

Mr. Campana
4th Grade, 2017-2018
Back to School Information

Here is a more in-depth look at some of the information that we touched on at Back to School Night.

Curriculum:

Reading

The primary goal of our reading program is to help your child develop an appreciation and love of literature while learning the skills required of a successful reader who can read and think independently. The major components of the reading program are as follows:

Read Aloud - I will be reading to your child one to two times a day. Research has shown that children who are read to become better readers themselves. Read-aloud material will span several literary genres (poetry, picture books, chapter books, biography, informational texts...). We expose children to many different types of books to help them discover their reading preferences and to enhance their reading and writing skills. Useful reading strategies will be discussed and modeled in conjunction with read-alouds.

Readers Workshop- We will have Reader's Workshop 4-5 times a week. The Readers Workshop model, as developed by Columbia University Teachers College and Lucy Calkins, has been adopted by our district in all elementary schools. This model allows for children to read at their own instructional level while learning important skills and strategies of successful readers. We want the children to realize that ALL readers use these strategies, not just 4th graders!

Many workshops begin with a mini-lesson on a reading strategy (for example, predicting, characterization, sequencing of events, vocabulary, etc.). We practice this strategy using our Read Aloud book or a short reading passage. These lessons are typically about ten minutes long.

Children will then independently read self-selected books at their levels. As they read, students take notes on Post-its or in their notebooks about parts of their story that are significant. Independent reading is a time for students to practice positive reading strategies and to explore reading interests. During this time, I will confer with students - listen to them read and discuss strategies that may help them become stronger readers. The end of a Readers Workshop lesson is when students write in their Reading Notebooks or share with partners about the reading they have been doing.

At times during the year, we will read and discuss novels together in Book Clubs. These groups are flexible; sometimes they are based on reading level, and other times on a particular strategy.

Reading at Home- Your child should be reading for about 30 minutes (or more!) daily outside of school. This reading should be at a 'just right' level. If your child needs books assigned in order to make this reading happen, I am more than happy to do this.

Students log this reading on their Homework Agenda.

Writing

Students will participate in Writer's Workshop about four times a week. Writer's Workshop begins with a mini-lesson (5-10 minutes) designed to introduce or emphasize different positive writing strategies. These strategies could range from using beautiful language and imagery in writing to making sure each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period.

Literature from read-alouds as well as the children's own writing will be used to illustrate the writing strategies. Students will then spend the period writing. When students have written and collected several "pieces" they will choose one to expand, edit, and publish. So, not every piece of writing gets fully polished.

We will have Writing Celebrations periodically to share published pieces with family and friends. Because writing is a means by which children can clarify their thinking and show what they know, writing will also be integrated into other subject areas including math, science, and social studies.

Spelling

The Words Their Way program assesses students and places them into appropriate groups that are working on similar spelling patterns. I often have five different spelling groups in one class. Students will study spelling words individually and with their group during “Word Work” time. When they are ready to move to the next spelling list, they will take a 20 word quiz. Words that are incorrect will remain on their next list to learn.

During the year, I may move students between groups depending on their spelling needs.

Grammar

In addition to Word Study, we will study the grammar. Sample topics include parts of a sentence, parts of speech, subject/verb agreement, and punctuation.

Handwriting

We will be practicing cursive this year using Inspiring Quotes. I also provide small group and individual help for students as needed. Cursive is a great way to work on fine motor skills and be sure that each child is able to read cursive writing.

Keyboarding

Students will have many opportunities to type this year using their 1:1 Chromebooks. We will continue to use Typing Agent: <https://piedmont.typingagent.com/> as a way to practice correct keyboarding technique. (When they are practicing at home, be sure that they are using the home keys!)

Oral Language and Listening

Sharing ideas and developing thoughtful listening skills are central to success across the curriculum. These skills are integral to the new Common Core Curriculum standards. Opportunities to develop expressive language occur as part of our daily reading group work, during cooperative learning with a math partner, and in whole class discussions around a variety of topics.

Mathematics

We are excited to have a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, engaging program with which to teach our math standards. This program is Bridges and Number Corner from [The Math Learning Center](#).

We have math five times a week. Math activities include whole and small group problem solving, hands-on math activities involving manipulatives, games, and paper/pencil math. We emphasize problem-solving strategies as well as mastery of basic facts.

Children will often be asked to explain their thinking orally, in writing, or through pictures.

These skills fall under the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice: Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct a viable argument and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision.

There is a strong emphasis on learning and sharing multiple strategies.

(see <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Practice/> for more information).

Math Enrichment

Our math program will be supplemented by Jessica Roine, our math specialist. She will be working monthly with our class on Enrichment activities including “Problem of the Month”. She is also supplying our class with lesson extensions. Between Mrs. Roine and myself, challenge math is always available to students in our classroom.

Teachers and Math Specialist will be

- implementing a mathematically rich curriculum that is suitable for a range of learners.
- assigning challenge problems that are embedded within the Bridges curriculum

- presenting low floor / high ceiling investigations - high achieving students will be asked to present more complex and systematic strategies to the Bridges investigations
- asking high level critical thinking questions during class discussions.
- building math communities within which students will be expected to listen to and critique the ideas of others.
- providing alternative activities during Work Places for students demonstrating a need for rigorous problem solving (teachers and Math Specialists will work together to provide these)
- sharing Work Place game variations
- providing opportunities for small group problem solving/project work with a teacher or Math Specialist (2nd-5th grade) (could be pull-out or push-in)
- presenting 3 Problems of the Month throughout the year
- offering blended learning experiences (individualized learning through the use of tech - to be explored more fully this year)
- providing Fourth Graders with Math Olympiad problems during Work Places- Math Specialist will support this effort)
- offering optional Math Olympiad contests to Fourth and Fifth Graders during lunch (Math Specialist will facilitate the contests) Starting early October. Tell Mr. C. if interested.

Science Areas of Study:

Geology / Environments / Electricity and Magnetism / Engineering

We are transitioning between the old CA Science standards to [Next Generation Science Standards](#) over the next few years. Our district has not adopted curriculum for the new standards as publishers are still working on developing materials to meet them adequately. So, this year, we will be bringing some elements of the new standards into science while teaching units that align with the outgoing CA Science standards.

Social Studies Focuses:

CA geography, First Californians, Explorers of CA, Missions, Rancheros, Gold Rush, Statehood

We will focus primarily on California history with an emphasis on primary sources and multiple perspectives.

Social/Emotional Growth:

In order to help our students develop to their full potential academically, emotionally, and socially, Havens uses Second Step. Through this program, kids will practice the empathy, emotion-management, and problem-solving skills that they need, as well as self-regulation skills.

We are also using a website called Inner Explorer which focuses on meditation practice.

Schedule of Enrichment Classes

Monday: Technology

Tuesday: Instrumental Music, Art

Wednesday: Library (every 2 weeks)

Thursday: PE

Friday: PE

Discipline Policy

Discipline in our classroom begins with working together to create classroom expectations and reinforcing positive behavior.

The students have spent time in the beginning of the year creating a learning environment that stresses that we are a “Community of Learners.” Students are expected to be respectful of their peers as well as adults, and behave in ways that make the learning environment conducive to all, so that everyone has a fair chance at doing their best.

Positive Reinforcement

Individual: Star Chart- A class favorite! The star chart is a fun and visible way for me to give a quick ‘thank you’ to a student that is demonstrating excellent behavior. When a student fills up the Star Chart, they get an invitation to have a Star Lunch in the classroom where we play games, do a special project, or just enjoy time with our friends.

Wall of Fame- Students give daily appreciations to each other and put student's names on the Wall of Fame for all to see.

Other- I also leave notes for students or check in with positive feedback.

Whole Class: Marble Jar- The class earns (or loses) marbles based on meeting class expectations. When we fill up the jar, we have a class party designed by The students.

Consequences

First disruption- Reminder of expectation.

Second disruption- Student may be asked to move to a different place in the classroom to work. Student and teacher try to solve the problem together. Consequence of further reminders is stated.

Multiple / severe disruptions- Previously stated consequence is given. May be a call home. Student will talk about their behavior with a family member. I may choose to email the family. I very rarely send students to the office.

Homework

This year, expect these Weekly Homework Assignments:

- **1. READING.** Read everyday for 30+ minutes. In addition to books, students have online access to Newsela.com and other resources through the Havens library.
- **2. MATH.** 2-4 worksheets from Bridges 'Home Connection' workbook.

*** Math worksheets will be collected but not reviewed in class. This work is review of concepts and strategies we have covered in class. We hope to use this homework as a way for families to see what we're doing in class. It will not be used for grading purposes. Please send me a quick email if you notice a particular concept that is difficult for your child.

- 3. **ASSIGNED WEBSITES** may include: Typing Agent, Khan Academy, Newsela
- 4. **OTHER.** Special projects, writing, or other assignments may come home (but not weekly)

PDF

Play time, Down time, and Family time!

Elementary school children need ample time for their most important job: unstructured play. Kids of all ages need restorative time to reflect and dream. Families need time together: at meals, on weekends, and during vacations to connect and form lasting bonds.

Conferences

We will have 2 formal conferences this year. They will span a full five-day week. More info to come on the website in regards to signing up! During these conferences we will go over report cards, plan goals, and strategize for success. If, however, there is any need to contact me prior to our scheduled conference, don't hesitate to do so!

Parent Volunteers

Room Parents will coordinate volunteer activities throughout the year. Volunteers will be needed for field trips.

Birthdays

We will not be celebrating birthdays with food in school. We will recognize birthdays in other fun ways-- singing, birthday crowns, special song or read-aloud requests, etc.

Field Trips The 4th Grade field trips are fun and tend to be ones that are in very high demand for other schools. So, we may not go on the same trips every year.

This year we are planning on: Tilden Botanical Gardens, Sibley Volcanic Regional Park, Ano Nuevo (elephant seals), Oakland Museum of California, Davis Street Transfer Station, Angel Island *Exact Dates TBD.*

Donations for field trips can be made at: piedmontstore.org

*** Field Trips are funded by donations**** Please donate!

Postcards

It is always a lot of fun for the class to get mail! If you happen to go on a trip and you can help your child send us a postcard, we would all enjoy it! (It's a good way to sneak in a little writing too!)

Questions?

email: mcampana@piedmont.k12.ca.us In general, this is the best way to contact me about non-urgent matters. I'm not on the computer too much during the day, but I try to check email at lunch or right after school. I don't check email after 4:00 or on the weekend.

The phone number for the school is 510-594-2680.

If you need to get a message to me before the end of the school day, call the office. They will be sure I get the message before the day's end. I will get back to you as soon as I am able to.

Final Note

In addition to helping my students achieve academic goals, I hope to encourage them to become open-minded, respectful, and empowered individuals.

If you have any questions about your child's education or, if you would like to meet with me regarding your child's progress, please email or catch me before or after school.

Each class and each student is very unique. I'm looking forward to our accomplishments, achievements, successes, and surprises to come over this school year. Here we go!

Sincerely,

Matthew Campana