



Seattle Jewish Community School
*Challenging each **Mind** and **Inspiring** each **Heart***

**2nd Grade/Alim
Curriculum Overview
2011-12/5773**

Teachers

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Reading/Literacy Block

In **reading**, we strive to create a **Balanced Literacy Program** in which reading and writing are regarded as complementary processes that promote higher level thinking skills. Students are exposed to a **variety of genres**, mainly in a book group format. Groups are **flexible** depending on interest, instructional level, and skill level, etc. During this block, students are reading, writing, and talking about books. The emphasis is on vocabulary development, stamina, reading comprehension strategies, and guiding students to help make meaningful **connections** between the text and themselves.

Writing

The yearlong **Writer's Workshop** curriculum is divided into month long units of study. Many units of study help children learn to write within a particular **genre** such as writing **true stories about small moments, research reports, or poetry**. Other units highlight particular aspects of the **writing process** such as **revision**. Either way, children generally produce many pieces of writing across a unit of study and then, at the end of the unit, each child selects one or two pieces to revise and edit for publication.

Spelling/Word Study/Handwriting

The spelling program focuses more on teaching children **patterns** in English to give a deeper understanding of **word structure** rather than memorizing words for a weekly test. I use the Wired For Reading curriculum, as well as Words Their Way. We also learn about the history of the English language. By the end of the year, my goal is for the students to understand, identify, and even know the difference between Anglo Saxon, Latin, and Greek-based words. My experience is that a lot of students study the spelling words, do well on the test, but then misspell those same words in their everyday writing. The goal is for students to be able to apply learned word patterns in their own writing consistently. For handwriting, we use the Handwriting Without Tears program. Proper grip and letter formation are reviewed and practiced.

Math

We will mainly be using the Everyday Math curriculum, along with other supplemental materials. This curriculum is set up so that understanding is built over a period of time, first through **informal exposure** and then through more **formal and directed instruction**. Children are expected to master a variety of skills and concepts, but not necessarily the first time those concepts are encountered. The curriculum **"doubles back"** by revisiting topics, concepts, and skills and then relates them to each other in new and different ways. Lessons are presented briskly and in an interesting way. Research has shown that when newly learned concepts and skills are periodically reviewed, practiced, and applied in a wide variety of contexts, they are better retained. Concepts to be taught are:

- numbers and routine addition and subtraction facts
- place value/money and time
- probability
- addition and subtraction
- 3D and 2D shapes
- whole number operations and number stories
- patterns and rules/fractions
- measurement
- multiplication and division
- decimals and place value
- whole number operations revisited
- year-end reviews and extensions

When students are not working on Everyday Math activities, choice is built into the math curriculum so that students can work independently and at their own pace. Students frequently work on **problem solving activities** which are leveled, with each level becoming more challenging. Each student then moves on to the next level as she/he progresses.

Social Studies

The Social Studies curriculum is integrated into other content areas as much as possible, especially, through literature. Students learn about different parts and cultures of the world by reading biographies and fiction. Students also learn map features and mapping skills while studying Rain Forest regions around the world.

Science

The first science unit we are covering is called **Balancing and Weighing**, and then in January we will be starting a unit entitled **Forest Explorers**, a program in conjunction with the Woodland Park Zoo. During this time, students will be doing research reports on animals indigenous to the **Rain Forest**. Finally, we will end the year with a unit on **Soils**, which follows up nicely to our Rain Forest unit.

What is Inquiry Based Science?

Research has shown that the best way for children to learn important science concepts is to actively construct ideas through their own investigations. In the science lab, this means making observations, asking questions, testing ideas, recording results, comparing data, building concepts and explanations.

Core Inquiry Based Science Concepts for All Students:

Students explore core scientific concepts in the science lab. All students work on being keen observers. This means that they use their senses to observe what they are learning. They look – noticing changes, colors, shapes, and behaviors. They touch – observing the temperature and feeling for texture and consistency. They smell – noticing differences between the materials and noting if there is an odor. They listen – noting how the sound relates to the materials. Then, they use their words to describe what they are observing by writing in their science journals and having discussions with other scientists. Students have been learning how important it is for scientists to record data and their observations in organized ways, using tables, anecdotes and illustrations. They make predictions based on prior knowledge and then compare the results to their predictions. Students learn that scientists use models in order to observe something that cannot be easily seen. In the lab lessons, they learn how to conduct fair tests. This means knowing which variables remain the same (controlled) and which variables are changed (manipulated).

Science Lab Unit: Soils

In the 2nd Grade Soils unit, students deepen their awareness about soils. Using simple tests, students learn to identify sand, clay, and humus in soil. They study how water affects different kinds of soil. Through long term experiments, they explore how roots and plants grow in various soils and how, with the help of worms, old plants decompose and become part of the soil. Applying what they have learned, they investigate their own local soil.

General Homework

Mondays and Wednesdays students will bring home assignments from General Studies, and Tuesdays and Thursdays, assignments will come home from Judaic Studies. Monday's homework will usually involve some sort of writing, word study, or spelling assignment, and Wednesday's homework will most likely be a math assignment, connected to that day's lesson. The math assignments should not be new material, but rather a concept that has already been introduced, ideally, on that particular day. The math is differentiated in that it may be a review of the assignment we did in class that morning, for students who need extra practice, or it may cover the same concept, but in a more challenging way, for those students who need more of a challenge. Students should also be reading for 15-20 minutes every day as well as practicing math facts. More information will come home soon regarding what level your child should be practicing.

***Ivrit* (Hebrew)**

This year the students will be continuing their Hebrew studies with haMoreh Jeff and haMorah Iris. We will emphasize comprehension of oral and written Hebrew using the TaL AM curriculum. TaL AM is a unique curriculum of Hebrew Language Arts and Jewish Studies. At SJCS we will teach within an exclusive *sevivah ivrit*, or Hebrew environment, providing an interactive immersive learning space to engage with the Hebrew language. The curriculum was developed by a dynamic team of writers and teachers in Montreal

and in Israel, led by Covenant Award recipient Tova Shimon. For more information, please go to www.talam.org/about.html. We are very excited to be using this program.

Parshat Hashvuah (Weekly Torah Portion)

Torah Study takes both a general and intensive path in Alim. General Torah study includes portions relevant to the upcoming holidays and a regular study of the weekly Torah portion. The goal at the end of the year is for each child to have a solid grasp on the overall narrative of the Torah, to be able to derive the basic lessons out of the major events, and to be able to relate to the text personally. The in-depth Torah study teaches children how to study a biblical text using a *humash*. Various passages will be studied in Hebrew as the students will examine key phrases, words, and Hebrew roots as well as Rabbinic understandings of the text (*Midrash*). The children are introduced to Midrash and stories meant to enrich the concepts and values spoken about in the *Parashiot* (Weekly Torah Portions). Role-playing, drama, TaL AM Torah materials, and the Talmud Torah Packet are some ways that will help to enhance their understanding of concepts and characters in the Torah. Students will also regularly engage in discussions on issues that arise from the text.

T'fillah

Throughout the year, Alim students will work on mastering specific prayers and blessings. We will focus on prayers, their *kavanah*, structure of services (examining the question of why the Jewish prayer service is organized as it is) using the concept of the Energy Curve – a concept that was developed to illustrate the rise and fall of every service. We will study holiday-specific prayers as they arise, Shabbat prayers, *Shaharit*, and the Torah service.

Holidays

Each holiday will be studied as it comes up throughout the year. We will have a variety of activities and projects to help our understanding of each holiday including: acting, art, and storytelling. The TaL AM Hebrew curriculum will also be integrated into Jewish Holiday lessons. Many of these holidays are also celebrated at SJCS by combining grades in community celebrations.

Mitzvot

Mitzvot are an integral part of the SJCS environment. *Mitzvot bein adam l'havero* (*Mitzvot* between people) and Jewish values are incorporated into the daily classroom. We will study the *mitzvot* relevant to the holidays as well as the *mitzvot* between people and G-d. As part of a school-wide effort to deepen our connection to *g'milut hasadim* (acts of kindness) and *dereh eretz*, Alim students will also participate in the school's monthly *tzedakah* projects.

Judaic Studies Homework

Judaic homework will be sent out on Tuesday and Thursday and will be due the following day, unless otherwise specified. Homework on Tuesdays will be Hebrew related on Thursdays the homework will be related to the Torah portion. In each Torah packet there will be a section for parents and their children to work together and discuss the Torah portion and its message. In addition there will be a place for an adult's signature, showing that the homework was completed and reviewed.

*Note: This year as we grow into the TaL AM curriculum, the way the Hebrew and Judaic homework may become integrated and subject to change.

How to Help With Homework

If your child is having trouble with reading the Hebrew, or with any other part of the homework, please feel free to make a notify the teacher. Please make sure to help your child by checking that the homework is complete and the directions have been followed.

P.E., Music, Art, Library and Dance

Specialist time will be Music on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Dance on Mondays, P.E. on Wednesdays, Art every other Friday, and Library also on Fridays. On Wednesdays, please make sure your child dresses appropriately (i.e. no flip flops, etc.) for P.E.

Art

The over-arching goal of the SJCS art program is to provide a broad, multi-media art experience towards developing an understanding of the arts as a universal form of cultural and personal expression. The program offers an introduction to masters of American/European art history as well as non-Western masters, keeping in mind cultural and historical contexts. Students are shown the intrinsic connection between art and the disciplines of math and science especially, and also of literature, and taught that creativity is not the provenance of the arts alone. As an Elementary school topic, the emphasis is to provide a breadth of experience in the art program.

The media used in the SJCS art program are based on the National Arts Standards, and include: drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, ceramics and sculpture. Each grade works on projects designed to build skills, but mostly to provide experiences that create an understanding of process. The creation of art comes from individuals in cultural settings, such as the collages Romare Beardon created in New York City in the Harlem Jazz scene. It comes from needing to solve "problems", such as how to create a clay coil bowl. It requires planning, focused work and completion, in limited time. Each year we discuss the Elements of Art, on levels appropriate to age.

In the fall, Second Graders focus on drawing and painting. They will use a variety of media, sometimes mixed, including colored pencils, oil pastels, watercolors, finger paints and tempera. They learn more about the Elements of Art, expanding on color wheel knowledge and art vocabulary.

Collage in January is integrated with their study of rain forests with haMorah Debbie Clement, as is the foam-plate printmaking project that follows in February. Second graders really learn to draw what they see, and it's very exciting to see this development, but challenging to stop their self-criticism if what they create isn't what they were trying for. The children create hand-molded food with clay, learning to score and slip for strong attachments. Wood assemblage for the second time is one three-dimensional sculpture experience, as is paper folding. Some of the artists we study in second grade are Mondrian, Cassatt, Matisse, and Frank Stella. As we move through the year, the students will be reviewing Visual Thinking Strategies, a program that uses well-known works by Masters as an introduction to art criticism.

Physical Education

Statement of Purpose

The Seattle Jewish Community School recognizes the need for Physical Education and provides opportunities for students to learn, grow and develop in the areas of movement skills, fitness (energy) education, and teamwork. Paramount to its physical education environment is good sportsmanship through dereh erez, mutual respect, positive language and proper behavior among students. SJCS provides a safe learning environment and uses a diverse array sports games, tumbling exercises, dance, fitness and other related activities to provide a well-rounded physical education curriculum.

Curriculum

Students begin the year learning to use basic movement skills such as hopping, skipping, jumping, kicking, throwing, rolling, balancing, dodging and fleeing through a number of challenging activities. In October the focus shifts to basketball as students develop hand/eye coordination while learning the finer points of dribbling, passing, catching and shooting/placing a basketball or tossing bean bags in a hoop. November brings our soccer and first fitness unit installment. Students learn to dribble, stop rolling balls, and pass to teammates using their feet only. A variety of fitness activities are also conducted to promote aerobic endurance, body manipulation, quick reaction, and listening.

The month December continues with listening skills development, but now focuses on teamwork. Students are challenged to work with a partner(s) while participating in various activities using jump ropes, hula hoops, and bean bags with a focus on friendship, personal space awareness, and cooperation along with balance, agility, coordination, and quick reaction. January brings another fitness installment as students now learn the correct way to do calisthenics such as jumping jacks, sit ups, pushups, etc., as well as bear crawls, crab walks, and jogging non-stop for 2 minutes each class. During February's football unit students learn how to carry a football through a maze of wall mats while trying to keep other kids from snatching the flags attached to their waist. This activity helps kids with the skills dodging, snatching, fleeing, and strategy. It also helps prepare them for flag football at the higher grade levels.

Our March t-ball unit is solely focused on striking the ball off the "T", fielding the baseball, and then the actual game of t-ball. During our t-ball unit students learn to develop hand/eye coordination as they are challenged to watch the bat as it makes contact with the ball for a hit, successfully field a rolling or flying ball, and maintain awareness as they run the base paths alone or with teammates. Forward rolls, handstands, and cartwheels comprise the month of April as we usher in our tumbling/gymnastics unit. During the months of May and June a review of different skills/games/activities taught during each prior month will be conducted each week.

SJCS PE Dress for Success Policy

SJCS welcomes students to its Physical Education Curriculum of exercises and activities. In order for your child to optimize their learning experience and to reduce the embarrassment factor, we request that you pay close attention to your child's PE day(s) and make sure they are dressed appropriately each day.

Each child should wear a pair of athletic shoes. No heels, sandals, crocs, uggs, boots, etc.

Girl appropriate dress would include shorts, skorts, yoga pants, sweats. No dresses or skirts please! It is preferred that boys wear shorts or sweat pants.

Thank you for your understanding, and detailed attention to this matter. We look forward to having another great year of PE at SJCS

Library

All of the units in the library curriculum are guided by three main goals: 1) to instill a love of books and reading, 2) to teach library and research skills, and, 3) to use various forms of literature as a vehicle to explore important personal and social issues such as respect for diversity and social responsibility.

Second Grade

Review and Expand: Book care, borrowing versus owning, shelf markers, finding interesting books, title-author-illustrator, fiction versus nonfiction, alphabetical order. During this time we also read aloud some fun books about the library.

Library Sections: What are these sections and where are they located: Everybody Books, I Can Read, Chapter – Series, Fiction, Nonfiction, Biography, Graphic Novels, Jewish Holidays, Jewish (Everybody, Biography, Fiction, Nonfiction), Hebrew (Everybody, Biography, Fiction, Nonfiction).

Book Labels and Parts of a Book: Students learn to identify cover, spine, and title page. spine labels, call numbers.

Friendship: Each week we read aloud and discuss a book that focuses on some kind of social dilemma such as teasing, exclusion, jealousy, expressing anger, recognizing other's feelings, etc. In addition to a core group of books designed for this type of learning, books may be added that specifically apply to issues that a particular student or group of students may be facing. Discussion encourages students to relate to *all* of the characters involved in the stories and to examine the feelings and choices they made. Sometimes we discuss how the topics raised by the story may apply to students' lives.

SJCS Book Awards: First we learn about the Caldecott and Newbery Awards while highlighting certain authors. Then the second graders award a chapter book series.

Review and Expand Dewey: At this level, students learn that nonfiction books are arranged by the Dewey Decimal System and students use the ten basic classifications.

Library Check-out: Students learn about the SJCS and public library systems for checking out books and other media.

Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated during snack time on each student's birthday, or as close to the actual date as possible. Summer birthdays are celebrated in June. We celebrate with songs and something special for each child, but if parents would like to bring in something for the class, that is totally fine. Just let us know ahead of time.

A Special Request About Arriving in the Morning

Our morning routines vary throughout the year, but in the fall we start off the first 15 minutes of the day (8:15-8:30 AM) with silent reading. I believe that this is a great way for students to get focused, calm, and ready for the day. Silent Reading time is important because we are circulating throughout the class, listening to the students read, conferencing, and capitalizing on those teachable moments. On a good day, we can get to at least to four to six children. That being said, we would appreciate your help in reminding your child that upon entering the classroom, s/he is to immediately hang up backpacks, turn in homework, etc., and settle quietly into a book.

Also, because we are working with students during this time, we may not greet your child at the door, but eventually, as we make our way around the room, by 8:30 AM, everyone has been greeted and welcomed into the classroom. If you would like to accompany your child into the classroom, you are more than welcome, and we appreciate your cooperation in keeping conversations with other adults to a minimum to create calm for the students. If you are so inclined, you are more than welcome to read with your child until 8:30 AM.