

September 2007

Dear Concord Elementary School Parents:

Welcome to the first grade! During this year your child will grow and develop emotionally, socially, and intellectually. We encourage you to become involved in your child's formal education and ask you to carefully review this overview of the first grade curriculum. You will see that there are many exciting adventures ahead as your child continues to learn to read and write, develops a strong number sense, begins to think mathematically, learns science concepts by doing hands-on investigations, and finds new outlets for artistic expression in music and art.

We are proud of the curricular and instructional program of the elementary schools in Concord for many reasons. First, it is based on the central assumption that all children can and will learn. The dedicated teachers, principals, and other staff members of the elementary schools are committed to creating an environment which fosters the intellectual growth of each child.

Second, the program is comprehensive and guided by National Standards and Massachusetts Frameworks. At the core of the program is a strong, discipline-based curriculum which includes sequential instruction at every grade level in all of the traditional academic areas: language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics. We believe that children learn by doing, that they need to develop positive identifications as readers, writers, speakers, mathematicians, scientists, historians, and geographers. Because we also believe that children should develop all of their talents, art, music, physical education, health, computer, and library experiences are vital aspects of the curriculum.

Third, the schools are committed to promoting the well-being of the whole person which means cultivating strong minds and healthy bodies. In order to foster the development of caring, responsible, and committed people, some themes, such as respect for human differences, permeate the curriculum and guide our interactions with children and our expectations for how children will treat each other. The Open Circle curriculum which is a comprehensive multi-year social and learning program for children is also implemented in K-5 classrooms.

The curricular and instructional program is dynamic with ongoing revisions and improvements. Grade-level standards for each grade and content area have been determined to identify what we expect students to know and learn at each grade level. Please access our website at www.colonial.net to review the grade-level standards. Each child's progress toward mastering the critical grade-level standards is evaluated and reported to parents mid-year in January and at the end of the year in June. Parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring also provide the opportunity to further discuss your child's strengths and weaknesses.

No document can fully explain how general curricular and instructional goals will apply to the learning of an individual child. If you have any questions about how the curriculum applies to your child, please speak directly with your child's teacher. We hope that you will find the overview informative and that you will consider it an invitation to become involved in working with us to make this a very successful year.

Sincerely,

Diana Rigby
Assistant Superintendent