



STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

FIRST GRADE

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It is my sincere hope that you will find this program overview helpful in understanding the curriculum and areas of emphasis of your child's grade level. While it is impossible to capture all the "richness" that goes into the daily education of our students, the overviews are designed to introduce the basic concepts and content standards.

The most important experiences are those that provide the opportunity to grow and be challenged. Many processes related to critical thinking and problem solving that are vital to student success happen every day. Another important aspect to our program is to continually evaluate, assess and improve the quality of the programs in the district. To that end, these program overviews have been reviewed and upgraded by teacher representatives in the district.

Our partnership with the parents of our district is paramount to the establishment of a desirable overall goal of success for every child. We will continue to maintain high expectations for our students and ourselves and we look forward to continued collaboration in the learning process of our students.

Thomas J. Lohwasser, Ed.D

OVERVIEW FOR FIRST GRADE

This is a very important school year for your child. To a large extent, your child's response to school in the years ahead will depend upon his/her first grade experiences and training. On the next pages you will find highlighted major objectives for each subject in the first grade curriculum. We hope this will give you a clear picture of the program we will follow.

This pamphlet reflects the average expectancy at this grade level. Due to the range of abilities and motivation among students, there will be some who will exceed these expectations and others who will not be able to achieve all of them. Individual needs will be met through enrichment and remediation in all curriculum areas.

Although we've isolated each subject area to describe essential components in our classrooms, learning often takes place through hands-on activities, cooperative learning, and theme-based approaches which integrate many subjects. Technology is used as a tool to reinforce and motivate learning.

Uppermost on our list of goals is the desire to instill in each youngster a love of learning and positive attitude toward school. An optimal educational experience can be provided for your child if we all -- parents, teachers, and administrators -- work closely together.

THE FIRST GRADE CHILD

Every child is an individual who grows and develops at his/her own rate. Children in the same grade may differ widely from others in their group. There are, however, general characteristics and needs which apply to most children in first grade.

The First Grade Child May Be:

- Establishing tentative independence as an individual, which may include a new-found reluctance to share events of the school day with parents
- Tired or irritable while making the adjustment to a longer school day
- Excited about learning
- Impulsive, with periods of laughter and tears or periods of deep thinking and inattention
- Active: climbing, running, wrestling
- Participating in the enjoyment of imaginative play
- Forgetful of personal belongings

The First Grade Child Needs:

- A sense of security and a feeling of being loved and accepted no matter what
- Generous praise and encouragement and selective criticism of errors
- Opportunities to demonstrate abilities and to talk about interests
- Broadening experiences that encourage and satisfy growing interests
- A sense of self which may be reflected in collections, possessions and sharing experiences
- Nutritious balanced meals with healthy snacks
- Opportunities and encouragement to develop friendships

Parents Can Help By:

- Promoting general health and development, including daily active exercise, and regular examinations by doctor and dentist
- Providing encouragement and support and a regular study time as well as assisting in the child's everyday learning process
- Monitoring time devoted to TV, video, and other passive entertainment
- Asking about, listening to, and discussing the school day with your child each day
- Reading to your child every day
- Listening to your child read to you every day
- Monitoring your child's homework and progress
- Keeping abreast of the day-to-day school program and activities
- Teaching the child basic health and life skills (i.e., "911", tying shoes, address/telephone numbers, care of library books, washing hands after toileting and before eating, etc.)
- Addressing basic safety issues, (i.e, strangers, medicines, etc.)
- Choosing age-appropriate limits, consequences, and rewards
- Encouraging and supporting your child's independence (having your child enter the classroom alone, turn in homework, hang up his/her own coat, give the teacher notes from home, etc.)
- Ensuring that your child gets 10 or more hours of sleep each night
- Providing a nutritious breakfast and lunch with healthy snacks
- Having your child arrive at school on time and having regular attendance
- Planning vacations when school is not in session

The new CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS for Language Arts, Mathematics, History/Social Science, and Science can be found on the Internet:
www.cde.ca.gov
or at the Dixie School District Administration Office.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Language Arts Program encourages the integration and balance of listening, speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking and the learning of language skills in meaningful context. Oral and silent "reading" are a part of the daily program.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

First graders use language to develop skills in both listening and speaking by:

- describing and relating experiences and ideas
- listening to, giving, and following directions
- listening and speaking to other children and adults to gain information and exchange ideas

READING

First grade students learn a variety of strategies to decode words and derive meaning from the printed page

- Phonics (sounds that letters or combinations of letters make) to identify unfamiliar words
- Building a vocabulary of sight words (common words which must be memorized because they do not follow phonics rules)
- Pictures and context clues to help figure out the meaning of words
- Applying personal experiences to make connections to literature
- Developing an appreciation for good literature

WRITING

First grade writers begin to express themselves in writing by:

- Understanding that words make up sentences and sentences have meaning
- Using basic writing mechanics, e.g., punctuation, capitalization, etc.
- Exploring a variety of purposes for writing
- Using phonetic spelling (which encourages children to express their ideas without confining them to the words they can spell)
- Transitioning to conventional spelling
- Using D'Nealian manuscript to write legibly

MATHEMATICS

In first grade, the thinking theme is "Quantifying" (or *How much? How many?*) as students explore more and better ways of counting. They use addition and subtraction equations. They also learn more about how our number system works and how numbers and quantities relate to one another.

By the end of first grade, students understand and use the concept of "ones" and "tens" in the place value number system. They add and subtract small numbers with ease. They measure with simple units and locate objects in space. They describe data and analyze and solve simple problem situations.

HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE

Social Studies in first grade is integrated throughout the curriculum. The classroom serves as a microcosm of society in which decisions are made for rules by which we live. Fair play, good sportsmanship and respect for the rights and opinion of others are emphasized. First grade Social Studies concepts include:

- Understanding of good citizenship
- Comparing and contrasting people and places
- An examination of simple maps
- An understanding that places and things change over time.

- Cultural diversity is introduced
- An understanding and appreciation of the local neighborhood

The focus of the curriculum in first grade evolves around the child “me,” moving out towards the child’s family, the child’s community and the greater world around them. Civic values, democracy and cultural diversity are introduced.

Our Social Studies curriculum reflects the California State Adopted Social Studies Framework.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH

The Science Program encourages students to experience, explore, ask questions and draw conclusions.

First grade students develop scientific thinking processes in:

- Beginning organizing skills (putting things in order).
- Observing (using the senses to get information).
- Communicating (talking, drawing, demonstrating).
- Comparing (similarities and differences).

The specific units of study in first grade are as follows:

EARTH SCIENCE:

Sun, water and air cause changes in weather. Weather can be observed, measured, and described. Students will learn how to use simple tools (e.g., thermometer, wind vane) to measure weather conditions and record changes from day to day and across the seasons.

LIFE SCIENCE:

Plants and animals meet their needs in different ways. Students will learn that different animals and plants inhabit different environments. An environment provides an animal or plant its basic needs. Animals and plants have adaptations that help them to survive in different habitats.

PHYSICAL SCIENCE:

Materials come in different forms (states), including solids, liquids, and gases. Students will learn the three states of matter have different properties and properties can change when substances are mixed, cooled or heated.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE:

People are dependent on the Earth’s dynamic natural systems and can participate in responsible actions to enhance or protect the quality of their lives. Recycle, Reduce, Reuse.

- We show our respect for living things by caring for them and their surroundings.

The health concepts focus on feelings, friends and family, growing and learning, food and nutrition, keeping healthy, exercise and fitness, community health workers, safety at home and school, and taking care of our neighborhood. The health program also includes at least three hours per year of Substance Abuse Prevention education (drugs, alcohol, and tobacco) which focuses on making healthy choices and developing refusal skills.

The District Code of Conduct

- Be Safe.
- Be Responsible.
- Be Respectful.

The Physical Education Fitness Program for primary children is based upon learning the fundamentals of movement and building a foundation for physical fitness. The program helps children to:

- Develop cooperation and good sportsmanship skills.
- Develop physical abilities and fitness through running, jumping, skipping, climbing, playground games, rhythmic movements, etc.
- Use playground equipment properly and safely.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art, music, drama, and dance are integrated into the curriculum through a variety of art and craft mediums, including simple dances, dramatized literary selections, singing in a group, viewing theatrical events and multi-cultural performances, using rhythm and movement, and learning art appreciation and skills.

Visual and Performing Arts instruction is supplemented by grants through the Council of Music and Art and through Dixie Children’s Fund and PTA fund-raising activities.

HOMEWORK

Homework is defined as an assigned activity that is primarily accomplished outside of regular class time. Such work shall be appropriate to the grade level, subject matters, and instructional objective(s); in general, the amount of time spent on homework shall increase as the student progresses through the grades.

Purpose and benefits of homework can include:

1. Extend or make more meaningful concepts introduced at school.
2. Engage students in purposeful practice relevant to their learning.
3. Develop effective study habits.
4. Develop independent learning skills.

Each school follows the District Administrative Regulations and Policy as well as follows the site specific Homework Guidelines.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

Open communication between parents and teacher is essential to each child’s educational and developmental progress.

- A parent-teacher conference is held in October/November and will include a progress report card. Mid-trimester Progress Reports are also issued in January and May. Standards-based report cards are issued in December, March and June.
- Teachers communicate with parents so they can stay informed about what the class is learning and their child’s individual progress.
- Teachers will contact the parents on an individual basis as need arises.

Parents are encouraged to send a note, phone the teacher at school, or make an appointment for a conference, whenever they have a concern, and to let the teacher know about significant changes or events (new glasses, loss of a pet, family emergency, change in living arrangements, etc.) that might affect the child’s ability to learn.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Teachers use a wide variety of assessment strategies including teacher observation, student tasks and projects, and tests.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The Dixie School District provides services for Special Education, English Language Development, counseling and psychological services. The district also offers an enriched learning program for gifted and talented students.

DISTRICT TESTING SCHEDULE

Testing	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dixie/State Standards Testing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STAR Testing: CA Standards Test (CST)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program				X	X	X	X	X	X
State Physical Fitness						X		X	
State Writing Assessment					X			X	
CA English Language Development Test	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

NOTE: Additional testing for various programs occurs throughout grade levels as needed.

DIXIE ADOPTED BASIC TEXTBOOKS

Subject	Publisher
LANGUAGE ARTS	Houghton Mifflin <i>6+1 Traits of Writing</i>
MATHEMATICS	<i>Everyday Math,</i> The Wright Group
SCIENCE	<i>CA Science,</i> Pearson Scott Foresman
SOCIAL SCIENCE	Harcourt
HANDWRITING	<i>D'Nealian,</i> Scott Foresman, Handwriting Without Tears

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

All students must have a doctor's written report of a Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP) examination done between March and September of the year they entered kindergarten, and must have up-to-date immunizations: Hepatitis B vaccine (3 dose series) as well as a second MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), polio and OTP is required.

All students must have an oral health assessment (dental check-up) within the 12 months prior to entering Kindergarten or first grade, whichever is his or her first year in public school.