

# Curriculum

## Literacy

All Soulard School elementary classrooms use the workshop approach to structure their literacy lab instruction.

Teachers implement reading mini-lessons based on the Missouri Learning Standards that meet the needs of all students, including an emphasis on phonics in the early grades. Guided practice in the form of small-group guided reading instruction or literature groups follows mini-lessons so that students can more deeply engage with the subject introduced or reinforced. Additionally, teachers meet regularly with individual students to monitor fluency, accuracy and comprehension progress. K-2 students individually practice literacy skills and standards through independent reading, word work, writing, listening to reading, reading with a partner or meeting in small groups with the teacher. Intermediate grade students (3-5th) use response journal writing and small-group assignments to practice their literacy skills and gain greater independence in preparation for secondary learning. The reading block also consists of daily phonics and/or phonemic awareness instruction.

The school utilizes Souday, a phonics curriculum, across the grade levels as part of literacy instruction. The program helps teachers quickly identify those students who could benefit from reading intervention as well as ensures that all students have a solid base in phonics to build their reading skills. Haggerty is another literacy support used daily to teach phonemic awareness in grades K-2.

The school has been working to provide all classroom and special education staff with LETRS training as part of a schoolwide approach to literacy instruction.

Writing is incorporated through all subjects throughout the day, as well as during writer's workshop, where students are given freedom to work on topics of their choice, going through the steps of writing (brainstorming, writing, editing, publishing, etc.) at their own pace.

Spelling and handwriting instruction are integrated into the writer's workshop period and literacy time. Teachers utilize the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum to promote correct letter formation and fluid handwriting. Keyboarding skills are also taught at the upper grades.

Currently, all teachers are being trained in LETRs. LETRs include teaching reading components in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension assessment, written expression, spelling, and oral language. The program follows a Structured Literacy approach to aid teachers with an understanding of the Science of Reading pedagogy, depth of knowledge, and tools to teach language and literacy skills to every student. The LETRs approach to teaching reading is broken up into two volumes with 4 units in each volume. Volume one focuses on word recognition: learning to read, the sounds of English, beginning

phonics, word recognition/spelling, and decoding. Volume two focuses on language: oral language, comprehension, text driven comprehension and making reading/writing connections.

Teachers use Haggerty and Sunday as the curriculum to guide them through the LETRs approach to teaching reading. Each of the curriculums aligned with LETRs by covering how to teach and assess students' knowledge of the sounds in the English language (phonemic awareness), how those sounds represent letters that can create words (phonics), and how and why to teach word parts (morphology). It also covers spelling and fluency instruction.

During whole group and small group instruction teachers use the LETRs system to teach students the rules/skills, provide opportunities to practice skills and multiple opportunities to show mastery.

## Mathematics

Mathematics, like Literacy, is taught through a workshop approach which allows for flexibility. Teachers use the Investigation Math curriculum as a basis for daily instruction. Investigations Math provides an inquiry-based approach to teaching mathematics. In addition to whole group and small group instruction, the curriculum supports student-centered mathematics, active learning, collaboration and opportunities for students to justify and explain their reasoning. This allows teachers to analyze students' number sense and the students' thinking to clarify misconceptions and inform instruction in real time.

Teachers also implement mini-lessons with the whole class or small groups. Instruction is individualized so that students can move through the process as quickly or slowly as needed. Teachers are able to analyze and diagnose students' mathematical thinking, and can apply remediation, encouragement, or challenges as needed on the spot. Students meet for guided math lessons in flexible small groups based on student needs and topics of study.

When not participating in math groups, students have repeated practice opportunities through game play, individual work, or an ongoing project (such as designing a fish tank using area and perimeter formulas previously taught). Basic math computation skills are embedded throughout the math curriculum as well as given specific focus.

## Science/Social Studies

Science curriculum development and instruction is grounded in Next Generation Science Standards as well as Missouri Learning Standards. Science is taught through an inquiry-based approach, as well as problem-based learning. Through research, experimentation, and active learning students learn both content and concepts necessary for their grade level and how to integrate those concepts into other areas/curriculum.

Similarly, the social studies/history curriculum is based on Missouri Learning Standards as well as Learning For Justice Standards. Topics in history originate with local history. In this way, students are encouraged to draw relevant, meaningful connections.

Students are empowered to think globally by first focusing on local topics and current events that affect them and then transferring that understanding to a broader global goal. Teachers integrate multicultural literacy, cooperative learning groups and whole classroom simulations to support student comprehension of concepts that can often seem abstract for elementary students.

## Extended Core

At The Soulard School, learning goes beyond designated literacy and math time. Our weekly Extended Core classes extend academic learning into other areas, and provide a rich and varied education to our students. Discipline, personal empowerment, and cultural pluralism are some of the necessary elements of social-emotional intelligences we support through our weekly Extended Core classes.

Extended Core classes for renewal period:

- Strings (violin) & Performing Arts
- Physical Education
- Culinary Arts & Nutrition
- Studio Arts
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math)