

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH FIRST GRADE QUICK START PARENT GUIDE

Mission

Never Stop Innovating

Vision

We envision a world of exponential possibilities where every child develops the innate knowledge, skills, creativity and character to thrive, lead and succeed in an ever-changing future.

Formula for Character

Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Empathy

First Grade Team

Ms. Bench, Ms. Ristucci, Ms. Alascio, Ms. Schiffman

Daily Schedule

The first grade classes are picked up by the teachers at 7:30am and classes start at 7:40am with morning announcements followed by the Classroom Meeting/Community Time.

7:30 -7:40	Soft Start
7:40 -8:00	Classroom Meeting/Community Time
8:00 - 9:15	Math
9:15-10:00	Specials
10:00-10:20	Phonics/Grammar
10:20-10:55	Writing
10:55-11:40	Lunch and Recess
11:40-1:30	Literacy
1:30-2:15	STEM (Science, Social studies, engineering)

2:15-2:25	Closing meeting and dismissal
2:25	Dismissal

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

Clothing

Other than the standard dress code for STEM, there are some broader suggestions for school clothing for your First Grade student. The playground is equipped with monkey bars, rock wall, climbing ladders and slides all on a mulch area surrounded by black top and artificial turf. Although there is no requirement for closed toed shoes in the dress code, it may not be safe for students to wear flip flop sandals or open toed shoes while enjoying the playground and its equipment. It will be to the discretion of the aides, instructional assistants or teachers on recess duty as to whether or not your students' clothing or footwear could be a potential threat to their safety on the equipment. Also, please make sure that your student has appropriate outerwear for the day's weather. During winter months, warm coats, gloves, hats and boots will be necessary to enjoy their recesses outdoors. When there is snow on the ground, students will not be allowed to walk in snowy areas without wearing snow boots. Please write your student's name on all jackets, gloves, hats, and other clothing items that your student may take off during the school day.

Supplies Required

In the fall, prior to the beginning of the school year, parents will receive a school supply list. Additional items needed are: backpack, water bottle, comfortable shoes, as the students do go outside for both morning snack and lunch recess.

Water Bottles

Students must carry water in leak proof bottles in order to stay hydrated. All water bottles need to be clearly labeled in order to stay out of the ever-growing Lost and Found.

Lunch

Your student may bring a packed lunch from home or choose to have a hot lunch provided by Douglas County Nutrition Services. School lunch includes a fruit, vegetable, main dish, and milk. Please make sure your child has an appropriate amount of food to be

consumed in the allotted time for lunch, as well as any and all utensils your student will need to consume their lunch, ie., spoons, forks, and/or napkins.

Students may bring food to be warmed up in the microwaves by an aide or instructional assistant. They are also available to assist your student with opening their lunch items. Please keep in mind, there are likely 100 second grade students dining in the cafeteria and the lunch period lasts approximately 20 minutes. If your student needs assistance with heating up food, opening lunch items and getting utensils, etc., it greatly cuts into the time they are allotted for consuming their lunch. Please keep this in mind when packing your students lunch. Emphasis should be made in getting your student to be able to independently open lunch boxes, food containers, and beverages. Please write your child's name on tupperware, lunchbox, and other reusable items.

Lunch Numbers

Each student is assigned a DCSD identification number that stays with them throughout their DCSD career. This number is used at lunch time to access their lunch account funds and must be memorized to keep the lunch line moving at a steady pace. Instructional assistants and aides are also available to assist your student with entering their lunch numbers, however emphasis should be made to have your student be able to complete this task independently in time.

Snacks

Snack breaks are included throughout the day. Please plan on only sending 1-2 healthy snacks with your student each day. Please do not send snacks with peanuts in case of allergies.

Recess

Students have this free time to talk with their friends and play on the elementary playground. All students are expected to have weather appropriate clothing as we only stay inside for recess if the weather is unusually harsh.

ACADEMICS

Specials Rotations

Students at STEM are given the opportunity to engage in learning Music, Art, Physical Education, and Computer Information and Technology. These special classes will be on a rotating schedule.

Problem Based Learning Units

At STEM, our students work in groups to investigate real world problems. They receive direct instruction on state standards to guide them throughout the problem solving process. These units are slightly modified every year. Students may investigate:

- How animal traits can be used to advance technology
- Conflicts with peers may occur because of a lack of understanding of a person's background, culture, and perspective
- Problems in transportation and supply chains because of the pandemic and the impacts those problems have on production of goods and services
- Alternative ways to communicate using light and sound in an emergency situation
- How to address problems with space exploration and observation of the sun, moon, and stars

Use of Technology

Technology will be utilized in the classroom on a daily basis. Various technologies will be used by your student over many subjects including math, literacy, science and engineering, with the assistance of the classroom teacher and instructional assistant. It will also be used to facilitate independent and small group activities or lessons throughout the day. Students will be instructed on proper use and care of our school technology resources. Basic understanding of using any technical applications and navigating websites will help your student in using technology in the classroom and getting the most of this valuable classroom resource. Websites we use in the classroom and may be accessed at home include LiteracyFootprints, Spelling City, Zearn, Prodigy, Google Classroom, National Geographic Kids, Tynker, and Nearpod. Login information will be given to your student from their classroom teacher.

Literacy Rotations

Every day students will take part in literacy rotations and guided reading (centers). They will vary from time to time usually consisting of two teacher assisted centers and two to three independent or student driven centers. At these centers students may also engage in applications such as Spelling City, iReady, and LiteracyFootprints.

Math Rotations

Students are assessed on many standards of mathematics in the beginning of the year. Through this assessment we are able to analyze where they are mathematically so their needs will be better met. Similarly to literacy, students will work in small groups either with a teacher, instructional assistant, or independently. At the independent centers, students will work individually or in small groups on a skill based task or game further reinforcing math skills. Technology is sometimes used to reinforce skills taught as well. Examples of technology used are applications such as Zearn and Prodigy.

Math First Grade Standards

- *Number and Quantity:* Students will be able to count to 120, starting at any number; understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones, compare two two-digit numbers based on meanings of the tens and ones digits, add within 100, mentally find 10 more and 10 less, and subtract multiples of 10.
- *Algebra and Functions:* Students will be able to add and subtract within 20 to solve word problems, solve word problems that call for adding 3 numbers within 20, understand subtraction as an unknown-addend problem, apply properties of operations as strategies to add and subtract, relate counting to addition and subtraction, add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10, understand the meaning of the equal sign, and determine if equations involving addition and subtraction are true or false, and determine the unknown whole number in an addition or subtraction equation relating three whole numbers.
- *Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability:* Students will be able to order three objects by length, express the length of an object as a whole number of length units, tell and write time in hours and half-hours using analog and digital clocks, and organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories.
- *Geometry:* Students will be able to distinguish between defining attributes versus non-defining attributes, compose 2D and 3D shapes, and partition circles and rectangles into two and four equal shares.

Language Arts First Grade Standards

- *Writing:* First graders are authors! Each day, students will compose at least one page in the book they are creating. Students will develop skills throughout the year reinforcing basic letter writing, full sentences using upper and lowercase letters appropriately, proper word usage, adding details, and necessary punctuation skills. Students will learn several styles of writing including narrative, informative, and persuasive.
- *Oral Expression and Listening:* Students will be able to participate in collaborative conversations, ask and answer questions about key details in a text, or what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood, describe people, places, things, and events, add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions, produce complete sentences, and give and follow simple two-step directions.
- *Reading for All Purposes:* Students will be able to fluently read grade appropriate text, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, use key details to answer questions about the text, retell the story, describe characters in the story, and make predictions. Students will also be able to demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds and know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- *Writing and Composition:* Students will be able to write an opinion supported by reasons, write informative/explanatory texts by naming a topic, providing related details, and giving the audience a sense of closure, recount real or imagined, sequenced events that include details and a sense of closure, and use appropriate grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- *Research and Reasoning:* Students will be able to participate in shared research and writing projects, write or dictate questions for inquiry, use text features, identify a clear and significant purpose for research, and recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Field Trips

First Grade classes will have at least 3-4 off site field trips in a school year. Field trips are a great hands-on learning experience for your student. This provides some of the best school memories and gives students the opportunity to explore and reinforce lessons outside of the classroom. Students will be provided bus transportation to/from these trips. Parents will have an opportunity to sign up as a volunteer for the field trips. Teachers will create an online sign up and volunteers will be chosen on a first come first serve basis.

Students will be required to bring their own disposable sack lunch and disposable water bottle. In first grade, students may go to:

- Fiske Planetarium
- Denver Zoo
- Cave of the Winds
- Douglas County Library
- Hike to Bear Creek Lake State Park

Homework

Your child will bring home a book bag daily. Please have your child read 1-2 books from their bag every night and send the book bag back to school the next day. After reading, please help your student practice comprehension skills by retelling the story and/or identifying important details in the text. A reading log will also be signed nightly as well.

Other homework may be assigned by individual teachers and sometimes varies.

OTHER

Instructional Assistants

STEM School Highlands Ranch is proud to provide a full time instructional aide that is dedicated to our grade level. The instructional assistant provides additional support for both students and their teachers each and every day. Instructional assistants work either in small groups or one-on-one to offer support as needed. Our assistants are extremely valued and we expect that they are respected as any other adult on campus.

Birthday Celebrations

We love to celebrate your student's birthday with the whole class. With advance notice to the classroom teacher, you may bring in a store-bought, edible treat or goodie bag to share with the class; however, this is not a requirement. Please check beforehand in case of allergies in the classroom.

Toys

Toys from home are not allowed to be brought to school unless specifically allowed by the classroom Teacher for show and tell or as a reward for good behavior. This is not only to ensure your students are not distracted during learning time, but to also ensure that the

toys will not be lost or broken at school. If toys from home are brought to school, the Teacher may have to take the toy and hold it until the end of the day.

Bathroom Expectations

It is very important that your student be able to independently use the bathroom when at school. Students are expected to behave appropriately in the bathroom. It is expected that the bathroom is treated like a place to “do business,” you go, flush, wash and leave. Talking and playing in the bathroom is not tolerated.

Hygiene

Teaching the basics of proper personal hygiene is important. This keeps students healthy and clean. This is important for students to practice good hygiene, in particular washing hands. Students will spend so much of their time in close contact with each other in the classroom sharing everything from pencils, chairs, tables and germs.

- **Hand washing:** It is the most important hygiene habit to teach. It is especially important to do after playing outside, before eating food and after using the bathroom. Hand washing without a doubt is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. Students might need to be reminded to not “splash and dash”, running their hands under water for mere seconds without soap and call it done. Another thing students often do is put soap on their hands and then immediately rinse off without any scrubbing or lathering. Make sure students know to first wet their hands and then apply soap. Next, lather for 20 seconds making sure to rub all parts of the hand including in between fingers (best way to count would be to sing the ABC’s song) and then rinse. Then, dry your hands using a paper towel. Lastly, after students have washed their hands, they may use their paper towel to open the bathroom door, ensuring that their clean hands remain clean.
- **Covering sneezes and coughs:** Germs can travel far and wide through sneezing or coughing. Teach students to cover their mouth by using a tissue or coughing or sneezing into their elbow while turning away from others.
- **Blowing noses:** Many students come to kindergarten not knowing how to blow their noses. Nose picking is an easy way to spread germs. In case a child feels they have dry mucus irritating their nose and they want to get it out, the best way would be to make a finger ghost. What that means is you cover your finger with a tissue. Once they do that they can use that finger to clean their nose. Every time they clean their nose encourage them to clean their hands either with hand sanitizer or with soap and water.

Library

The STEM library consists of white book shelves around the elementary hallways with books divided by age appropriate reading levels. This system ensures books are readily available for students to use and place in baskets when they are done. Individual classrooms also have a collection of books for students to use and return when done.

Volunteering

Volunteering in the classroom is a great way to help the teacher and be involved and informed of what your student is learning in the classroom. If interested, please reach out to your child's teacher for more information.

First Grade Spartans!

Yes we are!

We look forward to working with you this year.