First grade is a new adventure for your child! They are starting to understand how school works. Still, first graders are working on the basic elements of learning, and because children develop in different ways at different rates, they may seem like they are shooting ahead one day and falling behind the next. Or learning may come easily in one area but seem much more difficult in another. Families and teachers play important roles in helping young children understand that learning comes with practice, and that when things are hard, there is opportunity to grow! When your child recognizes sight words or finally reads a whole book by themselves, they feel powerful. You can help them find their “Super Reader” and “Super Mathematician” powers by recognizing small daily achievements, as well as bigger accomplishments.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) helps children manage emotions, set and achieve goals, express empathy, establish positive relationships, and make decisions. These skills are important for learning in school communities.

SEL skills are part of all subject areas so students learn and practice them through the school day. Teachers emphasize and evaluate these skills on elementary report cards:
- identifying strengths, feelings and needs
- seeking to understand others
- building cooperative relationships
- critical thinking
- decision making
- following safety standards and
- working through challenges

Teachers use the words Strength (S), Developing (D), and Emerging (E) to describe students’ SEL growth.

Strength = consistently uses skills across subjects and settings
Developing = uses skills in most subjects and settings
Emerging = beginning to use skills in some subjects and settings

Your child’s teachers can help you turn “I can’t” into “I can” by finding “just right” materials that challenge them step by step. As first graders develop thinking and planning skills to answer their own questions and make decisions, they are also developing social skills to build relationships. You can support their learning by letting them “teach” you about their school experiences.

The report cards are a tool for conversations about their developing Social-Emotional Skills and Learning Readiness. Teachers can help you understand how those skills affect your child’s time in the classroom and their progress in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and Arts. Talk together to nurture confident first grade learners!

? Please visit seattleschools.org/academics/curriculum for more info on any subject area
What Are 1st Graders Learning in Math?

**Fluent** in math means “fast and accurate.” A goal for your child’s learning is for them to become fluent in their skills so they can move on to more complex mathematics.

In first grade math, students will become fluent in addition and subtraction within 10. Students will also communicate and use strategies for addition and subtraction within 20, count within 120, group objects and numbers in groups of tens and ones. They will begin to understand measurement and time, and reason about geometric shapes. Report card standards are arranged by section: **Counting and Cardinality** has to do with number names and values, and quantities **Operations and Algebraic Thinking** is about the language, patterns and symbols of math; **Numbers and Operations in Base Ten** relates to the decimal system; **Measurement and Data** is about tracking sizes and amounts; **Geometry** is about shapes and dimensions.

For more information, visit the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at: www.k-12.wa.us/parents-families

How Can Families Help Their Students in English/Language Arts?

**First Grade students learn to:**
- Read and understand grade-level text and figure out meaning of unknown words when reading
- Retell what is read, using key details from the text
- Ask questions about their reading
- Describe characters, settings, and events in stories
- Start to determine and identify topics and big ideas in a text
- Write and draw and add details to communicate for different purposes
- Take part in collaborative conversations about their learning and what they have read

**Encourage reading at home with your child! Read to them or listen to them read every day!**
- Create a reading space that is comfortable and free from distraction
- Ask your child to tell you about their reading (questions they have, a favorite character, what they learned)
- Encourage your child to create stories with writing and/or drawings
- Go to the library and find books that your child would like to read

Remember, when your child is learning to read, listening to them and reading together are important ways to show that you value their learning!
What’s New in Elementary Science?

This is a time for transition in science education, with teaching and learning focused on three key areas in Washington State Science Learning Standards:

1) Science/Engineering Practices used by professionals to explain the world or solve problems
2) Core Ideas that include fundamental scientific knowledge
3) Crosscutting Concepts frame scientific thinking across life, earth/space, physical sciences.

Your child’s report card shows Performance Expectations, for what students should be able to do by the end of a unit. The three dimensions are woven into each Performance Expectation.

Engage in Science at Home!!

Get outside together, taking time to notice, appreciate, and wonder about the natural world.

- Ask open-ended questions and take time to encourage thoughtful answers: “Tell me about what you made.” “What do you think caused the change?” “Can you think of a different way to do it?”
- Observe carefully and notice small details about natural and physical things like shapes in a spider web or types of bread.
- Make predictions and test how things work “How long will an ice cube last on the counter?” “Will it melt faster on another surface?”

- Encourage investigation. Try taking things apart to see how they work - from flowers to old appliances. Don’t worry about putting them back together!
- Let your child teach you by explaining or modelling through drawing, writing, or conversation.
- Challenge your student to argue from evidence. This is not fighting but using facts to explain their thinking. Ask: “How do you know that?” “Why is that so?”

You can support your child’s teacher by volunteering to help with classroom experiences or science related field trips.

Science learning is powerful!

What’s Important About 1st Grade Social Studies?

The report card shows four areas of social studies that you and your child can discuss. These are:

Civics - Understanding the purpose of rules in the classroom and school community

Economics - Understanding that families make choices to meet needs and wants

Geography - Using maps and globes and Understanding how environment shapes how families live

History - Creating timelines to show events in a sequence, or order

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PE and Arts are Part of Basic Education Too!

**Visual and Performing Arts**
Research shows that students with an arts education are more engaged, do better in school, and are more likely to graduate and participate in community life. In Seattle Public Schools, we want every student to receive a comprehensive, predictable arts education during their K-12 years.

Each elementary school offers different arts programs, from possibilities including visual arts, general music, theatre, dance, or instrumental music. Progress report standards come from the Washington State Arts Learning Standards, which focus on aspects of artistic process:

- **Creating:** developing new artistic ideas and work.
- **Performing:** interpreting and presenting artistic ideas / work
- **Responding:** understanding and evaluating meaning in the arts
- **Connecting:** Relating personally to artistic ideas and work

The arts are a core subject!

**Physical Education**
In physical education, students build movement skills, knowledge, fitness, social wellbeing, and confidence so they can enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle. Seattle Public Schools is committed to providing a quality physical education program to help students develop in these areas.

Our Physical Education (PE) standards are based on motor and movement patterns and skills, as well as concepts like physical literacy, which is the ability, confidence and desire to be physically active for life. PE is an instructional program, which makes it different from recess, free play, recreational sports or athletics. PE teachers work with general education teachers to provide high quality instruction for an average of 100 minutes per week, which is required by Washington State law. Schools organize PE times in different ways, but all students should be learning about their physical selves all year long!

**Support the arts at home!**

- Ask your children what they created today.
- Have your child describe what their art is about.
- Art is an area children experiment and make mistakes. Ask them to tell you about a “beautiful oops”
- Make art together!

**In every grade, SPS’ core work is supporting student learning.**

We believe it is our responsibility to do whatever it takes to ensure that every child, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, learning style or disability, achieves to their highest level.

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