

First Grade Information

We have tried to think of many of the commonly asked questions that parents often have concerning first grade. Following is a list of items we hope you will find useful. If at any time you have further questions, we encourage you to send a note with your child or call school. We can normally be reached between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. We value open and frequent communication with parents as an essential element in the education process of your child.

1. SCHOOL ADDRESS

Bennington Elementary
11620 N. 156 St.
Bennington, NE 68007

2. Bennington Elementary Phone 402-238-2690

3. SCHOOL HOURS 8:20-3:05

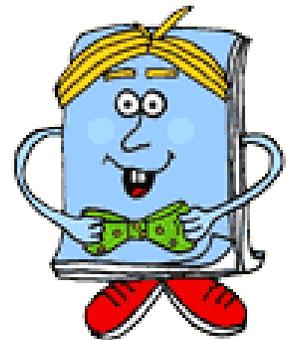


4. LUNCH TICKETS

Please keep a positive-running lunch balance in your child's lunch account.

5. HOMEWORK

Weekly sight word lists, guided reading books, and math activities will be sent home throughout the year. There is usually enough time allowed during class for students to complete daily assignments. However, if a student does not complete his work in class, he may be asked to take it home to finish. Please check backpacks and folders daily, as there may be important materials enclosed.



6. ABSENCES

We would appreciate your continued cooperation in phoning the school office as soon as possible, after 7:30 AM, if your child will be absent.

7. BOOK ORDERS

Please send a check (NO CASH) written to Scholastic Book Clubs, not your child's teacher or Bennington Public Schools. Please put the book order and check in an envelope with your child's name, teacher, and BOOK ORDER written on the front. Scholastic is now providing an opportunity to order online as well.

8. SUPPLIES

Please check periodically with your child to make sure they are equipped with glue, scissors, pencils, and crayons (the essentials).

Bennington Public Schools
First Grade Program

Bennington Public Schools Mission Statement:

The mission of the Bennington Public Schools is to provide educational opportunities in a safe, caring environment that will prepare all students to meet the challenges of the future.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- *Reading, writing, and phonics* instruction share a major portion of each day's instructional format. A literacy rich environment provides students with meaningful reading, writing, listening and speaking activities.
- *Math* is taught with an emphasis on basic math concepts and facts, while teaching children to become problem solvers and critical thinkers.
- *Science* provides students with the opportunities to explore science concepts that include inquiry, the scientific process, life, earth, physical and health topics presented in a hands-on format.
- *Social Studies* provide students with basic learning in the areas of history, economics, geography, and citizenship.
- *Personal and social development* is integrated on a daily basis as students learn to work and interact with other students and adults in a positive and productive way.

High expectations are held for all students to grow and develop to their greatest potential.

Rules of respect for one another and responsibility for oneself are stressed. Students listen to one another, solve conflicts and become sensitive to one another's feelings.

Parents and teachers work together as partners in the educational decision-making process for students.

Student Evaluation and Assessment

Children are evaluated on their strengths and growth throughout the year. Information is shared with parents during our fall and spring conferences.

***Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher when questions arise throughout the school year. ***

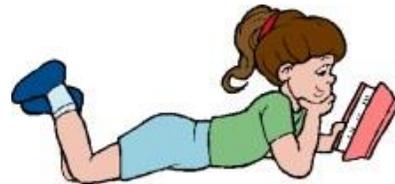
First Grade Assessments

The children are given state assessment tests throughout the year in all core curriculum subjects. All assessments are aligned with the state standards. These assessments are compiled within a portfolio that is shown to parents at conferences.

Ways to Help with Reading at Home

Setting the Atmosphere:

- *Have your child find a quiet, comfortable place to read.
- *Have your child see you as a reading model.
- *Read aloud to your child.
- *Discuss the stories you read together.
- *Recognize the value of silent reading.
- *Keep reading time enjoyable and relaxed.



Responding to Errors in Reading

Based on the way most of us were taught to read, we have told the child to "sound it out" when he comes to an unknown word. While phonics is an important part of reading, reading for meaning is the primary goal. To produce independent readers who monitor and correct themselves as they read, the following prompts are recommended *before* saying "sound it out":

- *Give your child wait time of 5 to 10 seconds. See what he attempts himself.
- *"What would make sense there?"
- *"What do you think it could be?"
- *"Use the picture to help you figure out what it could be."
- *"Go back to the beginning and try that again."
- *"Skip over it and read to the end of the sentence....Now what do you think it is?"
- *"Put in a word that will make sense there."
- *"You read that word before on another page. See if you can find it."
- *"Look at the beginning of the word. Start it out and keep reading."
- *Tell your child the word.

Most importantly, focus on what your child is doing well and is attempting to do. Remain loving and supportive. When your child is having difficulty and trying to work out the trouble spots, comments such as the following are suggested:

*"Good for you. I like the way you tried to work that out."

*"That was a good try. Yes, that word would make sense there."

*"I like the way you looked at the picture to help yourself."

*"I like the way you went back to the beginning of the sentence and tried that again. That's what good readers do."

*"You are becoming a good reader. I'm proud of you."



Invitations, Regie Routman
Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH

Strategies for Hard Words

In new books there will be some hard parts. What are you going to do when you come to a word you do not know? There are many strategies you can try.

You can...

*Try it again

*Grab the first sound

*Look at the picture

*Look through the whole word

*Look for chunks that you know

*Read with your finger

*Ask, does the word make sense?

*Ask, does the word I chose sound right?

*Ask, does the word I chose look right?

*If necessary, the adult may use a prompt. This may be any type of cue. The aim is to have the child take some initiative and do home reading work. You should welcome any contribution the child can make to solve the problem.

*Tell the child the word

*Later you can simply say....check it three ways...

- Does the word you chose LOOK RIGHT?

- Does the word you chose SOUND RIGHT?

- Does the word you chose MAKE SENSE?

Writing Process

The children will be encouraged to write every day. Our writing curriculum is *Scholastic Traits* Writing. It is important to positively encourage your child to write creatively first and worry about the specifics of writing second. Your child will be at various stages of writing. Encourage your child to use print that is around him. There are 6 traits to the writing process that your child will be exposed to throughout the year. They are: ideas and content, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, conventions

Ideas and content

It sticks to one idea
I know this topic well
I have included interesting details not everyone would think of
My paper has a purpose
Once you start reading you will not want to stop

Organization

Starts out with a bang
Has a good beginning, middle and end
It builds to the good parts
You can follow it easily
At the end it feels finished

Word Choice

You can tell I wrote this
My personality shows because I used feeling words
My writing makes the reader feel something
I am not afraid to write what I really think

Voice

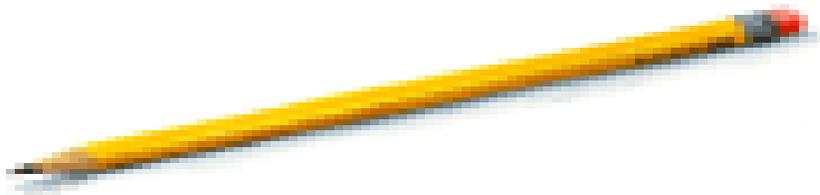
My writing matches the purpose and my audience
I care about my writing
My tone and style are engaging
I asked myself, "Does this sound like me?"

Conventions

I don't have many mistakes in my paper
I have used capital letters correctly
Periods, exclamation marks, and question marks are in the right places
Almost every word is spelled correctly
My writing is easy to read

Sentence Fluency

My sentences have different beginnings and patterns
My sentences are well constructed
I am sure that my writing is easy to read aloud



Math

In Bennington Public Schools, we use Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley *enVision Math* as our primary math source. Our program is geared to developing problem solving strategies and mathematical concepts. In addition, the 1st grade math standards are as follows:

- * Identify number relations and place value through hundreds
- * Skip counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s
- * Show and understanding of whole numbers and fractional parts
- * Solve one and two digit addition, subtraction, and story problems
- * Demonstrate the use of systems of measurement including time and money
- * Identify and understand geometric terms and ideas
- * Count, organize and interpret information from a graph
- * Identify and extend a variety of patterns
- * Identify, develop, and apply strategies to solve problems
- * Complete number sentences using math symbols



Reading

Using the Harcourt *Storytown* series as the basis of our reading program, we offer various components to our reading instruction. These components are:

- * Teacher Read Aloud
- * Enjoyment of literature
- * Modeling of literature behaviors
- * Shared Reading
- * Large group instruction
- * Common text
- * Teacher models application of skills and strategies
- * Guided Reading
- * Small group instruction
- * Strategy instruction and practice
- * Literature Study
- * Small group instruction
- * Literary interpretation and enjoyment
- * Reader's Theatre
 - On occasion, parents will be invited to view our Reader's Theatre performances.
- * Spelling
- * Whole group instruction
- * Words taken from weekly *Storytown* units
- * Teaches phonics and high frequency words



Handwriting

First graders will use *Zaner-Bloser* publishers to learn handwriting skills. Instruction will include proper letter formation.

Social Studies

Pearson/Scott Foresman Publishers All Together first grade Social Studies curriculum includes map skills and citizenship lessons, biographies and cultural experiences as well as units titled:

- * Time For School
- * In My Community
- * Work! Work! Work!
- * Our Earth, Our Resources
- * This Is Our Community
- * Our Country, Our World

Science

Our first grade science units:

- * Investigate and describe physical changes of objects and materials
- * Investigate and compare animals based on their characteristics and habitats
- * Examine life cycles and humans and animals

These units are supported by our district science curriculum, *Scott Foresman Science*.

Some of our themes or units for Social Studies and Science are:

- * Health and Nutrition
- * Fire Safety
- * Patriotism and Citizenship
- * Nocturnal Animals
- * Native Americans and Pilgrims
- * Holidays
- * Earth, Sky, and Planets
- * Earth Materials
- * Polar Regions
- * Martin Luther King Jr.
- * Oceans
- * Rain Forest
- * President's Day



Guidance and Counseling

Guidance classes as well as small group lessons and individual guidance assistance are an integral part of the school curriculum. Guidance lessons are designed to promote student growth in three areas: social/emotional domain, academic/educational domain, and career/occupational domain. The school counselor works with staff and parents in various ways to support a positive school experience for all students.

Physical Education

The primary purpose of the physical education program is to provide students with the opportunities to gain the knowledge, understanding, and skills to practice healthy physical activities throughout their lives. All students are taught to work together and treat others with respect and good sportsmanship.

Art

The elementary art curriculum encompasses the Art Elements and Design Principles in a comprehensive art education model and uses the National Art Standards.

Big Ideas

Unit 1: Line and Shape

Unit 2: Space and Form

Unit 3: Color

Unit 4: Texture, Pattern and Rhythm

Unit 5: Space, Proportion and Distortion

Unit 6: Balance, Variety, Unity and Harmony

Focus

Elements

Line – Sketch

Color – Monochromatic

Shape – Two Dimensional

Value – Tints & Shades

Space – Background/Foreground/Middle ground

Positive & Negative Space

Form – Three Dimensional

Principles

Proportion – Knee's & Elbows

Balance – Radial Balance

Contrast – Shape Contrast

Unity/Variety – A Cohesive Unit

Spanish

Students will receive a "Spanish Squares" sheet at the beginning of each unit. It has 5 tasks or skills the students need to master by the end of the unit. Students are asked to practice the skills at home and return the individual squares signed when the skill is mastered.

Unit 1: Numbers 1-20

Unit 2: All Colors

Unit 3: Body Parts

Find vocabulary lists, copies of assignments and Spanish Squares at:

<http://bennington.ishareinfo.org/kadeshina/index.cfm>

Music

General/Vocal Music

Kindergarten – Grade 3

Content Standards

Music lessons teach the following sequentially from Kindergarten through third grade, throughout the year and the sequence of grades.

- * Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
 - High, medium, low ranges
 - Sing a pentatonic song with pitch accuracy
 - Sing from a varied repertoire of songs
 - Sing songs from different cultures and different eras
- * Reading and Notation of Melody and rhythm
 - Steady beat, no beat, fast, slow
 - Short and long sounds, silence and sound
 - Quarter notes, half notes, eighth notes, whole notes and corresponding rests, 2/4, 3/4, & 4/4 meters
 - Space notes, line notes, melodic contour, upward, downward, pitch names
 - Bar line, measure, double bar line, repeat sign, ties, phrases,
 - Accent, staccato, marcato, legato, syncopation
 - Loud, soft, pp through ff dynamic markings, cresc., decresc.
 - Pentatonic scale, major scale
 - Learn and use notes as pitches and rhythm on the music staff
 - Recognize when melodies move by step, skip or repeated notes
 - Learn pitch names
 - Sharps, flats, naturals, treble clef, ledger lines
- * Perform on unpitched instruments, recognize instruments by sight and sound
 - Play a steady beat on instrument
 - Play a rhythm to a known song
 - Use instruments properly
 - Play rhythm notation
 - Recognize instrument families of the orchestra and band
 - Introduce instruments from different cultures
- * Introducing the structural components of form and harmony.
 - Same/ different, using pictures, icons, letter, patterns,
 - Call and response, question and answer, Introduction, Interlude
 - Sectional forms: AB, ABA, Rondo, Theme and Variations
 - Ostinato, round, countermelody, partner songs, harmony in 3rds & 6ths
- * Composing, arranging and improvising melodies, rhythms, variations and accompaniments within specified guidelines as a class.
 - Listening to, analyzing, evaluating and describing music and music performances and styles
 - Listening to many different genres of musical style
 - Listening to or performing music of various cultures
- * Understanding music in relation to history and culture.