

# Bishop School Curriculum

## *English Language Arts Reading*

Learning to read is a basic building block for learning. Proficiency in reading needs to be attained early in the lives of our students and continue to develop as texts increase in complexity and content. Arlington's reading curriculum is based on the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework and best practices from research. Our balanced literacy program includes experiences with a variety of instructional practices: read alouds, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and a systematic, sequential, multi-sensory phonics program.

Early in our students' school experience they have many opportunities to learn the essential components of reading. Students use multiple sources of information to learn about print and books including the sounds of spoken language (**phonological awareness**) and the letters of the alphabet and letter-sound relationships (**phonics**). In addition, they make connections while they think about their reading, search for clues, self correct, check sources of information, and confirm by rereading to understand what they have read (**comprehension**). Through teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice students develop their ability to read smoothly and naturally with good expression (**fluency**). A variety of texts and genres are used to assist students in learning new words and building their knowledge of what words mean in a particular context (**vocabulary**). The successful application of these complex and interrelated components enables children to become proficient, independent readers.

Our goal is for children to develop the skills, interest, and motivation to view reading as an enjoyable life-long habit that will help them better understand their world.

## *English Language Arts Writing*

Our writing program encourages students to gain an understanding and appreciation to communicate effectively through written and spoken language. Through writing workshops, children work through the different stages of the writing process, from prewriting, drafting, revising, and finalizing. Throughout this process students focus on traits of writing: ideas, organization, sentence fluency, conventions, and voice. Students learn how to respond to literature as well as narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing. Six Traits and Lucy Caulkins techniques are utilized.

## *Mathematics*

The mathematics curriculum is designed to provide all students with the content, pedagogy, and assessment practices necessary for them to become mathematically literate members of the twenty-first century. Responding to broad societal changes, our program is designed to equip all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a technological society. Students engage in problem solving, communicating, reasoning and proof, making connections and using representations.

Our active learning-centered approach is consistent with the Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework, Achieving Mathematical Power, and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics. It provides mathematical experiences that enable all students to:

- Appreciate the role mathematics plays in human affairs.
- Communicate and reason mathematically.
- Achieve meaningful mastery of computational skills.
- Become confident mathematical learners and problem solvers.

Learning situations are active, cooperative, technology supported, investigative, and problem-based to support these goals. Our program presents mathematics as a connected whole, represented in numerical, graphical, and analytic models that are interlinked. Learning activities reflect varying levels of understanding.

## *Social Studies*

Our teachers seek to engage students in the study of the early and modern world and its history, and to examine the history of the United States and the challenges it faces today. Though we often cover topics of the past, we look to find connections to current issues and situations in the United States and abroad. As part of their study of history, we also look to develop students' research, critical thinking, writing, and organizational skills.

## *Science*

In science classes at all grades students learn about the natural and physical worlds using grade-appropriate curriculum and investigations. Curriculum has been developed to fulfill the expectations of the Massachusetts Science and Technology/ Engineering Curriculum Framework. The elementary science program is built around Science and Technology for Children (STC) kits that provide hands-on opportunities for inquiry-based experimentation and observations. Students explore weather, life cycles, plant growth, ecosystems, electricity, and related topics through their work with the kits. Additional units cover the solar system, phases of the moon, simple and complex machines, climate, electromagnets, and major biomes of the world. Several themes such as energy, adaptation, and climate spiral through the curriculum and are revisited in grade six middle school science classes.

## *Fine Arts (Music & Art)*

The curriculum of the Performing and Visual Arts program of the Arlington Public Schools will provide students the skills with which to create, perform, understand and respond to the arts. The curriculum also strives to place the performing and visual arts in a wide social, cultural and historical perspective. Inspired by the National Standards for Arts Education, the philosophy of the arts program of the Arlington Public Schools subscribes to values that draw connections among the arts, the world and the lives of students. This philosophy affirms that:

- the arts are a way of knowing and as students create, they learn how to express themselves and how to communicate with others
- while providing personal fulfillment, the arts have value and significance for daily life
- situations in other disciplines requiring creative solutions can be illuminated by artists' methods and modes of thinking
- self-discipline, perseverance and the collaborative spirit, so necessary to the arts, can transfer to the rest of life

As stated in the National Standards for the Arts, participation in the arts "is among the best possible investments in the future of not only our children, but also of our country and civilization".

## *Health and Physical Education*

A comprehensive health education and physical education Program is provided to all students in grades K-5 through regularly scheduled physical education, and health classes. The program is an educational pathway for children to develop skills to achieve a healthy and balanced lifestyle, which emphasizes resiliency and responsibility while fostering respect for themselves and others.

Through health literacy (knowledge), self-management skills (practice and application) and health promotion (communication and advocacy), comprehensive health education teaches fundamental health concepts, promotes habits and conduct that enhance health and wellness and guides efforts to build healthy families, relationships, schools and communities. The four framework strands addressed through our curriculum are Physical Health, Social and Emotional Health, Safety and Prevention and Personal and Community Health. Each strand is addressed in every grade level.

The health program may also be enhanced throughout the year by special programs on conflict resolution, self esteem, and health.

The Great Body Shop curriculum is built sequentially. Knowledge, universal values, life skills and critical thinking skills are introduced through concepts that are age appropriate and familiar. Positive health values and universal values such as trust, love, respect, honesty, perseverance, and the pursuit of excellence are encouraged. The curriculum encourages collaboration among students, parents, classroom teachers, specialists, health services, and counseling and guidance. For each unit the students receive a student pamphlet and parents receive a bulletin that outlines the topics being covered that particular month.

## *Technology*

Technology integration and achieving technological literacy is integral to the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for our students.

Our goal is to provide instruction and support to both students and teachers. This effort is aligned with the district's K-12 technology benchmark standards.

Application of these technology standards in the elementary schools will ensure that there will be a level of technology competence for students when they reach middle school.

Through the use of various technologies, teachers are able to facilitate individual support and remediation, as well as enhance learning for all students through the use of technology.

The K-12 Benchmarks were adapted from the Massachusetts Department of Education Frameworks.