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COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Dear Fourth Grade Families:

Welcome to Fourth Grade! Students in grade four participate in a variety of classroom experiences to expand their love of learning and develop their academic, social, and physical skills while applying INQUIRY to all they study. 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:

- Number & Operations: Base Ten – generalize place value understanding, add and subtract whole numbers fluently, foundations of multi-digit multiplication and division
- Number & Operations: Fractions – build unit fractions to determine equivalence and compare, develop foundations for operations with fractions, understand decimal notation for fractions

- Operations & Algebraic Thinking – use four operations to solve problems, gain familiarity with factors, multiples, and patterns
- Geometry - identify lines and angles, classify shapes by properties, symmetry
- Measurement and Data – conversion of measurements, interpreting data, and angle measurement

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.

Social Studies: Elementary Social Studies provides the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for young students to become informed, empowered and socially responsible citizens. Through the study of history, geography, civics, and economics students learn to interact with and contribute to the world in which they live. Students continue to evaluate sources of information, craft arguments based on evidence and take informed action developing civic voice, identity, and agency. In fourth grade students will begin their first deep dive into American History focusing on a more accurate and inclusive history of the different peoples, perspectives and events that have shaped early America. The units studied are:

- World's Collide: Cultures and Conquests (1450-1650)
- Resistance, Colonization, and European Expansion (1500-1750)
- American Revolution (1750-1789)
- American Revolution Continued (1750-1789)

Science: Through exploration of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) curriculum, students engage in scientific inquiry. During this process, students ask scientifically-grounded, real-world questions, take measurements, collect data, and analyze information to find solutions to scientific problems. Students study patterns and relationships within science and learn to build evidence-based arguments in response to claims. The topics are:

- Structure and Function of Organisms
- Use of Patterns in Transferring Information
- Interpreting Maps of Earth's Features
- Developing Models of Wavelength and Amplitude of Waves
- Weathering and Erosion
- Forms of Energy & Energy Transfer
- Effect of Fuels on the Environment
- 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. Students will answer the question: How has human activity affected Maryland's living things? Students conduct investigations and collect data through their science curriculum and experiences with staff from Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center to complete Project Based Learning action projects. Focused environmental topic relates to their current science units. They learn that when humans change

environments, organisms are not always able to adapt and may not survive. With a particular focus on their local Chesapeake Bay environment, students learn and understand issues affecting the Bay and how they can make a difference.

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 fourth grader. If you desire additional information, please contact your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Walter R. Lee III

Walter R. Lee, III

WRL/pmw