

John Lyman School

Regional School District 13

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Welcome to John Lyman School!

John Lyman School is a child-centered community of learners that is dedicated to fostering a lifelong love of learning through active exploration of all curricular areas. The Integrated Day Program provides a supportive, stimulating environment in which students learn to take responsibility for decision-making as well as for their own learning and behavior. As a Higher Order Thinking (HOT) School, John Lyman fosters an arts-integrated approach in a democratic setting that celebrates the voice of every child. We strongly believe that the arts can support and enhance all subject areas and help to create more meaningful learning opportunities for our students.

We take great pride in our outstanding and dedicated faculty. The Lyman staff always puts kids first, and we are committed to helping your child succeed academically and socially. Our teachers work hard to foster open communication and to keep you informed about your child's progress. Likewise, we hope you will contact us when you have questions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to call or schedule an appointment with me at any time.

Our goal is to provide an outstanding educational experience for each child, and I hope you find this pamphlet informative and helpful.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Ford
Principal

Educational Choice in Regional School District 13

In Regional School District 13, parents of incoming kindergarteners choose either the Integrated Day Program or the Contemporary Program. Both programs follow the same Region 13 curriculum. The Integrated Day Program has been one of two equally viable educational options in the district since 1971. Region 13 believes that all students can grow and mature academically, socially, and emotionally in either program.

Parents are encouraged to visit both programs in January while classrooms are in session before making a final decision by February 1st.

Parents often ask for a list of the characteristics of a child who is more suited for one program over another. Parent satisfaction is the key to student success in either program. It is important for parents to support the philosophy and instructional approaches of their choice. When there is a match between their expectations and program offerings, parents should feel confident that they have made the right choice for their child.

Regional School District 13 Mission Statement

The mission of Regional School District 13, a school system that honors tradition and embraces change, is to ensure that all students become self-reliant, lifelong learners, and respectful, responsible citizens who will thrive in global and technological environments by expecting excellence and providing challenging educational opportunities responsive to each student in meaningful partnership with family and community.

John Lyman School Mission Statement

To provide a holistic and integrated view of learning which actively involves each child in the pursuit of academic excellence through decision making and problem solving.



Philosophical Framework

The Integrated Day (ID) Program at John Lyman School is based on a child-centered, project-based, and arts-integrated philosophy. Here are our guiding principles:

- The ID approach provides a supportive and stimulating environment that encourages and guides the child in an active exploration of all curriculum areas.
- The ID approach promotes a holistic and integrated view of learning in which individualized, small group, and whole group instruction ensure that each child is met at his/her particular level of understanding.
- Children are encouraged to be active, involved learners, decision makers, risk takers, and problem solvers who set goals. They work with teachers and peers to pursue their individual academic, social, and emotional needs.
- Children are encouraged to use a variety of learning styles to maximize academic potential.
- Teachers design both “hands on” and experiential learning activities to guide the child in developing a meaningful understanding of what is being investigated and/or presented.
- The teacher is a facilitator for open-ended discussions and activities.
- All students are measured according to their own performance and progress using grade level benchmarks.



Theory into Practice

As a constructivist approach to teaching and learning, Integrated Day teachers plan instruction to ensure that children will have opportunities to do the following:

- Use their own experiences to actively construct new knowledge which connects to and extends what they can already understand and do.
- Identify a problem and generate a variety of solutions.
- Learn in a variety of artistic and creative ways.
- Work both independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.
- Develop into flexible thinkers who are able to adapt to a rapidly changing world.
- Become effective communicators.
- Develop an awareness of the inter-connectedness of all things.
- Learn responsibility and respect for themselves, their environment, and other people.
- Develop a sense of competence in their ability to positively affect the world around them.
- Develop academic skills which will prepare them for life in the 21st century.

The Integrated Day (ID) Approach in Action

The multi-age classroom is a unique characteristic of the Integrated Day approach at John Lyman School. After the kindergarten year, students in the Integrated Day program stay with the same teacher for two years. Each class consists of students in two grade levels (1/2 and 3/4). Classes include a wide range of abilities and a balance of boys and girls.

The multi-age approach is designed to foster the individual personality and learning style of each student within the framework of the Region 13 curriculum. This grouping model enables children to develop and progress at their own rate. The structure naturally lends itself to opportunities for cooperative learning and produces a positive learning environment. A variety of whole group, small group, partner activities, and one-on-one instruction occurs throughout the day.

The goal of the Integrated Day Program is to develop students who have curious, inquisitive minds. Throughout the school day children are encouraged to ask their own questions and pursue answers. The child takes the role of initiator and is an active learner. Individual project work, a hallmark of the Integrated Day Program, tailors this process to each child's particular needs and interests. Students work creatively and to their greatest capacity when given ownership over the direction of their learning. The teacher acts as both facilitator and instructor. Teachers set the stage to encourage students' natural curiosity and to aid students in solving problems or answering their own questions. Teachers share a common philosophy of how children learn. An important aspect of the teacher's role is to help students discover that there are many ways of arriving at conclusions or solutions.

Teachers help children to plan their day. They also provide opportunities for students to apply these skills in a variety of learning settings. A predictable daily schedule allows children to develop independence and responsibility for their learning. Students are learning to think for themselves and to view themselves as lifelong learners. Planning for instruction involves providing as many authentic learning experiences as possible, including field trips, speakers, active involvement, play, and simulated discovery. Instruction begins with the premise that new learning should relate to some previous experience. Extended work periods are scheduled into the day to provide sufficient time for these meaningful connections to be made.

Educators involved in this program are committed to a lifelong educational process for themselves as well as their students. Staff meet regularly to share ideas and to discuss various aspects of instruction and curriculum design and implementation. This interaction with each other mirrors their expectations for students and fosters the sense of community felt throughout the school.

The social curriculum is an integral part of the Integrated Day Program, too. The classroom is a small community, representative of the larger world community. Class meetings are held in each classroom. Students work together, share ideas, and find creative answers to problems. Throughout the day, students are encouraged to explore their thinking, explore the problem solving process, and share their findings. Students work together to establish rules and expectations by creating a classroom constitution. These constitutions incorporate Region 13's Core Ethical Values of respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness and courage.

A whole school assembly is held approximately three times a month. It is a time for the entire school to come together. We celebrate our school community through song, classroom and individual student shares, and recognition of students' accomplishments. Students are

encouraged and supported by their peers to have the confidence to share with our entire school community. Parents and family members are always welcome to attend. Our assembly has a dynamic and positive impact upon the school climate.



Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Schools



John Lyman School is a longstanding member of the Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Schools network. HOT Schools falls under a grant through the state of Connecticut. The core components of the HOT Schools philosophy are **strong arts, arts integration, and democratic practice**. Our membership in the HOT Schools network and the HOTs approach are perfect complements to the Integrated Day philosophy.

Strong Arts reflects our belief that the arts are valuable academic subjects and a critical part of a child's educational experience. This investment in strong arts gives students the tools to communicate and learn through their strongest intelligences and to do so with confidence. This is also reflected in our discipline-based curriculum.

Arts Integration is another important aspect of the HOT Schools approach. Connecting the arts and academics makes learning easier by incorporating the visual arts, movement, music, and theater with curricular standards. For example, students may use music to practice patterns or counting in math or visual art to explore an author's purpose. At John Lyman School, arts integration is developed not only in the classroom, but also through work with resident teaching artists. All students work with an artist over a period of time to develop relationships between the artist's craft and important curricula. The philosophy of arts integration allows for students to become creative and flexible thinkers and teaching artist residencies are typically a highlight of a student's year.

Democratic Practice encourages our students to have voice inside and outside the classroom. Democratic practice is inherent in the Integrated Day approach and takes many forms at John Lyman School, including voluntary student boards, class constitutions, and our school senate. Students have a number of meaningful opportunities to get involved outside of the classroom, including the following:

Student Senate
Literary Board
Gardening Committee
Trail Committee
WJLS Student Broadcast Team
ECHOs

Art Board
Tech Crew
Hello Chorus
Go Far Committee
Yearbook Committee
Rosa's Readers

Grade Level Curriculum

John Lyman School follows the Regional School District 13 curriculum, which is consistent across the district. That curriculum is delivered, however, through the framework of the Integrated Day and HOTs approaches. Please see below for a more detailed description of curriculum implementation at each grade level in our building.



Kindergarten

The overall reading goal for kindergarten is to provide reading readiness skills and a love of reading. Students come into kindergarten with a variety of reading skills. Some students are learning letters, while other students may be reading and ready to explore books. Pre-reading skills such as letters, sounds, phonological awareness skills (rhyming and other word play) and comprehension strategies may be taught in whole group, small groups, or one-to-one.

John Lyman School uses the Readers' Workshop approach to literacy instruction, and that begins in kindergarten. A typical lesson includes a mini-lesson with a specific teaching point followed up by a longer period of independent and/or collaborative reading time. During the independent portion of Readers' Workshop, the teacher will work with a small, needs-based group or confer with individual students. Confering allows the teacher to monitor a child's progress, reinforce the teaching point or effective reading strategies, and to provide the child with specific feedback. Workshop ends with a brief whole-group share.

As part of Readers' Workshop, students are read to everyday. The read-aloud may be a story, song or poem, or a nonfiction piece connected to a current unit of study. Stories are retold to include story elements such as character, setting, problem or plot and solution. Songs and poems are read and recited together and then put into poetry books for students to practice and share at home. Students may read informational books when researching facts for project work. As noted above, student progress is carefully monitored as part of Readers' Workshop. Some students in kindergarten may benefit from extra support with beginning reading skills through HOT Readers. In HOT Readers, letters, sounds, concepts about print, and phonological awareness activities are presented through songs, nursery rhymes, games, and music to small

groups of children. Other students may work directly with our literacy tutor or reading interventionists.

Kindergarten students develop writing skills during Writers' Workshop. Writers' Workshop also starts with a whole-class mini-lesson about anything from topic selection to adding details to a story. Most kindergarten students begin by drawing pictures as a way to tell a story. Students then begin to label their pictures and form words, which will lead into sentences. During Writers' Workshop, the teacher confers with individuals to assess progress and to provide feedback. Writers' Workshop often ends with students sharing their writing with classmates.

Math is an important part of the kindergarten experience. Beginning math concepts are reinforced through class meetings where students graph and discuss the weather, explore patterns, and learn calendar concepts. During math instruction, developing an understanding of foundational place value concepts and number sense (basic counting, one-to-one correspondence, the concept of 10, etc.) is of the utmost importance. Students are also introduced to addition and subtraction, basic geometry, and problem solving.

In science, kindergarten students study and develop observational skills using their five senses. Students attend field trips with our district Science Specialist to a cranberry bog and Chatfield Hollow State Park. Students also study evergreens and are introduced to reptiles. In the spring, students formulate a question about an animal. They research the answer and share their information by creating a project.

The main focus of the Social Studies curriculum is on the classroom and school community. At the beginning of the school year, students work together to create a classroom constitution. Through the creation of a set of classroom rules, the teacher is able to introduce and discuss the Core Ethical Values.



First and Second Grade

The first and second grade curriculum at John Lyman School focuses on students becoming life-long learners. As in kindergarten, reading is taught using the Readers' Workshop model. The development of early literacy is a priority, and it is developed using a balanced approach that incorporates phonics, sight words, vocabulary development, rhyming, letter patterns, chunks, and comprehension strategies. Students are evaluated regularly using district selected and teacher developed assessment tools. Those students needing additional support outside of the classroom receive reading support provided by qualified reading specialists. One of the reading interventions for beginning readers at Lyman School is called HOT Readers.

Students explore the writing process during Writers' Workshop. A mini-lesson at the beginning of a working period may focus on a specific spelling convention, proper use of capitalization and punctuation, or a strategy connected to narrative, informational, or opinion writing. Throughout the school year, students select different pieces of writing to work through the publishing process in order to create a book. Writers' Workshop ends with a sharing period, during which students may read a piece of original writing and ask for feedback from the class.

Math instruction is suited for each child's individual needs and aligned to the Region 13 math curriculum. Concepts are introduced and developed with manipulative materials such as Unifix cubes, blocks, counters, beans, and Base Ten Blocks. Students develop critical thinking skills in order to solve problems. They construct the meaning of mathematical concepts in their own way. Students are encouraged to use manipulative materials, pictures, numbers, and words to support their thinking.

The science and social studies curricula alternate on a two-year cycle in order to teach first and second grade standards. Units of study in science include areas of life, physical, and earth sciences. In all areas, the focus is on scientific inquiry; students are encouraged to ask questions and investigate their surroundings through hands-on experiences connected to real life. The district Science Specialist supports student learning by guiding trail walks, leading field trips, and providing materials.

Social studies curriculum begins on the first day of school as students are encouraged to view the classroom as a microcosm of the larger community. Together with class presentations and reading trade books, students gain an understanding of tradition and family heritage. In addition, students may focus their attention on other cultures, fostering cultural understanding and knowledge.

Students choose a high-interest topic or one that is connected to a broader theme of study for project work. Once the topic is selected, students sort through information they know and determine what they would like to find out. With teacher and adult guidance, students develop their research skills as they look for answers to their questions in books, magazines, and the Internet. Students learn the value of hard work and persistence as they work through each step toward project work completion.



Third and Fourth Grade

During Readers' Workshop in third and fourth grade, students are reading and responding to self-selected books from extensive classroom libraries of fiction and informational texts. Teachers support these readers by helping them to make appropriate selections, meet new authors, read a variety of genres, increase vocabulary, improve comprehension, and build fluency. Students are evaluated regularly using district selected and teacher developed assessment tools, and conferring continues to be an essential component of Readers' Workshop in 3/4 classrooms. Building on the work that started in grades K-2, the ultimate goal is to develop lifelong readers who enjoy reading.

In Writers' Workshop, students use the workshop time to independently draft their own individually generated pieces of writing. The emphasis is on revising and refining a piece of writing and continuing to develop proficiency with narrative, informational, and opinion writing. The curricular expectations build from one year to the next, so third and fourth grade writers continue to improve the writing skills that kindergarten and first and second grade teachers helped to develop.

Math is aligned to the Region 13 curriculum and tailored to fit effectively into a multi-age classroom. Teachers differentiate their instruction and often use math labs that they have developed as a team. Students begin exploring most areas of math using manipulatives to aid them in constructing an understanding of each new math concept. Concepts are approached in ways that ultimately allow students to make "real-life" applications with their new math knowledge. The emphasis in math is on students developing problem-solving skills, generating efficient strategies, and effectively explaining their thinking. Multiplication, division, and a deeper understanding of place value are among the concepts studied.

All 3/4 students do research as individuals or in small groups as part of curricular-related studies. Each student does personal project work every year. Students pose questions, gather resources, search for answers, write up information in their own words and create presentations to share what they have learned with their classmates. The project work experience is not new to third and fourth grade, but students are able to apply previously learned skills with increasing sophistication.

Each year there are three science units in third and fourth grade. Through hands-on activities and direct experiences, students learn about a physical science topic, an earth science topic, and a life science topic. The district Science Specialist adds to the students' learning by providing additional activities to support the science units. Field trips also extend students' understanding. The whole third and fourth grade travels to the Bronx Zoo every other year as part of our study of endangered animals. Students also visit the Case Quarry in Portland for the geology unit.

The Social Studies curriculum alternates on a two-year cycle. One year the class studies Native Americans, explorers, local history, and geography. During the alternate year, students study Pilgrims, early settlements, life in Colonial America, concepts leading to the American Revolution, Connecticut history, and beginning civics. The Outdoor Education Department offers hands-on experiences for students such as observing and collecting plants on a Native American plant walk or playing games that the Native American children once enjoyed. Field trips enhance students' learning. The third and fourth graders travel to Bushy Hill Nature Center and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in conjunction with their study of Native Americans. They visit the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum for their study of Colonial America and tour the Old State House and the State Capitol in Hartford as part of our study of civics.



Technology Use at John Lyman School

Technology is integrated across the grade levels and curricula at John Lyman School. Every classroom is equipped with a SMART Board, allowing for regular interactive instructional opportunities. In addition, John Lyman School has a newly renovated computer lab for student use. The lab houses 22 iMac computers and includes a SMART Board for instructional use. We also have a full set of iPads that can be signed out for student use. Students have numerous opportunities to use available technology to enhance their learning, which is especially important as we work to develop students who are ready for the technology demands of the 21st century.

Children use technology in a variety of ways at John Lyman School, from coding exercises to creating iMovies that support project work to using iPad applications to bring historical figures to life. Musical compositions, such as the student-composed Hello Chorus greeting song, are often created using programs such as Garage Band. One of our goals is to help children become digital citizens and to ensure that they understand how to use digital tools, including the Internet, appropriately and responsibly. Our goal is not to “teach” technology. Rather, we strive to have children use technology tools to enhance learning experiences and to build the competencies they need to be successful in a rapidly changing world.

In order to make the best use of technology in the classroom, teachers participate actively in professional development focused on technology integration. Our classroom teachers maintain individual class websites that are becoming increasingly interactive. We are also fortunate to have Technology Integration Specialists in the district to support teachers and their instruction as they use technology in new ways.

Support Services

John Lyman School offers a wide range of services to meet each child’s individual needs. Programs and services are offered at each grade level (based on student need) and are consistent across both the Integrated Day and Contemporary programs.

Special Education
Occupational Therapy
ABA Services
Reading Intervention
Literacy Classroom Tutors

Speech and Language
Physical Therapy
School Counseling
Math Intervention
Math Classroom Tutors