

**A GUIDE TO
LEARNING
RIVERVIEW CHARTER SCHOOL**

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.



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.





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
- Optimism
- Perseverance



RIVERVIEW NORMS

are created collaboratively and set the tone for a safe, inclusive learning environment.

- 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 lifelong 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 lifelong learners

A program that...

- Focuses on the whole child
- Combines academic excellence with civic engagement
- Emphasizes 21st 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



Fifth graders study the names on the Vietnam War Memorial during their Capstone Field Experience in Washington, DC.

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.

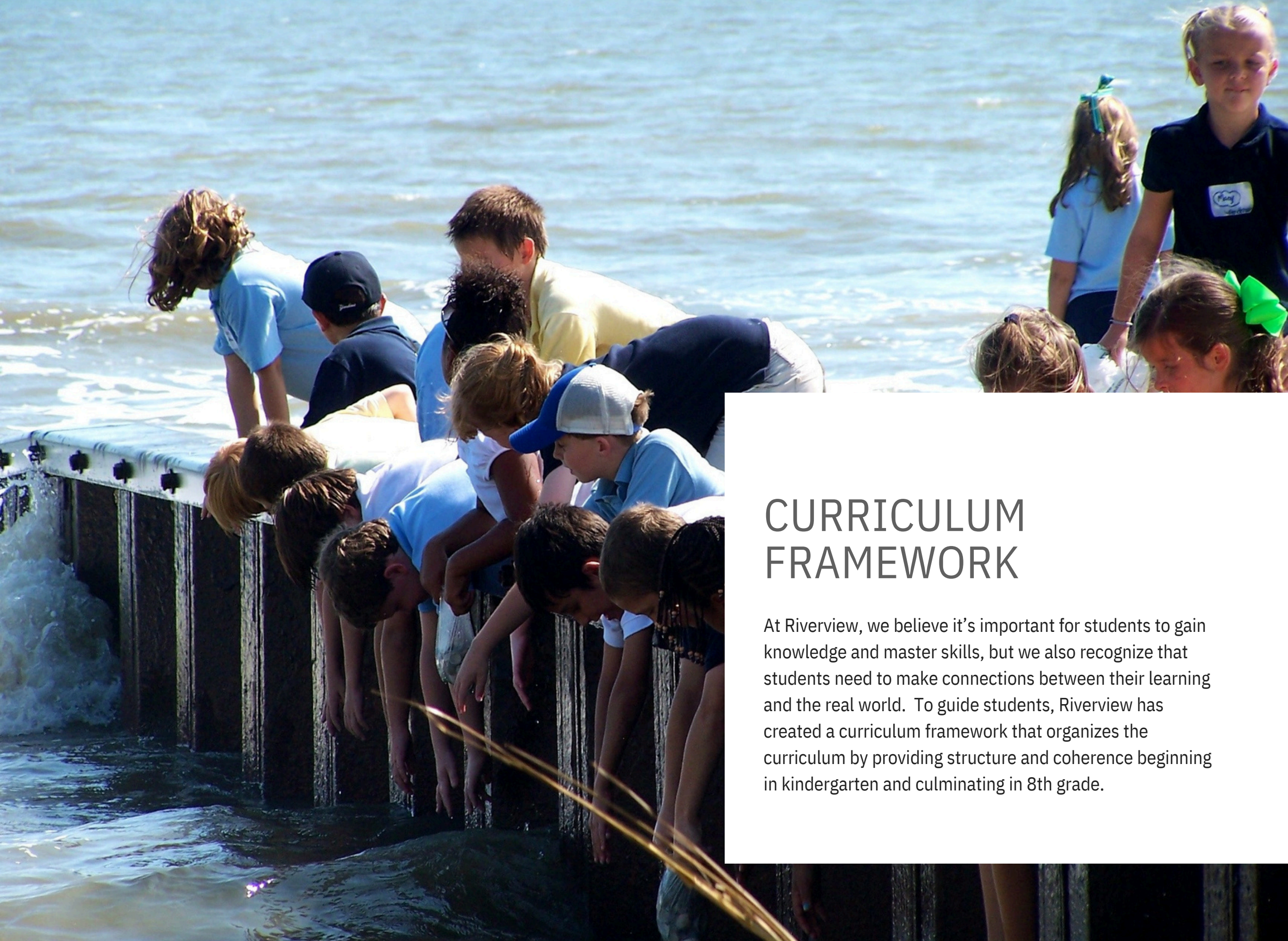
At each grade level, the curriculum teaches basic academic concepts and skills, interwoven with interdisciplinary 21st century themes, through real-life experiences.

Riverview students are challenged to practice their academic, social, and emotional skills through service projects they help to 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 21st century skills and the South Carolina Academic Standards through meaningful learning experiences.





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.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

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 is 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 ecosystem. 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 Connecting Concepts 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.

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. In other words, what will students know, understand and be able to do as a result of their classroom experiences?

Using the State Standards as a starting point, our teachers collaborate to design 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.



CYCLE ONE - COMMUNITY

BIG IDEAS: **KINDERGARTEN: BEGINNINGS**

FIRST GRADE: PATTERNS & CYCLES

SECOND GRADE: SYSTEMS

In Cycle One, inclusive of 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.

HOW DO 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 Origins 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 Community Systems explores the diverse people of the United States that came together over time to build our country and to establish a more perfect union.





CAPSTONE FIELD EXPERIENCES

Second Graders sift the marsh during their Capstone Field Experience on a barrier 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 fundraising 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. Riverview provides need-based aid to enable all students to participate in Field Experiences.



BARRIER ISLAND TRIP

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, 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. Campus 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 a transformative experience, offering students the opportunity to demonstrate personal responsibility and growth, while creating lifetime memories. Riverview believes learning should be experiential 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.





CYCLE TWO - CULTURE

BIG IDEAS: **THIRD GRADE: ADAPTATION** **FOURTH GRADE: CONFLICT & COOPERATION** **FIFTH GRADE: GROWTH & POWER**

In *Cycle Two*, inclusive of grades 3, 4 and 5, students begin to explore human culture and environments through a three year study of American History and the discoveries of the developing scientific world. We consider the word culture to refer to the larger context of a child's social experience—the child's extended family, state, region, and ethnic group. This is when students are more likely to join clubs and teams, and create social identities that extend beyond their families. Taking this stage of child development into consideration, students learn to approach history as a narrative of which they are a part. Students are encouraged to place themselves in different time periods to appreciate the tri-cultural perspectives that created our nation--the Native American, the European American, and the African-American perspectives. As students themselves become more independent, they'll begin to realize that humans all crave freedom and independence - a theme that runs deep in the birth and development of America. Likewise, students will discover the concept of independence is not unique to the human race, but is characteristic to the natural world as well. Throughout the study of American history, students will be asked to compare times of conflict and cooperation in our emerging and growing nation, as well as how our nation's growth fueled geographic, economic, political and technological/ scientific power.

In 3rd grade, each unit of study is related to the Big Idea of Adaption. For example, students explore the biological features of the Earth and examine how where we live impacts how we live, as well as plant and animal adaptations to different environments.

4th grade explores the Big Ideas of Conflict and Cooperation. For example: in the fourth grade unit, Movement and Impact, students find out what environmental, social, economic and political factors cause people to migrate. What benefits and challenges are presented when these shifts occur?

In 5th grade, each unit is related to the Big Ideas of Growth and Power. For example: in a unit about boom and bust periods during the Industrial Revolution, students create and build their own assembly line and explore its benefits and drawbacks for American life. Students trace the development of the US as a world power following World War II through field experiences like the Washington DC Capstone trip.

Students learn about the history of a local lighthouse.





WASHINGTON, DC

Throughout the second cycle, students complete three years of World Geography and American History. Third graders study the physical features of the Earth and examine how access to natural resources impacts the lives of people where they live. Fourth grade begins with exploration of the New World and ends with Civil War Reconstruction, and fifth grade continues with Westward Expansion to the end of the 20th century. The conceptual theme of Culture is explored in all three grade levels as students are asked to view history through the eyes of the peoples that originally lived in, explored, settled, and inhabited our new nation--Native American, African, and European populations.



Scenes from the Capstone Field Experience in Washington, DC.

Because of the heavy emphasis on American history during this cycle, students in Fifth Grade will visit a site of national importance - Washington, D.C. - to investigate the larger context of national identity, history and power. Visiting the halls of federal government will help students learn about the nested hierarchy of political and legal structures at the foundation of American history and the American experience. Lessons in history will come to life as students relive our nation's greatest moments and tragedies and pay tribute to our great leaders. Students will experience first hand how America is a reflection of the cultures that helped create it.



CYCLE THREE - WORLD

BIG IDEAS: **SIXTH GRADE: CONTRIBUTIONS & TRANSFORMATIONS**

SEVENTH GRADE: SYNERGY

EIGHTH GRADE: BALANCE

In Cycle Three, inclusive of Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grades, students expand their world view as they reflect on the past and study ancient civilizations, the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the dawn of modern European history, and America and South Carolina's role on the global stage. Simultaneously, we consider that the word world refers to the international context of a child's social experience—the child's nation, continent, religious affiliation, and larger ethnic and national identities. While students yearn for independence, this also becomes a time when they begin to feel a part of something larger than themselves and the concept of Synergy emerges -- the sum of our collective effort brings greater results. Teachers in Cycle 3 work with community partners to Connect the Dots for students through civic participation.

The history of the world's great civilizations and recognition of their political, scientific, and historical contributions becomes important. Students are asked to examine multiple perspectives over the course of time and to track changes and transformations over time. Remembering the past to understand how we became the people we are today allows us to participate in our world and dream about the future. Riverview's goal is to give students the knowledge, skills, conceptual understanding and confidence they need to become active participants in the world in which they live. As they study the "world," they begin to see the interconnectedness of people, cultures and nations, and they are asked to consider what their own legacy, their own contribution to the world will be.



CYCLE THREE UNITS, CONNECTED TO BIG IDEAS



Seventh graders use GIS mapping technology and locate above-ground utilities to understand how community planners must work together to create and maintain sustainable infrastructure.

In 6th grade, each unit is related to the Big Idea of Contributions and Transformations. For example: A unit on classical civilizations focuses on the impact of early global interactions and the historical, political, and scientific contributions they made that still exist today; hence laying the foundation for future generations.

In 7th grade, each unit is related to the Big Idea of Synergy. For Example: A unit on world regions broadens students' global perspectives, enabling them to collaborate more effectively across cultural divides. Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum, and students have the opportunity to apply their learning in the community. For example, students recently had the opportunity to beta-test GIS Mapping technology used to identify, analyze, and map above-ground utilities in a local county construction project.

In 8th grade, each unit is related to the Big Idea of Balance. For example, in a unit on leaders students analyze the writing of Frederick Douglass and ask how imbalances of power are corrected. Simultaneously, students explore how biological adaptations of populations enhance survival in a particular environment.



THE WORLD

Throughout the third cycle, students will complete three years of studying the global stage and South Carolina's role in it: Sixth grade explores ancient civilizations and religions around the world, Classical Greece, the Roman Empire, Europe and the Middle Ages, Seventh graders investigate the geography of world regions and Eighth graders return to their roots as they revisit South Carolina's role in the nation and the world.

The conceptual theme of World is relevant and meaningful to all three grade levels and integrates into their big picture learning experience as students begin to understand how their community, culture, and world shape history and the future, and how individuals are connected to the world. Middle school science furthers this exploration as students' study the geological history of planet Earth, plants and animals, energy, properties of waves, weather, climate, cells, heredity, disease and human body systems, ecology, and the earth's biological diversity, structure and processes--with a focus on the relationships and symbiosis inherent in inhabiting the planet Earth.



COSTA RICA CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

At Riverview, students are encouraged to reflect and consider how they as individuals impact the earth, and how their individual talents and gifts can contribute to their local community and the world.

It's only fitting that our 8th graders travel internationally for a field trip in experiential learning to coincide with our conceptual themes of Community, Culture, World. Students will travel to Costa Rica, Central America to investigate the similarities and differences between our local community and environs, with a country on another continent. Both Beaufort and Costa Rica are coastal areas, both with a

history of a plantation economy, and both with a rich diverse ecosystem. In addition, students will be able to practice their world language, Spanish, while participating in experiential learning opportunities and service learning experiences.

Traveling is 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.

previous page:

Eighth grade students participate in a Service Learning project at a school in Costa Rica.

this page: Eighth grade students white water raft in the Puerto Viejo area of Costa Rica.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

NURTURING THE WHOLE CHILD

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 all of us. Even our staff engages in play during professional development. Play allows us to unleash our creativity while developing problem solving skills. Cooperative play teaches us how to work in groups to negotiate, build rapport, and resolve conflicts. Above all, play is a simple joy that makes learning fun.

Social skills 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 Meeting 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/ADVISORY

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: 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. In middle school, this time of the day is called Advisory. Advisory meetings are adjusted to meet the needs of adolescent learners.

SERVICE LEARNING

To extend the learning from the classroom and field experiences, and to encourage students to become responsible citizens, personally, socially, and globally, students engage in service learning projects. The Empty Bowls Project, is a school-wide service learning experience that has been held each fall since the inception of Riverview. Partnering with Rise Against Hunger, Riverview students, teachers, families and community supporters work cooperatively to package 50,000+ meals for children 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 are focused on community stewardship and local outreach. As students engage in learning experiences and service learning projects, they realize the responsibility we have in making the world a better place for humanity.



ACADEMICS



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The South Carolina State Standards for ELA are created, revised and updated regularly through a collaborative process by a writing team comprised of teachers and leaders in higher education from across the state. Some of Riverview's own teachers have participated in writing these standards. Our Standards place emphasis on fundamentals of reading, writing and communication. These fundamental describe the processes and strategies students utilize to become effective in language usage. As students grow in their ability to automatically apply these processes, they can tackle more difficult literacy tasks.

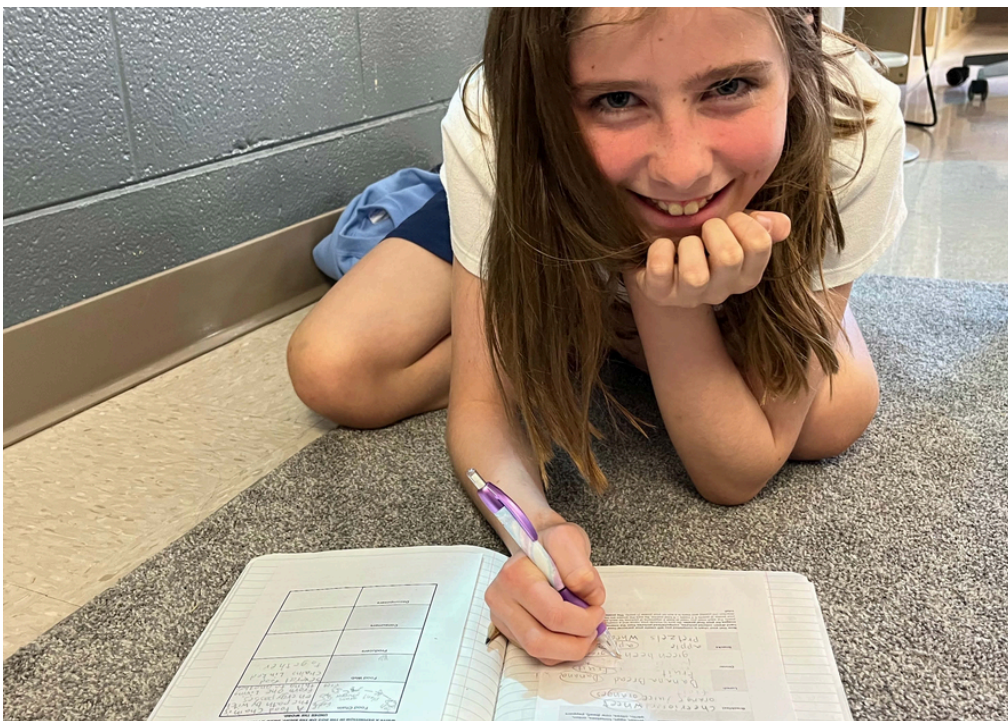
At Riverview, the Standards are just the beginning. Literacy instruction is focused on growing students who are adept at reading, writing and speaking in order to be contributing members of our communities.

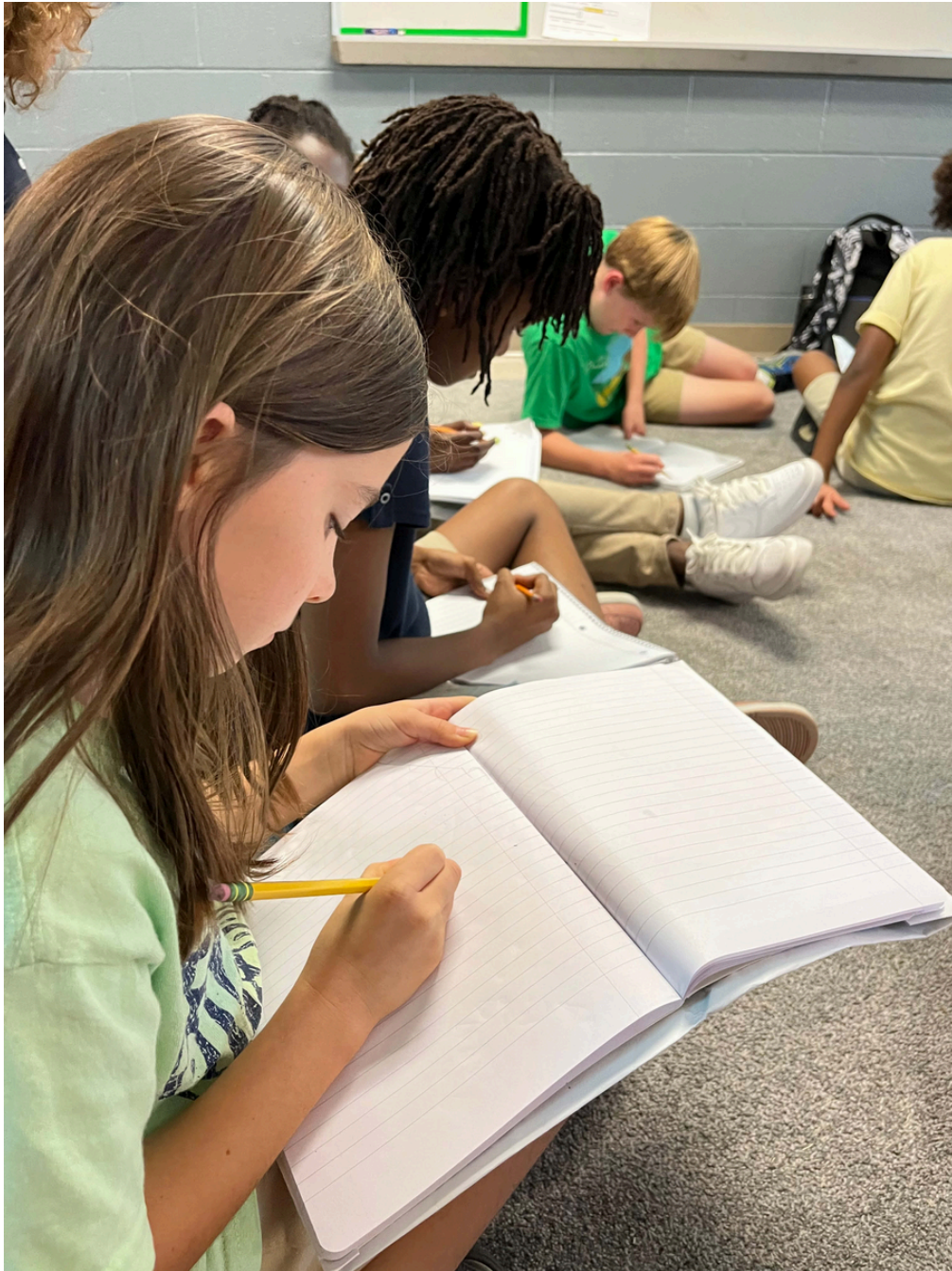


READING INSTRUCTION FUNDAMENTALS

Our students engage in literacy experiences that build on their natural curiosity. Explicit phonics instruction provides students practice in decoding texts. Students at Riverview use poems and word play to decompose and recompose words and word parts in order develop phonemic awareness. Fluency and comprehension are taught through targeted practice in both small group and whole group reading lessons appropriate to students' individual needs.

Vocabulary instruction is inquiry based and builds on students' curiosity. Students use roots and affixes as well as text clues to determine meaning in context. 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.





WRITING and RESEARCH

Some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, while other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Our teachers 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. Students write about topics they care about and present their research to one another and the community.

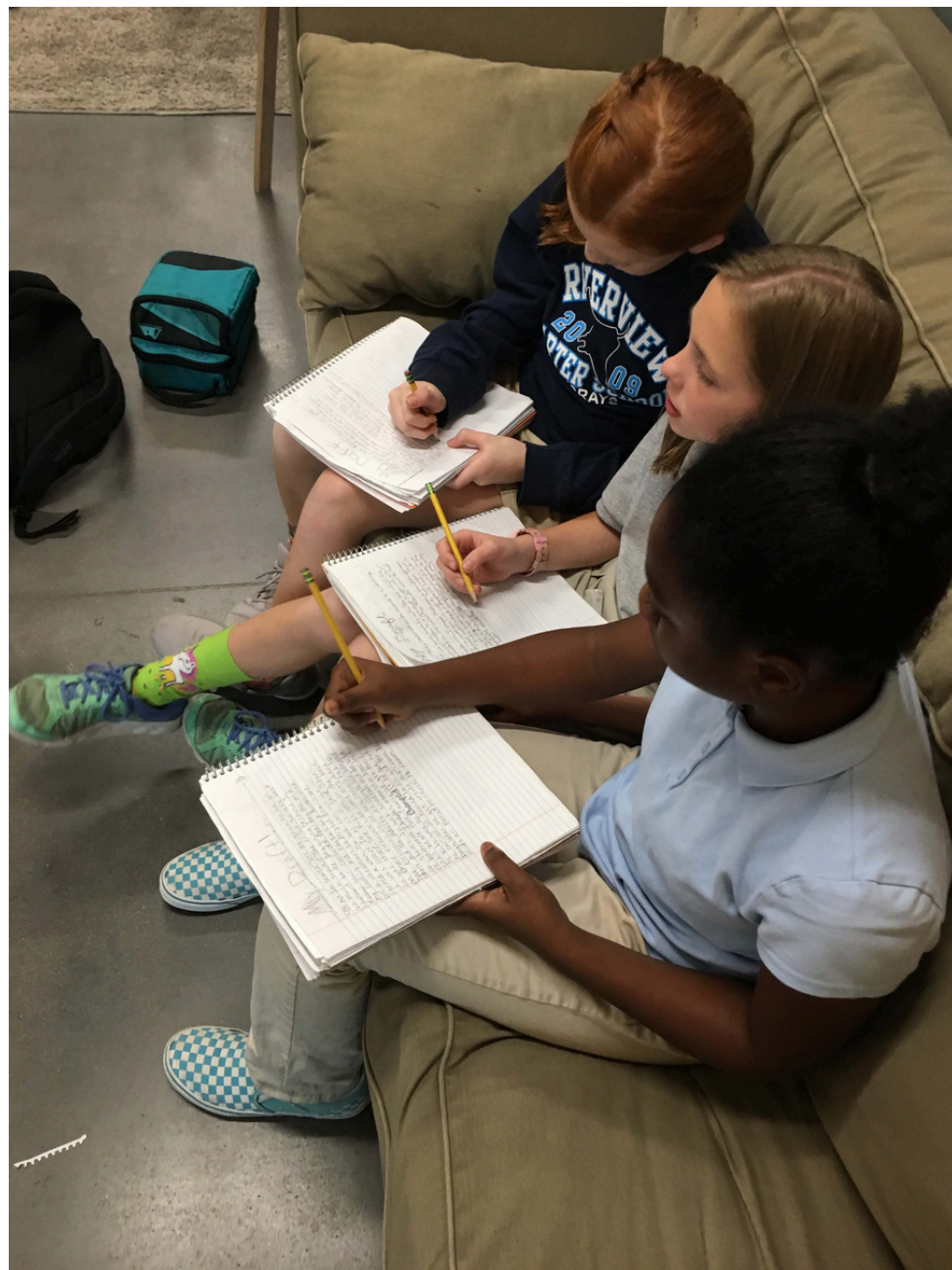
SPEAKING, LISTENING and COMMUNICATION

Students at Riverview 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 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. Vocabulary instruction focuses 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



Standing firmly on the premise that all students can learn to read and write, at Riverview the balance between reading, writing, listening and speaking allows students to receive the individualized teaching appropriate to their strengths and needs in literacy. Students who need support in meeting grade level standards receive supplemental instruction from reading interventionists in our Response to Intervention (RtI) program.

Teachers 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 Riverview integrated curriculum includes a literacy approach that transcends the disciplines.

Visit a Riverview classroom during an ELA block, and you will see students spread out in the classroom engaged in individual and small group reading, writing, word study and project work, while teachers circulate to confer and gather groups.

Our ELA structure helps students develop the daily habits of reading, writing, and working independently. In our K-4 classes, class often begins with a read aloud and a targeted mini-lesson. The teacher provides targeted reading instruction to a small group of students while others rotate through authentic literacy tasks. Teachers also meet with writers to revise, edit and prepare student work for publishing. Typically, social studies instruction is integrated into the ELA block to help students Connect the Dots across content areas.

As students enter 5th grade and middle school, the ELA block includes time for book clubs organized and led by students and facilitated by teachers. Students explore vocabulary in context and discuss and debate to uncover meaning. Students write informative, argumentative and narrative pieces to put forth and defend their claims with credible evidence, preparing themselves to be effective, passionate and creative communicators.

MATHEMATICS

As mandated by the state, Riverview's curriculum aligns with State Standards for Math. The Standards present a balance of conceptual and procedural knowledge. Mathematical process standards describe the ways students develop math skills. Students persevere in solving problems, reason, use critical thinking, connect math ideas to real world situations, use math tools effectively, communicate with precision, and use structure and patterns. Key concepts in the K-5 standards are number sense and base ten, algebraic thinking and operations, geometry, measurement and data analysis. Beginning in grade 3, students are introduced to fractions.

Students in Sixth through Eighth grade are instructed in the number system, ratios and proportional relationships, functions, expressions, equations, and inequalities, geometry and measurement, and data analysis, statistics and probability. High school level classes in math are available at Riverview to students who are ready for advanced coursework.





KEY POINTS OF THE MATHEMATICS STANDARDS

previous page:

Students use playing cards to practice basic math facts.

this page:

Students 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.

The standards follow successful international models and recommendations from the National Research Council's Early Math Panel Report, by focusing foundational math 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 provide detailed guidance to teachers on how to navigate their way through the knotty topics such as fractions, negative numbers, and geometry, and to do so by maintaining a continuous progression from grade to grade.



APPLICATION AND MASTERY OF MATHEMATICS

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 in Cycle 3 do hands on learning in geometry, algebra and probability and statistics. Students who have *mastered the content and skills through the Standards* will be well-prepared for high school level coursework. Consistent with other middle schools in Beaufort County, Riverview offers high level math coursework to students who demonstrate readiness.

Our teachers 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 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. Mathematical standards at this level emphasize mathematical modeling, the use of mathematics and statistics to analyze empirical situations, understand them better, and improve decisions.

MATHEMATICS IN PRACTICE AT RIVERVIEW

Riverview supports a 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.



SCIENCE

The South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Science Standards are integrated across three dimensions: science and engineering practices (SEPs), Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCIs) and Crosscutting Concepts (CCCs). They provide students opportunities to explore the natural and human world as scientists and engineers.

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PRACTICES

Students are taught to think and like scientists and engineers by asking questions, using models, analyzing data, using math, constructing explanations, making arguments supported by data, and communicating outcomes.

CROSSCUTTING CONCEPTS

Just like Riverview's Big Ideas that students in each Cycle explore, broad concepts like patterns, cause and effect, scale, quantity, systems, energy and matter, structure, function, stability and change cut across content areas and explain how the world works.

DISCIPLINARY CORE IDEAS

Key knowledge in the physical sciences, life sciences, earth and space sciences, and technological applications of science builds in complexity as students work through the science curriculum.

Students will be prepared to understand scientific and technological knowledge related to their lives, engage in discussions on science issues, be civic-minded, make sense of observable phenomena, identify solutions to local and global problems and appreciate the beauty and wonder of the world.



Fourth graders conduct scientific investigations in the classroom.

Riverview recognizes that reading and writing is critical to building knowledge in science. 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 taught 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 experiences 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. School wide Spring Service Learning Projects give students the opportunity to engage in community outreach in support of making the world a better place to live.

Students pick up litter at a local beach.



SOCIAL STUDIES

Riverview's social studies program aligns with State Academic Standards. Students utilize disciplinary thinking skills to analyze and understand important events and topics in history, economics, geography, civics and government. Then, they are called to apply that understanding to new situations. At Riverview teachers ask Essential Questions to guide students towards transfer. For example, what drives people to seek liberty? Is struggle necessary for growth?

Social studies and science Standards are often the starting point in our Integrated Unit creation. Our teachers begin by closely examining the Standards and then asking ourselves, How will we know that our students have internalized their understanding of these topics? How will they transfer what they learned to their own lives? We see this transfer occur when students engage in passion research projects about the topics that they personally care about. We see our students take community engagement seriously. When we speak to our Riverview alumni who enter local high schools, we often hear comments like, "The Riverview kids, they're the ones who care."





Fourth graders conduct a walk for water to explore the ways in which people around the world access the resources they need to sustain life.

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.



INTEGRATED STUDIES

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

To extend the South Carolina Academic Standards, Riverview integrates 21st 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.





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

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.

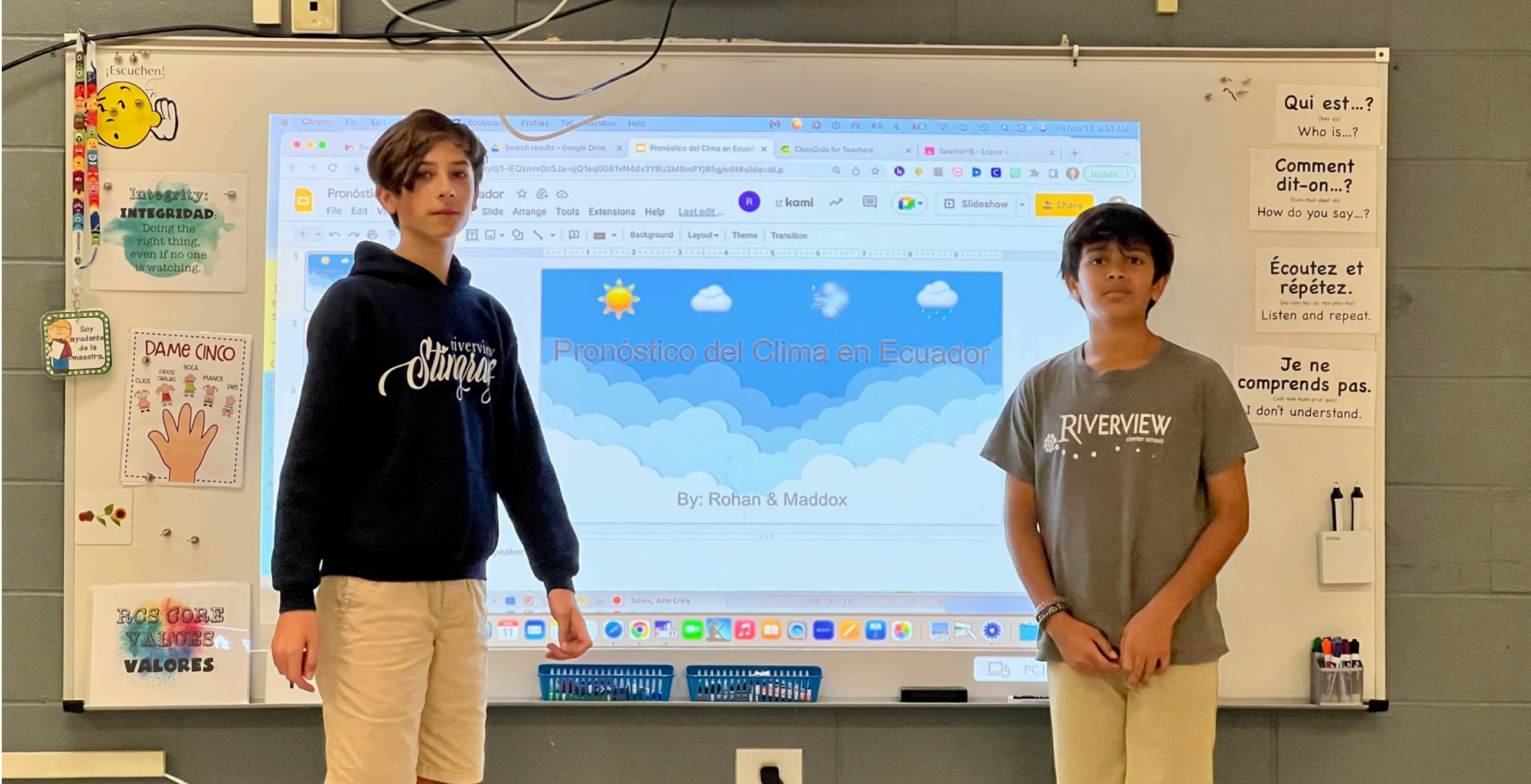
BAND

Band is an ensemble that provides students with learning and performance opportunities on wind and percussion instruments beginning in Cycle 3. 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.



CREATIVE MOVEMENT

All students in Cycle 1 participate in Creative Movement class once a week in order to gain mastery over locomotor and non-locomotor skills while getting the physical activity our youngest students need. Older students participate in yoga, breathing and mindfulness exercises in their movement classes.



Cycle 3 students conduct a presentation in Spanish about Ecuador's climate and culture.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Riverview's world language program is in alignment with the South Carolina Academic Standards for Modern and Classical Languages. We offer instruction in both Spanish and French. Students in Cycle 1 begin learn Spanish through games, songs and hands on cultural experiences. Students in Cycle 2 switch gears and explore French culture and language, looking for connections and common roots between these 2 romance languages. As students enter Cycle 3, with a focus on the world, students take a half year of French and Spanish and have the opportunity to choose one of these languages to take for high school credit in grades 7 and 8. World language instruction is integrated with Riverview's focus on knowledge of the world and its people. Students are tasked with becoming effective communicators by speaking and presenting content in Spanish and French. American Sign Language (ASL) is offered as a middle school elective course as well.



(Above) Cycle 1 students learn coding. Seventh graders engage in GIS Mapping. (Left)



(Left)

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATH (STEM)

STEM instruction at Riverview is targeted to develop problem solving skills, computational thinking, digital literacy, confidence and clarity in communication and to build creativity. Students are 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. 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 21st Century skills.



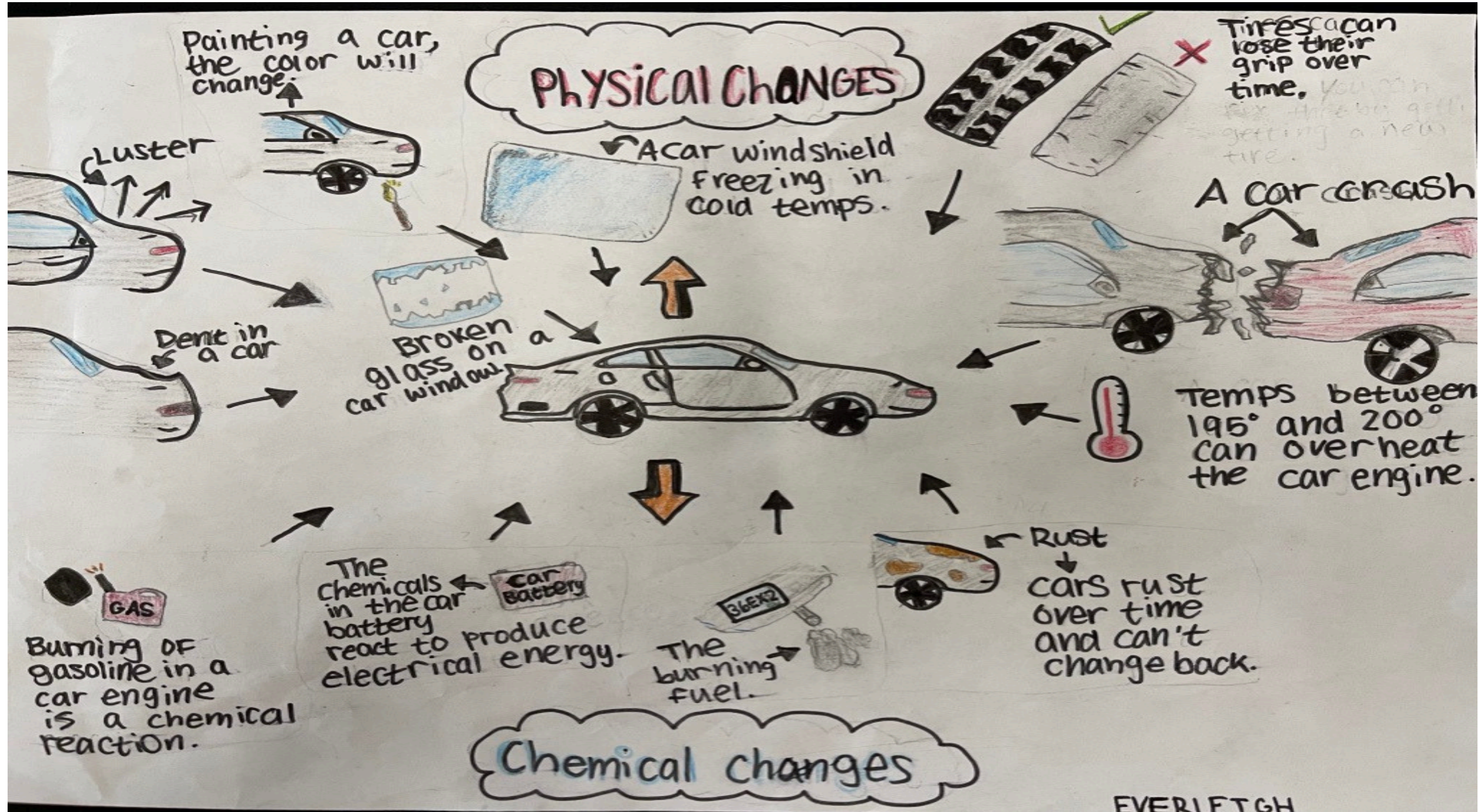
As part of our emphasis on the whole child, physical education develops students' motor control, improves self-regulation, provides opportunities to learn cooperation, improves problem solving ability and supports emotional health by providing ample time to play outdoors.

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.

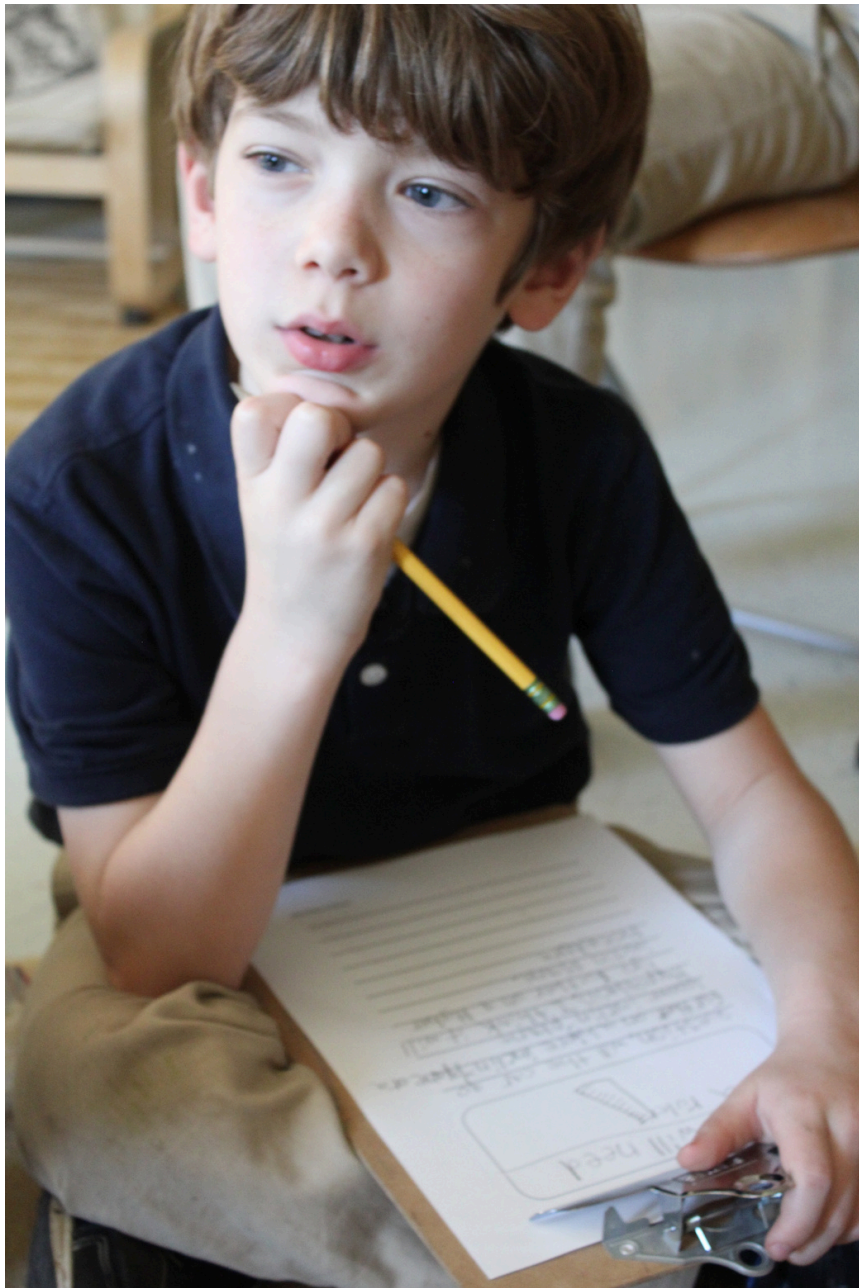
In addition, physical activity is built into the school day through daily recess and learning experiences in the core curriculum areas.

Students in grades 6-8 have the opportunity to participate in competitive team sports such as soccer, cross country, volleyball, golf, basketball, cheerleading, and sporting clays.



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.



ASSESSMENTS USED AT RIVERVIEW

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 metacognitively aware of their individual learning styles and processes and to empower students to become self-directed learners. Formative assessments assist the teacher in identifying what students know and provide benchmark data.

Student self-assessments and reflections allow students to set goals and track progress with teacher assistance. Students reflect on their learning experiences. Formative assessments in reading, writing and math provide teachers with actionable data that guides their instructional practice and tells them what students are ready to learn next.

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.



Students share their work at Portfolio Night.

Teacher observations, checklists, 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.

Student Portfolios highlight authentic learning experiences, demonstrate students' growth and competencies, and involve the teacher, the student, and parents in the assessment process. Multimedia 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.

The State of South Carolina provides families with specific assessment data on our State Report Card, an accountability tool that helps families compare assessment data, school climate, and progress among all our State's charter and public schools. Standardized assessment measures are just one of many data points that paint the picture of what our students know and are able to do.



STANDARDIZED MEASURES

KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT (KRA)

The KRA is given to kindergarten students in South Carolina each fall. This assessment evaluates early language and number skills as well as social, physical and emotional wellness. The KRA is aligned with first and second grade standards for English language arts and mathematics.

SC READY ELA & MATH ASSESSMENTS

South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) is administered to South Carolina public school students, including charter school students in grades three through eight. SC READY test items measure grade level student performance on the South Carolina Academic Standards. SC READY test results are used for school, district, and federal accountability purposes.

SC READY SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS

The SC READY Science test is administered in the spring to South Carolina public school students, including charter school students in grades four and six. The test items measure grade level student performance on the South Carolina Science Standards. Test results are used for school, district, and federal accountability purposes.

THE MAP TEST

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is an adaptive test that assesses students in math, reading, and writing for grades two-eight. MAP can be used as a diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment measure. MAP tests are administered 2 times a year.

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

Our Riverview teachers utilize the SC READY data, along with additional information from MAP, iREADY, and in-class assessments, to continually monitor mastery and provide our students with strategic classroom instruction, additional opportunities for higher level work, and individualized support as indicated. During our Fall parent conferences, each child's teacher shares data from our Fall MAP and iReady testing, strategies and supports being utilized in the classroom, as well as ways in which families can support their child's learning at home.

SC READY

Beginning in grade 3, students take SC READY tests in Math and Writing and Reading. Students in grades 4 and 6 also take the SC READY Science test. All tests contain multiple-choice test questions with varying degrees of difficulty. The writing test also includes one extended-response item. The SC READY tests are not timed. Tests are given each spring. Students receive the results of their test at the beginning of the next academic year. Student results are shared through performance levels. Performance levels for each test are Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Approaching Expectations, and Not Met. All students in grades 3–8 must participate. Students with disabilities participate with the appropriate accommodations.

THE MAP TEST

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are a series nationally normed computer based tests that identify a student's level of academic achievement in math and ELA. Each school year, students in 2nd-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.

iREADY

Riverview utilizes iReady, an online program for reading and math to monitor student progress throughout the school year, not just during the standardized testing window. Each fall, winter and spring, students take the iReady Diagnostic to show what they know.

MAP vs. SC READY & iReady

All public and charter schools in SC are required to administer SC READY for accountability purposes. While SC READY assesses mastery of grade level standards at the end of each academic year, MAP assesses student's knowledge, independent of grade level. SC READY tests are not adaptive. They measure students' progress in mastering grade level standards for students in grades 3-8.

Riverview's Charter names the MAP test as the primary tool we use to measure academic progress over time. MAP is taken by 2nd-8th grade students 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.

Beginning in Kindergarten, iReady provides each student with targeted, engaging lessons at their own level designed to address learning gaps and/or extend understanding across domains.



RIVERVIEW REPORT CARDS

A MEANINGFUL, CLEAR AND CONSISTENT APPROACH TO ASSESSING LEARNING GOALS

Students work in small groups on a creative problem solving challenge using 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 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?"



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 = Exceeds Expectations: The student demonstrates superior accomplishment in performance and skill. The student consistently exceeds expectations.

3 = Meets Expectations: The student demonstrates solid accomplishment in performance and skill. The student consistently meets expectations.

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

1 = Beginning to Develop: 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





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 match their 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 books 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.





SKILL PRACTICE AT HOME WITH iREADY

iREADY™ is a computer-based program that Riverview uses to differentiate instruction and target skill gaps in reading and math, as well as prepare students for standardized testing measures. The iREADY 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. iREADY is research-based, with proven results. It simultaneously provides academic intervention, as well as academic acceleration, and helps teachers meet kids where they are.

PORTFOLIO NIGHT

Portfolio Night is a celebration of learning that takes place each fall and spring in conjunction with our Service Learning showcases. A portfolio is an organized, purposeful collection of student work that displays knowledge, understanding, skills, concepts, accomplishments, interests, and achievement over a specified time. When used as an assessment, portfolios provide an overview of a student's abilities, demonstrate growth, and help to determine the strengths or weaknesses of the student. Portfolios encourage self-evaluation while providing a structure for feedback from students, peers, parents, and teachers. Portfolios contain items which the students and the teachers consider representative of their growth as a learner.

Student work is showcased in a gallery walk. Teachers have a brochure/checklist with a list of artifacts/evidence/projects/labs for students to discuss with families and community members. Some artifacts are viewed digitally, work might also be in folders or binders, learning is displayed on tables and on walls.

Portfolio Night is all about EVIDENCE and GROWTH. Samples of student work from the beginning of the year compare with samples at the end of the year. The evidence might include writing, book lists, projects, math fluency tests, self reflections, and more. BIG IDEAS, ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS, AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS provide the anchor that help students CONNECT THE DOTS. This is a night for students' learning to be CELEBRATED!

