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irst Grade Curriculum Overview

The South Brunswick School District Curriculum being taught at the first grade level integrates the NJ Common Core State Standards (NJCCSS) in Mathematics and English Language Arts and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) in all other areas of content.¹ Students study developmentally appropriate concepts. We teach for deep understanding of the “big ideas” in each content area while we encourage students to wonder about the “essential questions.”

Technology is integrated into instruction in meaningful ways. Students and teachers use digital tools and information to solve problems individually and collaboratively to create and communicate knowledge. (NJCCCS 8.1)

Below is an overview of each content area for First Grade.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The South Brunswick Language Arts Curriculum assumes the integration of reading, study of literature, study of informational text, writing, speaking, listening, and language (conventions, vocabulary and grammar). All the elements are meant to function together; each is incomplete without the others. The curriculum is based on Core Curriculum Content Standards.

The K Language Arts program is typically divided into three “blocks” which helps teachers deliver a balanced literacy approach: Reading (read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading) Writing Workshop (mini-lessons and conferencing) and Word Study (spelling, phonics and vocabulary). Leveled books, mentor texts and trade literature are used for reading and writing instruction.

Guidelines for Balanced Literacy Grades K-2

Elements of the workshop structure are to be scheduled to align within the daily classroom time restraints. These elements lend themselves to natural integration across all content areas. Children will also have opportunities to apply Language Arts Literacy skills in all of their other content areas (science, social, math or character education).

The Reading Workshop Block

Reading in the early childhood classroom has four components.

- **SHARED READING.** The teacher and students read aloud from large print texts (e.g. big books, poems, large print text). During the reading, the teacher helps children become proficient readers by modeling concepts about print and the use of all three major cuing systems: meaning, language structure and visual cues. For example, students are asked to think about what would make sense (meaning), sound right (language structure), and look right (visual), when they encounter an unknown word.
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- **READ-ALLOUD.** The teacher reads aloud from many different types of books; inviting predictions, clarifications, summaries, questions and discussions. Although the emphasis is on enjoyment, the teacher models fluent reading and the use of strategies to analyze new words and have greater understanding of the author’s message. Read-alouds may be outside the students’ reading ability, but the content is within their understanding.

¹ NJ has renamed standards as the NJ Student Learning Standards (NJSLS). Our curriculum documents still reflect the original names.

Guidelines:

- Read-alouds: Literature, Big books, Poems, Songs (These may be used at a later date for reading/writing workshop).
 - Students share the reading with the teacher (e.g. choral reading).
 - Teacher demonstrates/models what a proficient reader thinks while reading to comprehend texts.
 - Whole group discussion and turn and talk sharing with peers to facilitate comprehension of text.
 - Teacher demonstrates word study strategies and skills.
- **WHOLE CLASS MINI LESSONS.** The teacher provides whole class mini lessons determined by the needs of the group and the district curriculum.

Guidelines:

- Reread a section of familiar text to demonstrate and model what a proficient reader thinks while reading to comprehend text.
 - Provide direct instruction in the use of comprehension strategies, fluency, vocabulary and author's craft strategies.
 - Whole group discussion and/or turn and talk sharing with peers, to facilitate comprehension of text.
 - Use strategies to help students record their thinking. (e.g. anchor charts, stop and jots, sticky notes).
- **GUIDED READING.** The teacher works with a small group of children to study a book appropriate to the specific needs of that group. The composition of these groups is flexible and reflects the needs and interests of the children. Many of the strategies and skills presented during shared reading are reinforced in small group instruction where students receive greater attention and support. Through mini-lessons and guided reading instruction, students learn to apply comprehension strategies such as predicting, making connections and retelling a story.

Guidelines:

- Small, flexible groups of students with similar needs (up to 6 students) meet for instruction and guided reading of text.
- Teacher provides direct instruction of skills and strategies. Lesson may support whole group mini-lesson.
- Use one-to-one conferences & anecdotal notes to support instruction.
- The goal of guided reading is to teach strategies that develop independent readers of text.

- **STRUCTURED INDEPENDENT READING:** Independent reading gives students the opportunity to apply the skills and strategies they have learned in shared reading and guided reading groups. Students are taught strategies to self-select books to read on their own.

Guidelines:

- Independent reading (build stamina from 10 to 30 minutes- as appropriate).
- Partner reading
- Independent practice of the concept/skill demonstrated in reading mini-lesson.
- Extend the Meaning of Text: through oral discussion, drawing, diagramming, drama or written response to reading.



The Writing Workshop Block

Students in Grades K-2 explore what it means to be a writer. They have opportunities to choose topics, make their writing beautiful with writer’s craft and revise and edit writing for an audience. Teachers use the “Writing Workshop” approach to teach students the joy and purposes of writing. During Writer’s Workshop, there are mini-lessons to deliver instruction and independent writing to provide time for practice. While students write, teachers conduct individual conferences to help raise the quality of each child’s writing skills.

Throughout Grades K-2, students write personal narrative “Small Moment” stories and explore various non-fiction genres. These include “All-about” and “How-to” selections as well as some beginning research projects. In addition, students explore the language of poetry and study “mentor writers” to help build their skills.

- **WRITING MINI LESSONS.** Teacher directed, whole group instruction determined by the assessed needs of the group and the district curriculum.

Guidelines:

- Procedural, craft, and/or skill lessons are taught during various genres studies.
- Shared writing experiences/ Interactive writing.
- Teacher’s writing (used for direct instruction or modeling).
- Use of mentor or touchstone texts (may be the same texts read during the daily read-alouds).

Writing Workshop Components:

- Connection
- Explicate Instruction
- Active Engagement
- Link
- Teacher meets with students in one-to-one conferences or flexible, small group strategy groups.
- Students share writing with writing partners or during group shares.

- **INDEPENDENT WRITING**

Writing Guidelines:

- Students choose topics and plan writing.
- Students have daily opportunities for independent writing (build stamina from 10 to 30 minutes- as appropriate).
- Students should show evidence of use of strategies from recent mini-lessons and conferences.

Conferencing Guidelines

- One-on-one conferences
- Small group conferences
- Anecdotal notes to track progress

- **SHARING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WRITERS**

Guidelines:

- Sharing/discussion to bring closure to the writing workshop by reflecting on the day’s writing and /or some aspect of direct instructions.
- Students have opportunities to share some aspect of their writing with partners or whole group.



The Word Study Block (Spelling/Phonics/Vocabulary)

The District uses a systematic and explicit phonics, spelling and vocabulary program called, *Words Their Way*. Students learn the relationship between letters and letter sounds and how letter patterns and word chunks, such as diagraphs, prefixes and suffixes impact spelling. In addition, vocabulary lessons are based on high frequency words, multiple meaning words, multi-syllabic words and words from other content areas. Students are grouped and regrouped throughout the year based on spelling assessments and written samples.

Handwriting

The District teaches handwriting through direct instruction and independent practice of letter formation and spacing.

MATHEMATICS

The South Brunswick Mathematics Program is based on a well-articulated curriculum that is aligned with NJCCSS. The curriculum has interwoven technology, and is connected in meaningful ways to other curriculum and real life.

Building upon the knowledge and skills learned in the previous grade (which provide a strong foundation for new learning), the following are the First Grade topics of study:

- *Number Sense and Base 10*
- *Measurement & Data*
- *Operations & Algebraic Thinking*
- *Geometry*

First Grade	Essential Questions	Enduring Understandings
<i>Number Sense & Base 10</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do numbers represent and define value? • What are the relationships between numbers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers have relative value. • There are many ways to represent a number. • Quantities can be counted and compared.
<i>1st Grade Operations & Algebraic Thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do addition and subtraction relate to each other? • How do I know which operation to use to solve a problem? • How do I determine which computational strategy to use? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematical expressions represent relationships. • In everyday life, we combine and separate quantities to solve problems. • More efficient computation occurs when using combinations of 10.
<i>Measurement & Data</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do we use measurement? • Why is telling time essential for our daily lives? • How & why do we organize information? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday objects have a variety of attributes that can be measured in many ways. • Measurement can be used to compare lengths. • Time is measured in hours and minutes. • Data can be organized in meaningful ways so that it can be interpreted and analyzed.
<i>Geometry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are geometric properties used to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objects can be described, compared,



	solve problems in everyday life?	and classified by geometric attributes. • Many geometric shapes can be divided into equal parts.
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1st Grade students will work with numbers within 100, developing a deep understanding of place value and the Base 10 System. They will explore counting in different ways and explore the meaning of digits in different places and the importance and power of the digit 0. They will compare whole numbers (at least to 100) to develop understanding of, and solve problems involving their relative values. They will think of whole numbers between 10 and 100 in terms of tens and ones (especially recognizing the numbers 11 to 19 as composed of a ten and some ones). Through activities that build number sense, they will understand the order of counting numbers and their relative magnitudes.

In measurement, students will develop an understanding of the meaning and processes of measurement. Students will practice measuring with non-standard units and will compare numerous objects to another specific object to determine if the items are longer or shorter than the specific object. Students will order objects by measureable attributes. Telling time to the hour and half hour will be introduced in this unit. Additionally, students will record data using tally tables, bar graphs, and pictographs and will analyze and ask questions about the data that is presented.

In geometry, students will compose and decompose plane or solid figures (e.g., put two triangles together to make a quadrilateral) and build understanding of part-whole relationships as well as the properties of the original and composite shapes. As they combine shapes, they will recognize them from different perspectives and orientations, describe their geometric attributes, and determine how they are alike and different, to develop the background for measurement and for initial understandings of properties such as congruence and symmetry.

Materials from the Scott Foresman and TERC Math Investigations series are in use in the First Grade Math program. Manipulatives, computer software, and calculators are supplementing the curriculum. Over the course of the year, a first grade child may take part in math enrichment projects such as “Math for All Kinds of Minds” in which students work by ability on problem-based, long-range projects that will provide additional challenge and enrichment. As one component of our Gifted & Talented Services, each year we identify students in Kindergarten through Grade Five who may be ready for mathematics acceleration (that is, accelerating a full grade level in math). Multiple criteria, along with recommendations, are utilized to make such decisions on student placement.

SCIENCE

It is the intention of South Brunswick Schools to graduate all of its students with the scientific knowledge, skills and habits of mind needed to be lifelong-learners, critical thinkers, effective communicators and wise decision-makers. Students will develop and use the skills necessary for full participation in a world shaped by science and technology.

First Grade students study physical and life sciences based on the 2014 NJCCCS 5.1.4.A.1-A.3, 5.1.4.B.1-B.3, 5.1.4.C.1, 5.1.4.C.2, 5.1.4.D.1, 5.1.4.D.3, 5.1.4.D.4, 5.2.2.A.1, 5.2.2.A.2, 5.2.2.E.1-E.3, 5.2.4.E.1, 5.2.4.E.2, 5.3.2.A.1, 5.3.2.B.1-B.3, 5.4.2.E.1, 5.4.2.G.1-G.3

- **Water** (physical) ~ What are the properties of water? How does water change from one form to another? Where is water found? Why is water important?
- **Forces** (physical) ~ How do things move? How can we change the way things move? What evidence do we have of forces that we cannot see?



- *Collecting and Examining Life* (life) ~ How do we know if something is alive? What are the basic needs of living things? How do living things change over time? What parts do animals have to help them move, grow, breathe, eat, and sense their environment?

SOCIAL STUDIES

The expectation is that all the students of South Brunswick will develop the social studies skills and knowledge they will need to be active, informed, responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities. The students will understand history as it relates to the present and future of their lives.

First Grade students study the “here and now” as it relates to neighborhoods and belonging. This study is based on the 2014 NJCCCS 6.2 Civics, 6.4 US and NJ History, 6.5 Economics, and 6.6 Geography.

- *Belonging* ~ What makes us different? What makes us the same? Diversity, tolerance, fairness and respect.
- *Neighborhood* ~ How does where people live affect their shelter, communication and transportation? How do people contribute to their neighborhood and community? Housing, business and stores, people, community jobs, community leaders.
- *Community, Citizenship, and Geography* ~ What defines a community and how do people contribute to their neighborhood and community? How do maps and globes teach me about my world and help me locate places in my community? What makes a good rule and why it is important to follow rules? Simple class maps, directions such as above/below/near/far/left/right, & cardinal directions.
- *Holidays & Celebrations*
Holidays are integrated into the curriculum and taught as they are applicable.
- *Current Events*
Current Events are integrated into the curriculum and taught as they are applicable.

HEALTH EDUCATION

South Brunswick students need to be health literate, especially in response to all the input they receive from the media and society. Our District’s Health curriculum is firmly based on this teaching of “wellness” which can be defined as a “way of life.” Our goal is to help students learn the lessons of wellness and to encourage them to take responsibility for their own health and to make informed choices about their health now-- and in the future. The First Grade Health curriculum is based on 2014 NJCCCS and addresses all relevant standards for first grade with particular emphasis on 2.1.A, 2.1.C, 2.1.D, 2.2.A, 2.2.B, 2.2.E.1, 2.3.A, and 2.3.B.

In First Grade, the classroom teacher, the nurse, and the counselor collaboratively teach Health.

- *Personal Safety* (good/bad touch and strategies for protecting oneself)
- *Personal Health* (self-care practices that support wellness and stop the spread of germs)
- *Medicines* (distinctions between medicine and candy and reinforcement of the concept of taking medicines only from a trusted adult)

WORLD LANGUAGE

South Brunswick School District wants students to demonstrate a positive attitude toward other languages and cultures, demonstrate motivation to learn languages, show confidence in their ability to learn and communicate through listening comprehension, accurate pronunciation, and some basic interpersonal communication.

An education in world languages fosters a population that:

- Communicates in more than one language with the levels of language proficiency that are required to function in a variety of occupations and careers in the contemporary workplace.

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- Exhibits attitudes, values, and skills that indicate a positive disposition and understanding of cultural differences and that enhance cross-cultural communication.
- *Values* language learning as a global literacy as well as for its long-term worth in fostering personal, work-related, and/or financial success in our increasingly interconnected world.

South Brunswick uses the SALSA program in the K-2 classes, a videotape series (the tapes are about 15 minutes in length and feature the Spanish language through well-known and well-loved children's fairy tales) with accompanying mini-lessons that are taught by the classroom teacher with support from the World Language teachers. Teachers then use the language in their daily routines and instruction wherever meaningful and purposeful.

First grade topics are based on SALSA I, Part II (Episodes 13-30)—

- *Three Billy Goats Gruff (Los tres chivos)*
- *The Little Red Hen (La gallinita roja), and*
- *The Little Train (El tren pequeño)*

ART

The Arts bring an important dimension to the educational program of the schools. Arts education draws upon personal feelings and experience as well as on logical and intellectual thought.

Students in Grades K-2 receive Art instruction one day per week as part of their Special Subject/Integrated Arts schedule. Their curriculum is based on the 2014 NJCCCS for Visual and Performing Arts: 1.1 Creation, 1.2 History of Arts and Culture, 1.3 Performance, and 1.4 Aesthetic Response and Critique.

Students in K-2 are introduced to the concepts and principles of color, shape, form, line, texture, and pattern. They use a variety of media and materials as appropriate for their grade level. The caring Art environment fosters freethinking, risk-taking, inspiration, and critique. Students are introduced to artists and artwork that connects to the themes of family, community, culture and time periods.

MUSIC

The South Brunswick Elementary Music Curriculum is designed to allow students to experience music through many different venues such as singing, movement, games and activities, classroom instruments, composition and performance. Students learn that music is all around us. Music reflects life, builds a sense of community and helps define cultural identity. It is an art form and a form of entertainment. Students will understand that music is a universal language and music allows us to transcend time.

Students in Grades K-2 receive music instruction one day a week as part of their Special Subject/Integrated Arts schedule. Their curriculum is based on the 2014 NJCCCS for Visual and Performing Arts: 1.1 Creation, 1.2 History of Arts and Culture, 1.3 Performance, and 1.4 Aesthetic Response and Critique. Over the year, the students study musical opposites, beat, rhythm, pitch/melody, movement, singing voice vs. speaking voice, listening skills, performance etiquette and decorum.

Essential Questions for the K-2 general music curriculum include:

- *In what ways does rhythm impact how we hear/feel music?*
- *How does rhythm make you feel?*
- *Where else can you find rhythm?*
- *What is the relationship between melody and speech?*
- *How does melody make you feel?*
- *Why do we like the music we like?*
- *How does music impact our lives?*

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- *Is all sound music?*
- *Why do we listen to music?*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

Physical activity is critical to the development and maintenance of good health. The goal of physical education is to develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity. It is our goal that our students will know the benefits of their choice to be involved in physical activity and have a mindset that values physical activity and its benefits in sustaining healthy lifestyles.

Program Delivery: Our Physical Education gymnasiums are effective 2014 NJCCC standards-based environments that foster understanding of physical fitness, skill development, competition and cooperation through a meaningful content that provides:

- Instruction in a variety of motor skills that are designed to enhance the physical, mental, and social/emotional development of every child.
- Fitness education and assessment to help children understand, improve, and/or maintain their physical wellbeing.
- Development of cognitive concepts about motor skill and fitness.
- Opportunities to improve their emerging social and cooperative skills and gain a multicultural perspective.
- Promotion of regular amounts of appropriate physical activity now and throughout life.

At the elementary school level locomotor skills, manipulative and non-manipulative skills are routinely addressed through active participation in the activities designed by the physical education teachers. Activity-based fitness is emphasized rather than fitness through formal exercises/calisthenics.

LIBRARY-MEDIA PROGRAM

The overall goal of the libraries is to help South Brunswick students read extensively and become information literate. Librarians, in collaboration with classroom teachers, guide students to read and to acquire skills to access, analyze and use ideas and information with competence and confidence. The American Association of School Librarians' "Nine Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning" serve as the foundation for the work students do in their school libraries.

We build upon the knowledge and skills learned in Kindergarten and focus upon the following skills and knowledge in First Grade:

- *Parts of a Book* (publisher, copyright, dedication)
- *Library Structure* (emphasis on call numbers and shelf order)
- *Literature Appreciation* (in-depth author and illustrator studies)
- *Comprehension Strategies* (reading/listening with a purpose/prediction)
- *Fiction and Non Fiction* (real versus make believe)

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is integrated into all areas of the curriculum in meaningful ways. Students and teachers use digital tools and information to solve problems individually and collaboratively to create and communicate knowledge and thus meet the NJCCCS 8.1 and NJCCCS 9.1 Standards.

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaboratively and to create and communicate knowledge. (NJCCCS 8.1 Educational Technology) The strands addressed in NJCCCS Standard 8.1 Technological Literacy are:



- A. Technology Operations and Concepts
- B. Creativity and Innovation
- C. Communication and Collaboration
- D. Digital Citizenship
- E. Research and Information Literacy
- F. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision-Making.

All students will demonstrate creative, critical thinking, collaboration and problem solving skills to function successfully as global citizens and workers in diverse ethnic and organizational cultures. (NJCCCS 9.1 21st Century Life Skills) The strands addressed in these NJCC Standards 9.1 21st Century Life Skills are:

- A. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- B. Creativity and Innovation
- C. Collaboration, Teamwork and Leadership
- D. Cross-Cultural Understanding and Interpersonal Communications
- E. Communication and Media Fluency
- F. Accountability, Productivity and Ethics.

As a component of our Technology Program, a technology-infused project is co-taught by the classroom teacher and a District Tech Educator in a pre-planned and systematic manner in all 1st Grade classes throughout the district using a technology that is present in the 1st Grade classrooms such as iPads. Each year the technology project changes to match emerging technologies, applications, and tech literacy skills.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

The *Responsive Classroom* is an approach to teaching character education that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. It is based on the five core values of CARES: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self Control.

Morning Meeting, a key component of *Responsive Classroom*, helps create a classroom community where children can practice and explore social skills and merge social, emotional and academic learning. Morning Meeting addresses the English Language Arts standards of speaking, listening and viewing, as well as the Core Values legislation in NJAC 6A:16.

- **Greeting:** Children greet each other by name. The greeting can include a variety of handshakes and other activities.
- **Sharing:** Children share some news of interest and also respond to each other through asking questions and giving positive comments.
- **Group Activity:** The whole group does a fun, short activity together, usually with an academic focus.
- **Morning Message:** Through reading this daily message written by the teacher, children practice academic skills and build their sense of community.

The elementary counselor also supports Responsive Classroom through the comprehensive, developmental guidance and counseling program for students in grades K-5. As part of this program, the counselor delivers direct whole group instruction to each First Grade class. This includes a lesson on the "C" in CARES: Cooperation.

STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS FOR FIRST GRADE

- District Grade 1 Letter and Sound Recognition Assessment
- Grade 1 Running Record Assessment
- Grade 1 South Brunswick Early childhood Literacy Portfolio (Measures each child's growth across a continuum of literacy development. The portfolio contains a series of assessments that give



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teachers information to help make teaching decisions and to provide for individual needs. It includes assessments for: phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, reading fluency and comprehension, and writing development.)

- Basic Math Fact Drills (Mad Minute, Otter Creek, etc.)
- District Math Unit Pre and Post Tests
- District End of Year First Grade Math Competency Test
- South Brunswick curriculum-based pre- and/or post- assessments in all areas of content

REPORTING SYSTEM

- K-2 Report Cards are sent home in February and June.
- Parent Conferences are scheduled every spring and fall.
- The teacher and/or the parent may request additional conferences.