

# First Grade Program Highlights

## Literacy

Reading, writing, speaking and listening are integral to all that we do in grade one. Our Balanced Literacy program ensures that students have daily instruction in the foundational skills required for effective reading, writing and word work. Our first grade literacy benchmarks are aligned to the Common Core English/Language Arts standards. Students receive daily small-group decoding and comprehension instruction within our guided reading program. In addition, students participate in whole-class shared reading, interactive read-aloud, and independent reader's workshop.

Writing instruction utilizes the process approach and is focused on developing skills for writing narrative, opinion, and informational text, as well as poetry. Teachers model effective writing, conference during independent writing time, and foster opportunities for shared writing experiences across the curriculum.

First grade writer's workshop units include:

- *Realistic Fiction & Small Moments*
- *"How To" & "All About" Books*
- *Mentor Authors*
- *Fables*

Phonics, grammar, mechanics and vocabulary are integrated into literacy lessons or directly taught through word work activities.

## Mathematics

The *Everyday Mathematics* program is a research-based field-tested curriculum that emphasizes lifelong mathematical understanding. Its lessons engage students in hands-on activities to build and reinforce computational and problem-solving skills. *Everyday Mathematics'* first grade benchmarks are aligned to the Common Core standards.

Critical areas of focus for grade one include:

- *Addition and Subtraction: Concepts & Strategies*
- *Place Value with Tens and Ones*
- *Linear Measurement*
- *Geometric Shapes*

## Social Studies

First grade social studies units explore individual and group relationships in homes, neighborhoods, and schools. Three thematic units provide engaging learning activities that promote cooperation and communication.

First grade social studies units include:

- *The Parade: An Exploration of My Culture*
- *Families in the Neighborhood*
- *A Child's Place at School*

In addition, all 1SD students participate in a celebration of global cultural diversity, Senegalese art, and traditional West African music during our school-wide World Culture Month.

## Science

*FOSS* science kits provide our first graders with thematic lessons that incorporate hands-on scientific exploration in the areas of Life, Physical, and Earth Science. First grade benchmarks are aligned to the National Science Education Standards.

First grade science units include:

- *Insects and their Habitats*
- *Balance and Motion*
- *Earth Materials: Pebbles, Sand and Silt*

## French Language

Students receive daily instruction in the French language for 45-minute instructional blocks. Based on AERO (American Education Reaches Out) and Francophone standards, the curriculum offers opportunities for integrated reading, writing, speaking and listening, as well as for exploration of the French and Senegalese cultures.

## Visual and Musical Arts

First graders attend separate art and music classes twice per 6-day cycle. During these 45-minute sessions, children explore the visual and musical arts through hands-on experiences that encourage creativity, collaboration and interpretation. Students perform in school-wide concerts and art exhibitions throughout the year. When possible, music and art lessons are integrated into classroom units of study.

## Physical Education & Health

Physical education is offered two times per 6-day cycle in 45-minute sessions. During this time, students learn the skills and strategies for team and individual sports, fitness, and dance and movement. Sportsmanship is highly emphasized, and students learn to work together in teams. Swimming instructional units are offered twice a year, in September and in May. Health topics are embedded in classroom units and facilitated by teachers and the school nurse.

## Technology, Research & Library

1SD's technology curriculum is an integrated program that infuses critical computer literacy benchmarks into existing grade level units of study. Students create media-based projects that build 21st century digital skills.

Students visit the library to learn about the power of books and research. 1SD uses the Super3 Research model for information problem solving, and students learn to PLAN, DO and REVIEW while they develop research projects that are integrated into classroom units of study. First graders visit the library once a week to check out books.

## Service Learning

1SD takes pride in an established community service program and maintains ongoing relationships with two local organizations:

- *Samusocial, a Dakar-based support agency for Talibe street children, and*
- *Le Pouponniere, an orphanage for Senegalese newborns and toddlers whose mothers have died at childbirth.*

First graders participate in service activities following a visit to a local school as well as with our school-based initiative, *Jappale*, which supports 1SD local staff.

## English Language Learners

1SD offers a sheltered immersion program for English Language Learners. Students are assessed at the beginning of the year to determine needs. Non-English proficient students receive daily support with the ELL specialist during the Language Arts instructional block (45 minutes to 1 1/2 hours daily). Limited-English proficient students are supported in after-school programs. The ELL specialist works with teachers to employ a wide variety of differentiation strategies to meet the needs of English Language Learners in their classrooms.

## Learning Support

In the first grade, both teachers and specialists use early intervention strategies to address weak literacy or mathematics. This small-group support may take place during the literacy block or during daily French instructional time. The early intervention program is fluid in nature, offering students an opportunity to receive the support needed to meet grade level expectations in core subject areas. An IEP (Individual Education Plan) is not written for students receiving this support unless a specific learning disability has previously been identified through a psycho-educational evaluation.

