



September 2021

Dear Third Grade Families:

Welcome to Third Grade! Students in grade three participate in a variety of classroom experiences to expand their love of learning and develop their academic, social, and physical skills while enhancing their ability to INVESTIGATE. The following descriptions present a brief overview of the comprehensive program.

i-Ready Diagnostic and Personalized Path: This year, our students will take the i-Ready diagnostic. This diagnostic is a short series of questions that will help teachers know how to group students to best address their needs and build on their strengths. The i-Ready diagnostic is administered on the computer. Once your student has finished the assessment the program creates a personalized series of games and learning activities. We ask that each student spend 10 - 15 minutes each day on reading and math i-Ready activities. To learn more about i-Ready, please go to www.aacps.org/iready.

Literacy: AACPS embraces a balanced approach to literacy instruction at the elementary level; whole language and phonics instruction are both valued. A compilation of learning blocks work in tandem to address the variety of needs of developing readers and writers. These include:

- *Explicit Comprehension:* Explicit Comprehension instruction provides students with skills and strategies they use to understand grade level texts. In Explicit Comprehension, students engage in a short lesson in which teachers model a new skill or strategy with a familiar book prior to giving students the opportunity to try it out with a partner or independently with a new book. Teachers check in with students during the independent time to monitor progress and assess students' understanding of the lesson.
- *Interactive Read Aloud:* Interactive Read Aloud instruction provides students with a daily opportunity to interact with complex books. During Interactive Read Aloud, students meet in a common area to listen as the teacher reads aloud and shows how skilled readers read, think and talk about books. The teacher pauses as he or she reads to share his or her thinking with students and asks questions that prompt students to discuss the book and develop a deeper understanding of content and ideas.
- *Writer's Workshop:* The *Units of Study for Writing Curriculum* is used to teach Writer's Workshop. Writer's Workshop provides student choice and ownership of writing. During Writer's Workshop, students engage in a short lesson in which teachers model a new skill or strategy prior to giving students the opportunity to try it out in their independent writing. As students write independently, the teacher works with small groups of students or individual students to apply the skill or strategy to their own writing or provide feedback.
- *Guided Reading:* Guided Reading instruction provides students with an opportunity to read books at their reading level based upon the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Students meet in small groups to receive direct instruction from the teacher. After a brief introduction to the book, students read the book independently, whisper reading in the early grades and transitioning to silent reading. After students read the book, the teacher uses questions to engage them in a discussion of the book. This differentiated instructional time provides teachers an opportunity to target students' precise strengths and needs as developing readers.

Mathematics: AACPS Mathematics PreK-5 program implements the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. These standards are a set of high-quality academic goals which provide rigor, focus, and coherence to prepare our students to be college and career ready by the time they graduate from high school. Instruction will include these mathematical domains:

- Operations and Algebraic Thinking – represent and solve problems with all four operations, multiply and divide fluently within 100, identify patterns in arithmetic
- Number & Operations in Base Ten – understand place value to perform multi-digit arithmetic

- Number & Operations – Fractions – understand fractions as numbers, recognize equivalent fractions
- Geometry – reason with shapes and their attributes
- Measurement and Data – solve problems with measurement and estimation, including the concept of area and perimeter, represent and interpret data

AACPS values creating a positive math culture in the classroom by inspiring success for all students through growth mindset and risk taking. AACPS embraces opportunities to make math visible with the use of concrete manipulatives and representations to develop conceptual understanding. Math is a social experience as students engage in meaningful conversations with their peers.

AACPS strives to inspire students to see the beauty in math through games and real-world problem-solving. Students can practice mathematics at home including building sets and relating them to multiplication, measuring/estimating the distance from the house to the playground, estimating or determining elapsed time when they clean their room, cooking with a family member and using the world around them to name shapes and describe their attributes. It is important for students to continue their math learning at home using their Ready Common Core student instruction book, i-Ready My Path and First In Math.

Science: The Science learning block focuses on education in science, environmental literacy, and engineering. Using the foundation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), students develop questions and investigate phenomena as scientists, environmentalists, engineers, and informed citizens. Throughout the Science learning block, students are encouraged to observe, collect, and evaluate data to share conclusions and take informed action about topics being studied. The topics are:

- Forces and Motion
- Life Cycles
- Group Dynamics and Survival
- Ecosystems, Past and Present
- Heredity of Organisms
- Weather & Climate
- Engineering Design

In the spring, students can apply what they learned by taking part in the Innovators of Science and Engineering Challenge.

Environmental Literacy: Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards are integrated into curriculum through engaging units that connect students with their local natural world. In third grade students will be investigating environmental issues through social studies, science, and math. During the fourth marking period, students investigate an Environmental Action Project in which where they apply the 21st Century skills acquired throughout the year (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity) to better understand, collect data, and take action on a class-identified, environmental issue.

Social Studies: Students investigate important concepts from the disciplines of social studies: geography, economics, civics, history and explore the concept of culture. Students learn about the geography, economics, and government of Anne Arundel County. Students continue to practice the skills of social studies: sequencing events, analyzing cause and effect, analyzing perspective, reading, and writing independently. They also listen to children’s literature to learn concepts of social studies. They complete short writing assignments, read and construct maps, charts, tables and graphs. At the end of each unit there is a culminating performance-based project that allows students to authentically apply the skills that they have learned. The units studied are:

- Our Community
- People in Our Community
- Community at Work
- Environmental Action Project

English Language Acquisition Program (ESOL): English Language Acquisition instruction and ESOL classes meet the requirements of Title III of ESSA. The goal of English Language Acquisition instruction is to enable English Learners to construct meaning from oral and written language, express complex ideas, and information, as well as access grade-level instruction across content areas. In order to accomplish this goal, the ELA curriculum is based on WIDA English Language Development (ELD) standards:

- Language for Social and Instructional Purposes
- Language for Language Arts
- Language for Mathematics
- Language for Science
- Language for Social Studies

The WIDA English Language Development standards framework represents the social, instructional, and academic language that students need to engage with peers, educators, and grade-level content curriculum. As such, the framework for teaching language is integrated with the Maryland State Standards for College and Career Readiness, as well as National and State Content Standards. All students who have been identified as eligible to receive English Language Acquisition services will take WIDA's ACCESS for ELLs, the annual assessment to measure English Language Proficiency.

Technology: Students increase their creativity, communicate, and collaborate with others and gather, evaluate, and analyze information and data using computers. They solve problems and make decisions in a manner that demonstrates their understanding of the social, ethical, and human issues related to technology.

We are looking forward to a year of learning for your third grader. If you desire additional information, please contact your child's teacher.

Sincerely,



Walter R. Lee, III

WRL/pmw