

Welcome to Curriculum Night

Gretna Elementary School

4th Grade

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Gretna Public Schools Mission Statement:

To accept all students unconditionally and maximize their potential.

Gretna Elementary School
“Every Minute Matters!”

READING

The reading series used by the district lends itself to differentiation of instruction. We will be working hard on **comprehension, fluency, and various reading skills**. Evaluation will be ongoing throughout the year to have up-to-date information on what students should be working on in order to strengthen their skills.

Students will take weekly reading quizzes which will gauge their level of proficiency in regards to the reading skills taught in class during the week. These will be graded and recorded as part of the reading grade.

Comprehension:

This involves the student's understanding of what they are reading.

The following is a list of important skills the students will be introduced to and will be working on developing. These skills will help them to understand and enjoy reading:

Story Elements	Inference	Drawing Conclusions
Problem and Solution	Main Idea and Details	Compare and Contrast
Author's Perspective	Sequence of Events	Fact and Opinion
Cause and Effect	Predicting	Author's Purpose
Making Judgments	Making Decisions	Summarizing

Fluency:

According to A Dictionary of Reading and Related Terms (Harris and Hodges, 1981), fluency is "the ability to read smoothly, easily, and readily with freedom from word recognition problems." Fluency is necessary for good comprehension and enjoyable reading.

Vocabulary:

At the beginning of each reading unit, a pre-test of the unit's vocabulary words will be administered to students. A post-test will also be given to students at the end of each unit as well to determine their level of comprehension and effective use of the vocabulary words.

Students will be introduced to vocabulary words each week on Monday. The vocabulary words will be used throughout the week of reading.

State Reading Assessment:

Students will take a Reading assessment (2 days) in the Spring of the year. The assessment will be very similar to what a unit Reading test will look like. Students will read a passage and then have a question with multiple choice answers to pick from.

New this year will be a writing component of the state test called TDA's (text dependent analysis). What it will entail is having students read a passage or paired passages and then write a written response to a question about the passage(s). They will have to include evidence from the text to support their answer. We'll work on practicing taking this type of assessment throughout the year with our weekly reading assessments. Grading of the assessment will be based upon the 6 Traits of Writing in addition to how well they are able to respond to the given question along with evidence from the passage (s) provided in their answer.

SPELLING

Our spelling ties in with the reading series we use. Our list of words is comprised of three lists: Approaching, On-Level, Beyond. The lists of words relate to our reading story and have a common feature (i.e. long vowel sounds, prefixes, suffixes, etc.). Your child will be assigned one of the three lists based upon how they perform on the weekly pretest.

WRITING

(using the 6-Traits model for assessment)

Throughout the year, students will use the Units of Study for Writing as the designated curriculum by the Gretna Public Schools. Students will focus on writing personal narratives, fiction writing, poetry and essays. The curriculum is based upon the work Lucy Calkins from Columbia University in New York.

Student writing will be assessed using the 6 Traits of Writing. These traits include: Ideas, Organization, Word Choice, Voice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions.

In the past if you've had a child in the 4th grade, she/he took a NESa writing test. This state assessment is no longer being administered.

GRAMMAR

Grammar instruction will include the parts of speech and will be incorporated in writing. It would be especially helpful when parents assist with homework, they help their son/daughter to focus on the following in regards to Grammar use:

- 1 – Make sure they use complete sentences. This means the sentence has a subject (who) and predicate (what action is the subject doing).
- 2 - Be able to identify and successfully use the four types of sentences (declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory) in their daily writing.
- 3 – To be able to identify the parts of speech of words. To recognize that a word can have different part of speech based upon how it is used in context.
- 4 – Ask if your son/daughter to check their writing for:
 - a. paragraphs that are indented
 - b. correct spelling
 - c. correct punctuation (commas, quotation marks, periods, question marks, exclamation marks, etc.)
 - d. correct use of words
 - e. capitalization of Proper Nouns and the beginning of sentences

SCIENCE

Students will study 3 units throughout the year and will include:

- Physical Science (the study of energy)
- Life Science (the study of environments)
- Earth Science (the study of rocks, soils and minerals)

Science instruction will include various science investigations. Students will also be asked to expand their knowledge of science by making various observations during an investigation using their five senses. Students will also conclude their knowledge by making, “I wonder...” statements.

Student notebooking will also be a part of the science curriculum.

MATH

The following areas will be our emphasis in 4th grade math:

Geometry	Place value	Adding/ Subtracting
Multiplication/ Division	Fractions	Graphing
Measurement (customary & metric)	Number Sense	Probability

All units depend on mastery of the basic math facts in the areas of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Reviewing these facts now would be very beneficial to your child. We can't emphasize enough that practice of multiplication facts is ESSENTIAL to success in math in 4th grade. Please continue to review throughout the school year and during the summer months.

Our websites contain links to math games and activities. Please check them often for review and practice.

State Math Assessment:

In the Spring, all 4th grade students will take a state Math assessment (2 days). The assessment will cover math concepts that have been taught during the past years as well as concepts covered in 4th grade.

NEBRASKA HISTORY

During 4th grade, all students will spend the year learning about and exploring that state of Nebraska. Topics will include state symbols, Native Americans, pioneers, famous Nebraskans, state and local government, and products made in Nebraska. Various projects will take place during the study of our state. Our field trip will be associated with our study of Nebraska History as well as having a pioneer day held in the spring.

At our pioneer day in the spring, we encourage students to come dressed as a pioneer. Informing families now will give you time to prepare an outfit for the day. We're hoping that by being dressed as a pioneer for the day will add more authenticity to the event. We don't want this to be a financial burden, but a fun experience for the kids. Items for the boys could include: jeans, flannel shirt, hat (not a baseball hat), suspenders, boots, bandana, etc. Pioneer girls typically wore a dress or a white blouse with a dress bottom as well as bonnet. Pictures and ideas will also be posted on our classroom website.

4th grade students will also have a culminating activity in the spring for NE History. The project is intended for students to create a project using their creativity relative to something we've studied this year in NE History. Some of the project ideas are: sod house, school house, steamboat, general store, church, covered wagons, etc. The list of iconic type of creations is endless.

The one thing we encourage the students to do with this project is to take ownership of it... meaning, parents can help, but the end project should be something a 4th grade has planned, designed and constructed using their creativity. We'd prefer that the creations not be something bought at a store and assembled, but that items around the house (clay, wood, etc.) (or outside – ex: sticks, twigs, dirt, mud, etc.) would be used, much like early Nebraskans had to do. Likewise, items inside the "constructed item" could be fashioned as much as possible out of everyday items. Purchasing some items at a local Hobby Lobby or similar store can be an option, but the bottom line is that we are looking for creativity and ingenuity in the students' creations.



ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOKS

Assignment books will come home each day so the student can share with the parents what they did in class and to keep track of work that is complete and not complete. Uncompleted work (homework) is to be completed at home.

All work is expected to be turned in the next day after it is assigned unless it is a special project or has an extended due date, and students will be notified of the due date for these projects/assignments.

Parents are asked to sign the Assignment Notebook every night, ONLY after all student assignments have been completed.

Our goal is to work hard at school. With good use of his/her time, your child should be able to complete most work at school. Studying spelling words, math facts, and reading together at home are important ways to ensure your child's success.

GRADING SCALE

1 = 94% - 100%

2 = 86% - 93%

3 = 78% - 85%

4 = 70% - 77%

5 = 69% and below

ABSENCES

If you know that your child will be absent for whatever reason, we ask that you email the homeroom teacher so they are aware of the student being gone. This includes times that your child may also be leaving early due to doctor appointments or coming late to school as well. Thanks in advance for communicating with us.

MAP TESTING

Throughout the year, you may hear your child or homeroom teacher refer to MAP testing. MAP stands for "Measure of Academic Progress." MAP testing replaces the C4L tests you may have heard being used in the past few years.

MAP tests are administered district wide to students to ascertain student knowledge of concepts taught throughout the year in the areas of reading, math and science. MAP tests also help to prepare students for the Math and Reading state tests administered in late spring. NOTE: Science state test is administered in 5th grade.

MAP tests will be given in the following academic areas:

*Reading – 3 tests

*Math – 3 tests

*Science – 3 tests

MAP tests are not graded, yet students are expected to give their best effort on each test given. Students who fail to give take seriously a MAP test and consciously don't make a good effort towards doing their best, may be required to retake a MAP test. Re-takes will usually be administered after school.

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Friday Folders come home at the end of the week. It will contain papers that students have completed during the week and can then be kept at home. It may also contain paperwork that needs to be completed for the school and returned.

Friday Folders are to be returned to school on MONDAY!

HOMework FOLDERS

All students have a Homework Folder which they will bring home nightly. It will contain any homework which they need to complete at home and return the next day. As soon as homework is completed at night, it should be placed back in the Homework Folder immediately so it gets back to school safely!

4TH GRADE ACCOUNTABILITY POLICY

I. Late or Incomplete homework policy:

All homework is due the day after it is given unless otherwise specified by the teacher.

1. For homework that is late or incomplete the day it is due, the student will be given a LATE/INCOMPLETE NOTICE slip which will be attached to the late/incomplete assignment. The late/incomplete assignment will be sent home to be completed and returned the next day with the LATE/INCOMPLETE NOTICE also returned and signed by a parent.
2. If the homework is late a 2nd day:
 - a. The student will miss recess to complete it.
 - b. If the assignment is not completely finished during recess, it will again be sent home to be completed with another LATE/INCOMPLETE NOTICE alert to the parents.
3. 3rd day of missing or incomplete homework – a contact will be made to the student's parents and the student will stay after school to complete the unfinished work.

II. REDO Homework/test policy:

If a student receives a failing grade (69% or below) on an assignment OR a test, the student will be re-taught the material. When the teacher feels the student has learned the information, they will redo the assignment or retake the test.

If the student fails the assignment or test again, the student will be re-taught until the student demonstrates an understanding of the material.

Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the material that they missed on the assignment or test, not the entire assignment or test.

The highest score a student can receive on an assignment or test retake is 70%.

Students will take home the redo paper along with the new work completed with a REDO notice that parents must sign and return the next day with all the paperwork.

The REDO/LATE/INCOMPLETE notices are meant to be a form of communication with parents so they are aware of bad study habits a student may be falling into as well as difficulty a student may be experiencing with a particular subject matter.