

Stewart Curriculum Committee Meeting With Mrs. Hand

Tuesday, November 15 · 11:30am

Attendance: Keri Hand (principal)

Suzanne Hess (parent member/PTA Curriculum Committee)

New Math Program Concerns:

Primary parents feel that there is too much reading in many of the problems and are very dependent on parent help. Upper elementary parents felt there was too much writing and explaining of all math problems.

- Mrs. Hand explained that there will be “Math Nights” scheduled for parents to attend and learn more about the math program.
- There is also a unit newsletter for classes using Illustrative Math sent out via email and posted on the district website with links to “Cool Down” sheets with examples of how problems are solved by the teachers to help explain what the children are learning in class to the parents. Parents should continually check their email for these newsletters. They provide lots of information and of course teachers and administrators are readily available to answer any questions or concerns.

Science:

There are currently lots of shifts in the science curriculum in GC as they are revamping their curriculum based on Dr. Cascio’s (district coordinator) recommendations. GC is following the NYS next generation standards and all grades are readily engaged in science activities throughout the year.

- Last year they went unit by unit for each grade level and made a supply list for science tools (i.e. measuring and data collection tools) as well as STEAM base tools.
- All units of study are hands-on.
- Teachers are currently using multiple resources for their lessons (Science 21 Kits and Mystery Science).
- Grade 2 is studying a matter unit and exploring properties of matter
- Grade 3 is studying a friction unit and exploring different surfaces
- Grade 4 is studying an energy and motion unit and building roller coasters
- Grade 5 is studying how mold grows in their terrariums
- There is no science fair at Stewart because it often becomes parent driven.
- Stewart is working on having a Project Based Experience that the children work on in school and then showcase it at the end of the experience and this may be social studies or science based.
- Children are often presenting their learning in school and have opportunities to “public speak”. This occurs in many curricular areas where the children are asked to make Google slides or buddy up with a partner or even a 2nd grade class and a 5th grade class share ideas.

Social Studies:

All Social Studies units are taught based on the NYS standards. There is a focus on American History based on the standards in both 4th and 5th grades.

- 4th grade topics include Native Americans, Colonial Times, Revolution, Freedom, Empire State, and Immigration
- 5th grade topics include the Age of Exploration, Government, Economy of the Western Hemisphere. 5th Grade also has the “We The People” program where they discuss the constitution.
- Many of these topics are also embedded in the Reading Workshop units (i.e. biography unit) and the 4th grade also has an American Revolution reading workshop unit.

ELA:

- Reading aloud in class is an important part to every child’s reading development regardless of their age. When we read aloud it offers the opportunity for the teacher to model good voice, fluency and comprehension. It also allows the teacher to embed any teaching points that he/she may want the students to learn. It is also a great way to foster listening comprehension.
- Writing curriculum is currently under review. It is being reevaluated and all students were given an “on demand” personal narrative writing piece to do. These writing pieces are being reviewed and rubrics are being used to evaluate areas of strength and areas that need to be improved in our students’ writing.
- GC is aware that many writing programs lack the teaching of conventions of writing (like spelling and grammar). Recommendations will be made for a new program or resources and teaching conventions in writing is a main focus along with generating ideas and working through the writing process.
- Editing and revising have always been a focus of the curriculum and all of the students’ writing pieces are checked and graded using a rubric.