Hello fourth grade families.

The following is an overview of the fourth grade curriculum that was discussed at Curriculum Night.

**Philosophy:**

Our goal in the fourth grade is to create a safe, trusting environment where your student can take positive risks in learning and friendship. We call our whole group of fourth graders Team Infinity. We call ourselves a team because all three classrooms work very closely with one another. We also call ourselves a team to teach students that we must look out for and support each other, academically and emotionally.

Fourth grade is a year of transition. Students are discovering who they are, continuing to learn to navigate new and old friendships. In the fourth grade we promote independence through developing student’s social skills.

We truly believe in teaching to the whole child. We use the Responsive Classroom approach alongside the school’s PBiS system (we have new Core Values this year: be safe, be kind, be your best self). Some key components of Responsive Classroom include holding a morning meeting every day, having a character trait to focus on weekly, and a closing circle. Morning Meetings allow for the development of community. They consist of a greeting, a share, and a group activity. Our morning board asks questions to the students about key character traits. (For example, “What is kindness?” “How did someone you know show kindness at school?” “How will you show kindness at school?”) Closing circle consists of a self-reflection. Students share with the group what they could improve on for the following week and what they did well.

**Communication and Homework**

Every Friday your student will bring home a Friday folder. This Friday folder will hold any finished work as well as notices from the school. Please help your student remember to return this folder when they return from the weekend.

The best way to contact teachers about changes in your student’s schedule is through sending in notes in the morning with your student. A note must be turned in if your student is biking home, going on a different bus to a friend’s house, or being dropped off at a friend’s stop that isn’t their own. You may e-mail us, but we may not always see the e-mail before the end of the day. You may also call the office if there is a change of schedule and the information will be relayed to us.

Our district has a no homework policy. We do ask your students to read 30-40 minutes every night. We also hope you talk with them about their day, have them get outside, and eat dinner!

Often families ask if there are ways that they can help their students with Math. There are Math Resources available on our Team Infinity Website. We will also be teaching the students various games using a deck of cards, dice, or simply paper!

The Team Infinity website has a lot of great resources to know what your child is working on: <https://4thgradeteaminfinity.weebly.com/> Under the tab titled “Ask me About” there are questions and topics of conversation for you and your student about their week. This will also be a place to post reminders of important upcoming dates. You may access the Math Resources page by clicking on the tab Links and scrolling down to Math. The Math Resources tab will bring you to our Math Coach’s website. This list of online activities is for grades K-5. We will be teaching your students which games will help them practice what they are currently learning.

**Here are our e-mails:**

Erin Bahrenburg [ebahrenburg@sbschools.net](mailto:ebahrenburg@sbschools.net)

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**Here is the Team Infinity Website:**

[**https://4thgradeteaminfinity.weebly.com/**](https://4thgradeteaminfinity.weebly.com/)

To find links to curriculum and math resources click on the Links tab.

**Math**

Our Math block will consist of a Launch (warm-up), Main Lesson, and Math Menu. Expect your child to come home and talk about any of the following teachers they might have worked with: Mrs. Vachereau, Mrs. Bahrenburg, Mrs. Thibault, Ms. Kathy, Mrs. Racine. We are lucky to have our Math Coach and our Special Educator available during our Math block.

During their main lesson in Math this year your student will be practicing:

* Place Value
* Using the Four Operations
* Solving Word Problems
* Factors and Multiples
* Fractions
* Decimals
* Geometry

After their main lesson and independent practice of the skill, your student will have the opportunity to make a Math Menu choice. Math Menu is a list of pre-taught practice options for your student to choose from. These options will reinforce the skills taught that day as well as skills previously taught. The options are a mix of technology choices, paper and pencil tasks, and games. Students will practice making smart choices for what they need more practice on.

**Literacy**

In Fourth grade we follow the Reading and Writing Workshop models. For this model, we spend time as a whole class in a mini-lesson followed by independent practice and groups based on student’s goals and needs.

In Reading we being with an interactive read-aloud. During the read-aloud students are practicing the literacy skills of speaking and listening. Students often discuss answers to questions with a partner in turn and talks. Students also use their Reader’s Notebooks to keep notes and practice the reading strategy taught in the mini-lesson. After the read-aloud, students bring their reader’s notebooks to their independent reading spot and use the strategy previously taught independently. The teachers conference with students to gauge the student’s understanding of text and teach additional strategies based on student need.

This year students might mention the DCF list. This is the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award nominees, books published by American authors in 2018. These books are chosen by teachers and librarians in Vermont as noteworthy books written by American authors and published the previous year. They are for grades 4-6. There are some stories that have content you might want to preview. Often the fifth and sixth grade books make great read alouds that allow for discussion between and student.

In Writing we teach a mini lesson focusing on a Writing skill, which is then followed by independent practice. Our mini lesson focuses on a text that demonstrates a certain writing skill. For example, if we are teaching how to add more description we will analyze a book that has some vivid description. Students use their Writer’s notebooks to brainstorm ideas for stories as well as write drafts. Final versions will be typed into the student’s Chromebook for publication.

We will be writing the following :

* Personal Narratives
* Realistic Fiction
* Informational Text
* Historical Fiction

In addition to learning the proper elements of each writing genre, we will work with students to improve spelling grammar and punctuation based on what we observe in their writer’s notebooks. Additionally, we use a spelling program that teacher students fourth grade work patterns and spelling rules.

**Science**

Our science units alternate with our social studies units. Throughout the year, we teach a science unit and then move on to a social studies unit. We teach through the scientific method. Students ask questions about the world around them and get to explore how to answer these questions. The following are our topics of study:

* Earth Systems→ the rock cycle, patterns of rock formation, changes in landforms, erosion and weather
* Energy→ how energy is transferred and changed with a focus on electricity
* Molecules to Organisms→ how animals and plant structures support survival, growth, and reproduction, heredity
* Patterns of Human Growth and Development→ this will be covered by the nurse and you will receive more information prior to the start of this unit

**Social Studies**

Our Social Studies units pair nicely with our reading and writing standards in fourth grade. From Grades K-3, students are learning how to read. In fourth grade students begin to read to learn. Students will be learning research and note-taking skills (highlighting, synthesizing information from multiple credible sources, creating citations).

Our Units of Study include the colonial period and the American Revolution.

Students will read many books and learn about colonies of their choice. They will also learn how the American Revolution began. After reading, students will utilize their notes to create an informational piece. Students then have the opportunity to create multimedia projects from their informational writing.

In the very beginning of the year we enjoy starting off with connecting with how our own families came to America from a different place. Native Americans lived in the United States first (as students learned in third grade), but everyone else arrived through immigration. Sometime in the upcoming weeks your student will come home with an interview to discover how their family ended up in America. The student can ask parents/guardians these questions, or you can help your student write an e-mail or make a phone call to a grandparent to gather information.

**Volunteer Information**

As the year goes on we will be looking for families to take field trips with us and other volunteer opportunities to be determined. In order to volunteer, you can contact the office for the volunteer paperwork to complete. This paperwork requires you to show two forms of ID, one of which needs to be a photo ID. These forms need to be renewed annually.

**Snack**

We do share a snack in the afternoon because of our early lunch period. Please send your students with enough so they have something for the afternoon. Students are not permitted to share food with others.

On Mondays we have an extended snack period to teach students various board games/activities. Some of these games include Scrabble and Yahtzee. The games help promote literacy and math skills as well as communication skills.

**Other**

Throughout the year we will have Team Infinity shares where you are able to come in to your students classroom and they will guide you through all of the learning they have been doing in fourth grade. These parent shares will give you an idea of your student’s growth as well as goals they continue to work on.

These shares will happen before conference dates. Conferences at Orchard happen in the months of November and April.