

1

first grade

# Cobb County School District Parent's Guide to LEARNING in 1st Grade



## LEARNING

The Cobb County School District is committed to providing your child an academic experience that will develop his or her knowledge and skills at every grade-level and to ensuring a strong foundation is established for your child to reach his or her greatest potential. Our teaching is aligned with content standards and our teachers bring those standards to life for your child through various strategies designed to meet your child's learning strengths and needs.

In Cobb County classrooms, students are immersed every day in learning experiences based on exploration, problem-solving, and critical thinking in all content areas including the core areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science; and in specialized content including Health, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Music, and Technology. Excellence in teaching guides your child's educational experience from Kindergarten to graduation and into life. Below is an overview of what your child will be learning this year.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

First grade students are immersed in reading, writing, listening, and speaking throughout their day. Success in English Language Arts in first grade is critical and equips students with the foundational skills they need to achieve in subsequent grade levels. Students enjoy a classroom with balanced literacy experiences such as small-group and guided reading, shared writing, reading aloud, listening, and speaking. Students read a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. Emphasis is on accuracy, pacing, expression, and comprehension. Students enjoy opportunities to self-select books and discuss their reading and writing with peers and adults.

### MATHEMATICS

First grade students extend their learning from kindergarten with understanding place value, addition and subtraction, and comparing and sorting two- and three-dimensional objects. Students demonstrate knowledge of place value by comparing two-digit numbers and properly using math symbols. Communicating math reasoning using addition and subtraction in word problems helps students to be competent problem-solvers. Students use hands-on resources such as counters and base ten blocks to conceptually understand the mathematics they are learning. They deepen their number sense to apply math in their daily lives when problem solving.

### SCIENCE

First grade students become hands-on explorers of the natural world around them. Using scientific terminology and vocabulary, young scientists learn the similarities, differences, and basic needs of various types of animals and plants. Engaging in the scientific process, students formulate questions about their world and make predictions. They develop models and use tools, including technology, to record their scientific thinking. By using weather instruments, they analyze weather data and patterns. Sound, light and magnets round out their studies.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Students are introduced to United States history through the study of important figures and their contributions to the development of the country. Through the exploration of their lives, 1st graders understand character traits of the figures and how they were influenced by the geographical locations in which they lived. Mapping skills help students locate major topographical features and locate all the continents and major oceans. Personal finance supports student exploration of spending and earning, as well as cost and saving programs.

## PARENT TIPS: Reading

Daily reading as a family is an enjoyable and important way to grow a love of learning. Create time to read during breakfast or in the evening before bed. Share your own favorite childhood books and talk about why the book is one you still love. Visit your local library and take advantage of school book fairs and literacy events. By sharing what you love about reading and showing them how much it means to you by reading with them, students will see how important literacy is in their lives.

### SPECIALS

Creative skills are celebrated in Visual Arts and Music in 1st grade. Students examine how artists use subject and theme and create their own works of art using basic art elements and design principles. In Music, students use pitch and rhythm to create sound stories and begin to distinguish contrasts in instruments, voices, and musical concepts. In Health, accident prevention is emphasized so students understand safety and avoiding illness and injury. In Physical Education, students explore movement, learn to share and take turns. Schools have a variety of specials that students experience. Ask your school if you would like more information about the specials they offer.



## Cobb County School District Parent's Guide to ASSESSING in 1st Grade



### ASSESSING

Your child will have a variety of classroom assessments that will aid his or her teacher in knowing how to provide the best possible instruction for your child. These assessments will also help you know how well your child is learning and what extra support may be needed. In addition, your child will participate in some standardized assessments that are used to gauge how well your child is doing in his or her grade level.

Students in 1st grade take a norm-referenced, standardized assessment, called the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), during first semester that helps families and teachers better understand students' skills and strengths. The CogAT measures reasoning and problem-solving in three different areas: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal.

All students in grades K-9 participate in the universal screening process for reading and math using a digital math inventory and a digital reading inventory. In first grade, the reading inventory measures foundational reading skills, such as letter/word identification, work attack skills, and phonemic awareness.

### TESTING IN 1ST GRADE

**MARK THE CALENDAR:** CogAT: October; Student Learning Objectives (SLOs): August & May

**QUESTION TYPES:** 1st grade students respond to multiple-choice questions, called selected-response. Questions are read aloud so young learners have a better chance of successfully completing all questions. Questions relate to subject areas such as English Language Arts and Math and encourage students to apply a broad range of thinking skills.

### PARENT TIPS: Assessment

Parents can support students in easing any concern or anxiety about assessment:

- Talk with your child about any tests or assessments.
- Explain that assessment is a natural and important part of any learning. Tests help students understand their thinking better and make improvements for better performance in the future.
- Remind your child to pay attention to the directions and to listen carefully as they are read. Encourage your child to take time to understand the questions before selecting an answer.
- A good night's rest is the best way to arrive focused on test day!

Remember that assessment is an important and helpful part of learning for students of all ages. Your support and involvement in your child's education is critical to success in school and in life. Research shows when parents play a key role in their child's learning, their child's achievement excels.