

2023-2024

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
INFORMATION
GUIDE

Course information to
help you prepare for
the school year



CONTENTS

1

Standards-Based Learning and Grading

2

Support Resources

- *Multi-Tiered System of Support*
- *Parent Academy*

3

Elementary Testing

4

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum

6

Kindergarten Curriculum

8

First Grade Curriculum

10

Second Grade Curriculum

12

Third Grade Curriculum

14

Fourth Grade Curriculum

16

Fifth Grade Curriculum

18

**Department for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG)**

19

School Choice Opportunities

20

**Extracurricular
NC Read to Achieve**

21

**Enrollment
Code of Conduct
Immunizations**

Gaston County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and federal regulations to not discriminate in such a manner. This requirement extends to admission and employment. Discrimination on the basis of sex, including any form of sexual harassment as that term is defined under Title IX, in any program or activity of the school system will not be tolerated.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX and its implementing federal regulations may be referred to the school district's Title IX coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education.

Las Escuelas del Condado de Gaston no discriminan a base del género en sus programas o actividades de educación y el Título IX de la Ley de Enmiendas de Educación de 1972 y las regulaciones federales requieren que no discrimine de esa manera. Este requisito se extiende a la admisión y al empleo. No se tolerará la discriminación por motivos de sexo, incluida cualquier forma de acoso sexual según se define ese término en el Título IX, en cualquier programa o actividad del sistema escolar.

Las consultas sobre la aplicación del Título IX y sus regulaciones federales de implementación se pueden remitir al coordinador del Título IX del distrito escolar y / o al Subsecretario de Derechos Civiles en la Oficina de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Educación de EE. UU.

STANDARDS-BASED LEARNING & GRADING

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has identified lists of standard knowledge and skills that students should learn in each subject and each grade level. Teachers are required to base their lessons on these standards. In a standards-based classroom, it's key that the standards be visible and accessible to all students. This allows students to know exactly what they are expected to master, and teachers can easily build lessons that work toward the goals set out in the standards. Assessment is ongoing, with teachers providing regular feedback about each student's progress towards mastery of the standard(s) they are working on.



*Standards
Support*



Rigorous Curriculum

*Standards-Based
Research-Based Framework
Complex Thinking*



Responsive Instruction

*Personalized
Blended
Relevant*



Learner-Centered Environment

*Collaborative
Flexible
Culturally Responsible*



Balanced Assessment

*Authentic
Mastery-Based
Formative*

GRADING GUIDELINES

Standards-based grading communicates how students are performing on a set of clearly defined learning targets called standards. The purpose of standards-based grading is to identify what a student knows, or is able to do, in relation to the grade-level standards. Scan the codes below for full grading guidelines.



K-2 *Grading
Guidelines*



3-12 *Grading
Guidelines*

SUPPORT RESOURCES

Multi-Tiered System of Support

In Gaston County Schools, we use a **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** to provide support for all students with attendance, behavior, academics, and social and emotional learning. MTSS is a data-driven, problem-solving plan that improves outcomes for all students through research-based and behavioral practices.

The tiered framework aims to provide high-quality instruction and support based on student needs. In an MTSS framework, there is a layering of support to meet student needs. The first layer is the high-quality instruction that all students receive, also known as the core. When students are not making progress, then school teams will consider what additional supports are necessary to meet their needs. Some of these supports could be smaller group instruction, increased time, or narrowed focus of instruction. Parents and families are encouraged to support problem-solving efforts for their children when necessary.



PARENT ACADEMY

Inspiring Success and a Lifetime of Learning

Parent Academy was established to support our families and community by answering questions on academic topics that impact your children's lives. These topics include academic support, wellness development, and more. Our goal is to collaborate with our committed community partners to offer resources, programs, and services to meet the needs of every child.

Find resources
for academic
support, wellness
development,
and more.



gaston.k12.nc.us/parentacademy

ELEMENTARY TESTING

Through balanced assessment systems, teachers and students can set goals, plan instruction, engage in the monitoring and assessing of learning, and adjust plans to ensure students meet and exceed state standards. The North Carolina Standard Course of Study has been prioritized and organized into proficiency scales to help teachers support students to meet the standards and identify the skills students will need to get there. In each proficiency scale, end-of-year expectations are identified, and the specific skills students need to know, do, and understand are presented within a developmental continuum. This allows teachers to use classroom and district assessment results, paired with proficiency scales, to support mastery of standards as well as provide remediation and extension lessons when needed.

Test	Grade Span	Overview
Assessing Math Concepts	Kindergarten	A formative assessment and progress monitoring tool that can be used to inform instructional planning for math instruction.
NC Early Learning Inventory	Kindergarten	The North Carolina Early Learning Inventory (NC ELI) is the updated version of the NC Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). NC ELI is an observation-based formative assessment and includes a set of developmental progressions across the 5 domains of learning and development. Teachers collect documentation of students' learning and development in an online portfolio to support a child's growth along with the developmental progressions and use this information to personalize instruction. North Carolina uses Teaching Strategies GOLD® to implement the NC Early Learning Inventory.
DIBELS 8/mCLASS	Kindergarten through 3rd Grade	NCDPI approved K-3 Diagnostic and Formative Assessment for reading.
iReady Reading and Math Diagnostic	Kindergarten through 5th Grade	An adaptive universal screener assessment is given to identify a student's academic strengths and weaknesses, identify the specific skills students need to learn to accelerate their growth and chart a personalized learning path for each student.
NCDPI Check-Ins: Reading and Math	3rd through 5th Grade	On-going formative assessments designed to measure student performance on the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies specified in the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> .
NCDPI Check-In: Science	5th Grade	
End-of-Grade Reading and Math	3rd through 5th Grade	End-of-grade assessments are designed to measure student performance on the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies specified in the <i>North Carolina Standard Course of Study</i> .
End-of-Grade Science	5th Grade	

PRE-KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM



Welcome to Pre-K!

Gaston County Schools Pre-Kindergarten program is proud to offer placement each year to approximately **900** four-year-olds. Classrooms are located in public school sites and in private childcare sites. Funding for the Pre-K program is provided by North Carolina's Pre-Kindergarten program (NCPK) and also by Title 1 federal funds. Our goal is to provide enriching experiences and a solid foundation for all children as they begin their journey of lifelong learning. Applications are accepted annually and eligible families are offered placement by **June 15**. Children must turn 4 by **August 31** of the program year.



Approaches to Play and Learning

This area of development focuses on helping children become curious and excited to learn. It encourages them to ask questions, explore, and find answers on their own. Through play, they get to explore and make connections. This kind of learning also helps them think critically, solve problems, and understand things better.



Emotional and Social Development

Emotional and social development in young children is about how they learn to understand and show their feelings and how they interact with others. In preschool, children learn to recognize and deal with their emotions. They learn how to express their feelings in the right way, like using words or facial expressions. They also learn how to handle their emotions, like calming down when they're upset or finding ways to feel better. Preschoolers also learn how to play and get along with other children. They learn to share, take turns, and work together in groups.



Health and Physical Development

Physical health and growth in children means taking care of their bodies and helping them grow strong and healthy. In preschool, children get healthy meals every day. They also have many opportunities to play and be active inside and outside. They do activities that help them learn to balance, move their bodies, and use their muscles. They practice things like running, jumping, throwing, and catching.



Cognitive Development

Children's cognitive development refers to how their thinking and problem-solving abilities grow and improve. In preschool, children learn to use symbols, which means they can understand that one thing can represent something else, like using a picture to show an object. They also learn to think about things from different points of view and make conclusions based on what they observe.

Children express their ideas and thoughts in creative ways, and they learn more about the world around them. They start learning to count and recognize numbers. They also understand and compare different amounts and sizes. They sort things into groups, create patterns, and organize objects.

Finally, they begin to notice and describe living things and the world we live in. They explore nature by looking closely at objects, asking questions, making guesses about what might happen, and coming up with ideas about how things work.



Language Development and Communication

Children learn how to talk and have conversations with others. They practice taking turns, listening carefully, and saying things that fit the conversation. They also learn to ask questions when they want to know something and give answers when someone asks them a question.

Children begin to develop a love for books and enjoy exploring them. They become interested in the sounds of words and how they rhyme or sound different. They learn about letters and what they look like. They understand that letters make sounds and can use letters to make words.

Children often start to write, using letters to make words and sentences. They learn how to write letters, put spaces between words, and that writing goes from left to right and from top to bottom.

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

Welcome to Kindergarten!

Kindergarten is a year with many changes that students must go through. Students are in a new environment with other students and adults that they may not know and engaging in activities they have never experienced. Students will need time to adjust to this new environment, routines, and expectations. The students in kindergarten will also be learning foundational **academic skills**, including beginning **reading** skills and basic **math** concepts that will continue to grow in subsequent years. This brochure will give you ideas for how to help your student through this transition.



Physical Development

During the school day, students will have the opportunity to grow and develop their motor skills. Through active play and structured physical activities, students will practice gross motor skills such as running, jumping, kicking a ball, and climbing.

Students will develop fine motor skills through daily activities that include the appropriate use of scissors, proper pencil grip, student manipulatives, and the use of buttons and zippers. Many of these activities will also help to develop hand-eye coordination.

Students will have the opportunity to practice self-help skills such as using the bathroom on their own, washing hands appropriately, and seeking help when needed.



Social Development

Students come into Kindergarten at varying levels of social abilities. It takes time for students to adapt to new routines and environments. They also need time to get to know their peers and teachers. The students will work on appropriate behavior and foster problem-solving and positive interactions with peers.



Language Development

In Kindergarten, language develops through opportunities to talk with teachers/peers academically and socially. Students will work to express their needs, wants, concerns, and ideas. Kindergarteners will participate in conversations, ask and answer questions, and follow oral directions. At home, parents can help by having regular conversations with their child.



Academic Development

Students in Kindergarten learn through active play, repetition, and hands-on exploration. They can sit and work quietly on tasks for fifteen to twenty minutes. They work best on tasks that involve concrete objects. They enjoy working alone and with others. Students engage in a variety of activities to express themselves. They may draw, write, color, or paint. They enjoy books and when stories are read aloud. Kindergarten students work on phonemic awareness by learning to orally manipulate sounds through activities involving rhyming, alliteration, syllables, segmenting sentences, phoneme manipulation.



Reading

In Kindergarten students will work to develop a deep understanding of word recognition by working with letter names and sounds both orally and in print. Students will learn to blend letter sounds to read words and then sentences.

Students begin to develop comprehension skills in books that are read aloud. With adult support, they will answer questions about the text and retell the events in a story.



Social Studies

In Social Studies, Kindergarteners focus mostly on the community and how various factors affect the community within the classroom, school, and locally. Students will explore cultural differences, character traits, rules and consequences, and how changes over time all affect a community. They will also learn about the roles of needs/wants and goods/services in a community.



Writing

Kindergarteners make tremendous gains in writing. They will start the year learning correct letter formation for all letters of the alphabet. They will progress from writing single letter correspondences to writing whole words and short sentences.



Science

In Kindergarten, students work in a group learning environment to explore the world around them, posing questions, and seeking answers. Through participation in various investigations, students will develop simple skills of observation, measurement, and number sense, by using tools such as magnifiers, thermometers, rulers, or balances to gather data and extend their senses. As they engage in the investigations, students will share and compare their observations with those of others by talking and using drawings and models to explain their results. In this learning environment, students learn how to consider other students' ideas. Students learn to use appropriate safety procedures and listening skills.

Some of the topics Kindergarteners will explore are: the position and movement of objects, people, and animals; physical properties (size, color, shape, texture, weight, and flexibility) of objects and their uses; patterns in the weather throughout the year; and comparing different types of the same animal for how they are alike and different.



Math

In Kindergarten, students will begin to develop an understanding of numbers, geometry, and measurement. Learning to rote count (saying numbers in the correct order) to 100 and learning to count for quantity to 20 (knowing how many) are a big focus in kindergarten. Students will also begin to write a number to represent a specific quantity to 20. In geometry, students will learn some 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes. In kindergarten, measurement understanding is about comparing two objects and using measurement attributes (words like heavy/light, long/short, and big/small) to describe objects.

FIRST GRADE CURRICULUM



Welcome to First Grade!

During the first-grade year, students will be more accustomed to the rules and routines of school than they were in Kindergarten. The focus in first grade will shift to more academics while still developing those social skills from Kindergarten. Students will be working on deepening their understanding of the foundational math and reading skills as they work through problem-solving and collaborative work with their peers and teachers.



Physical Development

In first grade, students will continue developing their motor skills. On the playground, students will have the opportunity to participate in active play that will develop their large motor skills. Activities that will help develop these skills include running, jumping, kicking a ball, and climbing. In the classroom, each student will be able to develop fine motor skills by practicing the appropriate use of pencils, scissors, and manipulatives.



Social Development

During the first-grade year, students are working on a variety of social skills that will help them to work cooperatively in a group setting. Teachers will help students understand different ways of completing tasks. Students will also work on understanding their peers and seeing situations from different perspectives. Students will practice these skills through working in groups and interacting with peers on the playground.



Academic Development

First graders are curious and excited to learn and can produce a great quantity of work even though they are not concerned about the quality. First graders love discovery, new ideas, and asking questions. Supporting and valuing their efforts and encouraging risk-taking will help them grow their ideas. First graders are generally comfortable with a busy level of noise and activity while they work, but some may prefer a quiet work space.



Reading

In first grade, students are using the reading skills they gained in kindergarten to become better readers. They are learning new phonics skills daily. They continue to work on decoding, or reading words on the page. As the year progresses they begin to recognize more words by sight allowing them to read more fluently. As reading fluency improves first graders are able to focus more on the meaning of a text.



Writing

There is tremendous growth in first graders' spelling and writing throughout the year. It is now possible for them to write longer sentences about many different topics.

First graders' fine motor skills continue to improve allowing them to write more clearly and neatly. This is a crucial first step toward using writing as a form of communication. First graders become more proficient in spelling words with patterns they have been taught, but will still often spell words with unfamiliar patterns based on how the word sounds. And that is okay.



Math

In first grade, students will continue to build upon what they learned in Kindergarten about numbers. Students will learn addition and subtraction combinations (+/- facts) within 10. They will build upon their understanding of numbers to begin place value (value of each digit in number) work with tens and ones. Addition and subtraction story problems (word problems) within 20 are also a big focus in first grade. Students begin to understand how story problems are structured and answer using addition and subtraction strategies. Students will also learn a basic understanding of telling time to the hour and half-hour.



Social Studies

First-grade students continue learning about communities including their own. They learn how we engage with and participate in communities and how different cultures and values come together to shape communities. First-grade students will learn about the economic ideas of supply and demand, goods and services, and trade. They will begin to understand how economic decisions are made. First graders learn about geography by learning about maps and map tools as well as learning about their physical environments. In history, students will learn how people and events have changed history over time.



Science

In first grade, students work in a group learning environment to explore the world around them, posing questions, and seeking answers. Through participation in various investigations, students will develop simple skills of observation, measurement, and number sense, using tools such as magnifiers, thermometers, rulers, or balances to gather data and extend their senses. They need time to talk about their observations and compare them with others by talking and using drawings and models to explain the results. In this learning environment, students learn to consider others' ideas, and use appropriate safety procedures, and listening skills.

Some of the topics First Graders will explore are: pushes and pulls and their effects; day and night skies, including the pattern of the Moon's shape over time; earth materials, such as rocks, minerals, soils, and water; and plant and animal basic needs and the human influence on the environment.

SECOND GRADE CURRICULUM



Welcome to Second Grade!

Second grade is another year of major growth for your child physically and academically. They continue to need parental support and guidance in order to be successful. Second-grade students will become more fluent readers. They will improve their ability to communicate through writing. Their increasing number sense will expand their math skills. Science and Social Studies will contribute to their knowledge of the world.



Physical Development

Second graders are able to be active for longer periods of time as their muscle strength and stamina increases. The muscles in their hands and fingers are also stronger, so their fine motor skills are more coordinated. Second graders will continue to improve their fine motor skills through handwriting practice. Recess and P.E. will contribute to muscle strength and stamina building.



Social Development

Children in second grade are continuing to grow their social skills. Students will have many opportunities in the classroom and on the playground to interact with peers.



Academic Development

Second graders tend to become engrossed in what they are doing, although they often have limited attention spans. They often forget what they have heard or are supposed to do. Gentle, consistent reminders are helpful. Even though second graders can manage more complex tasks, they do get tired easily and may give up. Short brain breaks can help them refocus.



Reading

Second graders are still improving in their ability to decode, or read the words on the page. They will continue to learn new phonics skills daily. As the year progresses, the focus shifts to reading for meaning. Students will also begin to improve in reading fluency and should begin reading with expression. This year your second grader will be able to read independently for longer periods of time both at school and at home. They should begin predicting what they think is going to happen in their stories and be able to tell why. They should also be making use of the phonics skills they have learned in order to decode unknown words.



Writing

There is tremendous growth in second graders' spelling and writing throughout the year. They have learned how to listen to the sounds they hear in words and the consonants and vowels or vowel teams that create those sounds. These improved skills help them to write longer sentences, paragraphs, and stories. Second graders are also able to write about different topics and experiences. They are able to practice finding and correcting their spelling and punctuation errors.



Social Studies

In Social Studies, second graders are going to be learning about the American government and how ideas and beliefs shape the culture of America. They will also learn about economic ideas related to scarcity and supply and demand and how these affect economic decisions. Students will also explore geography and the decisions and motivations behind movement throughout the country and why people settle in certain locations.



Math

In second grade, students will continue to build upon their learning about numbers from first grade. Students will continue to work on their addition and subtraction combinations (+/- facts). The focus in second grade is combinations within 20. They will build upon their understanding of numbers from first grade to continue the development of place value understanding (value of each digit in a number) with hundreds, tens, and ones. Students will also begin addition and subtraction with place value understanding within hundreds, tens, and ones. Students continue their understanding of how story problems are structured and answer using addition and subtraction strategies. Students will also continue their basic understanding of telling time to the nearest five minutes.



Science

In second grade, students work in a group learning environment to explore the world around them, posing questions, and seeking answers. Through participation in various investigations, students will develop simple skills of observation, measurement and number sense, but using tools such as magnifiers, thermometers, rulers, or balances to gather data and extend their senses. They need time to talk about their observations and compare them with others by talking and using drawings and models to explain results. In this learning environment, students learn to consider others ideas, use appropriate safety procedures, and listening skills.

Some of the topics Second-Graders will explore are: sound and vibrations; solids and liquids and changes they go through; weather patterns and things that affect weather; the different animal life cycles; and the ways that plants and animals are similar and different from their parents.

THIRD GRADE CURRICULUM



Welcome to Third Grade!

Students in third grade experience a variety of changes in their school lives. Students tend to be excited and industrious about school, but they can be impatient and frustrated if their accomplishments don't come easily. Social studies and science projects feed their awareness and fuel their curiosity about the world around them. Students in third grade work to build their comprehension skills, develop new math concepts, and take the End of Grade (EOG) Math and Reading tests for the first time.



Physical Development

Third graders are full of energy but often don't know how to stop and relax; however, outlets will be provided. During these years, growth spurts occur, leading to awkwardness in coordination. Hand coordination improves, and many students are ready to use an adult pencil grasp.



Social Development

Students are working and interacting with groups of peers. Their friend groups become larger. Students at this age need to socialize with other children and spend time with their friends. They are full of ideas they want to explain and jokes they want to tell. Students at this age tend to be confident and adjust well to change. They bounce back quickly from mistakes. "It's not fair!" becomes a common statement as well.



Academic Development

Third graders are interested in learning about the world and ask a lot of questions about how things work. They can be completely engrossed in what they are doing but have a limited attention span. They don't always remember what they've heard or what they are supposed to do and can take on more than they can handle. Third grade students read longer books, write longer paragraphs, and do more complex math.



Reading

Third graders continue to learn word-reading skills, including advanced phonics. This supports them as they begin to transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Students read a variety of different texts ranging from informational articles to poetry. Students learn to ask and answer questions about their reading, discuss their reading, and go back into the text to find evidence.



Writing

Third graders learn to write narrative, informational, and opinion texts. They learn to write legibly in cursive handwriting. Students participate in a writing and social studies project called, "Pride in Gaston" where they have an opportunity to enter an essay writing contest about what makes Gaston County special.



Social Studies

Third graders focus on the local and regional community, learning so much about Gaston County. They study the culture, government, economics, geography, and history of our wonderful county! They also get the opportunity to share why they are the "Proudest Kid in Gaston County."



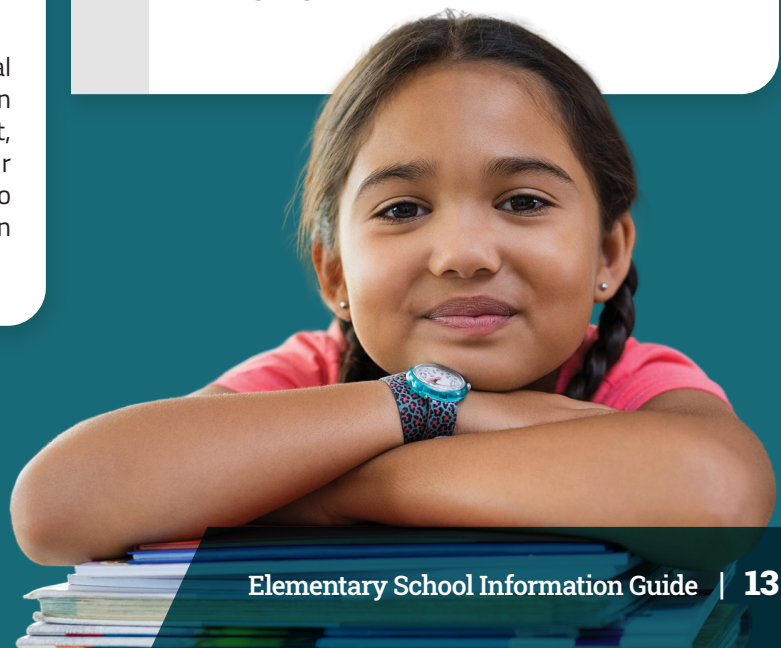
Math

In third grade, students will be adding and subtracting word problems to 1,000. This is also the year your third grader will be introduced to multiplication and division. Students will be given many opportunities to explore and develop an understanding of multiplication by solving tasks and problems that are embedded in real-world contexts. Fractions are also a new concept that will be introduced. Students will understand the meaning of a fraction, explore equivalent fractions and be able to compare them.



Science

Third graders will be learning about the land and water features on Earth and how the Earth is a part of the solar system. Students will study how plants survive in their environment. Students will also explore force and motion and the effects of gravity. Solids, liquids, and gasses will all be a unit of study for third graders. Learning about the skeletal and muscular systems, along with the skin, will be a learning target.



FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM

Welcome to Fourth Grade!

Fourth grade is a time for continued development of skills that students began in previous years. In addition to more complex word recognition, students will go further in depth with comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Students will also expand and deepen their knowledge of math and science concepts. They will also learn more about topics that directly impact them personally, especially with regard to current events.



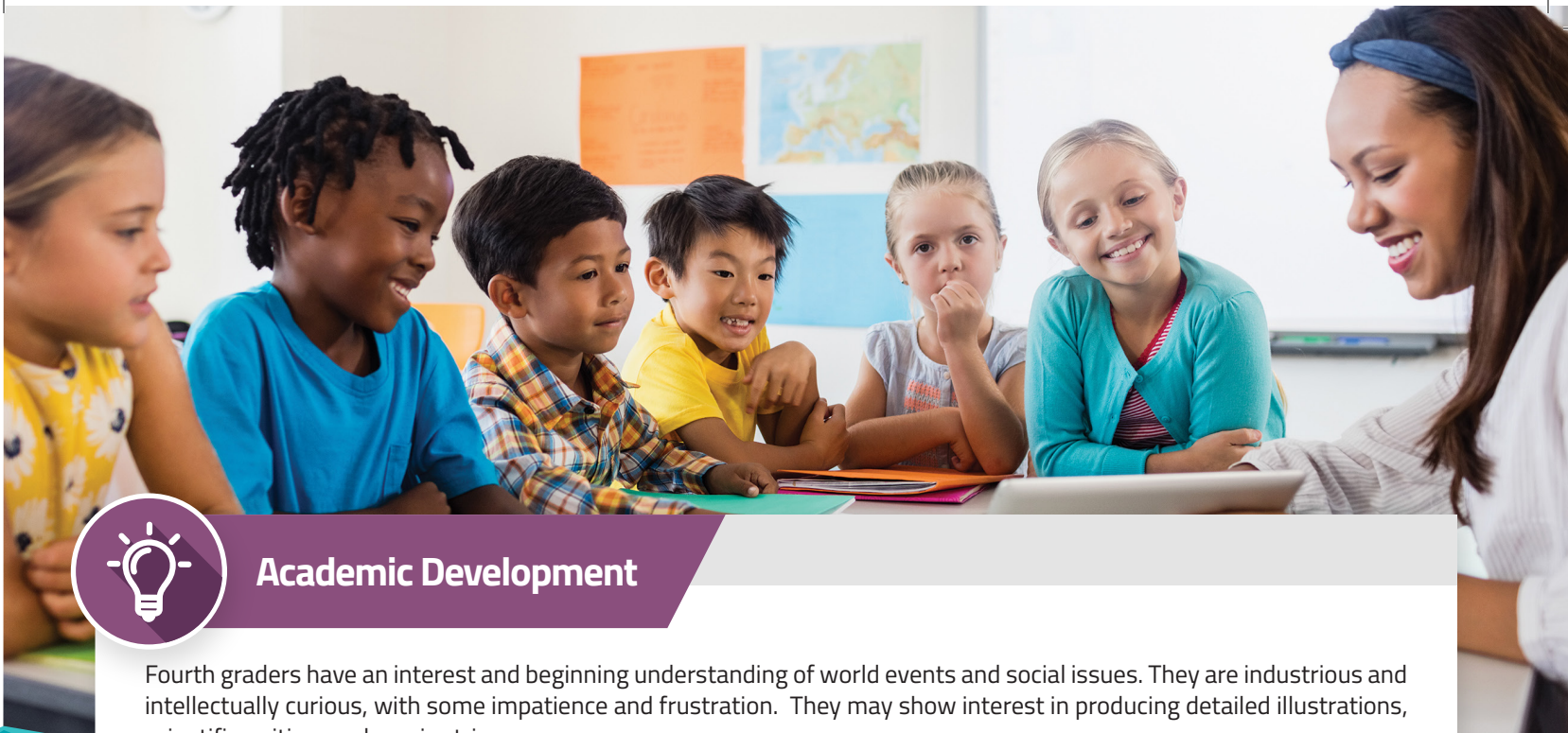
Physical Development

Fourth graders can benefit from practice with fine motor tasks like drawing. Better coordination is present in almost all physical activities.



Social Development

Peers are important for fourth graders and they enjoy being part of a group. Emotions change quickly for fourth graders and they can feel worried and anxious. Be sure to have frequent conversations about how things are going at school and with friends.



Academic Development

Fourth graders have an interest and beginning understanding of world events and social issues. They are industrious and intellectually curious, with some impatience and frustration. They may show interest in producing detailed illustrations, scientific writing, and comic strips.



Reading

Fourth graders are applying the word-reading skills they've learned in previous years, with a focus on comprehension. Because they have a developing understanding of world events and social issues, students are able to figure out texts' themes and main ideas. They read a variety of different genres: fiction, nonfiction, fables, poems, and more.



Writing

Fourth graders do many types of writing, including narrative, informational, and opinion. Students build their editing and proofreading skills, and they pay more attention to details as they write. Students use cursive handwriting to produce writing pieces.



Social Studies

Fourth graders develop a foundational knowledge of North Carolina's culture, government, economics, geography, and history. They study North Carolina's history from pre colonial times through the present day. They also study North Carolina's impact on major United States events. This is also the first year students begin to study the impact of personal financial decisions during Social Studies.



Math

In fourth grade, students will be adding and subtracting word problems to 100,000 using the U.S. Standard Algorithm. This year, students will be building their multiplication understanding by multiplying 2-digit by 2-digit numbers and 3-digit by a one-digit numbers. Division of whole numbers will be another major topic in 4th grade. They will use what they have learned about all four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) to be able to solve multi-step word problems. Students will continue to work with equivalent fractions, and will be introduced to adding and subtracting fractions with like denominators, multiplying a fraction by a whole number and working with fraction and decimal equivalencies ($1/10=0.1$).



Science

Students will learn about the causes of Day and Night and the phases of the Moon. Fourth graders will learn about how the Earth's surface changes through weather, landslides, volcanoes, and earthquakes. Students will learn about rocks and minerals and explore push and pull through magnets. Learning about forms of energy (light, heat, sound, electrical) will be a unit of study.

FIFTH GRADE CURRICULUM

Welcome to Fifth Grade!

Fifth grade is a time for students to grow their independence and take pride in their accomplishments. Students have a longer attention span, and they have the ability to concentrate through longer projects. Teachers in fifth grade provide opportunities for students to showcase their abilities through projects that incorporate their new learning.



Physical Development

As their control of small muscles improves, they enjoy precision tasks such as tracing, making maps, and drawing cartoons. As their large muscles develop, fifth graders can benefit from spending time outside while exercising.



Social Development

Fifth graders have an increased interest in friends and social activities. They can be self-conscious about their appearance and concerned about what their peers think of them. Be sure to reassure them that they look great, and help them find something they are good at and enjoy (e.g., sports, music, art, etc.).





Academic Development

Fifth graders can discuss more serious topics, and they can concentrate for longer periods of time. They take pride in their school work including homework and can concentrate for a long period of time. They are voracious readers and need as much time for independent reading as well as homework.

Fifth graders can pay attention to writing, spelling, and penmanship simultaneously, but their work may be somewhat sloppy as they learn to integrate these skills.



Reading

Fifth graders read a variety of genres, ranging from poetry to informational articles. Students use what they've read to work on reports and long-term projects. Students learn how to analyze and summarize what they read.



Writing

Fifth graders incorporate more vocabulary words into their writing. Students do many types of writing, including narrative, informational, and opinion. Fifth graders pay more attention to spelling and penmanship, and they use cursive handwriting to produce writing pieces.



Social Studies

Students in fifth-grade study United States culture, economics, geography, government, and history. Students will study the same time period as in fourth grade but transfer their understanding from the state to the national level. Students will gain a general understanding in order to have the foundations necessary for later grades where an in-depth study of the role of the United States in world affairs will be covered. This is also when students continue to study the impact of personal financial decisions during Social Studies.



Math

Students in fifth grade will continue to solve multi-step word problems involving all four of the operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division). This year, these numbers will not be limited to whole numbers. Instead, students will be solving problems involving whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. This will be the first year students are expected to add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators. Students will also be expected to multiply fractions by whole numbers and fractions, as well as, divide whole numbers by unit fractions (ex: $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{5}$, etc.) and unit fractions by whole numbers.



Science

Students will learn that the Sun is the energy source that drives all weather and the Water Cycle. A focus on weather will include hurricanes, the jet stream, and observing and predicting weather patterns using instruments.

Fifth graders will explore the interconnected relationship between plants, animals, and their environments. Students explore physical and chemical changes of matter along with learning about heat energy and transfer. Fifth graders will also learn about force and motion in regard to speed, mass, and change of direction. Students will learn about genetics, and the differences between unicellular and multicellular organisms, along with exploring human body systems: Muscular, Skeletal, Digestive, Cardiovascular, Nervous, and Respiratory.

DEPARTMENT FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Gaston County Schools works to meet the needs of all of our learners by offering educational, behavioral, and related services through our schools' Exceptional Children Departments. To receive these services and support, students must meet certain criteria and be found eligible under one of the fourteen eligibility areas identified by the Individuals with Disabilities Act. If found eligible, an Individualized Education Plan will be written to provide specific services and accommodations based on the unique needs of the student. Exceptional Children Departments at each school can help navigate this process.



ACADEMICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED (AIG) DEPARTMENT

AIG Identification

Gaston County Schools has a comprehensive screening system to identify possible gifted learners as required by State Legislation Article 9B (N.C.G.S. § 115C-150.5). Screening and testing begins in elementary. All Gaston County Schools' students are given an opportunity to be screened and/or referred for AIG services each school year. Screening criteria varies for each of the different grade levels. Once students are identified, they remain identified throughout their school career unless a formal request for exiting is requested by the parent/guardian.

AIG Program Services

Gaston County Schools has programs and services that address the academic and affective needs of gifted learners in grades K-5. There are AIG-licensed teachers in every elementary school. These teachers deliver direct and consultative services to AIG-identified students through a program for 90 minutes weekly. The Gifted & Talented Academy at Pleasant Ridge (GTA) is one of Gaston County Schools' Choice Program options. It offers daily instruction in all core subject areas by AIG licensed/endorsed teachers. PRGTA provides an accelerated learning environment for students through the use of Paideia active learning principles and through the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM).

AIG Curriculum

An AIG differentiated curriculum is designed to enrich and extend the NCSCOS. The curriculum is developed by the AIG Department to meet the diverse needs of gifted learners. The Gaston County Schools' AIG Department utilizes various service delivery options to adapt the NCSCOS to each student's academic ability and to provide appropriate differentiated instruction.



SCHOOL CHOICE

For the 2023-2024 academic year, Gaston County Schools is pleased to offer **5 choice programs**. Some of the Elementary School Choice Programs have the option to follow pathways into our middle school's Choice Programs. Students may apply for these programs during the application window.



Apply online: gastonnc.scribborder.com

For more information, visit gaston.k12.nc.us/schoolchoice



Gaston County Schools **Collegiate Prep** Academy

The **Gifted and Talented Academy** at **Pleasant Ridge Elementary** is designed for students who demonstrate academic excellence and have the ability to excel in a dynamic school environment.

Students participate in in-depth study of science, math, reading, and other subjects; engage in problem-solving and critical thinking; use modern technology as a learning tool; develop leadership skills; and flourish in their capacity to think creatively and at a higher level.

The schoolwide enrichment model gives all students an opportunity to be involved in activities including the science and math fairs and the concert and marching bands.



MIDDLE SCHOOL PATHWAY

Gifted and Talented Academy
at Cramerton Middle School



Gaston County Schools **Leadership** Academy

The **Leadership Academy** at **Costner Elementary** gives students an opportunity to learn, at a young age, that they have the potential in them to be an outstanding leader at school and in their community. "Every child can be a leader" is the motto that drives instruction, which integrates academic, leadership, and life skills and creates a sense of student empowerment.

Through the "Leader in Me" model, students learn about the importance of responsibility, integrity, vision, and teamwork/ collaboration, which are qualities found in an effective leader. Additionally, students learn how to handle challenges that elementary-age children face.

Special elective courses available include **Leadership** and **Spanish**.



MIDDLE SCHOOL PATHWAY

Leadership Academy
at W.C. Friday Middle School



Gaston County Schools **Performing Arts** Academy

The new **Performing Arts Academy** at **Pinewood Elementary** takes advantage of Pinewood's prestigious designation as a North Carolina A+ School, which is a program of N.C. Arts Council, and its commitment to integrating the arts across the curriculum.

Research indicates that arts education is linked to positive academic and social outcomes, increased civic engagement, and higher academic achievement. Further, students who are engaged in the arts have higher degrees of empathy, acceptance, and creativity and demonstrate stronger critical thinking skills. Taking part in an arts curriculum benefits students later in school and beyond graduation.



Gaston County Virtual Academy

The Virtual Academy is a dynamic online school that offers personalized learning and schedule flexibility for students in grades K-12. This program is ideal for students who are currently in a homeschool setting.

The online classes are aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and focus on English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. World languages, electives, and Career and Technical Education classes are available.



Hawks Nest **STEAM** ACADEMY

Hawks Nest STEAM Academy is a North Carolina Model STEM School of Distinction and is home to Gaston County's only STEAM Academy magnet school for elementary students. The school offers a challenging curriculum that features a distinct emphasis on STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics.

With a focus on the five STEAM areas, students are engaged in collaborative, hands-on activities through a project-based instructional model. The goal is to go beyond teaching the core curriculum and develop students who are innovative learners, creative thinkers, and ready to apply what they learn to real-world situations.

Students have technology at their fingertips, and they enjoy participating in activities such as robotics, advisory, spark of genius clubs, theater, music, and more.



MIDDLE SCHOOL PATHWAY

STEAM Academy
at Stanley Middle School

EXTRACURRICULAR



Art



Music



Physical Education

Every elementary student in Gaston County Schools participates in a robust program in art, music, and physical education in addition to the regular curriculum. Typically, students take part in these classes once per week. The teachers are licensed in their particular content areas. These “specials”, as they are referred to, help provide a well-rounded education for our students. Students typically participate in school programs that involve art and music and sometimes participate in community events in those areas as well.



Media

Gaston County Schools prides itself on providing engaging, relevant, and student-centered media centers in our elementary schools. Students have access to a wide variety of reading materials that span different genres, reading levels, and interest topics. Students also have access to digital tools and technologies to enhance their learning experience. Our children learn important research skills and digital citizenship. We advocate and have students participate in various reading programs, events, and competitions such as Battle of the Books, Spelling Bees, field trips to our local library branches, One Book, One School, voting for Children’s Book Awards at the state level, and Book Fairs. Most importantly we strive for our students to develop a love and passion for reading in our media centers.



NORTH CAROLINA READ TO ACHIEVE

The Excellent Public Schools Act became law in July 2012 and was implemented in 2013-2014. The Excellent Public Schools Act has been referred to as the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program. During the summer of 2021, Senate Bill 387 was written to align literacy instruction with the Science of Reading and to modify the implementation of the NC Read to Achieve Program in order to attain statewide reading proficiency by the third grade.



*For more information, visit
NCDPI's Early Literacy Website*

bit.ly/3RTA

The goal of the state is to ensure:

that every student read
at or above grade level

that students continue to
progress in reading proficiency

that students have the ability
to read, comprehend, integrate
and apply complex texts

that students apply these skills
for secondary education and
career success.

ENROLLMENT



Gaston County Schools is pleased to offer online enrollment. Our secure platform manages the student application and enrollment process online and is available to all families at your convenience.

Enroll Online At: **gastonnc.scribder.com**

Kindergarten Registration is open to students that turn **5 years old** on or before **August 31**.

Support is available at: **The Office of Student Assignment**
1 Learning Place | Gastonia, NC 28052

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Each child entering a North Carolina public school for the first time must submit proof of a health assessment to the school's principal within 30 calendar days of the child's first day of attendance. The assessment must be submitted to the principal on kindergarten assessment forms provided by the N.C. Department of Human Resources and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction Kindergarten health assessment forms are available at elementary schools, the Gaston County Health Department, and all pediatrician offices. Students who do not meet the state requirements for immunizations and a health assessment will not be allowed to remain in school.



For more details, scan the code or visit

N.C. law requires the following immunizations for students prior to entering Kindergarten:

Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis	5 doses
Polio	4 doses
Measles	2 doses
Mumps	2 doses
Rubella	1 doses
Haemophilus Influenzae type B (Hib)	4 doses
Hepatitis B (Hep B)	3 doses
Varicella (chickenpox)	2 doses
Pneumococcal conjugate	4 doses

immunization.dph.ncdhhs.gov/schools/k-12

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Student Code of Conduct for schools is to help establish and maintain a safe and orderly environment, which must prevail if learning is to take place. The term "school" as it applies to these guidelines refers to all school buildings, parking areas, and properties. These rules are in effect at any function or a school-sponsored activity and while students are waiting for, riding or leaving the bus. Principals are authorized to establish individual school rules and regulations in addition to the rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct.

View Student Code of Conduct online at
gaston.k12.nc.us/Page/11019





shaping our future

943 Osceola Street
Gastonia, NC 28054

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W. Jeffrey Booker, Ed.D., Superintendent

