st** Motion of Objects, Animals in Action, Life Cycle of the Butterfly, Measurement
 - 2nd** Solids, Liquids and Gases Nutrition, Cycle of Plants, Soil
 - 3rd** Chemical Testing, Adaptations, Rocks and Minerals, Conservation
 - 4th** Land and Water, Magnetism and Electricity, Force and Motion, Food Chains
 - 5th** Dynamics of Sound, Light Energy, Effects of Sun and Moon on Earth
- Visit the K-5 Parent Wiki for details.



Social Studies

The Darien K-5 Social Studies Program encourages students to examine and understand communities, from the local to the global, their various heritages, and the nature of citizenship within them. Social Studies instruction:

- Fosters individual/cultural identity;
- Examines forces that hold society together or pull it apart;
- Provides opportunities for participation in school/community;
- Addresses critical world issues;
- Prepares students to make decisions based on democratic principles;
- Teaches skills needed for citizen participation in public affairs.

Grade Level Content Focal Points

- K** Self and Others
 - 1st** Family and Local Community
 - 2nd** National Communities
 - 3rd** Global Communities
 - 4th** Connecticut and Regions of the United States
 - 5th** Discovery, Founding and Early Development of the U.S.
- Visit the K-5 Parent Wiki for details.

Art

The encouragement of original thought and creativity and the nurturing of skill development and self-confidence are central to art instruction and learning goals on the elementary level.

The curriculum for students in grades Kindergarten through Grade Five is designed as a sequential, standards-based visual arts education aligned with the developmental stages of young children. Visual arts classes K-5 meet one time a week for fifty minutes in the art room.



Music

The K-5 Music curriculum is based on the three artistic processes of creating, performing and responding to music and offers a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based music education to all students. Pitched and non-pitched classroom instruments, movement, singing and dance skills are an integral part of the general music curriculum.

Because of the importance of the inherent performance nature of music, General Music students will have the opportunity to participate in one public performance or program to demonstrate their musical skills each year. General Music classes meet two times per week.

Library-Media

Darien Public School adheres to the following standards as introduced by the American Library Association in 2007. Learners use skills, resources, and tools to:

- Develop a love and appreciation of literature
 - Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge
 - Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.
 - Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.
 - Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.
- Classes meet with the Librarian for 45 minutes weekly in the Library-Media Center.

Physical Education - PE

Darien K-5 students follow a well-planned program in PE. Each grade has its own emphasis that supports children's well-being over time. The standards for PE are:

- Physical Activity
- Human Movement
- Fitness
- Responsible Behavior
- Respect for Differences
- Benefits of Physical Activity

The K-5 curriculum emphasizes movement experiences to develop basic loco-motor, manipulative and physical skills. PE classes also provide modified games and sport activities and classes meet twice weekly.