

Teaching and Learning Handbook

This document, the Teaching and Learning Handbook should provide you information about the most important aspect of schooling: student learning. Our intent is to provide information about Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment so you have a clear understanding of the learning your child will be doing in their time at Einstein Elementary. All professions have their own alphabet soup of acronyms and terms and we hope to define educational terms that you may encounter on the news or in conversations with teachers.

Curriculum

Curriculum is a term that is used to describe what the students should know, (the concepts that are taught) and be able to do (the skills that are taught). These standards are what the students are expected to master as a result of the instruction. You will often hear the term Standards Based Education, which differs from an approach where just broad content areas are identified. The curriculum at Einstein is guided by a number of sources.

The State of Washington has an overseeing educational agency called the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and they have developed a set of Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and also published Grade Level Expectations for different content areas. Math is an example of a content area. In these documents, OSPI has identified what the students should know and be able to do. For more information about OSPI, the EALRs or the GLE's please visit the OSPI website at <http://www.k12.wa.us/>

The following section is from the Lake Washington School District Website. Please visit <http://www.lwsd.org/Parents/Teaching-Curriculum/Pages/Teaching-Framework.aspx> for more information.

The Teaching and Learning Framework is the Foundation

Providing a guaranteed and viable curriculum for students

The Teaching and Learning Framework defines curriculum as the work and learning of students. It involves instructional planning on the part of the teacher, the use of effective instructional strategies with students, and ongoing assessment of student learning. Curriculum provides students, teachers and parents with clear goals and targets for achievement. Out of this grows the work of teachers: instructional planning and delivery, and assessment practices that will support students in their development and learning.

Planning for Student Success begins with a focus on student-centered classrooms. Teachers build unit and lesson plans incorporating a variety of assessments with student-centered learning as a foundational framework. Thinking skills and strategies are at the center of student learning.

Key Points in Student-Centered Learning

- Students benefit when they help to design/implement instruction and assessment.
- Effective instructional activities meet academic standards and student needs/interests.
- Decisions about instruction are based on assessments of what students already know and

can do.

- There is a strong connection between what students are learning in class with applications in the world beyond the classroom.

Characteristics of Student-Centered Learning

- Ongoing reflection on assessment of standards and learning
- Student choice
- Relevant connections to the world
- Collaboration
- Student involvement in planning
- Student interests and needs at the center of instruction
- Student awareness of the importance of their learning:
 - What am I doing?
 - Why am I doing it?
 - What am I learning?
 - How will I show my learning to others?
- The teacher's first step in curriculum planning is to develop a comprehensive plan for the units of study students will engage in over the course of the school year. With a yearlong plan in mind, the teacher designs specific units to help students reach the standards set in the Teaching and Learning Framework.

Power Standards

Our Teaching and Learning Department, a group of administrators and teachers who work at the Lake Washington School District Resource center, has begun to use a process to produce what are called Power Standards for our content areas. These standards are the ones that are most essential for students to master because they meet the following criteria: Endurance, it is something that they need to know and will apply long after the test. Leverage, it is learning that will be applied across different content areas. Readiness for next level of learning, meaning learning that will be used in future grades. A power standard relative to graphing is an good example, it is a skill that will be used through a students life, will be used in many content areas, science and social studies for example. The Power Standards for math are currently complete and the Teaching and Learning team is in the process of completing them for the other content areas.

Curriculum Resources

Curriculum Resources are the tools that teachers use to teach the curriculum. For example: In our math classes, Investigations is the math curriculum resource we use to teach the students the math power standards which is the curriculum. In the following grade level sections the curriculum resources used will be identified.

Instruction

Our teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies or ways to teach in their classrooms. Teachers will use different methods depending on different Many of the lessons that are delivered are done using a constructivist approach. This means that the teachers design activities

and experiences for the students to help them come to their own understanding about concepts. Many of the math and science lessons are in this format.

Differentiation

This is a term that is used to describe the ways that teachers tailor their instruction to meet the students' individual needs. Over the past few years, we have focused on strategies to meet the needs of all learners in our classrooms and have had professional development about this topic. To meet the needs of different learners, teachers may modify their instruction for different needs. For example, students who are just learning English may listen to a story with vocabulary at their level, while other students may be reading a different story on the same topic. The assignment may be to produce a poster demonstrating they understood the concepts, which all students could do, just different vocabulary would be used.

Grouping

Many teachers provide direct instruction to small groups of students while other students are involved in other learning activities. For example, a group of students may be working with a teacher in a small group on a specific skill while other students are engaged in independent work. The students often will rotate through stations so that they are all receiving the small group instruction.

Manipulatives

Especially in math and science, students will be using hands-on manipulatives to help them understand the concepts. Students who appear to be playing with blocks, are actually using them to produce models of the concepts being taught. A wide variety of objects are used as concrete examples for students to interact with such as; snap cubes, Legos, puzzles, blocks, and many more.

Team-teaching or Co-Teaching

Our teachers will use the strategy of team teaching or co-teaching on some lessons. Having two classrooms and two teachers is an excellent way to share resources and it is also good for the students' social development to interact with all students in their grade level. Many of our classrooms have a wall that can be opened in between them providing for a large space for the two teachers to use. Some grade levels will also have buddy classrooms. When the 3rd and 4th graders come to the Kindergarten to read to them, they have an authentic audience for oral reading and have to have an understanding of the story to answer the questions that the younger students ask. Many teachers use this technique for art lessons.

ELL -English Language Learners

Many of the students who attend our school speak a language other than English in their homes. This provides a great opportunity and we celebrate our diversity in many ways. Students, who qualify for the English Language Learner program, receive direct instruction in English and are also provided additional support in their classroom.

Safety Net Teachers

We closely monitor student progress in the area of reading. Students who need additional services because they aren't performing at the level they are expected to receive additional

instruction in the area of reading. Most of these services are done in a very small group setting with our teachers who have been specifically trained in the area of teaching reading. Our goal is to help support students in reaching the district academic standards and becoming successful in the classroom. You will be notified if your student qualifies for these services.

Technology

Technology is a very powerful teaching tool. In our classrooms, we have ceiling mounted projectors that can be used to show paper documents with what is called a document camera or an Elmo. We also have a powerful tool called an ActivBoard. This is an interactive whiteboard that allows teachers and students access to a very wide variety of resources. It is an amazing resource and the teachers are receiving the necessary training to use them throughout this school year. Students have access to computers in their classrooms, the library and in the computer lab. They have access to a number of software products including:

- Accelerated Math -A program that creates appropriate level math problems.
- Accelerated Reader -A program used to test student reading comprehension.
- Rosetta Stone -A program used to teach English vocabulary to ELL students.
- Headsprout -A literacy program for primary students, focusing on letters and sounds.
- Fast Forward - An intensive intervention software to help students make the connection between letters and sounds.
- Microsoft Office -This is the productivity suite that we use.
- Internet & E-mail- Used appropriately at each grade level under teacher supervision to access and share information.

Other Adults

In addition to the classroom and support teachers, we have other adults that help us deliver the instructional program.

Student Teachers

We are a partnership school with University of Washington Bothell and we host a number of student teachers every year. Student teachers are mentored by the classroom teacher and supervised by university personnel. Their involvement in the classroom begins primarily as an observer at the beginning to actually teaching a majority of the lessons towards the end of their experience. The classroom teacher assists in planning the lessons and coaches the student teacher. Student teachers are treated as staff members and attend all of our meetings and work shops.

High School Volunteers

We are lucky to have a group of high school volunteers who come from Redmond High School to assist in a few of the classrooms. They are under the direct supervision of the teachers that they work with and will often work one on one with a student to assist them with their work.

Parent and Links volunteers

We also have parents and community volunteers who help with everything from reading with small groups, to making copies, to teaching lessons on occasion. There is a project called Links

(Looking Into the Needs of Kids and Schools) that also provides us with volunteers. All volunteers must have turned in a Volunteer Application and receive clearance from the Lake Washington School District Public Information Office before they may volunteer in our school. Many volunteers also assist in the social development of our students by becoming Lunch Buddies, a mentoring program in which students eat lunch with an adult mentor on a regular basis.

Art Docents

The PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) has a program called Art Docents. The program provides art lessons in the classrooms by parents who have been specifically trained on the lesson that they are delivering.

Assessment

The third component of the instruction program is the assessment of student learning. Teachers use a wide variety of methods to collect information or evidence that students know concepts or can perform skills. Everything from in class questions to formal pencil and paper tests, and student performances. Large scale projects to student responses on an assignment can all be used to judge how well the student is doing.

A tool that is often used in assessment is called a rubric. This is a set of criteria that student performance is measured against. It describes what level of performance is necessary to earn which marks. Please see the included writing rubrics in the grade level sections for an example.

Formative

As the teachers are teaching, they are constantly doing formative assessments that they use to guide their instruction. As the students answer questions or complete small tasks, they use the student responses to know what further instruction students will need to get to the goal of the lesson. In class, a concept is presented and then the teacher does a quick check for understanding. If a majority of the class doesn't understand this, they know that they need to teach this concept further before going on.

Summative

A test given at the end of instruction to measure what the students learned is called a summative assessment. This is often used at the secondary level in end of the quarter, term or a final exam.

Dibels

Dibels is a reading test that we give students in grades K-6 three times a year. Dibels stands for Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. This test primarily assesses students reading fluency, or how fast they can read words or passages. The assessment has benchmarks for each time the test is given. Students who are not performing at the benchmark level are considered for additional reading help.

WASL

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is given to students in grades 3-6 every spring. This is a large scale state mandated test given to all students in the state of

Washington. It is used to measure student performance against the state EALRs. Student results come out in September and a report is mailed to each home on how the students performed. The following sections of the test are administered in the following grades:

Third	Reading	Math		
Fourth	Reading	Math	Writing	
Fifth	Reading	Math		Science
Sixth	Reading	Math		

Reporting

Conferences

Having a face to face meeting with your child's teacher is an excellent way to get information about how they are doing in school. We have formal conferences in November and again in March. You may also request to meet with teachers at other times.

Report Cards

At the end of each Trimester, your child will be bringing home their report card. There are 3 sections to the report: Life Skills, Academics, and a Comments section. Student performance against the standard is what is reported on this card using a 1-4 scale. Please see the included examples in the grade level sections for more information.