

# **KINDERGARTEN**

**CURRICULUM OVERVIEW  
2010 – 2011**

**CONCORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**SUPERINTENDENT**

**Diana Rigby**

**DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT of FINANCE & OPERATIONS**

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**DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**Kathryn Codianne**

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**PRINCIPALS**

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**KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS**

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**ALCOTT SCHOOL**

**Gayle Chatlosh**

**Colleen Desmond**

**LTS for Darcy McSweeney TBA**

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**THOREAU SCHOOL**

**Christine Apollos**

**Johanna Ellis**

**Jacqui McKenna**

**Maureen Silven**

\*

**WILLARD SCHOOL**

**Arlene Gluck**

**Jeanne Connolly**

**Kathy Madfis**

**Jane Spalding**

**Jacquelyn Turner**

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Jessica Murphy**, Director of Special Education K-12  
**Amy Mates Mencow**, Out-of-District Team Chairperson  
**Ellen Schoellkopf**, Secretary, Ripley Building  
**Mary O'Callaghan**, Secretary, Ripley Building

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

### **School Psychologists**

**Laura Driscoll** - Alcott  
**Mary Schaefer** - Thoreau  
**Miriam Kornitzer** - Willard

### **Social Workers**

**Sherree Lenkarski**, Social Worker - Alcott  
**Rachel Levesque**, Social Worker - Thoreau  
**Julee Vitello**, Social Worker - Willard

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

**Katherine Bell, R.N.**, Chair of Nursing

### **School Nurses**

**Anne McCormack, R.N.** - Alcott  
**Nicki Richards, R.N.** - Thoreau  
**Janine Gaudreau, R.N.** - Willard  
**Polly King, R.N.** - Ripley Integrated PreSchool

### **Center for Parents and Teachers**

**Sally Quinn Reed**, Director - Ripley Building  
**Angela Martinez**, Secretary - Ripley Building

## **CURRICULUM SUPPORT**

<b>Diane Kablik</b>	Science	Ripley Building
<b>Judith Olson</b>	Math	Alcott School
<b>Laurie Link</b>	Math	Thoreau School
<b>Laurie Penney</b>	Math	Willard School
<b>Jean Thuma</b>	Language Arts	Alcott School
<b>Joyce Carter</b>	Language Arts	Thoreau School
<b>Susan Chafe</b>	Language Arts	Willard School

## **PHILOSOPHY**

As educators, we consider the kindergarten experience to be a cooperative endeavor between home, school and community. In order to continue the learning experience from home to school, we provide an environment for children, which supports and encourages personal growth. The unique manner in which each child views his or her world, learns from it and contributes to it is the foundation of our program.

Kindergarten is the first step in a thirteen-year process that helps students develop a love of learning and an understanding of their place in the community and the world. The school experience supports each student in acquiring the skills and concepts that are necessary to meet society's expectations and become an independent thinker. Programs are offered which foster a desire for knowledge, aesthetic enjoyment, physical health, positive relationships, independence and responsibility.

Being keenly aware of the varying rates of child development, we in the school strive to create a classroom atmosphere that accepts differences in children. An emphasis is placed on providing the social, emotional, and academic support necessary for each child's transition from one stage of development to another.

## GOALS

The focus of the Concord Public Schools is on the learner. The kindergarten year is a time to encourage young children to use all their senses to explore their world. A well-rounded kindergarten program lays the foundation for a student's success in school. While each kindergarten classroom in Concord is unique, there are certain basic goals that are shared by all kindergarten teachers. We have listed some of these goals here.

### *Goals for each child in relation to oneself:*

- to develop a love of learning by experiencing success and by learning how to deal effectively with failure;
- to develop a feeling of adequacy and self-respect;
- to develop some independence and initiative by making choices and decisions, and to realize the value of seeking help and assurance when needed;
- to recognize feelings and understand how to control one's feelings;
- to develop a sense of responsibility by caring for possessions and materials;
- to begin to develop artistic expression.

### *Goals for each child in relation to other people:*

- to develop a respect for other children and adults;
- to improve perceptions of and consideration for the feelings of others;
- to learn how to work within a group;
- to develop an enjoyment of other children and adults.

### *Goals for each child in relation to the world of ideas:*

- to have experiences which arouse curiosity and enthusiasm;
- to develop an awareness of the environment;
- to experiment with new ideas and new places – test, discover, take excursions;
- to sharpen the use of the senses of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling;
- to learn to plan – to think, work, follow through, and make decisions;
- to discuss, question, organize, classify information and draw conclusions;
- to clarify work concepts and to increase language skills;
- to recognize that written symbols have meaning – that information may be communicated to and from others by printed symbols;
- to develop interest in books and other printed materials;
- to increase understanding of size, shape, space and time;
- to learn to communicate ideas of number and quantity;
- to distinguish between reality and fantasy;
- to enjoy humor.

## **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

In order to implement our common goals, Concord's kindergarten program has been developed to provide a strong foundation of both academic and aesthetic experiences. The program is geared to the individual growth and development of each child, while at the same time emphasizing his or her social and emotional well-being. Each kindergarten includes large group, small group, and individual learning activities, to enhance the learning environment of the classroom community and the individual learner.

### **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT**

Language development is the basis for learning and understanding. Listening and speaking are precursors to reading and writing. Therefore, the development of language skills in relation to pre-literacy skills is emphasized in the kindergarten program.

The kindergarten program provides children with age-appropriate opportunities to develop and enhance language and literacy skills through:

- reading aloud a wide variety of literary genres;
- listening activities;
- instruction in writing to communicate;
- vocabulary development;
- cultivating conversational skills with peers, teachers and staff;
- developing the recognition of visual cues using pictures, book illustrations, games and puzzles;
- instruction in pre-reading skills using Telian Program;
- instruction and practice in letter formation of upper case letters using the HANDWRITING WITHOUT TEARS program.

Specific activities and materials used to develop language skills include:

class meeting - sharing experiences - group discussions - story time - looking at books in the library corner - poetry and riddles - puppets - building patterns - records/tapes/filmstrips/videos - interest areas such as housekeeping, block corner and sand table - dictation about experiences - book making - library time - shared reading - writing workshop - shared and interactive writing

## MATHEMATICS

The major goal of the elementary mathematics curriculum is to develop students who are proficient in and empowered by the effective use of mathematics. Students come to school with ideas about numbers, shapes, measurements, patterns, and data. If given the opportunity to learn in an environment that stresses making sense of mathematics, students build on the ideas they already have and learn about new mathematics they have never encountered. This goal is consistent with the philosophy of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics as published in *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (2000) and *Curriculum Focal Points for Prekindergarten through Grade 8 Mathematics* (2006) that support the view of school mathematics as an experience that is “grounded in the belief that all students should learn important mathematical concepts and processes with understanding.”

The mathematics program in kindergarten is developmentally appropriate in its use of concrete materials and its focus on process. The groundwork is laid for developing concepts in the areas of our number system, addition and subtraction, measurement, patterns, 2-D and 3-D geometry, graphing, and problem solving.

Our K-5 Mathematics Program is *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* (2008, Pearson Scott Foresman). The *Investigations* curriculum incorporates years of research about how children make sense of mathematical ideas. Students use a variety of hands-on materials to engage in thinking about and interacting with mathematical concepts.

During their kindergarten experience, students will begin to develop

- the processes of describing, sorting, classifying, comparing, ordering, equalizing (length, weight, number) and representing.
- visual-spatial skills.
- the language of mathematics.
- the organizational skills necessary for mathematical problem solving

## HEALTH EDUCATION

The health education program at the kindergarten level lays important groundwork for gaining the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to develop healthy, life-long behaviors.

“Comprehensive health education contributes to the capacity of students to work in a positive manner with families, school staff, peers, and community members to enhance personal health and create a safe and supportive environment where individual similarities and differences are acknowledged.”\*

**GOALS:** Student learning outcomes from the Department of Education Health Curriculum Frameworks incorporate the strands of Physical Health, Social/Emotional Health, Safety and Prevention and Personal and Community Health. Because much of the focus of the program is

on the area of self-esteem, the goals of the health program reinforce many of the overall goals of the kindergarten program. They are:

- to develop a feeling of self-worth and self-respect;
- to recognize, understand and learn to cope with feelings;
- to develop a respect for the similarities and differences of other children and adults;
- to begin developing independence and a sense of personal safety by recognizing the skills necessary to make healthy decisions.

Topics covered at this level include nutrition, personal safety, the family, support systems, assertiveness, decision making, emotional health, male/female similarities and differences, and personal care. Many of these topics are integrated with the Social Studies and Language Arts curricula.

Throughout the K-5 curriculum, emphasis is on developing skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and social skills including communication, empathy and assertiveness, and habits of mind, including open-mindedness, flexibility, curiosity, sense of interdependence and acceptance of personal, social and civic responsibility. Classroom teachers, with assistance from our school Social Workers and Health Curriculum Specialists, have been trained in the Wellesley College *Open Circle* Social Competency program to meet the health education standards in the Social Emotional Health Strand.

\*DOE Health Framework

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

Social studies activities are an important part of the kindergarten program, linking the child's family and home experiences to those of school and community. The structure of the kindergarten classroom enables the child to begin to understand the importance of living cooperatively within the larger community. The concepts of rules, responsibility, fairness and leadership are introduced.

In addition, Kindergarten students have opportunities to learn about important American observances, people and symbols, such as Columbus Day, Martin Luther King Jr., and the American flag, respectively.

**GOALS:** To provide children with opportunities for learning how to live in a socially acceptable way in the home, school and community, the goals of the kindergarten program are:

- to begin to appreciate human similarities and differences;
- to begin to understand the interdependence of people;
- to understand how one's actions affect others;
- to understand the significance of certain holidays;
- to develop positive self-image.

Specific activities for the development of social studies concepts include:

interest centers and displays - field trips - community resource people, particularly parents - group discussions - pictures from magazines to demonstrate certain concepts such as feelings, different relationships, occupations - stories, tapes, videos, dramatizations, plays, puppets - block constructions - making models - celebration of important lives and events - Our Human Family unit.

## SCIENCE

Science activities broaden the kindergarten child's understanding of the world by emphasizing investigations of the immediate environment. The child's natural curiosity in living things and the physical world is encouraged and developed through hands-on minds-on science investigations and activities. Students construct meaning and develop concepts and skills through active involvement with materials and systematic observations of living organisms.

Within the curriculum, emphasis is placed on the development of the following science processes: observing, questioning, measuring, recording data, recording observations and making predictions.

The kindergarten science program includes the following student learning outcomes.

The students will:

- use their senses to observe and describe objects and organisms;
- note similarities and differences between objects and organisms;
- communicate observations verbally and through drawings;
- make predictions;
- ask and respond to questions about objects, organisms, and events.

Kindergarten science investigations and activities include:

observing nature's life cycles, - observing the weather and identifying daily weather changes - observing, describing and caring for plants and animals, - participating in school yard nature walks, - describing, sorting and classifying objects and organisms. - exploring the physical properties of objects and materials using balls and ramps, magnets and/or water tables for sink and float activities.

## SPECIAL AREAS

All kindergarten children in the Concord Public Schools receive specialized instruction in **art, music, physical education and library skills**. In addition, there are numerous opportunities for children to participate in art, music and physical education activities in individual classrooms. These activities are integrated into all parts of the kindergarten program.

**The Library Media program** in kindergarten (one thirty minute class per week) helps develop and nurture the habit and enjoyment of reading and using libraries, while teaching and reinforcing listening skills, care of books, fiction and nonfiction materials, and authors and illustrators.

**The Music program** in kindergarten (two thirty minute classes per week) is based on building a foundation of musical skill development including pitch matching, steady beat and such opposites as: loud/soft, high/low, fast/slow, long/short, choppy/smooth. Goals in this child-centered environment are accomplished through active participation and exploration in singing, listening, playing classroom rhythmic instruments, moving and playing musical games.

**GOALS:** To provide children with creative experiences:

- to develop their self-confidence;
- to develop an appreciation of their own ideas;
- to develop creativity and self-expression through a wide variety of activities.

**The Art program** in kindergarten gives children another language for learning. Children are encouraged to express themselves through their art. They draw inspiration from observation, imagination, personal experience and classroom study. Students explore a variety of two- and three-dimensional processes, which they use as a means to realize personal expression. The art program uses a spiraling curriculum, and each year will include developmentally appropriate units in any of, but not limited to, the following media: drawing, painting, printmaking, clay, papier-mache, paper sculpture, etc. Reflection and discussion are important elements of each art experience, fostering insights that are applied to future learning. In kindergarten, art classes are one half-hour in length. Each class includes a dialogue and presentation of the lesson, time for students to work through ideas, and a wrap-up with sharing of solutions and ideas.

**The Physical Education program** (two half-hour classes per week) offers children a variety of creative motor experiences that promote healthy attitudes towards exercise. The physical education program offers vigorous and non-vigorous activities that build skills, strength, speed, coordination, self-confidence, and self-image. Social and emotional development is addressed through the teaching of concepts such as cooperation, problem solving, team building, fair play, and respect for human differences. The physical education program clearly plays a vital role in the education of the whole child.

In kindergarten, the physical education program introduces basic movement patterns. Emphasis is placed on proper kicking, throwing, and movement techniques. Doing one's "personal best" is introduced in kindergarten, and reinforced throughout the child's elementary physical education experience.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Massachusetts special education law, Federal Public Law 94-142 guarantee to all special education students, ages 3-21, the right to a free and appropriate public education. A child in need of special education is defined as one, who is eligible, based upon a substantiated disability and who is unable to progress effectively in the general curriculum without specialized instruction. The disability categories are as follows: autism, developmental delay, intellectual, sensory, neurological, emotional, communication, physical, specific learning, or health.

All kindergarten children participate in a global screening intended to identify whether a disability is suspected. As a result of the screening and teacher observation during the first three months of school, some children may be referred for further evaluation. The parent must grant

permission for such an evaluation before it takes place. Eligible children are provided specialized instruction designed to enable them to progress in the general curriculum.

Elementary special education staff provide a range of services designed to meet the individual needs of eligible students. These services include specialized instruction and related services (therapies). For more specific information please contact the Special Education Office at (978) 341-2490 Ext. 8105 or 8106.

## HEALTH SERVICES

Good physical and mental health is intimately linked to a child's ability to progress effectively in school. In recognition of this relationship, the Concord Public Schools and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health require that entering kindergarten students complete the following prior to enrollment:

- a complete physical examination, by physician or nurse practitioner, within six months of attending (the School Health Form is available through the elementary school nurse);
- current immunizations for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DPT) measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), polio, Hepatitis B and varicella. If immunization conflicts with religious beliefs or medical needs, a parental statement to that effect may be presented. Proof of lead screening is also required.
- a new Student Health Screening Form (available from the elementary school nurse).

All of these forms, once returned to the school, become part of the child's confidential cumulative health record. Vision and hearing screenings are conducted by the school nurse on an annual basis.

While the health care of the child is the primary responsibility of the family, a nurse is located in each of the school buildings throughout the day. The school nurse attends to daily student health needs and emergencies that may occur. The nurse also shares a responsibility with the classroom teacher in providing ongoing health education to students. Parents are encouraged to contact the nurse with any health-related questions or concerns.

Medication cannot be given by the nurse without specific written instructions from a physician and written authorization from the parent/guardian. Children's Tylenol may be administered at the discretion of the nurse if parent/guardian permission is indicated on the Health Office Information Card. With the exception of emergency first aid, all medical treatment is considered to be outside the province of the school. In the event of student illness or a medical emergency at school, parents will be contacted immediately and are expected to transport their child for necessary services. In the event of an emergency when a parent cannot be contacted, the family physician will be contacted for necessary consultation or treatment.

The elementary school staff and parents work together to promote good health for our children. The regular practice of adequate sleep, sound nutrition, exercise, dental care and awareness of safety issues contribute significantly to a child's success in school.

## **SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER**

The Concord Public School system recognizes that in order for children to take full advantage of their educational experiences, they need to establish a positive feeling about themselves. There are times when children experience different stressors that may interfere with developing these positive feelings. Each elementary school has a social worker whose knowledge about child development, family dynamics and social adjustment of young children assists those children who may be experiencing excessive stress. The social worker is an integral part of the educational process, starting in kindergarten. S/he assists all the kindergarten teachers in providing an easy transition into our kindergarten program, and are available for teacher consultation regarding different aspects of child development, given the wide range that exists with children entering kindergarten. These same services are available to all parents who may have questions regarding their child's development. This home/school link is invaluable in creating a positive learning atmosphere that will last for the next 12 years of a child's life. Social workers are also liaisons between the school and community. In this role, they can provide information about outside agencies that provide support services not available in school.

A few signals that may indicate to a teacher, parent or other school personnel that a child may need some support are:

- excessive anxiety, particularly about the school experience in general;
- loneliness, when a child complains of a lack of friends or when a teacher notices social isolation;
- behavioral swings, i.e., a child getting too angry or too out of control.

## **VISITING AND VOLUNTEERING**

### **Volunteering at School**

Many people in our community have skills and interests that they share with children in the schools. In as little as an hour per week, or an occasional block of time, a volunteer can share a hobby or profession, play math and language arts games with small groups of children, listen to a child read or simply assist in a classroom. The only necessary qualities to bring to the job of volunteering are a desire to help and an interest in children. All work is done under the supervision of a staff member, and training is provided whenever needed.

Volunteers provide an example to the children of the skills, concern and willingness to share that exists in our community. Often this help from the community inspires children to appreciate the many sources of learning - people and places - around them.

If you are interested in helping at school or in finding out more about volunteering, call the principal of the school in which your child is enrolled.

As of the Spring 2003, it is a Massachusetts State Law that all persons working in or volunteering in schools must undergo a CORI check. This is a criminal background check. Approximately two weeks prior to volunteering, you should fill out a CORI check agreement form at the school office.

### **Visiting the School**

The Concord Public School system invites you to visit the schools. A visit can provide an understanding of school procedures and atmosphere. If you wish to spend time in classrooms, arrangements should be made through the individual school office.