



## Welcome to Fourth Grade!

JULY 2021

Fourth graders are extremely busy! They are busy with new experiences, learning, friendships and relationships. But do not be fooled by how old they look and act: fourth graders will still organize a pretend game with a group of friends, take on the roles in a made-up performance and write funny poems. Fourth graders are coming into their own, and what looks like play might hint at the talents and interests the child may embrace later in life.

Reading and writing work is grounded in the Teachers College reading and writing units of study. Students respond to reading in journals which become an important tool for teachers to chart growth. They cite evidence from the text to support their ideas and read for both inferential and literal meaning. Reading is assessed frequently throughout the year. Students have access to the online reading program, *RAZ Kids*, to practice targeted skills at home.

Writing workshop includes units in narrative, information and persuasive writing. Students write more complex sentences, organize their ideas into paragraphs, and revise their work independently. Spelling follows the *Words Their Way* sequence. They learn to use google.docs to share, edit and revise their pieces with a peer or teacher editor. Students are invited to publish a piece to the Lower School literary magazine, *DEscribe*.

As in all grades, a problem-based math approach supported by the Singapore Math program helps develop strong conceptual understandings and skills, flexible thinking and a willingness to engage with open-ended problems. Teachers work with whole groups, small groups and one-on-one, as needed and determined by frequent assessment. Students are given an *ALEKS* (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) account. *ALEKS* is a web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system that allows students to practice, develop and master skills at home. Math units of study in fourth grade include whole number operations within numbers up to 100,000; factors and multiples; multiplication and division; graphing, data and measurement; and fractions and decimals.

Students learn about government and also participate in the *World Peace Game*. The game is a simulation that provides the opportunity for students to participate in making far-reaching decisions. Students try to extricate their world community from various economic, social, military and environmental crises. The goal of the game is to achieve world prosperity and peace with the least amount of conflict.

Fourth-grade musicians work with pitched percussion instruments such as xylophone, metallophone, and glockenspiel and are able to play alone, as well as in a group. Our hope is that by 2021 it will be safe to hold our traditional Spring Concert, as well as attend a concert at NJPAC presented by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. We are mindful of COVID protocols and will adjust and plan the experience in response to new information. Students research and report on the life of a composer of their own choosing from the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th Century and Contemporary Periods.

In Health and Wellness students develop an understanding of fitness and basic skills. They learn to use a fitnessgram and participate in *Jump Rope for Heart*. Sports introduced and practiced include soccer, flag football, handball, basketball, floor hockey, base games and lacrosse. They learn to become more strategic teammates. They engage in basic movement and motor skills to improve overall fitness, hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, and body/spatial awareness. When possible, and frequently in the spring, students have physical education on the school's Leggett Field.



# Dwight-Englewood School

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Science begins with a plant study and includes plant classification and reproduction. The students record data from the garden and take measurements for our records. They become immersed in environmental issues forming their own opinions and discuss them articulately. They are able to use microscopes, reason based on evidence and make inferences. They conduct experiments independently. They are shown the basics of working in a chemistry lab and expand their science vocabulary.

As part of technology, fourth graders use *Lego WeDo* kits and are challenged to build several design models, and then use software to make the objects move. Students come up with their own designs as well.

In Spanish students use memorized phrases and full sentences to express messages verbally and in writing. There is an increased emphasis on conversation. A thematic unit on lifestyle covers the following topics with a cultural perspective from Spanish speaking countries: food and nutrition; leisure activities; environment.

Fourth graders visit Swartley Arts Center where they build on the importance of knowing elements of color, line and shape, pattern, design and composition, while exploring broader concepts of drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, printmaking, digital art and photography. Each student creates a collection of their work within each medium that demonstrates their understanding of the mediums and concepts taught. Students will add to and shape their digital portfolios which will highlight their art projects. They are also exposed to art and art history.