



September 2021

Dear Fifth Grade Families:

Welcome to Fifth Grade! Students in grade five participate in a variety of classroom experiences to expand their love of learning while developing their academic, social and physical skills while seeking DISCOVERY. The following descriptions present a brief overview of the comprehensive program for the fifth grade.

**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](http://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: Fractions – use all four operations to solve problems with fractions
- Number & Operations: Base Ten – place value including decimals, decimal operations with multi-digit whole numbers
- Operations and Algebraic Thinking – write and interpret numerical expressions, analyze relationships

- Geometry - classify figures based on properties, use a coordinate plane to solve problems
- Measurement and Data – Convert units of measurement, represent and interpret data, understand concepts of volume

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:** Students explore the answer to the question, “What does it mean to be an American?” by studying the history, government, and geography of the United States through the lens of diverse perspectives. Students investigate the historical events leading to the founding of our country and learn about exploration, colonization, and the American Revolution. They also study the principles of democracy and our form of government. Students have the opportunity in the U.S. Government unit to participate in a class campaign or a Simulated Congressional Hearing for which they may receive up to 5 hours of service learning. Students continue to practice the skills of social studies by sequencing events, analyzing cause and effect, and analyzing perspective. They read primary sources and complete writing assignments and research projects. They are expected to read and write independently. Students will utilize the textbook, America's Past both in traditional and digital format. They also interpret and construct maps, charts, tables and graphs. The units studied are:

- Colonization
- Road to Revolution
- American Revolution
- We the People

**Science:** Through exploration of the Next Generation Science Standards curriculum, students engage in scientific inquiry. Throughout this process, students generate questions around real-world science phenomena and develop investigations to find the answers to these questions. They 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:

- Food Webs in Ecosystems
- Stars and Constellations
- Interactions of the Four Spheres of Earth
- Phases & Interactions of Matter
- Engineering Design

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

**Environmental Literacy & Outdoor Education:** Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards are integrated into curriculum through engaging units that connect students with their local natural world. Students answer the question, “How do state and local laws address environmental issues?” During the fourth quarter in social studies, they examine state and local laws related to an environmental issue. They conduct research and investigate, then students act as responsible citizens and promote the common good by taking action on the issue.

**Drownproofing:** The Drownproofing Program is a comprehensive aquatic safety program for AACPS fifth graders. Students learn personal water safety skills through teacher and Drownproofing staff led lessons. The instruction is aligned with the language arts and physical education curriculum. Water safety instruction is provided by certified aquatic safety instructors. Lessons focus on personal water safety, use of personal flotation devices, safe rescues, cold water survival techniques, hypothermia and ice safety.

**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.

**Media Arts:** Students experience a heightened level of art access through a unique medium of artistic expression that can amplify and integrate the four traditional art forms by incorporating the technological advances of the contemporary world with emerging skill sets available to students and teachers. In the Media Arts, students cultivate both artistic abilities and a technological aptitude. The media artist utilizes a fundamental understanding of the mediums of analog and digital media to integrate digital technologies with traditional forms of artistic expression. Artistic processes are the cognitive and physical actions by which arts learning and making are realized. National Core Arts Standards are based on the artistic processes of Creating; Performing/ Producing/Presenting; Responding; and Connecting.

**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.

**Health Education:** Students increase their awareness in the health skills of analyzing influences, nutrition, safe living environment, communication, disease prevention and control, decision making, conflict resolution, self-management and advocacy through identified literacy texts within the 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum.

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

Sincerely,



Walter R. Lee, III

WRL/pmw