

HANDWRITING MISSION STATEMENT

The importance of legible manuscript and cursive handwriting as a life skill is still expected and valued by the American public. Handwriting is often used to judge an individual's organizational skills, communication abilities, and pride in his/her work. Poor handwriting diminishes the perceived quality of the work. While it is important to allow students to develop their own style, it is also important that students maintain a high standard of neatness and legibility. Our goal is to help students develop self-discipline and responsibility for producing quality work.

REQUIREMENTS

In kindergarten through third grade handwriting will be explicitly taught daily for at least ten minutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In fourth through sixth grade handwriting will be explicitly taught for at least ten minutes a day, three times a week.

- * Primary handwriting should include fine motor readiness skills and left to right directionality. Left to right directionality doesn't come naturally for children. It must be taught.
- * The verbal cues for the letters should also be taught.
- * Neat, legible, and proficient handwriting is a skill that must be taught consistently, modeled and practiced. Modeling is usually more effective when done on the chalk board rather than the overhead.
- * Neat, legible, proficient handwriting must be an expectation in all curricular areas.
- * Since it is natural for students to develop their own personal style of handwriting, teachers should be accepting of work as long as it is neat and legible.
- * Handwriting Without Tears will be used in all K-3 classrooms. Grades 4-6 have a choice of using Handwriting Without Tears or Zaner-Bloser.
- * Based on research, it is our recommendation that cursive writing not be introduced until third grade.

1. Children are more developmentally ready to write in cursive.

They have better muscular coordination to handle the sustained motion required for cursive.

2. Because children in third grade are more ready, they can learn cursive much faster, thereby saving valuable time for instruction in other areas.
 3. Many children continue to experience problems in reading in second grade. If they are experiencing difficulty decoding symbols with which they are familiar, what happens when they are required to use a new set of symbols?
 4. Children tend to forget over the summer what they have learned about cursive writing at the end of second grade, and the third grade teacher often must "start all over."
 5. Children who are not introduced to cursive until third grade become more legible and fluent writers. Most programs that were introducing cursive in second are now going back to third.
 6. Children's creative writing can be adversely affected when they are introduced to cursive too soon.
- * It is necessary for students to use and perfect their manuscript skills throughout elementary school.
 - * As stated in the spelling benchmarks, it is recommended that students at all grade levels practice and test in manuscript.
 - * Although handwriting is a critical life skill, it is not reflected on the report card nor is it a critical objective to be bubbled in.

HANDWRITING BENCHMARKS

Kindergarten

As the letters are introduced, the formation of the letter, including verbal cues, needs to be taught, modeled and practiced. Students will receive at least ten minutes a day of explicit, direct instruction in handwriting.

First Grade

The formation of letters, including verbal cues, needs to be reviewed and practiced. Spacing needs to be emphasized. Students will receive at least ten minutes a day of explicit, direct instruction in handwriting. MODELING IS CRITICAL.

Second Grade

Correct letter formation and spacing need to be reviewed and practiced. Students will receive at least ten minutes a day of explicit, direct instruction in handwriting. MODELING IS CRITICAL.

Third Grade

Cursive writing is introduced. Letter formations and connections are taught first semester and practiced during second semester. Students will receive at least ten minutes a day of explicit, direct instruction in handwriting. MODELING IS CRITICAL.

Fourth Grade

Cursive letter formations, connections, and spacing need to be reviewed and practiced. Continue to practice manuscript writing. Students are recommended to receive at least ten minutes a day, three times a week of explicit, direct instruction in handwriting. MODELING IS CRITICAL.

Fifth Grade

Cursive letter formations, connections, and spacing need to be reviewed and practiced. Continue to practice manuscript writing. Students are recommended to receive at least ten minutes a day, three times a week of explicit, direct instruction in handwriting. MODELING IS CRITICAL.

Sixth Grade

Cursive letter formations, connections, and spacing need to be reviewed and practiced. Continue to practice manuscript writing. Students are recommended to receive at least ten minutes a day, three times a week of explicit, direct instruction in handwriting. MODELING IS CRITICAL.