

Fifth Grade Program Highlights

Literacy

Our Balanced Literacy program blends the areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking into a yearly calendar of literacy units. Using the Common Core English/Language Arts standards, teachers connect specific content and skills targets with engaging literacy activities, providing opportunities for whole-class, small-group and individualized reading and writing. Reader's Workshop allows students to develop skills and strategies, cultivate a love of books, empower themselves as authors, and develop literacy analysis skills.

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.

Fifth grade literacy units include:

- *Realistic Fiction & Personal Narrative*
- *Historical Fiction*
- *Research-Based Argument Essay*
- *Navigating through Non-Fiction*

Phonics, grammar, mechanics and vocabulary are integrated into both literacy and content-area lessons. In addition, prefixes, suffixes, and Latin and Greek roots are directly taught through word work activities.

Cursive handwriting is not taught in grade five, but is, at times, expected to be used when completing written assignments.

Mathematics

The *Everyday Mathematics* program is a research-based, field-tested curriculum that emphasizes life-long mathematical understanding. Its lessons incorporate real-life examples that ensure the relevance of targeted mathematical concepts and reinforcement of computational and problem-solving skills. *Everyday Mathematics'* fifth grade benchmarks are aligned to the Common Core standards. Critical areas of focus for grade five include:

- *Computation with Fractions and Decimals*
- *Multi-Digit Division*
- *Volume*

Social Studies

Fifth grade social studies looks at history through the lens of cause and effect. Using simulations, texts and primary sources, students participate in engaging learning activities that promote cooperation and communication while developing analytical and critical thinking skills. Social studies learning benchmarks are aligned with AERO (*American Education Reaches Out*) standards.

Fifth grade social studies units include:

- *Cultural Roots*
- *The Economics of Exploration*
- *The Consequences of Colonialism*
- *Slavery*

In addition, all ISD 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 (Full Option Science System) kits provide our fifth graders with thematic lessons that incorporate hands-on scientific exploration into the areas of Life, Physical, and Earth Science. Fifth grade benchmarks are aligned to NSES (*National Science Education Standards*). Students learn how to "do science" using the scientific method, and they visit Lac Rose as a culminating science event to support their learning.

Fifth grade science units include:

- *Environments*
- *Mixtures & Solutions*
- *Models & Designs*

French Language

Students receive daily instruction in the French language for 45-minute instructional blocks. Based on AERO (*American Education Reaches Out*) and French National Standards, the curriculum offers opportunities for integrated reading, writing, speaking and listening, as well as for exploration of the French and French/Senegalese culture. French language teachers work as a team to provide multi-leveled instruction to students by determining individual skill levels at the beginning and end of each year.

Visual and Musical Arts

Fifth 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. Participation, effort and sportsmanship are highly emphasized, and students learn to work together in cooperative 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

ISD'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. Learning targets are aligned with NETS (*National Educational Technology Standards*).

ISD uses the *Big6 Research* model for information literacy. Students identify research goals, seek, use and assemble relevant and credible information, and reflect on their process and product. These research projects are integrated into classroom units of study. Students visit the library once a week to check out books.

Service Learning

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

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

Fifth graders participate in activities with Samusocial, both at ISD and at the local Samusocial facility as well as with our school-based initiative, *Jappale*, which supports ISD local staff.

English Language Learners

ISD 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 - 90 minutes 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

Teachers use a variety of differentiation strategies in fourth grade classrooms to meet student needs. If additional academic support is warranted and a student is struggling to meet grade-level expectations, educational testing may be recommended to assist the school in identifying learning differences and making instructional recommendations. Once identified and evaluated, these students are eligible to receive a daily 45-minute instructional block instead of French instruction. Students in the Learning Support Program do not take daily French classes. The learning specialist uses psycho-educational testing results to create an IEP (Individual Education Plan) and works with classroom teachers to support identified students and their needs.

