Fifth Grade Curriculum & Key Info!

Reading

- Reading Workshop model. Will incorporate lessons designed by Lucy Calkins and the Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project (out of Columbia University).
- Daily mini-lessons on new concepts and skills
- Students read texts at their instructional level and meet regularly with their teacher and peers to complete relevant discussions and activities.
- Independent reading to develop stamina, vocabulary, comprehension
- Students are learning to speak and write about increasingly complex aspects of texts (ex: characters' influence on one another, key moments that illustrate a central theme, quotes that demonstrate how a character has changed, etc.). We will be developing the ability to locate supporting evidence and explain how it supports our thinking.
- Lessons are flexibly-designed and student-centered, regularly evolving to fit students' insights about texts and their strengths and needs as readers.

Math

- Math Expressions program
- Focus on "Math Talk" (discussion of problem-solving strategies, collaboration)
- Spiraling Program – students apply and extend the skills built in fourth grade
- Nightly homework
- Done periodically in school and at home, Prodigy Math is another approach for strengthening understanding and boosting student engagement. (Please see instructions for connecting to your child's account, should you wish to keep track of his or her progress!)
- Math fact fluency practice through periodic partner games and Xtra Math. I will set up individualized Xtra Math accounts, based on our upcoming October math fact assessment. Relevant sign-in info. will be sent home so that students may use Xtra Math there, as well!)

Writing

- Writing Workshop model. Will incorporate lessons designed by Lucy Calkins and the Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project (out of Columbia University).
- We will be writing personal narratives (stories from our lives), opinion pieces, research papers, poems, essays exploring the books we read, and fantasy narratives.
- Instruction will promote development of the "6 + 1 Traits of Writing" (Ideas, Organization, Sentence Fluency, Word Choice, Voice, Conventions, Presentation). We will also focus on writing process skills (brainstorming, structuring a piece, drafting, revising, editing, publishing).
- Skills are reinforced through regular student-teacher conferences, independent practice, and collaborative work.

Language Arts

- Mini lessons and practice specific to grammar, punctuation, and word study concepts.
- Emphasis on vocabulary development through exploration of Greek and Latin roots, prefixes, suffixes
- Instruction is integrated into reading and writing time

Social Studies

- Fifth graders will learn about the period of time from when the earliest "Americans" traveled to North America over the Bering Strait Land Bridge to the American Revolution and establishment of a new nation.
- Specific units include: Geography; Aztec, Inca and Maya civilizations; European exploration; early American settlements; Revolutionary War; US government

Science

- Curriculum features inquiry-based learning, interactive stations, experiments
- Students are taught how to follow both the Scientific Method and the Engineering & Design Process
- Specific units include: solar system; magnets & motors; energy; engineering solutions; biomes

Meeting Individual Needs: Differentiation and Enrichment

- Frequent formative assessment allows me to gauge whether any particular students need reinforcement or challenge.
- The fifth grade team works closely with the reading and math specialists and special educators; specialists both support instruction *in* the classroom and pull small groups for tailored support.
- Book clubs: Optional, before-school book clubs with reading specialists for fun enrichment. Students read MCBA books. No written assignments; the emphasis is on engaging discussion.
- Student Bubble: Writing for school newspaper. Meets in the morning.
- "Math Talk" provides built-in differentiation. Collaborative work and frequent discussion promote growth in the full spectrum of learners. Students who feel more comfortable with the material are challenged to strengthen their skills by explaining their approaches to peers; such explanation also benefits those who are still developing their understanding of the day's concept.
- Math challenges (Anytime Problems, Challenge Packet, "tic tac toe" enrichment boards, etc.) are provided to "stretch" students' thinking and provide extra stimulation and rigor.
- Xtra Math and Prodigy Math (see above) are intended to encourage greater math fact automaticity and fortify skills acquired in class, respectively.