

## **Curriculum, Instruction and Instructional Materials**

The curriculum of the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District is vertically articulated and horizontally enriched. It is based on and expands upon Pennsylvania State Standards, Chapter 4 and national content standards, and attends to available global standards. A designated curriculum supervisor is assigned to each of the District's curricular areas to ensure cohesiveness and consistency.

Curriculum is developed by District teachers under the guidance and direction of curriculum supervisors. Curriculum development is reviewed by the Board Education Committee, and approved by the Board of School Directors. Cross-grade-level teams of teachers design curriculum in beginning and end of year inservices to ensure that the curriculum is standards-based, is properly spiraled from kindergarten through grade twelve, and that it incorporates District initiatives beyond basic learning standards. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, critical and creative thinking, self-directed learning, cultural competence, written and oral communication, technology and information literacy, and ethical academic behavior. Some of these initiatives are well-established, while others are in their beginning stages.

The District's instructional program is organized and communicated via the research-based Tredyffrin/Easttown School District Teacher Model. The Teacher Model expands and describes in some depth the areas of planning and preparation, classroom environment, instructional delivery and professionalism. All teachers and administrators in the District have received training on the Teacher Model, and the model is completely accessible to all professional staff members. It forms the basis for teacher reflection on personal performance, and for teacher evaluation.

Instructional materials are selected and designed to support the District's curriculum. The District is committed to providing students with multiple sources of instructional materials, from text materials to primary source materials. Web-based materials are utilized, with both teachers and students being guided to be critical consumers of all sources of information. The District invests substantial resources and support into the design of teacher-made materials. These are most often produced in a collaborative summer workshop setting, with teachers working under the guidance of District supervisors and administrators. Curricular materials are available for review by parents upon request.

In summary, the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District allocates considerable financial and human resources to the development and updating of District curriculum, instructional strategies and instructional materials. The design model is fully collaborative, and is based on state and content-specific standards. This base is extended through the explicit teaching of critical thinking skills, self-directed learning and other content development themes that support life-long learning. Materials to deliver the curriculum range from texts, to primary sources, to teacher made materials, to web-based sources. The District's instructional model implements research-based best practices, and is systematized so that it is accessible to all who are responsible for instructing students.

### **Elementary Curriculum**

#### **Language Arts**

The District's Language Arts Learning Competencies provide the framework for language arts learning in eight key areas. Using these competencies as a foundation for spiraling skills development, teachers enrich the reading program with the most valuable aspects of a balanced literacy approach. This balanced approach accommodates the individual learning needs of each student and stimulates teacher creativity while providing a strong, consistent level of reading instruction across the District.

## **Language Arts Learning Competencies:**

- Reading comprehension: Learning strategies (Example: main idea, sequence)
- Reading comprehension: Thinking skills (Example: inference, compare/contrast)
- Reading: Investigating language patterns (Example: word analysis, decoding, phonics)
- Speaking and writing (Example: writing process, grammar, spelling)
- Study skills
- Research skills
- Response to various genres (Example: fiction, biography, poetry)
- Lifelong reading

## **Reading**

Reading instruction in the T/E School District is an organized, sequential program which includes a balanced use of whole group, small group, and direct instruction utilizing a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts.

## **Writing**

Writing begins with the student's initial school experience. The use of the writing and reflecting process (brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, revising, conferencing, editing and publishing) continues throughout the grades. Writing is not an isolated experience but is integrated throughout the school day in various curricular areas. Teachers introduce and reinforce the components of good writing at each grade level. Students and teachers use the portfolio as a vehicle for the development of skills in composing, revising and reflecting on writing throughout the grades.

## **Listening/Speaking**

Communication skills are an integral part of the learning experience. Early modes of learning center on kinesthetic and visual activities. Listening and speaking skills develop as the child progresses through school. Learning these skills enables the student to become an active participant in the learning process.

## **Spelling**

Beginning in kindergarten, students experiment with letters and sounds and learn how those letters build words. Emergent writers may have difficulty spelling words within their oral vocabularies. Rather than interrupt the flow of thought, invented spelling is encouraged. As students progress in their writing abilities, the purpose of the spelling curriculum is to help learners master conventional spelling. The formal spelling program focuses on spelling patterns and words student frequently misspell. Students also learn to use tools such as the dictionary, collaboration with peers, and technological devices.

## **Handwriting**

In the early elementary grades, students learn the strokes which form the basis of manuscript letters. Handwriting instruction focuses on the development of letter formation skills and the application of these skills throughout the curriculum. Cursive handwriting is introduced in the third grade and refined in fourth. Students work with keyboarding and word processing, progressing in efficiency on an individual basis.

## Study Skills

The development of good organizational and study skills is an essential part of schooling. Such topics as how to manage time, plan for long and short term assignments, organize workspace and materials, and study for tests are taught and reinforced at the appropriate team levels.

## Mathematics

The T/E mathematics curriculum is based on a set of clearly defined learning objectives. Major concepts include: numbers and numerals, measurement, rational numbers, geometry, decimals, graphing, number theory and probability. These concepts are developed through a balanced use of manipulative materials, various text-based instruction and technology. Students are grouped for instruction beginning in first or second grade. This approach to teaching and learning accommodates the needs of students and provides students with appropriate challenge. Mathematics is an important subject and T/E's teachers are dedicated to preparing every student to meet the challenges and demands of the future.

## Science

Science is best learned when students are engaged in practicing science. Hands-on activities encourage students to experience for themselves, through direct observation and experimentation, the process, joy and fascination of science. Through scientific experimentation, students answer their own questions and develop patience, persistence and confidence. T/E's elementary science curriculum in kindergarten is a hands-on, theme-based program. Grades first through fourth have adopted Science and Technology for Children which was developed by the National Academy of Science in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institute. Each elementary school provides both hands-on science instruction in a science lab and classroom science instruction where reading and writing are tools for learning. A full-time science aide assists and supports the classroom teacher in the preparation and implementation of lessons.

The units of study are as follows:

Kindergarten	Senses/Properties, Weather, Insects, Seeds/Plants, Energy, Agriculture, Animal Coverings, Hibernation, Solar System, Landforms, Energy, Magnets
Grade 1	Comparing & Measuring, Weather, Rain Forest, Organisms, Magnetism, Solar System, Go Green
Grade 2	Life Cycle of Butterflies, Balancing and Weighing, Changes, Soil, Sound, Solar System, Go Green
Grade 3	Chemical Tests, Rocks and Minerals, Plant Growth and Development, Land and Water
Grade 4	Ecosystems, Microworlds, Watersheds, Electric Circuits, Motion and Design

## Social Studies

The T/E social studies curriculum is designed to help students understand cultural diversity and their place in a global community. Grade one focuses on the concept of "Our Global Village" and, in addition to units on Japan and Africa, includes a unit on communities, maps, and geography.

Grade two concentrates on exploring the concept of time and the use of a historical timeline. The cultures, geography and history of the United States are the thrust of the third and fourth grade programs. Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to explore the following questions:

Kindergarten Grade 1	Holiday Curriculum, Guidance Lessons, Famous People (ie. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln) Who Am I in the World? Units of Study: Our Global Village, Japan, Africa (Nigeria and Kenya)
Grade 2	Who Am I in Time? Age of Dinosaurs and Early Man, Ancient China, Exploration and Immigration, Space
Grade 3	Who Am I in My State? Units of Study: Native Americans, Chester County, Pennsylvania, Elections
Grade 4	Who Am I in My Country? U.S. History: Geography, Early Settlers and Settlements/Colonies, American Revolution, America Grows

## **Health**

K-4 health is divided into four basic areas of study incorporating both factual knowledge and the development of positive attitudes and lifelong healthy behaviors.

### **Safety:**

Includes personal and group safety concerns involving, but not limited to, bus, bicycle, fire, playground and other grade appropriate issues.

### **Drugs and Alcohol:**

Incorporates Officer Friendly, Guidance and REACH (Responsible Adolescents Concerned and Helping) to encourage the child to make appropriate decisions based on factual information.

### **Family Life:**

Focuses on information, self-concept, interpersonal relationships and positive decision making.

### **Care of the Body:**

Provides children with activities that enable them to understand the value of maintaining good health through acquiring information and encouraging supportive health habits.

Please note: An alternate to the Family Life curriculum is available upon parental request.

## **Art**

Students have a regularly scheduled art class with an art teacher in Kindergarten and in grades 1, 3 and 4 once per cycle. In grade 2, students have two scheduled art classes per cycle. The classes range from 35 minutes in Kindergarten to 45 minutes in grades 1-4. All levels of the program include experiences designed to exercise and strengthen the pupil's ability to create, perceive, appreciate, and criticize art. Provisions are made for each student to be involved with a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials and to gain understanding of our visual arts heritage. The activities are planned to promote the development of independent thinking and self-evaluation. The art curriculum follows a developmental scope and sequence and is a discipline-based approach to art education. Lessons are designed to provide instances for integration with elements of the core educational program.

## **Music**

### **Classroom Music:**

The goals of the music program are to provide the opportunity for every child to learn the basic skills of singing and reading music, to develop song repertoire, and to broaden listening skills. Once per cycle, in grades K, 2, 3 and 4, every class meets with the music teacher for a period of thirty to forty five minutes for musical activities that include listening, singing, performing, moving, reading and creating. In grade 1, students have two scheduled music classes per cycle. Through these activities, the students learn concepts dealing with the major elements of music which are rhythm, melody, form and harmony, tone, color, style and expressive qualities. In third grade, students are introduced to the "recorder" as an adjunct to the music reading program.

### **Instrumental Music:**

When students reach the third grade, they have the opportunity to study a string instrument. At the fourth grade level, they may begin instruction on suitable band or orchestra instruments. Group instrumental lessons are scheduled for thirty minutes once per cycle and rotate from cycle to cycle so that the same subject is not missed in the regular classroom. Students are invited to join a string orchestra and/or band that meets before school for forty minutes each week. In this setting, students are provided with the opportunity to further develop performance skills and produce both winter and spring concerts for the school and surrounding community.

### **Performance Groups:**

Students are provided with a variety of performing opportunities. All elementary schools provide three music performance organizations: string orchestra, beginning band and choral club. These groups rehearse before school once each week. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to rehearsals.

## **Physical Education**

Physical education contributes to the well-being of students through participation in activities designed to meet their physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs. It is a tool used to develop individual values of good citizenship and sportsmanship for real-life situations. As students move through the elementary grades, there is an increased degree of difficulty in skills and a greater emphasis on team play. The program is designed to provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in physical activities that promote self-confidence and the ability to work in coeducational groups. Our physical education program includes:

### **Kindergarten and Grade 1**

- Locomotive skills
- Eye hand coordination
- Ball handling skills
- Stunts
- Game type activities
- Movement and posture education

### **Grades 2, 3 and 4**

- Physical fitness, testing

- Start of formal exercise
- Stunts, tumbling, apparatus
- Rhythmics and dance
- Game program
- Sports program
- Individual/dual activities
- Citizenship/sportsmanship

## **Library**

The library is a warm, friendly, and inviting place where we encourage children to become lifelong readers. Books may be checked out for a one or two-week period of time. Fines are not charged for late items, but we do send home reminder notices on a monthly basis. Children of all grade levels come to the library to enjoy rich literature and to receive direct instruction in the workings of the library and its many technological resources. Research has demonstrated that students who are exposed to a print-rich environment engage in voluntary reading, and those who read at home tend to develop the habit of reading. We encourage families to take advantage of the resources of our library and share the joys of reading together. We strongly encourage all parents to spend time reading with their child each day.