

Curriculum Night
Mrs. Ramsey's 2nd Grade
September 13, 2016



Curriculum Information

Second grade is a year of transition and growth in many areas! With guidance and support, students begin to work more independently, handle greater responsibility, enjoy reading for pleasure, and generally show greater capabilities both academically and socially.

Reading Workshop

Reading workshop is a daily 60 minute block of instruction which includes guided reading, literacy centers, read aloud, and independent reading. Students work in cooperative groups at centers that support their development in reading, writing, spelling, and other academic areas, while I work with small groups in guided reading.

Guided reading is a teaching approach intended to help individual students learn how to read a variety of increasingly challenging texts with understanding and fluency. It occurs in a small-group context because the small group allows for interactions among readers that benefit them all. I select and introduce texts to readers, support them while reading the text, engage the readers in a discussion, and make teaching points after the reading. Sometimes, after reading a text, I require that students extend the meaning of the text through writing, or another learning experience. The lesson may also include work with words based on the specific needs of the group. **The target levels for second grade include Levels J-M.** The range of levels is narrower than in previous grades and students move through them at a slower pace because they begin to be exposed to more genres and a larger number of comprehension strategies that will broaden their appreciation of literature and deepen their understanding of texts.

Literacy centers include tasks such as making spelling words with magnetic letters, reading a book and writing about it, finding information on a map, using a dictionary, developing vocabulary, and creative writing tasks. I include a variety of centers so that students are exposed to many different assignments that help them develop literacy skills. I often include tasks that are related to social studies, science, and math in order to facilitate cross-curricular connections.

Writing Workshop

Writing workshop is another daily activity in second grade. **Each writing workshop session starts with a mini-lesson about a specific procedure, skill, or craft related to writing.** Students are expected to choose their own topics and have 20-30 minutes of independent writing time. Every student is encouraged to share his/her writing with a partner or the whole class. During writing workshop I also confer with individual students to help identify and develop areas for growth.

Along with most other teachers in Ann Arbor, I use Lucy Calkin's Units of Primary Writing. This curriculum is organized into monthly units that focus on a variety of writing projects including memoir (small moments), poetry, how-to, report writing, and fiction. We will also take some compositions through the entire writing process including drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

Spelling

We will use an individualized approach to spelling as a part of our overall literacy program. **In second grade, we use the Words Their Way curriculum.** This program will help students become familiar with many common spelling patterns. Currently, I'm assessing each student's skill level so I can organize word study groups. Afterwards, we will begin learning common spelling patterns. Each week a new pattern will be presented to each group. Students will then choose 10 words to study in class and for homework. During the week students will take part in spelling practice in class and a weekly "buddy test" will be taken on Friday.

Math

We use the 2nd Grade Everyday Math (EDM) program which includes nine units ranging in content from place value and addition/subtraction, to multiplication and division processes. We explore math using a variety of manipulatives and concrete materials. We focus on adding and subtracting larger numbers with regrouping, money, time, geometry, fractions, and measurement. **At the beginning of each unit is a parent letter outlining the content. This will be sent home prior to each unit.**

Parents sometimes find the EDM program a little confusing because it has different ways of approaching the same skill, so don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or your student is having difficulty. You may also check out the EDM website for more information. We're using the Connect-Ed website and students/families will have access to it throughout the year.

Knowing math facts is a critical skill in second grade. As the content of the math program becomes more difficult, your student will need to recall basic facts quickly and automatically. Students are expected to memorize all their addition and subtraction facts this year. Games are an important part of the EDM curriculum that help students

practice these facts in a fun and interesting way. Directions for these games are usually outlined in the parent letter. Students will also need to practice their math facts as a regular part of their homework, so fact triangles will come home as a part of Unit 2.

Science and Social Studies

Science and Social Studies are very important areas of the curriculum. I really enjoy teaching these subjects and students often identify them as their favorite subjects in school because they offer many hands-on learning opportunities.

The two major science units of study for second grade are **Rocks and Minerals, and Life Cycles**. We will study Rocks and Minerals in the fall, and the bulk of our Life Cycles lessons in the spring. Students will take part in many activities and experiments to reinforce the concepts we are learning and there will be one science project assigned.

Another important component of our curriculum is new this year! **Project Lead the Way is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program that the second graders will enjoy during December and January**. The modules for 2nd grade are Properties of Matter, and Games and Grids. Samantha Danzinger is Bach's PLTW teacher this year. She and I will co-teach these modules, and I'm looking forward to learning more about this exciting program.

The second grade social studies curriculum centers around a textbook titled My Community. This textbook is colorful, interesting, and contains a reading level that is accessible to most students. Chapters include topics ranging from maps, ecology, manufacturing, economics, and other relevant topics. Students also complete writing assignments and hands-on classroom projects as a part of their studies.

Homework

A weekly homework folder is sent home on Monday and should be returned on Friday. The average second grader should be spending 20-30 minutes per night on homework. Second graders should also be reading independently (or listening to someone read) so they can participate in our weekly Reading Lotto. **The folder is sent home weekly so that students can choose when to complete homework according to their schedules**. I realize many children are busy after school and are not able to do homework on certain nights of the week. My hope is that students will learn to manage their own time and materials so that all assignments are complete and ready to turn in on time. (Students who need extra time to complete homework, can keep it over the weekend and turn it in on Monday, instead of Friday.) Parents can help by checking their child's homework for neatness and accuracy before it is returned to school.

After a few weeks of homework, I will send home a survey for parents to give me feedback on how their student is doing. This will give you an opportunity to let me know if your child is having difficulty or feeling frustrated by the homework. I will be happy to make adjustments and offer suggestions for greater success.

Friday Folder/Weekly Report

Your student will bring home a red folder on Friday. It should contain his/her weekly report as well as corrected classwork. Please sign and return the weekly report so I will know you have seen it. **Both the folder and the signed report should come back to school each week.** (Having the folder and report back at school by the following Friday is fine.)

Students may also have **unfinished work or work that needs to be corrected.** If so, please help your student make corrections and return this work inside the folder.

Each Friday, I'll also send via email the class newsletter. I will try to include detailed information about class activities for the week as well as any upcoming events of importance.

Snacks/Holiday Parties and Birthday Celebrations

Since there are students in the class who have food allergies, **we are a nut free classroom.** We'll restrict snacks to fruit or vegetables during the first two weeks of school. (Fruit cups, applesauce and raisins are acceptable.) In addition we'd like to make holiday parties more healthy by keeping the treats nut free as well as a nourishing combination of foods that are good for all students. Room parents will help me do this by requesting certain kinds of party food for our celebrations. Please do not send in food for a party unless it was specifically requested by myself or a room parent.

We do celebrate birthdays in the classroom. Please consider sending a nonfood item for your child to pass out. Items like erasers, pencils, stickers, etc. make a nice treat for your child to give out. Your child will receive a gift from the class. I usually give them a pencil or a bookmark.

Home/School Communication

The link between home and school is a very important one. **It is my hope that we will develop a partnership that helps your student gain critical academic and social skills.** I firmly believe that we are a team working together in the best interests of your child. Please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns. I may be reached at school (994-1949), home (475-3022), or e-mail (ramsey@aaps.k12.mi.us). I will get back to you as soon as possible.

I welcome your feedback because it will help me do a better job of addressing the needs of each and every learner. I look forward to working with you and your child. With your help, we can make this year a very positive and productive experience for everyone. Thank you for your support!