

2015 - 2016



Curriculum In A Nutshell

Excellence Without Exception

PRINCIPALS

- James Quinn, Mary Louise Aiken School
- Steve Woznicki, Braeburn School
- Noam Sturm, Lloyd H. Bugbee School
- Juan Melián, Charter Oak International Academy
- Kristi Laverty, Louise Duffy School
- Ryan Cleary, Edward Morley School
- Jen Derick, Eric G. Norfeldt School
- Teresa Giolito, Florence E. Smith STEM School
- Jeffrey Wallowitz, Webster Hill School
- Karen Kukish, Whiting Lane School
- Jasdeep Singh, Henry A. Wolcott School



50 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107
 (860) 561-6631
www.whps.org

What Your Child Will Learn In Kindergarten

Dear Families,

It is a pleasure to share our 2015 - 2016 *Curriculum in A Nutshell*, a brief overview of all areas of the Kindergarten through Grade 5 West Hartford Curriculum. This edition outlines the curriculum for your child's respective grade in school. Using basic skills and experiences as building blocks, the West Hartford Curriculum identifies what children learn at each grade level and represents a balanced and comprehensive program of all academic areas. Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Core Standards and provides instruction on the essential skills and understandings necessary for success on both district and state assessments. The Connecticut Core Standards in literacy and math have been introduced in all grades K-5. The West Hartford curriculum also includes an integration of the visual and performing arts, physical education, world language (grades 3-5) and library media services.

This curriculum comes alive in the hands of our talented teachers who are committed to ensuring that our students reach their highest potential. We are dedicated to accommodating children's diverse needs, the way they learn, their experiences and interests, and to facilitating continuous educational growth. If you should have any questions about your child's curriculum, your classroom teacher is the best source of information.

No single document can fully explain the rich and complex nature of the school curriculum and instructional goals. We know that learning is optimized in a partnership with families, teachers, and schools. Working together, we can use your experiences as a family and our work in the classroom to create a respectful climate of academic success and joy for lifelong learning.

Sincerely,

Nancy M. DePalma, Ed.D.
 Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

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Language Arts

Your child will be working to develop his or her understanding and mastery of Kindergarten Connecticut Core Standards in English-Language Arts. These standards integrate all aspects of Language Arts development and are categorized under Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language. Your child’s teacher will use a wide variety of instructional strategies and formats to help your child learn and progress toward mastery of these standards by the end of the school year.

Apply Concepts about Print

- Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print by following words-left to right, top to bottom, page by page.
- Understand that spoken words are printed in written language.
- Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.
- Recognize and name all upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Demonstrate Phonological Awareness (the ability to manipulate sounds orally)

- Recognize and produce rhymes.
- Understand words are made of syllables that can be put together and taken apart.
- Blend and segment onsets and rimes (/b/-/at/ says “bat”).
- Identify beginning, middle, and ending sounds.
- Substitute beginning, middle, and ending sounds to make new words (cat, cap).

Apply Phonics and Word Recognition Skills

- Produce the correct sound for each letter including short and long vowel sounds.
- Read kindergarten sight words automatically.
- Distinguish between similarly spelled words (map/mop, hat/ham, tim/tip).

Read with Fluency

- Read familiar and emergent texts with purpose and understanding.

Identify Key Ideas and Details

- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding in fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Identify main idea and retell familiar stories with key details.
- Identify character, setting, and major events in stories.
- Describe connection between two individuals, events, or ideas in informational texts.

Understand the Structure of Texts

- Ask and answer questions about unknown words.
- Recognize common types of texts (storybooks, poems, etc.)
- Identify author and illustrator and define their roles.
- Identify parts of a book (cover, title page).

Integrate Knowledge and Ideas Within and Across Texts

- Recognize that illustrations complement and add to the meaning of text.
- Compare/contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.
- Identify reason an author gives to support points in an informational text.
- Identify the similarities and differences between two informational texts on the same topic.

Read and Comprehend a Range of Texts with Appropriate Grade Level Complexity

- Engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

Language

Demonstrate Command of Conventions of Standard English

- Print uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
- Form plural nouns.
- Understand and use question words.
- Use common prepositions (from, in, out, on, off).
- Speak in complete sentences.

Capitalize the beginning of sentences and the pronoun “I”.

Recognize and name end punctuation.

Spell simple words phonetically with a beginning, middle, and end (i.e., mtn=mitten).

Understand and Use Grade Appropriate Vocabulary

- Use the context of a story to identify the meaning of words.
- Use the knowledge of prefixes and suffixes to understand the meaning of a word.
- Sort common objects into categories.
- Understand word opposites.

Identify real life connections between words and their use.

Act out similar verbs (walk, strut, march).

Utilize acquired vocabulary from reading and conversation.

Writing

Write a Variety of Text for Various Purposes

- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to share an opinion, tell a story, and share information.

Produce and Publish Clear and Coherent Writing

- Add detail to writing and edits with support from peers and adults.
- Explore digital resources for use in writing.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Participate in shared research and writing projects.
- Recall information from experiences or gather information from sources to answer a question.

Speaking And Listening

Participate in Collaborative Conversations with Understanding about Kindergarten Topics and Texts

- Follow rules for discussion.
- Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.
- Confirm understanding through questioning and request clarification if needed.

Present Knowledge and Ideas Clearly

- Describe familiar people, places, things, and events to provide additional detail.
- Add drawings to provide additional detail.
- Speak audibly and clearly.

Social Studies

Government and Civics

- Develop a sense of self and personal abilities.
- Develop the following skills: interpersonal, decision-making, problem-solving listening/speaking, personal and group skills.
- Explore, understand and appreciate the cultural similarities and differences between one’s own culture and other cultures.

Geography

- Distinguish between a map and a globe.
- Locate the United States and Connecticut on a map.
- Locate areas of land and water on a map and globe.

History

- Develop a sense of personal history.
- Develop a sense of U.S. history through the study of famous Americans and national holidays.
- Locate yesterday, today, and tomorrow on a calendar to sequence events.
- Recognize events that re-occur and use terms such as *before* and *after* to compare events.

Recognition of Religious Holidays

- Epiphany (Christian), Christmas (Christian), Hanukkah (Jewish)

Handwriting

- Engage in a variety of fine motor activities using pencils, markers, crayons, playdough, and scissors.
- Is introduced to the upper- and lower-case manuscript alphabet and practices letter formation in written work.
- Write name using upper- and lower-case letters.

Science

Life Science

Our Senses

- Identify how our five senses help us gather information and understand the world.
- Perceive the natural world through the use of five senses.

Earth Science

Weather Conditions

- Recognize that weather conditions vary daily and seasonally.
- Describe and record daily weather conditions.
- Relate seasonal weather patterns to appropriate choices of clothing and activities.

Science and Technology in Society

Environment and Shelters

- Recognize that humans select both natural and man-made materials to build shelters.
- Describe the materials people use to shelter themselves and how that is based on climate conditions.
- Compare and contrast shelters to identify common features.

Scientific Inquiry

- Demonstrate a thoughtful and coordinated attempt to search out, describe, explain and predict natural phenomena.
- Participate in speaking, listening, presenting, interpreting, reading and writing about science.
- Understand that mathematics provides useful tools for the description, analysis and presentation of scientific data and ideas.





Mathematics

Our mathematics curriculum is based on the Connecticut Core Standards for Mathematics (CCSS-M) that define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of the year at each grade level. The Connecticut Core Standards for Mathematics have two key components:

- (1) **Standards for Mathematical Practice** – eight practices in which students engage at all grade levels
- (2) **Standards for Mathematical Content** – conceptual understandings and procedural knowledge and skills

The Content Standards at each grade level are grouped into domains (e.g. Geometry) and clusters within each domain.

Our main instructional focus in Kindergarten is on representing, relating and operating on whole numbers, initially with sets of objects. An additional area of focus is on describing shapes and space. To provide you with an understanding of your child's mathematics learning this year, we have highlighted domains and clusters of standards for Kindergarten below. A comprehensive description of the Connecticut Core Standards for Mathematics is available at <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

Mathematical Practices

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

Counting and Cardinality

- Know numbers, names and the count sequence.
Count to 100 by ones and tens.
Count forward beginning from a given number.
Write numbers from 0 to 20.
- Count to tell the number of objects.
- Compare numbers.
Identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than less, than, or equal to the number of objects in another group.
Compare two numbers between 1 and 10 presented as written numerals.

Key Fluency

- Add/subtract within 5.

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.

Measurement and Data

- Describe and compare measurable attributes (length, weight)
Example: Compare the heights of objects and describe one as taller/shorter.
- Classify objects and count the number of objects in categories.

Geometry

- Identify and describe shapes.
Describe objects using names of shapes and the relative positions of these objects using terms such as above, below, beside, in front of, behind, next to.
- Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes.



Visual Arts

The Visual Arts Department promotes artistic development, fosters development of visual literacy, critical thinking skills, intellectual risk-taking and lifelong learning. The curriculum is grounded in the National Standards. The program strives to address the four components of Art Education in the following ways (suggested concepts to be addressed appear in *italics*):

Art History/Culture

Understand visual art in history and culture through studying artists such as:

- Grandma Moses (*Anna Mary Robertson*), (*landscape*)
- Piet Mondrian (*shape, primary color, horizontal, vertical*)
- Leo Lionni (*collage, illustration*)
- Mexican art
- Additional cultures, artists, and art forms

Art Production

Produce visual expressions; design and communicate through art:

- Drawing: introduce drawing materials for visual communication; emphasis on developing a vocabulary of visual images.
- Painting: introduce fundamental techniques and materials management in two-dimensional concepts.
- Three-Dimensional Forms: introduce fundamental techniques and materials to form three-dimensional concepts, both functional and decorative.

Art Criticism

- Perceive the qualities of visual art and makes judgments.
- Introduce appropriate elements of design and the language of art.
- Begin to develop visual literacy skills and vocabulary.

Aesthetics

- Make opinions about visual art and understand the basis for informed opinion.
- Recognize feelings and reactions to art.

Music

Vocal Music

Singing is the foundation of all music skills in the elementary vocal music curriculum. Music skills are sequentially taught and divided into five content areas: melody, rhythm, reading and writing, part work and form, using grade appropriate songs, singing games and rounds.

Singing

- Sing in tune, clearly, alone and with others, e.g., greeting songs.

Performance/Improvising

- Imitate simple melodic and rhythmic patterns.
- Move to and keep a steady beat.

Reading/Notating

- Develop reading readiness abilities.

Listening/Evaluating

- Listen to music with focused attention.
- Respond to music with movement.
- Use terminology in describing music, e.g., fast/slow; loud/soft.

Understanding Culture/History

- Identify ways in which other disciplines are interrelated with music.
- Sing songs and play games that explore cultural diversity, e.g., Mexico.





Library Media Services

The library media program in the elementary school provides the foundation for information and technology literacy skills and supports reading for lifelong learning. By the end of grade 5 students will:

- Identify what they need to do and find out to complete a task or assignment.
- Use the research process to solve problems and make decisions.
- Select and narrow or broaden search terms.
- Brainstorm a list of the possible information sources.
- Evaluate the relevancy and reliability of information sources.
- Use the navigational features of sources (e.g., indexes, table of contents, menus, site maps) to locate information.
- Take notes in their own words after reading, viewing, or listening to information sources .
- Cite information sources using the appropriate format.
- Create a product using appropriate information and technology that communicates ideas to others.
- Evaluate the final product by identifying what went well and what to improve in the future.
- Engage in a variety of literature experiences to make connections with text and images (e.g., illustrations, photographs, charts, maps, diagrams).
- Use a variety of strategies to select “just right” books.
- Demonstrate responsible use of library materials.



Physical Education

- Demonstrate good body control when performing locomotor and non-locomotor skills.
- Demonstrate developmentally appropriate manipulative skills using a variety of implements and different body parts.
- Apply movement concepts (e.g., space, speed) to movements.
- Perform simple rhythmic patterns involving creative or cultural dance movement.
- Participate in a variety of moderate to vigorous physical activities that promote fitness.
- Perform movement tasks (both on the floor and on the apparatus) that require creative or critical thinking.
- Demonstrate the physical, cognitive, and effective skills to participate in cooperative adventure activities.

Keyboarding

Keyboarding in grades PreK-1 focuses on keyboarding awareness skills such as left and right hand keys, and the location of alphabetic keys as well as the operation of the space bar, enter, and backspace keys. Proper technique and posture are emphasized at all grade levels.

Health

- Recognize characteristics of a safe home and school, and identify ways to prevent accidents, play safely, and use the Internet safely.
- Identify and distinguish between substances that are safe and unsafe (poison prevention).
- Identify trusted adults who can help them.
- Recognize and respect differences and similarities in the ways people think, act, learn, look, and live.
- Make healthy eating choices, including eating enough fruits and vegetables daily.
- Recognize their own feelings and others’ feelings and ways to show caring.
- Practice effective communication skills, including active listening and apologizing.
- Practice ways to manage strong feelings, including calming-down techniques.

West Hartford Community Relations police officers assist in teaching some of these objectives.

