

**GRADE 2**  
**CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**  
**2008-2009**

- **LANGUAGE ARTS**
- **MATHEMATICS**
- **SOCIAL STUDIES**
- **SCIENCE and HEALTH**
- **ART**
- **LEARNING RESOURCES and**
- **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
- **MUSIC**
- **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

September 2008

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Open House! This evening, you will have the opportunity to meet your child's teacher and learn about the challenging and engaging educational activities planned for this year. This Curriculum Overview has been prepared to provide you with general information about what will be taught during this important year in your child's education. Summaries of each subject area are included, and they will be supplemented by information from the classroom teacher.

In the Darien Public Schools, curriculum content and teaching methodology are continually reviewed. Each year, the Darien Board of Education establishes goals for instruction, as well as for other aspects of the school system. In the 2008-2009 Board of Education Goals, there are two that refer to curriculum (what and how we teach) and assessment (measurement of student learning). Goal # 1 states: "All students will have appropriate access to challenging and enriching instructional programming." Goal # 2 states: "All students will maximize their learning as measured by selected assessments."

With these goals providing over-arching direction, a systematic review of curriculum is in place. Over the past few years, revisions of language arts, health, and science have been completed. The proposed schedule for 2008-2009 elementary level curricula includes development of detailed units of study for the revised social studies curriculum and a review of mathematics to improve assessment and differentiation of instruction. All current curricula guides are posted on the district website: [www.darienps.org](http://www.darienps.org) under the heading of "Curriculum." You are encouraged to access this information regularly.

Sincerely,

*Judith Pandolfo*

Judith M. Pandolfo, Ph.D.  
Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education

## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

---

In accordance with students' developmental needs, Darien elementary staff members have organized a sequential language arts program that systematically develops reading, writing, and language competence in grades K through 5. This program is based on standards derived from the Connecticut Language Arts Framework, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the International Reading Association.

### **There are five goals of the K-5 Language Arts program. Students will:**

- develop the skills to read, write, listen, and view texts to construct meaning, gain knowledge, solve problems and respond thoughtfully to a variety of texts;
- write and speak English proficiently to communicate effectively;
- choose and apply strategies that enhance the fluent and proficient use of language arts;
- understand and appreciate texts from many literacy periods and cultures;
- develop a positive view of themselves as listeners, speakers, readers and writers;
- choose to listen, speak, read, and write for lifelong learning, work and enjoyment.

### **The teaching of language arts is a careful balance of a number of essential components. Among these are:**

- a stimulating classroom environment;
- the sharing of excellent literature read aloud to students across the curriculum;
- opportunities for shared reading, where students and teachers are all looking at a text together (e.g., big books, class sets of the same text, or text viewed on an overhead screen or PowerPoint);
- teacher modeling and explicit reading and writing strategy instruction ;
- direct instruction in the study of words (phonics, spelling, vocabulary);
- large blocks of time for students to engage in independent reading and writing to practice newly developing skills and strategies;
- opportunities to talk with teachers and students about what has been read or written;
- opportunities to write for many different purposes, in a variety of genres, and receive feedback;
- ongoing assessment, both formal and informal, that informs individual, small group, and whole class instruction.

## **GRADE 2**

Learning to read and write is a developmental process. Parents of second graders will observe different stages and rates of learning as children move from beginning to accomplished readers and writers. In second grade, children should be reading independently at home for at least 20 minutes daily. In addition, your child will benefit from being read aloud to daily and talking about books as well. Your child needs to see parents and teachers regularly model reading and writing skills and behaviors.

Second graders are using writing to communicate what they are thinking and feeling. Encourage your child to keep a notebook and write letters, notes and lists at home. Talk to your child about the content of his or her writing, and ask questions to help them clarify and elaborate upon their ideas. Proudly share and display your child's writing with others so he or she views writing as purposeful and authentic.

### **Reading Benchmarks (by the end of his/her second grade):**

#### **Word Analysis Skills:**

Teachers in grades K-2 are using the Fountas & Pinnell system for phonics and word study to provide more resources to accommodate the strengths and needs of individual students and their word study skills.

- Identify consonant and vowel sounds
- Recognize possessives, contractions, compound words, suffixes and prefixes

#### **Vocabulary Skills:**

- Increase sight word vocabulary
- Recognize synonyms, antonyms and homophones

## LANGUAGE ARTS – (continued)

### Comprehension Skills:

- Identify story topics, main ideas and details
- Make personal connections to texts
- Summarize, question, compare, predict, and recognize cause/effect in written texts
- Recognize different genres
- Identify author's purpose

### Independent Reading Skills:

- Self-select reading materials at an appropriate level
- Use a variety of strategies when reading
- Continue to build stamina in reading

### Writing Benchmarks (by the end of second grade):

- Follow the steps in the writing process with minimal support: pre-write, draft, revise, edit, publish, analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of written work
- Initiate and develop personal topics for writing
- Write to describe, express feelings, thoughts or opinions, respond to questions, record ideas or memories, organize and inform
- Develop logically sequenced stories with beginning, middle and end
- Follow friendly letter structure
- Write free verse and patterned poems
- Write complete sentences in legible printing with appropriate spacing between words
- Apply punctuation and capitalization rules when writing: period, question mark, exclamation mark, capitalized proper nouns and sentence beginnings

### Listening and Speaking Benchmarks (by the end of second grade):

- Speak clearly and audibly
- Use complete sentences to communicate
- Learn and use new vocabulary
- Listen for information and to follow directions

## **MATHEMATICS**

---

The K-5 Mathematics Curriculum Guide is based on the Connecticut K-12 Content Standards and standards established by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. It articulates specific learning objectives for each grade. These objectives are detailed in the scope and sequence of skills that is the foundation for instruction in math. The acquisition of these skills should be seen as a spiral staircase rather than a ladder; students make upward progress, but at the same time return again and again to the basics for review, reinforcement and further practice. Each grade's skills include, to some degree, those of previous grades. Important at all levels is the development of three important attitudes toward math: an understanding of the language of mathematics, enjoyment in the challenges of problem solving and confidence in mathematical reasoning.

The teaching of math is a complex process carried out through many different kinds of methods and strategies. Teachers introduce concepts and skills, provide opportunities for practice through whole group, small group and individualized instruction, monitor students' learning and adjust instruction accordingly. Teachers assess students' learning frequently and use the results of assessments to inform their instructional planning.

The standards, concepts and scope and sequence of skills are grouped into five strands of study. Each year, all students in grades K - 5 will study all of the five areas to ensure their full understanding of concepts in the K-5 Mathematics Curriculum Guide. The strands and components are listed as follows:

## MATHEMATICS (continued)

### 1. Number Sense and Operations

Understanding of numbers

- Ways of representing numbers
- Relationships among numbers and number systems
  
- Meaning of operations and how they relate to one another
- Ability to compute fluently and to make reasonable estimates

### 2. Algebra and Functions

Representation -the display of mathematical relationships in diagrams, drawings, graphs, symbols and tables

- Proportional reasoning - the ability to determine how objects vary in relation to one another
- Variable - the understanding of unknowns and creating methods for figuring their values
- Balance - the concept of equality among variable expressions
- Function - the relationship in which sets are linked by a rule
- Inductive and deductive reasoning – identifying patterns and extending them; seeing a pattern emerging from other given information
- Recognizing, analyzing, describing, extending and creating patterns
- Using patterns to describe mathematical and other real-world phenomena
- Sorting, classifying and ordering objects by size, number and other properties
- Analyzing how repeating and growing patterns are generated

### 3. Measurement

- Making and using measurement in both customary and metric units to approximate, measure and compute length, area, volume, mass, temperature, angle and time

### 4. Geometry

- Analyzing and using spatial relationships and basic concepts of geometry to construct, draw, describe and compare geometric models and their transformations
- Using geometric relationships and patterns to solve problems

### 5. Data Analysis and Probability

- Using basic concepts of probability and statistics to collect, organize, display and analyze data, simulate events and test hypotheses

In the revised curriculum guide, all five strands of skills have been organized into a taxonomy identical to that listed above in the overview. Under each level of understanding, the mathematics strands and specific objectives for each grade are listed.

Mathematics skills are taught through a variety of resources. The primary source for grades pre K-5 is the Growing with Mathematics program, which was adopted by the Darien Board of Education in May 2002 for use in all five of Darien's elementary schools. The program is organized around a series of sequentially presented math topics and regular assessments of student progress are conducted so that teachers may respond most effectively to students' instructional needs. Growing with Mathematics was selected because it successfully expresses all of the skills included in our scope and sequence, consistently provides students with opportunities for review, reinforcement and practice, incorporates high-quality literature in an integrated approach to math and offers a variety of enriching materials. Important at all levels is the development of three important attitudes toward math: an understanding of the language of mathematics, enjoyment in the challenges of problem-solving and confidence in mathematical reasoning.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

---

The Darien Social Studies curriculum for second grade aligns with the Connecticut State standards for social studies in the four key areas of history, civics and government, geography, and economics. Second graders study these key areas through a focus on neighborhoods. Students first learn some of the contrasting ways neighborhoods can be defined (size, geographical location, socio-economic composition, residential vs. commercial). They then identify common neighborhood needs (safety, adequate housing, sanitation, transportation, rules and laws) that tie residents together. Finally, they explore some of the differences among city, suburban and rural neighborhoods. Second graders are introduced to economics through discussions of needs and wants and how goods and services are provided in their local community. They continue to develop their geography map and globe skills studying the compass, grid lines, and specialized geographical vocabulary.

## **SCIENCE and HEALTH**

---

### **Science**

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 will take an active role in creating and testing hypotheses through scientific exploration using appropriate technology. This curriculum is student-centered, inquiry-based, and employs hands-on experimentation at all grade levels.

There are eleven units of study that are the foundation for the Darien K-5 Science Curriculum.

- I. Inquiry
- II. Properties of Matter
- III. Energy Transfer and Transformation
- IV. Forces and Motion
- V. Matter and Energy in Ecosystems
- VI. Structure and Function
- VII. Heredity and Evolution
- VIII. The Changing Earth
- IX. Energy in the Earth's Systems
- X. Earth in the Solar System
- XI. Science and Technology

### **Grade 2 Science**

#### **I. Properties of Matter**

Materials can be classified as solid, liquid or gas based on their observable properties.

#### **II. Structure and Function**

Plants change their forms as part of their life cycles.

#### **III. The Changing Earth**

Earth materials have varied physical properties that make them useful in different ways.

#### **IV. Science and Technology in Society**

Human beings, like all other living things, have special nutritional needs for survival.

### **Health**

New health curriculum for grades K-12 was approved by the Board of Education this past April after extensive study and a successful pilot program. The program entitled Health Promotion Waves fits extremely well with health at each grade level. The curriculum follows the State of Connecticut and national guidelines. The program focuses on children making age appropriate choices that affect their health and well being.

The grade two Health Education program focuses on a variety of topics, including human emotions, nutrition and safety, skeletal systems, muscles, and circulatory system. As mandated by the State of Connecticut, developmentally appropriate education about the dangers of substance abuse and communicable diseases such as AIDS are integrated into the health curriculum. One emphasis of the health curriculum is on the development of a strong self-image that supports emotional well-being and protects students from poor decision-making in the future.

## **ART**

---

In addition to teaching art as a means of self expression, the second grade curriculum integrates art and other subject areas. Students use past experiences to create works from observation and from their imaginations. Artwork begins to display a higher level of awareness of principles of art such as balance, symmetry, positive and negative space, etc.

### **Goals:**

#### **Learning Through Perception**

Students continue growth in their understanding of their environment as they select parts of the environment with which they identify for subject matter. Artwork continues to grow in sophistication as students observe and express their subjective relationship to various objects and people within their world.

#### **Criticizing and Judging Art**

The process of observing and discussing works by masters of art continues. Efforts are made to relate aspects of great works of art to what students are doing in the art classroom. Students continue to develop their critical “eyes” as they attempt to understand and appreciate great works of art. Instruction strives to make students aware of principals and standards (rather than personal opinions only) to define quality.

#### **Building Productive Artistic Abilities**

Students define and solve artistic problems creating works that use design elements organized according to design principles.

#### **Learning to Use Art Tools and Materials**

Students continue to be introduced to various art tools and materials. They are instructed on the care of these materials and are encouraged to use them in a proper fashion.

#### **Learning About Artists and Artwork**

To familiarize students with various styles, different artists and their works are introduced. Students are encouraged to utilize what they learn by looking at famous artworks in the production of their own work.

#### **Learning the Language of Art**

Students continue to discover and use vocabulary terms relevant to art to communicate their understanding of art elements, principles and media.

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of color mixing, i.e. using primary colors to create secondary and tertiary colors
- Demonstrate more advanced problem solving skills in composition by effective arrangement of art elements
- Understand how the environment influences artists
- Consider art as a valuable means of communication
- Begin to understand how art is involved in other areas of life
- Articulate verbally or in written form the meaning of their art

## **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

---

The grade two computer education program was designed to provide enrichment and support for the regular curriculum within the academic day. The instructional technology program consists of four learning standards. Each standard includes related skills that span Grades K-12. The italicized information is the standard that guides the K-12 approach to the effective use of instructional technology. Below the italicized statement is the developmental objective for grade two students.

- 1. Basic Skills and Operations:** *Students demonstrate a sound understanding of the nature and operation of technology systems*
  - At grade two, students will use a variety of media, multi-media and technologies for directed and independent learning activities and will discuss the common uses, advantages and disadvantages of technology.
- 2. Social, Ethical and Human Issues:** *Students understand the ethical, cultural and societal issues related to technology; students practice responsible use of technology systems, information and software; students develop positive attitudes toward technology use that support lifelong learning, collaboration, personal pursuits and productivity*
  - At grade two, students will use treat hardware and software with care and will demonstrate positive social behaviors when using technology.
- 3. Technology Productivity and Communication Tools:** *Students will use a variety of media and formats to collaborate, publish and interact with peers, experts and other audiences.*
  - At grade two, students will use a variety of media for problem solving, communication and illustration of thoughts and ideas.
- 4. Technology Resource Tools:** *Students select and use specific technology tools to accomplish specific purposes.*
  - At grade two, students will use simple menus to locate information.

## **LEARNING RESOURCES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (LIBRARY-MEDIA)**

---

The “LRIT” program consists of eight learning standards. Each standard includes related skills that span Grades K-12. The italicized information is the standard that guides the K-12 approach to the effective use of learning resources and information technology. Below the italicized statement is the developmental objective for grade two students.

- 1. Defining Information Needs:** *Students will clearly define information needs and identify effective actions needed for research, problem solving and pursuing personal interests.*
  - At grade two, students understand the concept of “key words” and identify, locate and use appropriate print, non-print and electronic resources with assistance.
- 2. Information Systems:** *Students understand and utilize the systematic organization of resources.*
  - Students will understand the purpose of on-line catalog of resources and demonstrate knowledge of various areas of the library-media center.
- 3. Information Strategies:** *Students will effectively use information skills and strategies to find information, solve problems and pursue personal interests.*
  - At grade two, students will understand that different media have different characteristics, qualities and uses and demonstrate an awareness of resources outside of school such as libraries, museums, and nature centers.
- 4. Information Processing:** *Students will evaluate information critically and competently.*
  - At grade two, students will use simple and specific evaluative criteria to select materials of interest.

## LIBRARY/MEDIA – (continued)

5. **Application:** *Students will use appropriate techniques to effectively communicate ideas, information or conclusions.*
  - At grade two, students will recognize keys on keyboard.
6. **Evaluation:** *Students will reflect upon and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of their own performance.*
  - At grade two, students will assess their use of time in completing tasks, with assistance, assess the relevance of information found based on usefulness and completeness, and assess effectiveness of presentation or product.
7. **Responsible Information Use:** *Students will use information resources responsibly, legally and ethically.*
  - At grade two, students will identify title page information.
8. **Appreciation of Literature:** *Students will read and appreciate various forms of literature.*
  - At grade two, students will identify their favorite authors and titles of their works.

The implementation of standards and skills is a joint effort between the library-media specialist and the classroom teacher. In teaching library-media skills, a spiraled approach is used, similar to that used in language arts and mathematics. After students master a skill at a basic level, this skill continues to be taught or reviewed in subsequent grades at a more advanced level.

---

## MUSIC

---

The study of music on the elementary school level is critical for the development of potential musical aptitude and lifelong learning skills in music.

The Elementary Music curriculum in the Darien Public Schools is based on the three artistic processes of creating, performing and responding to music and is designed to offer a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based music education to all students in kindergarten through grade five.

Pitched and non-pitched classroom instruments, movement, singing and dance skills are an integral part of the general music curriculum. Recorders are introduced to third grade students as a tool to reinforce and develop musicianship during the second semester of the third grade.

Because of the importance of the inherent performance nature of music, General Music students will have the opportunity to participate in one performance or program to demonstrate their musical skills each year. General Music classes meet two times per week and are within the recommended state guidelines for the elementary general music time allotment.

Every elementary school in Darien has a school chorus that is open to all interested fourth and fifth grade students. Students at the elementary level have an opportunity to study a string instrument beginning in grade three and a wind or percussion instrument in grades four or five. Chorus, Band and Orchestra rehearsals meet one time per week for 45 minutes outside of the normal school hours and instrumental lessons are given during the school day in small homogeneous groupings. All Band, Chorus and Orchestra students participate in a formal winter and spring concert performance each year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

---

The students in the Darien elementary schools follow a well-planned program in Physical Education. Each grade level has its own particular emphasis and contributes to the child's well being in a slightly different way. The elementary curriculum emphasizes movement experiences designed to develop basic locomotor, manipulative and physical skills. The program also provides modified games and sport activities that are designed to accommodate the physical and emotional level of the students. Darien High school hosts a volleyball jamboree each year for the 4th grade students as the capstone to that activity. The intramural program at each elementary school is also very popular with sessions offered before and/or after school

Connecticut's K-12 Content Standards for physical education are as follows.

**1. Physical Activity**

*Students will become competent in a variety of physical activities and proficient in a few physical activities.*

**2. Human Movement**

*Students will understand and apply principles of human movement to the learning and development of motor skills.*

**3. Fitness**

*Students will use fitness concepts to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity.*

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION (continued)**

**4. Responsible Behavior**

*Students will exhibit responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings.*

**5. Respect for Differences**

*Students will exhibit an understanding of and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.*

**6. Benefits of Physical Activity**

*Students will identify and understand how physical activity provides personal enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction.*