

Village School

Goals • Grade 4 • 2018-2019

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Village School! We hope your children are making a smooth transition to our dynamic school. One of our first goals for our fourth grade students is to build community within our classrooms and within our school. When children are active, engaged participants in their learning communities, they will be successful learners!

As teachers, we continually work as a team to establish learning goals for our students. With the new Common Core Standards in place, we are continuing to align our curriculum to meet these frameworks. We strive to meet the needs of each individual student through data-driven instruction. Our objective is to create on going opportunities for critical and creative thinking skills within each of the curriculum areas, while developing appropriate academic skills in each of the content areas. In other words, to have the children take the skills learned in the classroom and apply them in new and innovative ways to what they are learning. Last but not least, our goal is to provide a safe, exciting, and respectful environment in which all of our students will have the opportunity to learn.

Readers' Workshop will follow a workshop format, based on the writings of Lucy Calkins of Columbia Teachers College. Workshops begin with a targeted mini-lesson, followed by students practicing the specific skill. They are then given an opportunity to apply that skill independently in their own reading. Leveled trade books, picture books, core novels, poetry, and nonfiction texts will be used for instruction. Specific strategies for comprehension, decoding words, building vocabulary, conducting book talks or Book Clubs, and writing in response to literature are examples of skills and strategies that are taught. We will conduct whole class, small group, independent, and partner reading. It is imperative that independent and shared reading take place at home with your child. We will read aloud to the children several times each week to expose them to some of our favorite stories, as well as to develop strong listening skills.

One of our fourth grade read alouds this year will be [A Handful of Stars](#) by Cynthia Lord. The Village School PTO has generously purchased copies of this book for our classrooms. This novel's themes include friendship and prejudice. The 4th grade is excited to be hosting Cynthia Lord in the spring.

Writers' Workshop continues in fourth grade, also following the workshop model. Targeted mini-lessons on specific writing skills and strategies are presented at the beginning of the workshop. An important part of the writing process is demonstrated through teacher modeling, and then the students are asked to practice the skill independently. Our writing program is based on the "Six Plus One Traits" of writing and the Lucy Calkins' Writing Program. Each child will keep a notebook or folder and will learn to organize and develop ideas, as well as edit and revise pieces throughout the year. Both content and mechanics will be emphasized. We will focus on how to write a multi-paragraph personal narrative, a persuasive essay, a realistic fiction piece, and nonfiction pieces. Lessons used to reinforce grammar and language concepts also are taught during Writers' Workshop. The writing skills from Writers' Workshop will be applied to all other curriculum areas during the year.

Go Math is the math program we use in the fourth grade at Village School. There is a website for parents and students to access: www-k6.thinkcentral.com. You and your child can access Real-World Videos, Animated Math Models, an eGlossary, the Standards Practice book (the homework book) and iTools by logging in with your child's student number. These resources are to support your child as s/he learns various math concepts in the coming year.

Mathletes is a weekly special that is taught by Jennifer Athanas, who previously taught fourth grade in Marblehead. During Mathletes, Ms. Athanas reinforces and enhances math skills taught in our regular math curriculum. This is a great addition to our Math program because each week, Ms. Athanas, working in conjunction with the 4th grade team, is able to pinpoint an area that needs reinforcement or enrichment.

Social Studies curriculum in the fourth grade focuses on North America, including Canada and Mexico, with an emphasis on the geography, culture, and economics of the various regions of the United States. Cooperative learning groups, individual work, and many hands-on activities will be utilized in all the social studies units.

Science has some interesting units coming this year! The students will be learning about *The Changing Earth, Sound, Motion, and Plants and Animals*. Students will be conducting investigations (experiments), recording their individual results and observations, and discussing results in cooperative learning groups.

Partner Teachers. Most fourth grade teachers have partnered up to be able to better serve the needs of the students. One of the partners will teach Science to the two classes; the other partner will teach Social Studies to the two classes.

Keep Each Other Well. Our guidance counselors, Mr. Jeff Newsome and Ms. Kate Dulac, work with our fourth grade students on so many levels, it's hard to list them. They are the "go-to" people for questions or concerns about friends and other social issues. You will also find them in the cafeteria during lunch, working hard to help 225+ students move through the lunch line, find a place to sit, and navigate their way around a large cafeteria. In the spring, Kate and Jeff teach a health class to our students, and throughout the year, they will make classroom visits to talk about various issues. It is our goal to teach our children to think about and care about one another, both inside Village School and in the community at large. We couldn't do it without Kate and Jeff.

Assessments, Report Cards, and Conferences. Children will be assessed through a variety of measures in the classroom, including the use of Aimsweb, a diagnostic system of skill assessment. We will also use Galileo – an online instructional assessment system. Small group and individual conferences with the teacher, as well as written work, observations, and self-evaluation are part of each student's evaluation process. Report cards are sent home in December, March, and June. Parent conferences are scheduled for December. Please check the Village School Calendar for specific dates.

The Homework Question. It is the recommendation of the Marblehead School Committee that fourth grade students receive between 30 minutes to one hour of homework each night. Homework is based upon the material covered in class and should be a practice of those skills. Children should plan to spend up to an hour of dedicated work time on homework each night. If your child has difficulty doing or

completing the assignments in the given time, please attach a note to let us know. Students are responsible for recording daily assignments in the provided assignment books. Homework will be given Monday through Thursday. Long term assignments may require some work on weekends.

Field Trips. There is one whole-grade field trip scheduled this year to the Lowell Mills. Individual teachers may arrange other trips which support the curriculum. Separate communications will be sent home before each trip.

Communication. If you have questions or concerns at any time, please be in touch. We all want what is best for your child and communication between home and school will go a long way in achieving this goal. An email in the beginning can often prevent frustration or misunderstanding later on.

We look forward to a wonderful year with your child!

The Fourth Grade Team

Jennifer Athanas, Katie Fehrenbach, Maura Forward, Alexandra Hobson, Sue Holbrook,
Hannah Hood, Mary Ellen Kraft, Mary LeBlanc, Annie Madden,
Maura McDermott, Amanda Messina, Killeen Miller, Laurie Mohan, Katie Rossini,
Taryn Stockwell, Jane Sullivan, Meredith Sweet, Caitlin Welsh, Jennifer Wilkins, Victoria Wyard