

# A GUIDE TO LEARNING

RIVERVIEW CHARTER SCHOOL

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE





# HISTORY

In 2009, Riverview Charter School opened its doors to 254 Kindergarten through fifth grade students and celebrated the distinction of becoming Beaufort County's first public charter school. Founded by a small group of parents, Riverview began with the belief that a small group of citizens can change the world, and with this theme at the core of its curriculum, Riverview strives to grow engaged, global citizens through an experiential approach.

## MISSION

It is Riverview's mission to create a small, diverse learning community that actively engages students in meaningful and innovative learning experiences. Emphasizing "learning by doing", family and community involvement, and engaged citizenship, Riverview is committed to nurturing the whole child and preparing each student for a global society.





## CORE VALUES

Guide the policies, practices, and development of our school. They are the heart of our social and emotional learning approach...

- Integrity
- Cooperation
- Gratitude
- Empathy
- Mindfulness
- Stewardship
- Perseverance



## RULES

Guide the policies, practices, and order of our school...

- Take care of yourself
- Take care of others
- Take care of the community

# LEARNING COMMUNITY

At Riverview we strive to create a learning community with:

## **Children who...**

- Are self-directed, joyful learners
- Are active participants in the learning process
- Are effective communicators: confident and competent in articulating their observations, discoveries, and ideas
- Are explorers and academic risk-takers
- Are responsible, engaged members of the community that demonstrate Riverview's core values
- Are expected and encouraged to do their best
- Appreciate the special gifts and talents of others and themselves

## **Teachers who...**

- Make children feel safe, valued, and loved
- Demonstrate flexibility, creativity, consistency, and innovation
- Encourage critical thinking and creative problem solving
- Inspire and motivate
- Share Riverview's educational philosophy and Core Values
- Challenge their students to do their best
- Embrace the mission of the school
- Recognize students' individual intelligences, gifts, & special needs
- Know each of their students well
- Are life long learners

## **Parents who...**

- Care about their children's education
- Embrace the mission of the school
- Volunteer their time and talents to serve Riverview & the community

- Actively engage in their child's learning
- Model Core Values
- Teach academic, personal and social responsibility
- Set limits and boundaries
- Are life long learners

## **A program that...**

- Focuses on the whole child
- Combines academic excellence with civic engagement
- Emphasizes 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and concepts
- Recognizes and accommodates individual differences in development, temperament, and learning style
- Fosters an appreciation for the arts, sciences, and natural world
- Integrates skills & concepts into the context of real-life experiences and projects, allowing kids to "see the big picture"
- Broadens and enriches the child's view of the world
- Engages students in active, meaningful learning experiences
- Studies the past to understand the present and envision the future

## **A learning community where...**

- Members share common Core Values
- Members are dedicated to the mission of the school
- Policies and practices are fair, equitable, and ethical
- Finances are managed soundly and responsibly
- Members nurture the whole child and prepare students to be engaged, global citizens

Second Graders explore the marsh.



## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Riverview is committed to creating a small, diverse learning community that recognizes and values the whole child—cognitively, physically, socially, emotionally, aesthetically, and ethically—and provides educational opportunities for each dimension to grow and strengthen. By providing a setting that develops the natural learner in every child, Riverview supports children’s creativity, curiosity, and individual needs, while preparing them to be responsible, engaged citizens able to be successful in a global society.

Riverview’s experiential learning philosophy fosters learning by doing and constructing knowledge through

experiences. Using an integrated curriculum with research-based methodology, students are encouraged to observe and explore their environment in a community that nurtures and respects each individual child. Riverview’s educational program is designed to develop self-directed learners, to instill a love of learning, and to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to communicate effectively, understand the world around them, and be socially responsible.

At each grade level, the curriculum teaches basic academic concepts and skills, interwoven with interdisciplinary 21<sup>st</sup> century themes, through real-life

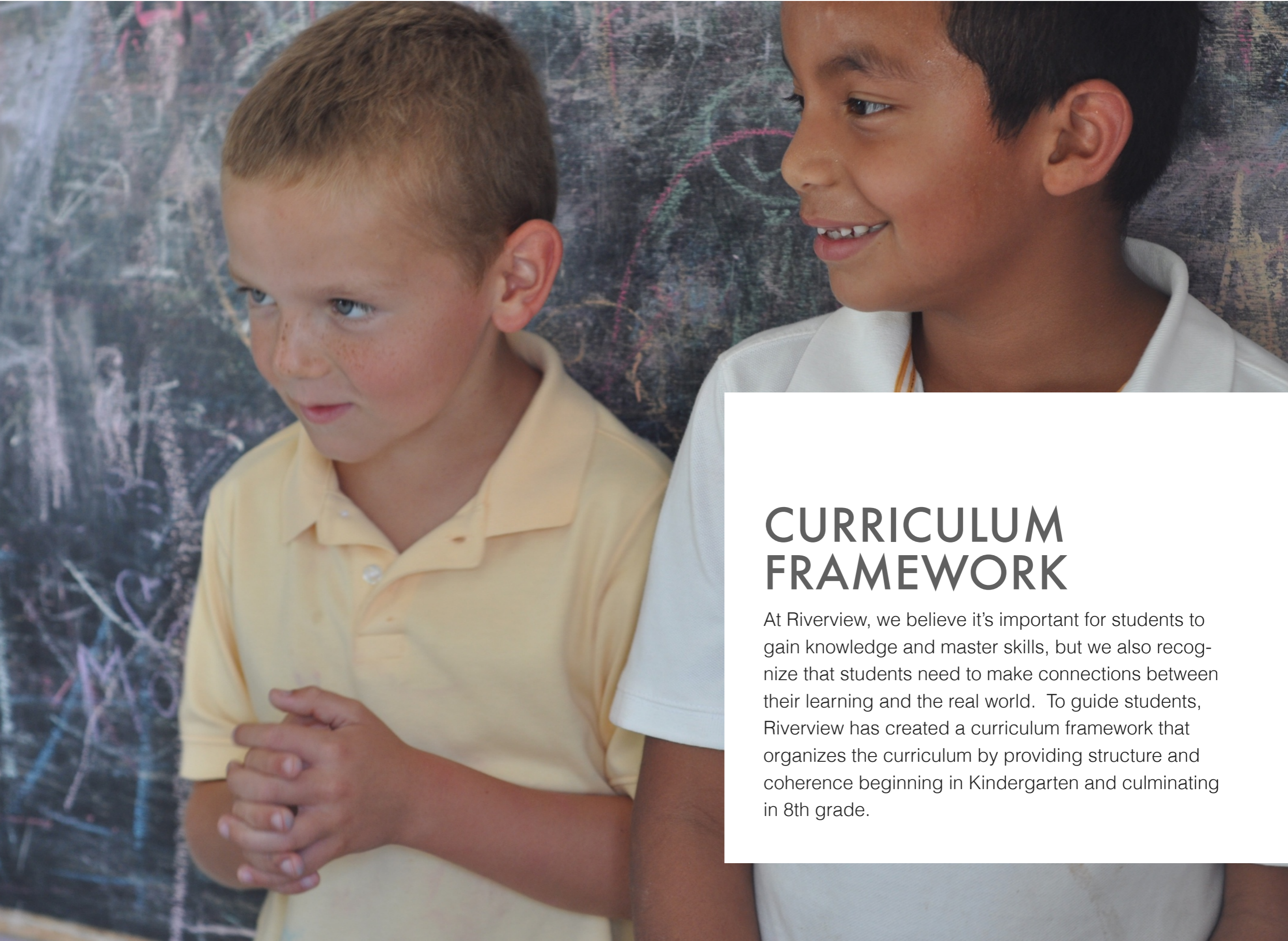
experiences. Riverview students are challenged to practice their academic, social, and emotional skills through service projects they design and implement with community partners. Students develop their appreciation for the natural world through environmental education, guided experimentation, and fieldwork. They cultivate their natural artistic talents by actively participating in the visual and performing arts. Reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics are investigated through hands-on experiences and student-initiated projects. Students will come to know the world, embrace its cultures, participate in world language studies and learn its history

through role-play, interactive media and simulations. A wellness-focused curriculum promotes physical activity, healthy eating habits, and social and emotional skill building. Media literacy, collaboration, technology, and creative problem-solving skills weave their way through all content areas and foster critical thinking.

Using experiential principles as our guide, Riverview employs a variety of research-based educational approaches to help students master 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and the South Carolina Academic Standards through meaningful learning experiences.

**Kindergarteners show their team spirit on Field Day.**





## CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

At Riverview, we believe it's important for students to gain knowledge and master skills, but we also recognize that students need to make connections between their learning and the real world. To guide students, Riverview has created a curriculum framework that organizes the curriculum by providing structure and coherence beginning in Kindergarten and culminating in 8th grade.



At each grade level, students are required to meet proficiency in state mandated standards that are heavily focused on skills and content. To enrich the curriculum, Riverview teachers write integrated units of study centered around Big Ideas to help students see that life is not arranged by content areas - that it's interconnected. For example, the Big Ideas in the K-2 cycle are Beginnings, Cycles and Patterns, and Systems. Kindergarten students learn how seeds grow into plants, in first grade, students discover that seeds are a part of a life cycle, and in 2nd grade they explore this concept further by experimenting with how the life cycle of a plant fits in to a larger eco-system. We call this Connecting the Dots. Students are encouraged to apply what they learn in each grade level to the next grade level, to make meaning, build connections, and apply their learning to the real world.

To further help our students Connect the Dots, Riverview students embark on a nine year journey that is comprised of three Cycles. Each Cycle, K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 is guided by conceptual themes that link the curriculum with the development of the child - the child as an individual in an expanding social network - community, culture, and world.

Running through and interconnected to all three Cycles are common threads to Riverview. These include a whole child approach, Core Values, service learning, and preparing 21st century learners.



# CYCLE ONE: COMMUNITY

**BIG IDEAS: KINDERGARTEN: BEGINNINGS**

**FIRST GRADE: PATTERNS & CYCLE**

**SECOND GRADE: SYSTEMS**

In Cycle One, inclusive of the first three years a student is at Riverview - Kindergarten, First and Second Grade - students begin the journey by exploring the idea that all things have a beginning. Students study their own beginning and what it means to be a part of a family; they explore elemental forces in nature that shape our world; and they begin to become aware of themselves as growing individuals that are a part of something larger...their families, their school, their community, their country, their culture, and their world. Throughout this cycle, students begin to make sense of their world by investigating patterns and cycles in human behavior and the natural world. They expand their understanding of the world as divided and connected through a series of systems and they begin to see themselves as a part of a complex whole--the global community.

## UNITS

Throughout the year, Riverview students learn through integrated units of study. Riverview teachers are trained to use a “backwards design” approach when developing units, which means “to plan with the end in mind.”

Grade level teams are trained to ask What do we want students to know, understand, and demonstrate at the end of Kindergarten? 1st Grade? 2nd Grade?

Using the State Standards and the State Common Core

Standards as our guideposts, Riverview designs integrated units that help students think critically, solve real world problems, apply skills, and make connections between the “Big Ideas” and content knowledge.

All integrated units have enduring understandings and essential questions that focus the unit. Students engage in learning experiences to help them discover the answers to the questions that lead them to conceptual understanding and “connecting the dots”.

Units of Study range from 6-12 weeks and focus on depth, rather than breadth or fast coverage.

## EXAMPLES OF HOW UNITS RELATE TO BIG IDEAS

In Kindergarten, each unit of study is related to the Big Idea of “Beginnings”. For example: a unit centered around “Babies” explores the concept of the “beginning” of life as a part of family units. Students study themselves as babies and learn about baby animals and animal families.

In First Grade, each unit of study is related to the Big Ideas of “Patterns and Cycles.” For example: a unit centered around Metamorphosis explores the concept of the life cycle.

In Second Grade, each unit is related to the Big Idea of “Systems.” For example: a unit designed about Body Systems explores systems in the human body like the digestive system, and the respiratory system.



## CAPSTONE FIELD EXPERIENCES

**Second Graders sift the marsh during their Capstone Field Experience on Seabrook Island.**

Part of Riverview's larger vision for students is to provide field experiences that extend the walls of learning beyond the classroom. In addition to the common threads, each Cycle culminates in Capstone Field Experiences and projects at the end of Second, Fifth, and Eighth Grade.

The field experiences are designed to allow students and teachers to use place-based learning to enrich the curriculum and engage students in real world, authentic experiences.

These field experiences build off of the Big Ideas explored in each grade level and the conceptual themes of Community, Culture, and World. Students participate in fund raising for their capstone field trips, and each trip is presented as a celebratory culmination of every student's growth throughout the cycle of three years.



## SEABROOK ISLAND, SC

Riverview's first Cycle allows our young people to explore the world around them. The foundation of this cycle is built around the idea that all things have a beginning, all things fit into a pattern or a cycle, and ultimately, a larger system of organization.

It's fitting then that the capstone "experience" and milestone for our second graders is to participate in a total immersion, experiential field study of a local barrier island. Students will travel to Seabrook Island, south of Charleston to enjoy a campus that includes nearly one mile of beach, 100 acres of salt marsh, 200 acres of undisturbed maritime forest, freshwater ponds, and a freshwater swamp. Barrier Island facilities include classrooms, numerous outdoor teaching sites, an arts and crafts building, a climate controlled gymnasium, a low ropes course, a beach front recreation hall, a lighted outdoor recreation field, a health center, full service dining hall and climate controlled beach front cabins with bathrooms.



Since 1980, the Barrier Island Environmental Education Program has provided public and private school students in Kindergarten through 12th grades a unique opportunity to learn about and experience nature in a way that is hands-on, memorable and a whole lot of fun.

This learning opportunity gives students the chance to discover the scientific world with all of their senses in an open and encouraging environment designed to see, smell, touch, hear and, yes, even taste lessons in biology, ecology, conservation, astronomy, botany and much more. The kids love it, and very often have their eyes

opened to a world they have never experienced or understood before.

Traveling is often a transformative experience, offering students the opportunity to demonstrate personal responsibility and growth, while creating lifetime memories. Riverview believes learning should be transformative and memorable as well, and by providing Capstone Field opportunities to all of our 2nd, 5th, and 8th grade students, Riverview hopes to inspire its students to “Connect the Dots” and better understand their place and contribution to the world.

Second Graders seining in the ocean during their Capstone Field Experience on Seabrook Island.



# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR... KINDERGARTENER

## **Socially:**

Early in their fifth year, kindergarteners like to help, follow rules, and “be good”. By the end of the year, they may begin to test grown ups

Need consistent rules and enforcement; respond well to clear and simple expectations

Need caretakers to use empathetic discipline as they test limits and make mistakes

## **Physically:**

Begin to have control over running, jumping, and other large movements

Need a lot of physical activity, including free play indoors and outdoors

Writing, handcrafts & other small movements are still awkward for most

Pace themselves well early in the year; later, they begin to tire quickly

Pencil grip changes from three fingered to other grips

Can see close objects best

If reading, read one word at a time

Copying from a whiteboard is difficult



## **Cognitively**

Have difficulty seeing things from other viewpoints

Imaginative

Think very literally

Often reverse numbers and letters

Early in the year, like to copy and repeat activities; later like to try more new activities

Often think out loud before acting

Learn best by exploring materials such as blocks, clay, finger paints, rocks, and shells

## **Play**

Part of Riverview's mission is to nurture the whole child and an important aspect of that is providing opportunities for play. Play is essential to the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical well being of children and youth. Indoor and Outdoor play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, social skills, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. It is through play that children engage and interact in the world around them.

Riverview's Kindergarten classes are organized to support children's play and exploration. Throughout the day, kindergarteners at Riverview have the opportunity to play at various centers that encourage learning by doing such as: Art, Blocks, Dramatic Play, Sand/Water exploration, Classroom Library, Writing.

In addition to center time, teachers prepare indoor and outdoor learning experiences designed to make learning fun and provide opportunities for children to actively engage in exploration and discovery. Play helps children learn how to work in groups, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts, and to learn to be self-directed. It helps build healthy, active bodies. It helps children to use what they know and understand about the world. Above all, play is a simple joy that supports children's growth and development in all areas of the curriculum.



## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR... FIRST GRADER

### **Socially:**

Competitive; sometimes bossy or critical

Either rushes to be first or dawdles to be last

Wants to have friends; may have best friends

Enjoys dressing up, putting on plays, etc., with other children

Talkative and noisy

Easily upset when criticized or discouraged

Loves encouragement, surprises, and treats

Might test authority with tantrums, complaining, or tattling

### **Physically:**

Eyes are maturing, so reading is easier, but whiteboard copying is still hard

Often chews pencils, hair, or fingernails (may be due to the discomfort of new teeth growing in)

Bodies growing rapidly

Like lots of physical activity

Tire easily and get sick often

### **Cognitively:**

Begins to understand past and present, and how and why things happen

More able to see other viewpoints and understand reasons for rules

Loves new ideas and asking questions

Learns well through games, poems, riddles, and songs

Very ambitious, often choosing projects that are too hard

Learns well from field trips and hands-on projects

Likes doing lots of work, not concerned with the quality of the work





## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR... SECOND GRADER

### **Socially:**

May be moody, shy, sulky, touchy; sometimes depressed

May prefer playing and working alone or with one friend

May change friendships quickly and feel “nobody likes me”

May rely on adults for help and reassurance

May need the security of rules, routines, and physical boundaries



### **Physically:**

Often keep their eyes focused on a small, close area

Copying from the whiteboard is difficult

With head or arm on the desk, grasp pencil point tightly and write very small

Can do quiet work for longer periods

Can get sick from worrying about tests, assignments, etc.



**First graders sit together  
on Field Day.**

**Cognitively:**

Better at understanding ideas such as time,  
space, and quantity

Learn new words and meanings quickly; enjoy  
writing stories

Open to learning math

Good at classifying, such as sorting buttons,  
pictures, leaves, and shapes

Listen well and speak precisely

Enjoy hands-on exploration of how things work

Bothered by mistakes and try hard to make their  
work perfect

Like to work slowly and finish what they start

Enjoy repeating tasks and reviewing learning



Kindergarteners learn about one of Riverview's Core Values: Cooperation

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING:

Teachers have long known and researchers are now confirming that social skills are not just something to be taught so that children behave well enough to get on with the real business of schooling. Rather, they are intertwined with cognitive growth and intellectual progress. A child who can listen well, who can frame a good question and has the assertiveness to pose it, who can examine a situation from a number of perspectives will be a strong learner. Our social and emotional curriculum is integrated into all subject areas and will foster a school community that shares common core values, is kind, empathetic, cooperative, unified, and spirited. Morning Meet-

ing is a daily ritual and part of our social and emotional curriculum. It provides a forum in which social and emotional skills can be practiced. It is not an add-on, something extra to make time for, but rather an integral part of the day's planning and curriculum.

## THE RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM APPROACH

Riverview has adopted the following Responsive Classroom Guiding Principles:

The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.

How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.

The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.

To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn and practice specific social skills. Five particularly important skills are Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control (C.A.R.E.S).

Knowing the children we teach-individually, culturally, and developmentally is as important as the content we teach.

Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach.

How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

## MORNING MEETING

Teachers lead students in a daily gathering that uses a consistent format for friendly greetings, sharing of news, having fun together, and warming up for the day of learning ahead. The purposes of Morning Meeting are to: set the tone for respectful learning; establish a climate of trust and build relationships; create a sense of belonging; make students feel significant; have fun; merge social, emotional and academic learning.



## SERVICE - LEARNING

SERVICE and LEARNING can offer both our students and the greater community. To extend the learning from the classroom and field experiences, and to encourage students to become responsible citizens, personally, socially, and globally, each fall and spring students engage in a service learning project. The Empty Bowls Project, is a school-wide service learning experience that had been held each fall since the inception of Riverview. Partnering with Stop Hunger Now, Riverview students, teachers, families and community supporters work cooperatively to package 20,000+ meals for children in orphanages around the world. To prepare for the Empty Bowls event, teachers at every grade level thoughtfully plan the curriculum unit that best lends itself to the service learning project. Service-Learning events in the spring have changed historically as teachers refine curriculum units to ensure learning is at its optimum and consistent to nurturing a global citizen. As students engage in learning experiences and service learning projects, they soon begin to realize the connection education has in making the world a better place for humanity.



ACADEMICS



# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The Common Core State Standards were developed through an unprecedented state-led initiative that drew on the expertise of teachers, parents, administrators, researchers and content experts from across the country. The Standards define a staircase to college and career readiness, building on the best of previous state standards and evidence from international comparisons and domestic reports and recommendations. Most states have now adopted the Standards to replace previous expectations in English Language Arts.

As mandated by the state, Riverview’s curriculum aligns with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. Common Core standards provide rigor, exposing students to a wide range of complex and meaningful texts and performance tasks to demonstrate learning.

## KEY FEATURES OF ELA STANDARDS

### Reading: Text Complexity and the Growth of Comprehension

The Reading Standards (Literature, Informational Text, Foundational Skills) place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. It defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. The goal is that students show a growing ability to make connections between personal experience, ideas and texts, teaching students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate texts at a deeper level.

previous page:

Kindergarteners celebrate reading during our annual Read-a-thon by dressing up as their favorite literary character.

### **Writing: Text Types, Responding to Reading, and Research**

The Writing Standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. The Standards stress the importance of the writing-reading connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts. Research standards are prominently included in the writing strand of the standards.

### **Speaking and Listening: Flexible Communication and Collaboration**

The Speaking and Listening Standards require students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills. Students must learn to work together, express and listen carefully to ideas, integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources, evaluate what they hear, use media and visual displays strategically to help achieve communicative purposes, and adapt speech to context and task.

### **Language: Conventions, Effective Use, and Vocabulary**

The Language Standards include the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English, but they also approach language as a matter of craft. The vocabulary standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationships, and their nuances and on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.





## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS IN PRACTICE AT RIVERVIEW

### BALANCED LITERACY: READING, WRITING, LISTENING, SPEAKING, LANGUAGE

Balanced Literacy is designed to help all students learn to read and write and communicate effectively. Standing firmly on the premise that all students can learn to read and write, at RCS the balance between reading, writing, listening and speaking allows students to receive the individualized teaching appropriate to their strengths and needs in literacy. Teachers implementing a Balanced Literacy instructional framework use an integrated approach to teaching language arts. This framework for literacy lessons consists of a number of elements that provide substantial amounts of reading and writing, and, sharing and reflecting on learning on a daily basis. The River-view integrated curriculum includes a balanced literacy approach that transcends the disciplines.

The **Daily 5** is a series of literacy tasks that students complete every day while the teacher meets with small groups of students or confers with individuals. The Daily 5 structure helps students develop the daily habits of reading, writing, and working independently. In our K-4 classes, while the teacher provides guided reading instruction to a small group of students reading at the same level, the remainder of the class engages in reading experiences to include Read to Self; Read to Someone; Listen to Reading; Work on Writing; and, Word Study. Students rotate through these tasks during the reading and writing block to ensure that each child meets with the teacher.

# WRITING WORKSHOP

## BALANCED LITERACY APPROACH

Writer's Workshop is a research-based approach that focuses on the goal of fostering life long writers. It is based upon four principles; students write every day across the curriculum, to build fluency; writing is a process that develops with increasing differentiation, they write to express their ideas in relevant ways and publish for real audiences; and they evolve into self-directed writers. Writer's Workshop is organized to begin with an explicit lesson, followed by time to write and confer, and concludes with share time. Like Reader's Workshop and the Daily Five, Writer's Workshop allows for differentiation to accommodate the range of student abilities and needs.

## SHARED WRITING

The teacher and students work together to compose various forms of writing. Students provide the ideas and the teacher supports the process as a scribe. The teacher provides full support, modeling and demonstrating the process of writing.

## INTERACTIVE WRITING

The teacher and class compose together to create a variety of written text using a "shared pen" technique. The group agrees on what to write through discussion and negotiation. Together the teacher and students navigate through the writing process.

## GUIDED WRITING

The teacher selects and introduces new techniques and strategies carefully chosen to match the instructional levels of students. Writers

are carefully prepared when being introduced to an element of the writer's craft, and various strategies are explicitly taught. Ongoing observation and assessment help to inform instruction and grouping of students is flexible and may be changed often.

## WRITING CONFERENCES

The teacher meets with an individual student, engaging in a dialogue about the student's writing. In the conference the teacher may listen to the students read the writing aloud, reinforce the writer's strengths, provide explicit instruction regarding some aspect of writing, and set writing goals. Conferences allow the teacher to identify instructional needs to be addressed in focus lessons and evaluate a student's progress in writing.

## INDEPENDENT WRITING

Students write independently a variety of genres. Writing topics are either directed by the teacher or often self-selected. During this time, students practice writing strategies and techniques that were explicitly taught during shared writing, interactive writing and guided writing.

## SHARING/REFLECTION

The teacher and students come back together at the end of the reading and writing workshop to share their new thinking about the reading and writing process, reflect upon their own reading and writing and to explain how they have used the information learned from the read aloud, shared reading/writing, interactive writing, conferences and guided reading/writing.

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICS

As mandated by the state, Riverview's curriculum aligns with Common Core State Standards for Math. The Common Core State Standards were developed through an unprecedented state-led initiative that drew on the expertise of teachers, parents, administrators, researchers and content experts from across the country. The Standards define a staircase to college and career readiness, building on the best of previous state standards and evidence from international comparisons and domestic reports and recommendations. Most states have now adopted the Standards to replace previous expectations in Mathematics.

The Mathematics Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are designed to be: focused, coherent, clear and rigorous; internationally benchmarked; anchored in college and career readiness; evidence and research based. Key Points of the Mathematics State Standards:





## KEY POINTS OF THE MATHEMATICS STANDARDS

**Second graders work collaboratively to solve a series of math word problems.**

The K-5 standards provide students with a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals - which helps young students build the foundation to successfully apply more demanding math concepts and procedures, and move into applications.

In Kindergarten, the standards follow successful international models and recommendations from the National Research Council's Early Math

Panel report, by focusing kindergarten work on the number core: learning how numbers correspond to quantities, and learning how to put numbers together and take them apart (the beginnings of addition and subtraction).

The K-5 standards build on the best state standards to provide detailed guidance to teachers on how to navigate their way through knotty topics such as fractions, negative numbers, and

## KEY POINTS OF THE MATHEMATICS STANDARDS (CONT.)

geometry, and do so by maintaining a continuous progression from grade to grade.

The standards stress not only procedural skill but also conceptual understanding, to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels - rather than the current practices by which many students learn enough to get by on the next test, but forget it shortly thereafter, only to review again the following year.

Having built a strong foundation K-5, students can do hands on learning in geometry, algebra and probability and statistics. Students who have completed 7th grade and *mastered the content and skills through the 7th grade Common Core* will be well-prepared for Algebra in grade 8.

The middle school standards are robust and provide a coherent and rich preparation for high school mathematics.

The high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.

The high school standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness, by helping students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

The high school standards emphasize mathematical modeling, the use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations, understand them better, and improve decisions.

## GRADE K OVERVIEW

### Counting and Cardinality

- Know number names and the count sequence.
- Count to tell the number of objects.
- Compare numbers.

### Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from.

### Number and Operations in Base Ten

- Work with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations for place value.

### Measurement and Data

- Describe and compare measurable attributes.
- Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category.

### Geometry

- Identify and describe shapes.
- Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes.

### Mathematical Practices

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
- Model with mathematics.
- Use appropriate tools strategically.
- Attend to precision.
- Look for and make use of structure.
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

## GRADE 1 OVERVIEW

### Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.
- Understand and apply properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction.
- Add and subtract within 20.
- Work with addition and subtraction equations.

### Number and Operations in Base Ten

- Extend the counting sequence.
- Understand place value.
- Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract.

### Measurement and Data

- Measure lengths indirectly and by iterating length units.
- Tell and write time.
- Represent and interpret data.

### Geometry

- Reason with shapes and their attributes.

### Mathematical Practices

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
- Model with mathematics.
- Use appropriate tools strategically.
- Attend to precision.
- Look for and make use of structure.
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.



Second graders work collaboratively to solve a math challenge.

## GRADE 2 OVERVIEW

### Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.

Add and subtract within 20.

Work with equal groups of objects to gain foundations for multiplication.

### Number and Operations in Base Ten

Understand place value.

Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract.

### Measurement and Data

Measure and estimate lengths in standard units.

Relate addition and subtraction to length.

Work with time and money.

Represent and interpret data.

### Geometry

Reason with shapes and their attributes.

### Mathematical Practices

Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

Model with mathematics.

Use appropriate tools strategically.

Attend to precision.

Look for and make use of structure.

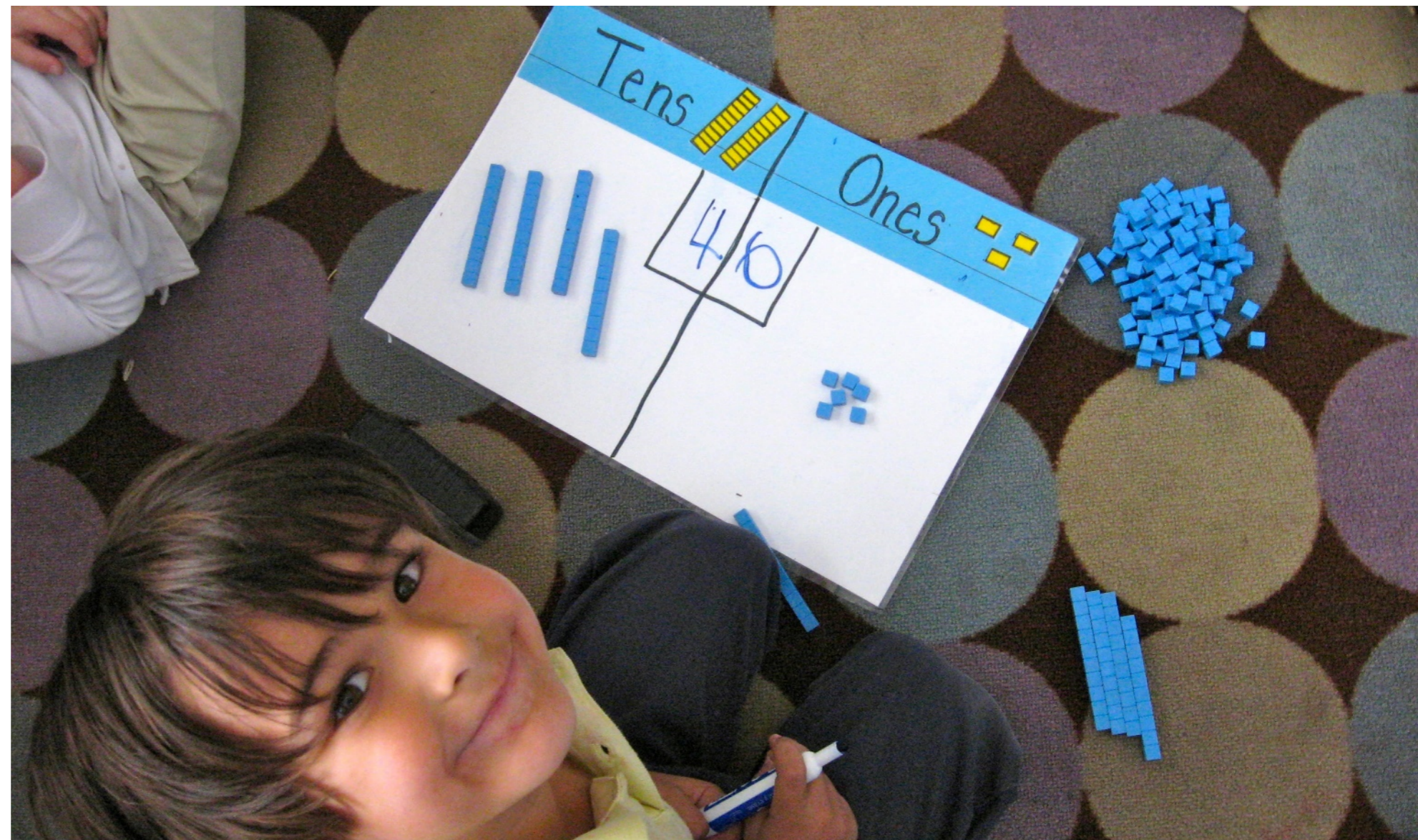
Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

# MATHEMATICS IN PRACTICE AT RIVERVIEW

Riverview supports a balanced math approach that deepens student understanding of the critical key mathematical topics and processes at each grade level. Striking a balance between conceptual understanding and procedural fluency, while fostering reasoning and sense-making in mathematics, Riverview encourages critical thinking and problem solving skills to grow 21st century thinkers.

Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of resources and instructional methods to meet the needs of varied learners. Students will participate in hands-on experiences that apply mathematics to every day, real life problems and situations. Writing in math, manipulatives, math games, technology, and cooperative learning are used to deepen and enrich student's understanding of mathematics.

Kindergarteners explore the concept of place value using manipulatives and writing.







Students observe wildlife at their local beach habitat.

## SCIENCE

Riverview's science program aligns with State Academic Standards and the Common Core State Standards by concentrating on the following areas:

**Physical Science:** Physical science content is related to the properties and structure of matter, energy, force and motion.

**Life Science:** Life science concepts are related to the principles of heredity and structure, function of cells and organisms, relationships among organisms, relationships among organisms and their physical environment and the diversity of life.

**Earth and Space Science:** Earth and space science content is related to atmospheric processes and the water cycle and the composition and structure of the Earth and universe.

In keeping with the Common Core push for shared literacy responsibility, Riverview recognizes that reading and writing is critical to building knowledge. At the middle school level especially, science instruction teaches academic vocabulary, an understanding of domain-specific words and phrases, an attention to precise details and the capacity to evaluate intricate arguments and synthesizes complex information. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) as well as robotics, are also encouraged at the K-5 level and middle school levels.

## SCIENCE IN PRACTICE AT RIVERVIEW

Riverview's science curriculum engages students in a systematic investigation of their world that is aligned with the South Carolina Academic Standards. Students experience a balance of explicit instruction and hands on investigations, while emphasizing the processes of science and conceptual understanding of topics. Engagements are centered around Big Ideas and essential questions that lead students through the process of inquiry, either in a single lesson, a series of lessons, or projects. This allows students to go after questions in search of and seeking resolutions, while nurturing inquiring habits of mind to enable students to continue the quest of knowledge throughout life.

The Inquiry Process includes: observation; gathering, organizing, and analyzing data; making predictions; formulating and testing hypotheses; estimating and measuring; identifying, using, and reading informational resources; communicating scientific findings, arguments, and evidence through writing or speaking; and practicing accepted safety procedures.



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

To extend the Academic Standards, Riverview integrates environmental science studies throughout the curriculum. Providing direct experiences in nature, our local environs, and our Eco-Cuisine food program, Riverview encourages environmental conservation and sustainability. Research shows that people learn to care for things they understand, and they understand things they have direct experi-

ences with. Using RCS's experiential learning philosophy and allowing students to construct knowledge by experiencing it will not only help students make achievement gains, but also will contribute to them becoming responsible, global citizens.

**First Graders enjoy a tractor ride while learning at a local farm on St. Helena Island.**



# SOCIAL STUDIES

Riverview's social studies program aligns with State Academic Standards and State Common Core Standards by concentrating on the following areas:

**American History:** Content focuses on the causes and effects of U.S. historical events and the life and development of American culture over time.

**World History:** Content focuses on the causes and effects of world historical events and the life and development of cultures over time.

**Geography:** Geography studies are integrated into American and World History. Geography-related themes across the grades include the world in special terms, places, and regions, physical systems, human systems, environment and society and the uses of geography. Geography-related content looks at the interdependence among the Earth's natural features, climate, resources, and population.

**Culture:** Culture-related content involves beliefs, customs, arts, influences, and institutions of a society.

In keeping with the Common Core push for shared literacy responsibility, Riverview recognizes that reading and writing is critical to building knowledge. At the middle school level especially, social studies instruction teaches academic vocabulary, an understanding of domain-specific words and phrases, an attention to precise details and the capacity to evaluate intricate arguments and synthesize complex information.



previous page:

Students at every grade level perform one play a year that is integrated with their science or social studies curriculum.

## SOCIAL STUDIES IN PRACTICE AT RIVERVIEW

Riverview's social studies program aligns with the South Carolina Academic Standards while helping students develop a historical perspective and gain a deeper understanding of the modern world. Social studies is at the heart of the curriculum, interwoven across the disciplines in an integrated, holistic approach to big picture, conceptual learning. Emphasizing 21st century skills, Riverview's social studies curriculum develops historical thinking in meaningful ways that connect to real life experiences.

In-depth explorations focused on Big Ideas and essential questions, provide students with an ever-widening understanding of how people live and work together, how habitat and geography affect communities, and the similarities and differences among cultures. Study of historic periods and events helps students analyze how and why change occurs over time. Through studies of social issues (hunger, poverty, human rights, conflict resolution, etc.) students gain an awareness of their rights and responsibilities as individuals in a community and the broader world. By aligning the South Carolina Standards with volunteerism, students participate in projects that directly influence the local area and their global community, while demonstrating mastery of academic, social, and emotional skills and building responsibility toward engaged citizenship.

In addition, studies in geography, history, and cultures become the context through which our students learn and apply academic skills. Learning opportunities and field experiences provide students with opportunities to develop skills in information processing, critical thinking, problem solving, informational, opinion, and argumentative writing, collaboration, communication, and their use of reference tools and technology.

**SPECIALS**





Bowls made by students as a part of the school's annual Empty Bowls Service-Learning project.

## THE ARTS

### VISUAL ARTS:

Riverview's integrated arts education program is aligned to follow the South Carolina State Standards. Explorations in the arts encourage self-expression through projects that strengthen conceptual development. Areas of study will include the development of artistic skills and knowledge; connections between areas of knowledge; choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas; critical analysis and aesthetic awareness; media application and processes; historical and cultural context; and using knowledge of structures and functions. The artistic process is emphasized in addition to the resulting products.

### PERFORMING ARTS:

Riverview's integrated performing arts program is a unique offering that has become a hallmark of the Riverview experience. To emphasize the 21st century skill of communication and collaboration, Riverview students learn to appreciate and experience the performance arts through yearly theater productions that integrate fully across the disciplines. Riverview students develop speaking skills, performance skills, body control, movement skills, voice control, musical skills, and the confidence to perform in front of large audiences.



## MUSIC

Riverview's music program is aligned with South Carolina State Standards. Students learn about music from a theoretical, cultural, and historical perspective, while learning to appreciate music, the science of sound, the mathematical patterns in music and develop good listening skills. Students will participate in activities such as: singing, dancing, playing instruments, composing, reading notation, analyzing and evaluating music, and integrating music across the curriculum.



## BAND

Band is an ensemble that provides students with learning and performance opportunities on wind and percussion instruments. The primary focus is on the development, continuation, and expansion of basic skills begun the previous year that are necessary for effective instrumental music performance. In addition to large group ensembles, individual growth and achievement are encouraged.



## 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

To extend the South Carolina Academic Standards, Riverview integrates 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills across the curriculum focusing on four themes: Knowing the World, Information and Media Literacy, Collaboration, and Creative Problem Solving. Riverview is committed to preparing its students to be responsible, engaged citizens in a global society.





Students work on Macintosh laptops during Computer Technology Studies.

## SPANISH

Riverview's world language program is in alignment with the South Carolina Academic Standards for Modern and Classical Languages. Students learn about Spanish-speaking countries and cultures as they expand their ability to speak, sing, read, write and listen in the Spanish language. Music and movement are an integral part of the Spanish program at Riverview.

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATH (STEM)

This course is designed to incorporate STEM skills, as well as 21st century skills. Students will be challenged to

work in teams to solve complex problems by creating novel and effective technological design solutions as well as evaluate the successes of their solutions.

## COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY STUDIES

Riverview's integrated computer technology program is aligned with the South Carolina Academic Standards. At each grade level, technology is integrated into the curriculum to support learning, increase productivity, promote creativity and build 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.



Riverview students receive Physical Education instruction twice a week.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND WELLNESS

Our physical education curriculum is aligned with the South Carolina Academic Standards, and incorporates physical activity, wellness, and sports and fitness activities into a program that helps children develop competencies and positive attitudes about their bodies and health. Personal health and fitness, collaboration, sportsmanship, and self-discipline are also emphasized and integrated into the content areas. In

addition, physical activity is built into the school day through daily recess and learning experiences in the core curriculum areas.



# ASSESSMENT

Riverview teachers use a variety of approaches to assess what students know and are able to do. Using multiple measures to assess students allows teachers to design instruction critically on behalf of each student and each class, and thus personalize learning.

previous page:  
Second Graders write in their journals daily so teachers can monitor their progress.

Students attending Riverview have a hands-on role in the assessment process. It is important for children to learn how they learn in order to increase understandings. Teachers work with students to become meta-cognitively aware of their individual learning styles and processes and to empower students to become self-directed learners.

#### TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS USED AT RIVERVIEW INCLUDE:

**Pre-tests** assist the teacher in identifying what students know and provide benchmark data.

**Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)** is an adaptive test that assesses students in math, reading, and writing for grades K-8. MAP can be used as a diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment measure.

**Student Self-Assessment** allow students to set goals and track progress with teacher assistance. Students reflect on their learning experiences to become more meta-cognitively aware of their individual learning process.

**Learning Portraits** for each student are created to determine what each child knows and how they learn best. They are constructed based on a variety of research-based assessments such as learning style inventories, Measures of Academic Progress results, community and family reflections, student records, and teacher observations. They allow teachers to assess and identify students' readiness, interests, and preparation to meet challenges that may lie ahead.

**Evidence Based Rubrics** are developed by instructors, often with the help of students, to assess the performance of students. They list the dimensions or tasks of the performance to be assessed, and the specific criteria used to evaluate each dimension. They are different from simple checklists because they also describe gradations of quality for each dimension of the performance to be evaluated. By describing what each criterion looks like at various degrees of qualities, the instructor not only creates a framework for fair, objective grading, but also conveys expectations to the students.

**Teacher observations, check lists, and anecdotal records** provide data and insight into student learning processes.



**Curriculum Related Tests** include traditional classroom tests such as multiple choice, short written responses, and essays. These tests are tied to the academic standards where applicable.

**Performance-Based Assessments** measure based on authentic tasks where students demonstrate their use of knowledge and skills.

**Digital Student Portfolios** highlight authentic learning experiences, demonstrate students' growth and competencies, and involve the teacher, the student, and parents in the assessment process. Multi-media portfolios can include writing samples, artwork, audio files, video clips, goal setting, self and teacher assessments, as well as many other processes and products. Levels of media used throughout the portfolio will depend on grade level.

**Riverview's Report Cards** provide specific information about a child's progress throughout the year. In addition, they put

the emphasis on learning, rather than on comparisons among students; separate academic performance from work habits and personal characteristics; and give information to assist the teacher and parents in understanding the child as a learner. Reports are summative evaluations that reflect the child's progress toward grade level standards and concepts.

**Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS)** is administered to South Carolina public school students, including charter school students in grades three through eight. PASS test items measure grade level student performance on the South Carolina Academic Standards and Common Core Standards. PASS test results are used for school, district, and federal accountability purposes.



## STANDARDIZED MEASURES

### PALMETTO ASSESSMENT OF STATE STANDARDS (PASS)

The Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) is administered to South Carolina public school students, including charter school students, in grades 3-8. PASS test items measure grade level student performance on the South Carolina Academic Standards and Common Core Standards. PASS test results are used for school, district, and federal accountability purposes.

### MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP)

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are a series nationally normed computer based tests that identify a student's level of academic achievement and also measures their progress in school. Each school year, students in K-8th grade take the MAP in the fall and spring. MAP tests are adaptive tests and the computer program adjusts the difficulty of the questions so that each student takes a unique test. The difficulty of each question is based on how well the student answers the questions up to that point. As the student answers correctly, the questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. With this information RCS is able to monitor the growth of students of all abilities and differentiate learning.



## THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MAP

Identifies specific strengths and areas of concern (diagnostic assessment)

Provides data to guide instruction and monitor progress (formative assessment)

Correlated to the Common Core Standards

Assesses through non-timed multiple choice

Adjusts level of difficulty appropriate for each student (adaptive)

Given twice a year (fall and spring)

Measures student progress in RIT score, an equal interval scale much like feet and inches on a yardstick - charting student academic growth from year to year in reading and math

Studies show that a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast increase test scores.

## MAP vs. PASS

While PASS assesses mastery of grade level standards at the end of each academic year, MAP assesses student's knowledge, independent of grade level. MAP is taken in the fall to diagnose students' proficiency in reading and math. Riverview teachers use the diagnostic MAP data as one tool to guide and differentiate instruction to meet students' needs. MAP is administered again in the spring to measure growth.





## RIVERVIEW REPORT CARDS

A MEANINGFUL, CLEAR AND CONSISTENT APPROACH TO ASSESSING LEARNING GOALS

**Second Graders work cooperatively on a creative problem solving project with straws.**

When educators think about parents and grading, they often worry about the question foremost in any parent's mind: "What grade did my child get?"

When using a concept approach like Riverview, the questions parents are encouraged to ask are:

*"What are the targets my child should know and understand by the end of the year?"*

*"What has my child learned?"*

*"What does my child know, understand, and care about?"*

*"What is my child able to do?"*

*"What concepts and skills does my child need support with and what are my child's areas of strength?"*

*"Is my child progressing well?"*

These questions are at the heart of Riverview's assessment system.

Riverview is committed to the growth of the whole child: academically, socially, emotionally, physically, aesthetically, and ethically. A key component of meeting this commitment is the accurate communication of student learning. In addition to state standards, Riverview has expectations that exceed the state requirements and address national standards, as well as social and emotional targets. After a thorough examination of current research and best practice, student learning goals have been established for each grade level and are reflected on Riverview's concept-based reports. While we believe these are not the only concepts and skills children need to learn, the report targets have been identified as "musts."

### **WHY USE RIVERVIEW'S APPROACH INSTEAD OF A TRADITIONAL REPORT CARD?**

The purpose of a report card is to clearly, fairly, and objectively communicate how a child is doing in school. Schools nationwide have been moving away from the traditional format of letter grades, to focus on learning goals, accountability, and consistency. Riverview's reporting structure provides specific information about a child's progress throughout the year. Our report cards communicate a clear message to parents about what their child knows and is able to do, in addition to what concepts and skills need more attention.

**Riverview's Report Cards** put the emphasis on learning, rather than on comparisons among students; separate academic performance from personal characteristics and work habits; give information to assist the teacher and parents to better understand the child as a learner; help students, parents, and teachers understand what concepts and skills have been mastered and which need more attention; personalize instruction and attend to individual development.

By contrast, a traditional report cards give single letter or number grades on broad categories, like "math" or "reading" and often reflect such things as effort, extra credit, work habits, and attitude. While those attributes are important at Riverview as well, they do not help parents and students understand specifically what has been learned and what the student needs support with. At Riverview, learning will be reported based on evidence of what a student understands and can do at particular points in time, rather than an "average" over a reporting period. Performance scores reflect the quality of student understanding, rather than the quantity of points accumulated.

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

4 = Area of Excellence: The student demonstrates superior accomplishment in performance and skill. The student consistently exceeds expectations.

3 = Area of Proficiency: The student demonstrates solid accomplishment in performance and skill. The student consistently meets expectations.

2 = Area of Development: The student shows partial accomplishment in performance and skill. The student meets some grade level expectations with support.

1 = Area of Concern: The student demonstrates little or no progress in performance and skill. The student is working below grade level and requires a high level of intervention and support.

/= Not evaluated at this time

Kindergartners practice writing their numbers.





THINGS TO DO AT HOME  
TO SUPPORT LEARNING

## SHARPEN READING SKILLS TO PREVENT LEARNING LOSS

**THE POWER OF CHOICE:** Help your child find a book that matches his/her interests. Building on a student's interests can stimulate an interest in reading, even among reluctant and struggling readers. 91% of kids are more likely to finish books when they are allowed to choose them.

**MAKE BOOKS ACCESSIBLE.** Having books all around the house or while traveling in the car are great ways to encourage your kids to pick one up and read. Audio and eBooks are great options too! When kids read 4 or more books over the summer, they can avoid the "Summer Slide"-- the loss of core reading skills that occurs when kids don't read books during summer break.

**READ EVERY DAY:** Children who read widely and frequently are higher achievers than students who read rarely and narrowly. As kids spend more time reading for fun, their reading achievement increases.





## ENCOURAGE READING AT HOME EVERY DAY

Reading, like any skill, requires practice, so we encourage you to promote summer reading in your home (and on vacation!).

Go to the library together every week.

Share books that you loved as a kid with your own child.

Read aloud to your child—even if they're growing up. Every age group loves to be read to and it strengthens reading skills.

Create a Family Book Club (or mother-daughter, father-son, etc.) where you read the same books and discuss them. This is a great strategy for middle school students reading books that have complex themes. Reading is like watching a movie—you want to talk about it!

Encourage your child to choose the books they want to read.



previous page:

Reading can take on many forms including “reading to self”, reading to a friend, or listening to a book being read to you.

## ENCOURAGE SKILL PRACTICE AT HOME

### COMPASS LEARNING ODYSSEY ~ A 21st Century Learning Tool

Compass Learning Odyssey™ is a computer-based program that Riverview uses to differentiate instruction and homework, as well as prepare students for standardized testing measures. The Odyssey software allows Riverview to integrate assessment data from external assessments, such as the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and create a portfolio of individualized assignments for each student attending Riverview. Compass Learning is research-based, with proven results. It simultaneously provides academic intervention, as well as academic acceleration, and helps teachers meet kids where they are.

### RIVERVIEW USES COMPASS LEARNING ODYSSEY BECAUSE IT IS:

Built on more than 40 years of research on how young people learn, think, and achieve

Aligned with Common Core and State Standards

Differentiates instruction for students of all ages and abilities

Helps teachers understand if students are proficient or advanced and whether they’re making progress toward State and Common Core Standards

Designed specifically to aid in the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and college and career readiness

Complete with tools to report, track, and measure individual and classroom performance

Assists struggling learners with additional instruction

Allows high achievers to accelerate curriculum



Facilitates parent involvement by providing easy access for parents to login and monitor their child's progress and achievement on assigned activities

Prepares students for standardized measures

Helps students continue to learn during the summer months and assists in preventing learning loss

### **How Compass Learning Odyssey Works:**

To get started using Compass Learning Odyssey, student MAP data is uploaded into the software system.

Once assessments are complete, the system automatically creates an individualized learning path with explicit instructions and learning activities for each student, based on his or her specific needs and abilities.

When assignments have been loaded into the Odyssey system, Riverview families are given a Compass Learning password that each student will use to log into the program. Once students are able to log on to Compass Learning, direct instruction is delivered through reading passages, manipulatives, videos, and animations. The curriculum, which is available for every grade, across every subject, is rigorous, and the activities are interactive and engaging. It is also based on current and confirmed research and is directly aligned to State and Common Core Standards.