

# **Center Elementary School**



# **Program of Studies**

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Welcome,

At Center Elementary School we are dedicated to the developmentally appropriate and rigorous education of young children. We believe that young children are capable of extraordinary learning when challenged to explore, investigate, and engage in meaningful inquiry.

We believe that each student comes to Center School with individual gifts and abilities. It is our job to help each student learn to maximize their first attempts at academic learning. Teachers at Center School support and facilitate the development of each student.

The program of studies details each academic area in our school curriculum and our expectations for kindergarten and first grade. Further information is available on the Center School website, through the school curriculum office, and through classroom teachers.

We feel strongly that parents are an integral part of their child's education. Please feel free to involve yourself by asking questions, attending parent workshops, volunteering in classrooms, and with the Parent Teacher Organization.

Sincerely,

Mary Rose Dymond

Principal

## Mission

### **Brookfield Public Schools**

To inspire, challenge and prepare all students to live meaningful and productive lives.

Every student is empowered to become a critical thinker, problem-solver, effective communicator, global citizen, and life-long learner through rigorous, relevant and comprehensive educational experiences, expansive student opportunities, and active community involvement.

### **Center School**

#### **Mission**

The mission of Center School is to provide experiential opportunities, which challenge, support, and encourage successful learning appropriate to the age and uniqueness of each young child.

#### **Vision**

Our vision is to develop confident students who are motivated to grow as lifelong learners with strong academic skills, inquisitive attitudes, keen social intelligence, and critical and creative thinking abilities.

#### **Beliefs**

- All children can learn, and we believe in honoring different learning styles to meet student needs.
- An effective learning process encourages children to use critical and creative thinking skills for solving problems
- In the worth or validity of a research-based program which utilizes a curriculum which is meaningful and relevant to the young child
- Actively engaging parents in a meaningful and cooperative partnership that supports their child's education
- In a supportive, nurturing, accepting environment that celebrates students' strengths, successes and achievements
- Modeling respect and understanding of individual differences
- Everyone is responsible for their own actions and words
- In the need for children to participate in hands-on discovery, exploration and investigation

## Literacy

The primary goal of the Center School literacy program is for students to become early readers and writers who enjoy literate lives and have the skills and strategies needed for further developing their reading and writing. The reading and writing curriculum at Center School is designed to embed the common core state standards in a balanced literacy approach to reading, writing, word study, speaking and listening. Using a workshop approach teachers facilitate a learning environment that helps each student access the common core state standards and grow to appreciate the value of a literate life.

## Reading

In **READING**, students are developing, practicing, and reinforcing the reading habits of mind, skills and strategies of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and text structures that will enable them to become mature readers. This goal is accomplished through the careful use of the following reading workshop structures.

Mini-lessons- During these short, focused lessons teachers explain and model skills and strategies students need to progress as readers along the prescribed reading units of study.

Independent Reading- During independent reading students read appropriately leveled texts and practice the skills and strategies presented in the mini-lesson and unit of study. During this time students build stamina and fluency for reading.

Guided Reading- During guided reading teachers meet with students in small groups. At this time students read in texts at their instructional level which is slightly more challenging than their independent reading level. Teachers instruct students in the skills and strategies necessary to successfully comprehend these texts independently.

Read Aloud- During the read aloud teachers build community literacy and model skills and strategies through a process called “think aloud”, using mentor texts.

Word Study- During the word study block students encounter information related to the way our system of language works. Spelling, grammar, and phonetic information is included in this block.

## How can parents help their children with reading?

The most important and also the most rewarding ways to help your children are to: read to them and read with them. These activities promote a wonderful dialogue and sharing of ideas. Parents can ask some of the types of questions listed below when reading to and with their children. These types of questions reinforce good thinking and reflection practices and are similar to those asked of students as they discuss in class.



Questions that indicate understanding of the basic elements of the story:

- What did you think or wonder about while you were reading the story?
- What is the story mostly about?
- Who are the characters in the story and what are they like?
- How would you describe the character?
- Do you know anyone like the character?
- Would you like to be friends with the character?
- What is the setting of the story? (Setting includes where and when.)
- What is the problem in the story and how is it solved?
- If you could give the story another title, what would it be?
- If there is a vocabulary word that the student does not know, try to have the student figure it out from the context.

Questions that indicate that the student is able to think beyond the information presented in the story and connect what was read to his/her own personal experience and knowledge:

These questions involve higher-level thinking skills.

- Is there anything in the story that is similar to anything that has happened to you (the student)? Is there anything in the story that is like something that may have happened in your school, town, country, or world? (making connections)
- Put the important events of the story in order.
- If there is dialogue in the story, why do you think the author has the characters talk to each other?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What lessons, ideas, or thoughts did the author want to share?

Questions that indicate that the student is able to make judgments and predictions (both before and after reading):

These questions also involve higher-level thinking skills.

- What might be another way to end the story? Why would you choose that particular ending?
- If you were going to write another book about the same main character, what would it be about and why?

- What part of the story did you think was the most important? Why? Use details from the story to explain why you chose that part.
- Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why, why not?
- If you could meet the author, what would you like to ask the author about this particular book?

## Kindergarten Reading

Kindergarten students focus on developing the early literacy skills needed for learning to read. These include:

- Letter recognition and letter sound correspondence
- Early sight vocabulary
- Early comprehension and monitoring strategies
- Apply background knowledge when reading
- Retell stories
- Actively participate in the reading community
- Engage in reading various types of texts
- Rhyme, segment, and blend sounds
- Identify beginning and ending sounds
- Tell familiar emergent stories using storybook language
- Talk about books

## Grade One Reading

Grade one students continue to develop early reading skills. These readers focus on developing skills and strategies that will lead to proficient independent reading.

Students learn to use multiple strategies to read and understand a broad range of authentic fiction and non-fiction text. Students engage in various instructional groupings including: individual conferences, small group guided reading and whole group mini-lessons. Students practice reading daily in “just right” texts.

Teachers focus strategy and skill instruction on the gradual release of responsibility from adult to child. The goal is to enable readers to independently apply and monitor reading strategies which combine the use of meaning, structure, and letter/sound cues.

Other major concepts and strategies in first grade reading include:

- Reading with fluency
- Recognizing the author’s central message
- Recognizing story elements
- Recognizing structures of non-fiction
- Expressing opinions about text
- Inference from text clues
- Know and apply appropriate phonetic information

- Know and fluently apply appropriate sight word vocabulary

## ***Writing***

In **Writers Workshop** students develop the skills to be effective writers. They learn to:

### **PRE-WRITE:**

- Orally explain thoughts, feelings, etc.
- Use visuals to generate ideas
- Use literature to generate ideas
- Generate ideas for writing in groups and independently
- Use free-writing to develop fluency and ideas
- Use reference materials to gather information for writing
- Plan a piece of writing
- Use a variety of graphic organizers when planning (web, outline, list, etc.)



### **DRAFT:**

#### Content/Organization:

- Use different purposes for writing: narrative, expository, and persuasive writing
- Think about who will read your work
- Write a piece on a given topic
- Select an appropriate title for a piece of writing
- Write in complete sentences
- Stay on topic
- Develop supporting details for a topic
- Write a rough draft
- Maintain a logical sequence of events, as developmentally appropriate
- Organize written pieces into beginning, middle, and end
- Develop a sequential and logical pattern for a written piece
- Write about content areas of the curriculum
- Reread the draft

#### Style:

- Use grade level appropriate skills and strategies to express ideas, opinions, and stories in writing

**REVISE:**

- Read their own work aloud to others for response
- Clarify meaning or add details (with help)
- See work as a product that can be changed and improved
- Remodel sentences
- Use reference resources when writing
- Consider responses of the audience
- Use the information from teacher/peer conferences to help revise a piece of writing.

**EDIT:**

- Correct for grade appropriate capitalization and punctuation
- Correct for grade appropriate spelling
- Edit for grade appropriate conventions of English
- Write legibly

**PUBLISH:**

- Write legibly in manuscript.

Students continue to develop and improve their narrative writing skills by writing their own stories and by using a variety of writing strategies. Students also complete different kinds of writing such as friendly letters, poetry, personal narratives, and shared research.

**How can parents help their children with writing?**

Children can write letters to relatives who live far away. They can write “thank you” notes for gifts. They can write grocery lists. They can be encouraged to write in a diary or writer’s notebook. They can keep a journal at home, write poems and share with the family.

Spelling and Handwriting
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The goal of the Center School spelling program is to begin each student on the journey to becoming a conventional speller. Students at Center School focus learning the ways words are constructed by focusing on patterns and spelling strategies. Teachers focus on the use of visual memory, multi-sensory learning, and chunking to aid students in developing an understanding of how words are spelled. Over time

students will include phonetically irregular words in their spelling practice.

### **How can parents help their children with spelling?**

Parents can help students learn and use essential skills through the Take-Home Tasks and Skill-Building Exercises; to help students spell and use essential words, parents can work on Papers for Proofreading and Words to Learn.

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In **HANDWRITING**, students are introduced to the manual alphabet as written in the Zaner-Bloser handwriting program. Beginning in kindergarten students learn proper pencil grip and letter formation. In grade one students learn to apply proper letter formation when writing words.

### **How can parents help their children with handwriting?**

Parents should expect their children's work to be legible. They can encourage them to be neater and praise them when their papers are neat and legible. It is important that parents reinforce the use of a proper pencil grip at home.

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Our literacy program relies on students, teachers, and parents all working together for the same goal: for students to become literate adults who not only love to read and write, but also have the necessary skills for literacy excellence. Together this can become a reality

#### Kindergarten Writing

During writing workshop teachers use individual conferences and whole group mini-lessons to develop the following skills and concepts in kindergarten writers:

- Use writing to express a complete sentence that shares and opinion
- Use writing to express a complete sentence that informs
- Use writing to express an event
- With support from an adult add details to clarify
- Participate in shared research

#### First Grade Writing

During writing workshop teachers use individual conferences and whole group mini-lessons to develop the following skills and concepts in first grade writers:

- Use writing to express opinions beginning with statement, followed by reason, and closure
- Use writing to give information beginning with topic statement, followed by facts, and closure
- Use writing to write narrative using a logical sequence of events, details and sense of closure
- Add supporting details with help
- Participate in shared research

## Mathematics

The math program at Center Elementary School provides students with a board background in mathematics. It embeds common core state standards and local standards in a curriculum that is designed to foster mathematical thinking and understanding of mathematical concepts by relating them to everyday experiences. Teachers will use a variety of strategies and approaches for classroom instruction. Program highlights include:

- A problem-solving approach
- Partner and small group activities to promote cooperative learning
- Concept and skill development through hands-on learning
- Opportunities to discuss and communicate mathematically

As teachers at Center School are working to embed the Common Core State Standards in our mathematics program in a systematic and meaningful way. These standards offer our students a tightly focused approach to the study of mathematics. This differs somewhat from our *Everyday Mathematics* program.

As we embed these standards we will build a cohesive set of mathematic units using resources from many appropriate programs of instruction and research based teaching strategies. This process will begin with kindergarten in the 2011-2012 school year and move to grade one in the 2012-2013 school year.

<i><b>2011-2012</b></i>		<i><b>2012-2013</b></i>	
Kindergarten	Grade 1	Kindergarten	Grade 1
Common Core Based Curriculum	Everyday Math CT Standards	Common Core Based Curriculum	Common Core Based Curriculum

Additional math resources are available on the school curriculum website, the curriculum resource teacher's website, and individual teachers' websites.

### **Fluency With Facts**

Knowing basic facts with fluency is as important to being able to perform mathematics as reading words with fluency is to reading comprehension. In kindergarten and first grade student will be expected to learn addition and subtraction facts with fluency. Fluency is defined as being able to give the answer without an aid (counting on fingers, numberlines, etc.) within three seconds. Kindergarteners are expected to know addition and subtraction facts to five. First graders are expected to know addition and subtraction facts to ten.

Children can learn and practice all of the basic facts in many different ways. It is not necessary to complete long drill pages. Games and fact triangles will achieve the same goal.

It will be necessary for these facts to be practiced and reinforced at home for fluency to take root and be maintained.

### **Math Homework**

It is common for students to reinforce daily math lessons with math homework called a "homelink." These are designed to build a bridge between home and school. Encourage your child to be the teacher and help you understand the work. If your child is confused by the work please inform the teacher with a casual note.

#### **Kindergarten Mathematics**

The kindergarten mathematics curriculum uses various teaching methods including hands-on activities, centers, whole class investigations, and direct teaching. It focuses on the following topics:

- Counting and Cardinality  
Know number names and the count sequence

Count to tell the number of objects

Compare numbers

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from.

Number and Operations in Base Ten

Work with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations for place value

Geometry

Identify and describe shapes

Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes

Mathematical Practices

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

## Grade One Mathematics

### Grade 1

Everyday math students study important concepts over consecutive years through a variety of formats building on and extending concept understanding. Students are exposed to a variety of process and procedures for addressing and solving mathematical problems.

The Grade 1 mathematics curriculum uses various teaching methods including hands-on activities, partner work, whole class discussion, and direct teaching. It focuses on the following topics:

### 2011-2012

- Numeration and order- Counting, reading and writing numbers, patterns, place value of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals
- Operations- number facts, extended facts, informal work with properties of operations, problem solving.
- Exploring Data and Chance- collecting, ordering, and displaying data using tables, charts, and graphs

- Geometry and Spatial Sense- exploring 2- and 3- dimensional shapes
- Measurement- use tools to measure length, capacity, and weight, coins, and time
- Patterns, Functions, and Sequences- attributes, patterns, sequences, relations, and functions
- Algebra and Uses of Variables- missing numbers; properties of operations; what's my rule and puzzles

In each unit children are working on concepts at the beginning, developing and secure levels of understanding. Grading is based only on the skills that should be secure at the end of each unit. Classroom work, in addition to formal and informal assessment, is used to determine if a child is secure in a skill.

- **Secure:** Children's strategies meet the content, thinking processes, and demands of the task. Responses reflect a broad range of understanding and children can apply the understanding to different contexts.
- **Developing:** Children understand part of the task but may need teacher prompts or additional instruction to accomplish the task successfully
- **Beginning:** Children's responses may have fragments of appropriate material and may demonstrate effort to accomplish a task, however, the responses indicate little understanding of either the concept or computational procedure involved.

2012-2013

The Common Core State Standards for grade one focus on the following concepts, skills, and strategies. These will be introduced to grade one program in 2012-2013.

- Operations and Algebraic Thinking
  - Represent and solve problems addition and subtraction
  - Understand and apply properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction
  - Add and subtract within 20
  - Work with addition and subtraction equations
- Number and Operations in Base Ten
  - Extend the counting sequence
  - Understand place value

Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract

Measurement and Data

Measure lengths indirectly and by iterating length units

Tell and write time

Represent and interpret data

Geometry

Reason with shapes and their attributes

Mathematical Practices

Mathematical Practices

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

## Science

The science curriculum is aligned with national and state standards. The elementary program is designed to motivate students as the gain and essential understanding of key scientific ideas and concepts. Science is taught through various methods including inquiry and exploration. Topics are chosen to give students a broad knowledge of science concepts and skills.

### Kindergarten Science

Kindergarten students explore their world through hands-on investigations, reading about science topics, and shared research. Topics studied in kindergarten include:

- Life science- Living things
- Properties of matter- Five senses
- Weather
- Technology- Shelter

## Grade One Science

- How scientists look, act, sound, etc.
- Sunshine and shadows
- Forces and motion- push and pull
- Living things- structures, needs, and comparisons
- Life cycles

## Social Studies

The social studies curriculum at Center Elementary School is based on the Brookfield Public School Social Studies Frameworks. This includes the study of history, social science, geography, citizenship, and global awareness. Our curriculum emphasizes participation and active learning.

Students gain knowledge in this area through comparing ideas and events on the basis of similarities and differences with their own lives. They make predictions based on observations in the world around them. The goal is to broaden the perspective of students to include new understandings about their world and develop skills needed for cooperative community citizenship.

## Kindergarten Social Studies

Kindergarten students are engaged in exploration, investigation, and shared research of the following topics:

- Understanding how communities work together
- Understanding rules
- Basic functions of community roles and jobs
- Cultural differences and similarities
- Transportation and geography
- Neighborhood geography
- Man's effect on environment

## Grade One Social Studies

First grade students are engaged in discussion, exploration, investigation, and shared research of the following topics:

- Classroom and community citizenship
- Native American culture
- Historical differences of generations
- Significance of historical figures
- Town geography
- Significance of historical holidays
- Needs and wants- producers and consumers
- Humans effect on environment

### **Technology**

Our computer lab is equipped with desktop computers. Our classroom teachers are responsible for providing technology instruction to their classes as required by state and local technology objectives. Grade level appropriate software and access to Internet activities is included in instruction.

#### **Kindergarten Technology**

In accordance with the district Technology Plan, kindergarteners complete an embedded technology task:

- Students will use appropriate software to identify the location of letters on the keyboard. The teacher will call out letters as the students' type the corresponding letter. Students will use the appropriate software to identify the numerals 0-9 using the mouse. Students will use appropriate software to demonstrate inserting and dragging pictures. Work will be printed out.

#### **Grade One Technology**

In accordance with the district Technology Plan, kindergarteners complete an embedded technology task:

- Students will create a document to add to a class book. Each student will word process a sentence on a topic: alphabet, animal facts and/or to their topic. Students will use draw tools to create an illustration for the sentence. All documents will be printed.

## Art

For most children, the art program is the first introduction to any “formalized” instruction. Through art, the child’s imagination grows and his/her imagination grows and his/her intellect prospers.

### **Four major goals serve as the focus for the art department:**

#### Create:

- Design original and imaginative works
- Express visual ideas
- Demonstrate knowledge and application of materials, technique, and forming processes.

#### Know:

- Learn about arts and crafts of the world’s culture.

#### Value:

- Participate in school and community activities related to art.

#### Grow:

- Develop a sense of self-confidence, maturation, and direction
- Help develop child’s physical coordination and motor skills
- Provide opportunities for children to work together cooperatively
- Develop a sense of responsibility and respect for materials, the works of others, and the environment

## Music

Young children are naturally responsive to music and enjoy all types of musical experiences. The music program offers opportunities to explore and develop the following skills in individual and group activities:

- Singing a variety of songs
- Learning about and playing instruments
- Creating their own music
- Listening experiences
- Moving to music; rhythms, dramatizations, dances and games
- Developing a music vocabulary and an understanding of the

## Basic rudiments of music

In addition to learning about and enjoying music, children develop listening skills, coordination, self-expression, emotional responses, and confidence. As a link to learning in the classroom, music enriches a story on theme and helps create a mood or tone.

### **Library/ Media**

The Center School Library Media Center provides an environment where students and staff have access to a wide variety of books and materials in order to encourage a love of reading and life-long learning. Through stories, activities, and technology our program helps students recognize and utilize the many benefits that a library media center has to offer including: book browsing, book borrowing, reading for enjoyment, and searching for information. Our goal is to support, enhance, and enrich the curriculum as well as meet the needs and interests of our young students as they grow and develop along their journey of learning.

### **Physical Education**

The physical education program is scheduled one class period every four days for all students.

Gross motor activities designed to develop large muscle groups dominate the physical education program. The development of physical fitness and coordination skills is also planned through activities.

Activities emphasizing running, jumping, hopping, skipping, and galloping, along with ball activities and organized games fill a class period. This plan develops individual skills to be used in later grades for organized sports. Emphasis is also placed on body awareness – how the body moves and functions.

Children are asked to wear sneakers for physical education so that they may participate and enjoy the activities with their classmates. Classes are held outside whenever weather permits.

## Grading

Formal grading provides important feedback for students, parents, and members of the educational community at regular intervals. Formal grade reports are an important supplement to intermittent, timely, and less formal communications about students' progress. CES students will receive report cards three times a year.

### **Purpose of Grading**

Grading is important in order to:

- Give each student continuous feedback regarding achievement in each academic area and progress toward mastery of objectives
- Periodically give parents or guardians accurate and useful feedback regarding their youngster's progress in order that they might effectively support his/her learning
- Communicate accurately to educational audiences
- Maximize each student's motivation to learn

We are aware of Center School the delicate balance between the effect of accurate reporting of achievement and student motivation. However, report cards are official school documents and must be an accurate reflection of student work. Care should be taken when sharing adult information with young students.

### **Academic Grades**

All academic grades shall reflect the degree to which a student has learned the skills taught to him or her during each marking period. The symbols to be used are as follows:

- 4 – Consistently demonstrates expectations
- 3 – Usually demonstrates expectations
- 2 – Sometimes demonstrates expectations
- 1 – Rarely demonstrates expectations
- \* - Not Applicable

The above grading system will also be used by special subject area teachers (music, art, physical education, and library).

## Homework

Homework is a vital component of education and is intended to:

- Promote responsibility
- Instill good work habits
- Enrich and extend school experiences
- Assist students in learning how to budget time
- Provide the necessary practice in reinforcing skills

Students at CES should either be read to and/or reading every night approximately 15-20 minutes. The teacher will communicate the expectations for reading in order to match student reading levels.

All other homework shall not exceed 15 minutes for kindergarten and 20 minutes for grade one. If your child routinely takes longer than the guideline please communicate your concern with the teacher.