

## Kindergarten Program Description

Children must be 5 years old, on or before October 31st, to enter Milltown Public Schools as a Kindergarten student. No exceptions are made to this cut-off date. The program is aligned with the NJ Common Core State Standards and Teaching Strategies GOLD, a system based on 38 research-based indicators that include literacy, math, science and technology, social studies, the arts and English language acquisition, as well as social-emotional, physical and cognitive development. The program allows each student to participate in individual, small group, and whole class activities. The program includes learning center activities and group discussions. A full curriculum including all the major content areas, music, art and handwriting are offered. Additionally, students exchange books in the Parkview media center one day a week. Technology is integrated as part of routine daily instruction. As developmental needs of young learners vary greatly, routine formative assessments are used to differentiate based on individual needs. Enrichment and remedial support are provided as needed.

**Morning meeting** helps students build a classroom community through face to face greetings by name, sharing and listening, fun group activities that practice social and academic skills, and a morning message written by the teacher to the students about upcoming events.

**Shared reading** is a time for the teacher to model what good readers do. The teacher will guide students in a picture walk and prediction of story events. The teacher then guides the students through the story using a variety of developmental strategies to build students confidence with text. Discussion of the outcomes of their predictions, story elements and events as well as various working with words activities are explored together using the shared story.

### Language Arts

Kindergarten students develop foundational language arts/ literacy skills using the Journeys Common Core Reading Program, the Handwriting Without Tears program, small group guided reading and writing lessons. The goal in kindergarten is to assess the reading ability of each child upon entrance in September and work in partnership with parents to progress each child at least 3 reading levels by the end of the school year. Ideally by the end of the year, each student should be reading at a minimum level of D according to the Fountas and Pinnell text level gradient.

Students participate in a whole class standards-based reading or writing lesson daily with the teacher. Kindergarteners also work with the teacher in a small guided reading group with their peers who are at a similar level of development in reading at least twice a week to build fluency and comprehension. Beyond the guided reading groups, each student participates in individual and small group activities which reinforce literacy skills. Benchmark assessments are administered periodically to adjust group assignments and text level selections as needed.

In order to nurture early writing skills, teacher and student writing conferences will take place at least twice a week to assist students as they progress through each step of the writing process. Kindergarteners will complete one writing project each marking period. Various on-demand prompts throughout the year will assist the teacher in addressing strengths and weaknesses in student writing.

### Center Time

After the whole group language arts lesson, students who are not participating in a guided reading or writing group with the teacher will work with peers at learning centers. Center activities include literacy daily. Other center activities include math, art, science/discovery, dramatic play/character education, library, blocks, sand table and various others throughout the year. Kindergarten centers promote learning through hands-on manipulative activities.

## **Mathematics**

Foundational math concepts and skills will be developed using the enVision Math Common Core program. Whole group lessons include an interactive instructional video introducing the topic, followed by guided practice and independent practice. Students will also participate in small group math work with the teacher and their peers. Manipulatives will be used to guide student learning of math concepts through hands-on experience.