

JOHN LYMAN SCHOOL

Regional School District 13
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Welcome to John Lyman School!

John Lyman is a child-centered community of learners. It is dedicated to fostering a lifelong love of learning through active exploration of all curricular areas. Our Integrated Day Program provides a supportive, stimulating environment. Students learn to take responsibility for their own learning and behavior. In addition, John Lyman School is a Higher Order Thinking (HOT) School affiliated with the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Arts Division. This arts-integrated approach exists in a democratic setting that celebrates the voice of each child.

John Lyman School's outstanding and dedicated staff members work closely with parents. Teachers maintain close contact with parents regarding their child's progress. Similarly, we hope that if there is a time when parents have questions or concerns, they will do the same. Please know that I always want to be available to parents. Any time parents have questions or need to talk to me they should feel free to call or drop in to see me.

Our goal is to provide an outstanding educational experience for each child.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Ford, Principal

EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

DISTRICT 13

In Regional District 13 (Middlefield, Durham) parents of incoming kindergartners choose either the John Lyman Integrated Day Program or Brewster-Korn Contemporary Program. Both programs use the same Region 13 curriculum. The Integrated Day Program has been a “challenging educational alternative” since 1971. This educational choice continues to be offered because of the belief 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, talk with teachers, administration, and other parents before making a final decision by February 1st for the following September.

Parents need to understand the philosophical framework upon which each program stands.

- 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. They need 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.

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.

Mission Statement of John Lyman School

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 a child-centered, project-based, arts-integrated, developmental program.

- It provides a supportive and stimulating environment that encourages and guides the child in an active exploration of all curriculum areas.
- It promotes a holistic and integrated view of learning in which individualized, small and whole group instruction ensures that each child is met at his/her particular level of understanding.
- Children are 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.
- The teacher designs 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

In the Integrated Day Program, teachers plan instruction to ensure that children will:

- 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, 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.





KEY FEATURES OF THE INTEGRATED DAY PROGRAM

The multiage organization (i.e., two grade levels per classroom) is a unique characteristic of the Integrated Day Program 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, approximately half per grade level. Classes include a wide range of abilities and a balance of boys and girls.

The multiage approach is designed to foster the individual personality and learning style of each student. 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. There are times when there is only whole group instruction, consisting of all students. Other times, the size of the instructional group varies depending upon the purpose. A variety of whole group, small group, partner activities, and one-on-one instruction occur throughout the day.

The goal of the Integrated Day Program is to develop students who have curious, inquisitive minds. Children are natural questioners. It is part of their nature to wonder about the world and all that it contains. This belief frames the overall educational climate of the school and the individual classroom setting. Throughout their school day children are encouraged to ask their own questions and pursue answers. The child takes the role of initiator and 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 facilitator and instructor. Teachers set the stage to encourage students' natural curiosity and aid students in solving problems or answering their own questions. Teachers share a common philosophy of how children learn. One aspect of the teachers' 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 to a variety of learning settings. A predictable daily schedule allows children to develop independence in learning and to take responsibility in varying degrees. Students are learning to think for themselves and to view themselves as lifelong learners. Planning for instruction involves providing as much real experience as possible. Field trips, speakers, active involvement, play and simulated discovery situations are examples. 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 each week. It is a time for the entire school to come together. We celebrate our school community by singing together, sharing writing, projects, artistic and musical accomplishments, recommendations for books, and voicing concerns. Students are encouraged and supported by their peers. Parents and community members are always welcome to attend. It has a dynamic and positive impact upon the school climate.

Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Schools

The core components of HOT Schools are strong arts, arts integration, and democratic process. Our position as a network HOT School complements the Integrated Day Program perfectly. **Strong Arts** will increase our students' expressive vocabulary. All students work with a visiting artist each year through our HOT School participation and the support of the JLPA. 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 the key to our goals of problem solving and flexible thinking. 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 artists. 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. **Democratic Practice**, in the form of class constitutions, school senate or simply voting on the name of a story character, creates a school environment in which we all are invested.



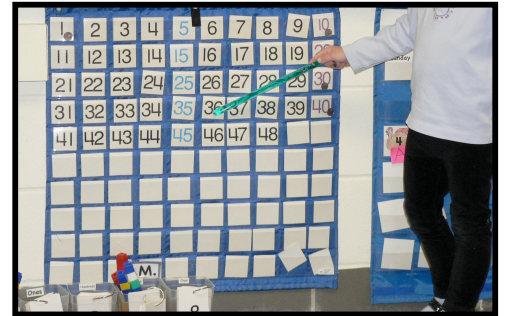
The Curriculum

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.

Students are read to everyday. The read-aloud may be a story, song or poem, or a non-fiction piece when involved in project work. 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 non-fiction books when researching facts for project work.

Students are assessed to monitor reading progress. Some students in kindergarten may benefit from extra support with beginning reading skills. In kindergarten, students who need reading support participate 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.



Kindergarten students write in their journals during Writers' Workshop. Writers' Workshop 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 circulates around and conferences with individuals based on their particular needs. Writers' Workshop ends with students sharing their writing and receiving feedback from their peers.

Many concepts are taught and reinforced during Class Meeting. Students count the number of days they spend in school in a variety of ways using different manipulatives. They graph and discuss the weather, explore patterns, and learn calendar concepts. Students are introduced to addition by the daily drink equation. Students also work on math concepts such as number sense, shapes, and problem solving based upon their individual needs.

In science, kindergarten students study and develop observational skills using their 5 senses. Students attend field trips with our Outdoor Educational Specialists to a cranberry bog and Chatfield Hollow State Park. Students also study evergreens and are introduced to reptiles by the specialists. In the spring, students formulate a question about an animal. They research the answer and share their information by creating a project folder.

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 that have been adopted by Regional District 13. Students also learn about a variety of holiday traditions and cultures from around the world with a focus on the similarities of the different cultures.

First and Second Grade

The first and second grade curriculum at John Lyman School focuses on students becoming life-long learners. Reading is taught using a workshop model. During one Readers' Workshop period, a teacher typically works with the whole class on a skill or concept and transitions to individual conferencing or working with small groups. The development of early literacy is a priority, and it is developed using a balanced approach which 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 teaches a specific spelling convention, models proper use of capitalization and punctuation or develops a writing strategy. 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. 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 Outdoor Education Department supports student learning by guiding trail walks, leading field trips, and providing materials.



Social studies curriculum begins 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 what they'd 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

Readers' Workshop is a large daily block of time during which students are reading and responding to self-selected books from extensive classroom libraries of fiction and non-fiction books. 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. Those students needing additional support outside of the classroom receive reading support provided by qualified reading specialists. The ultimate goal is to develop lifelong readers who enjoy reading.



After a lesson or writing share in Writers' Workshop, students use the workshop time to independently draft their own individually generated fiction or non-fiction stories and poetry. The emphasis is on revising and refining a piece of writing.

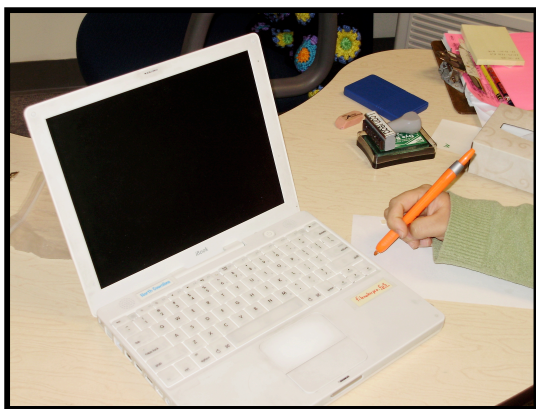
Math is individualized for each student's strengths and needs. Teachers differentiate their instruction to create a meaningful learning experience for each student. For this reason, rather than a textbook, teachers use tasks and assignments they have developed as a team, using a variety of resources. 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. Students are evaluated regularly using district selected and teacher developed assessment tools. Those students needing additional support outside of the classroom receive math support provided by a qualified math specialist.

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. Through this process they are truly learning how to learn.

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 Outdoor Education Department 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 Revolution, Connecticut history, and beginning civics. Current events are discussed and used on a regular basis to enhance the teaching of critical understanding. 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. The technology ranges from digital cameras to SMART Boards. Classrooms are equipped with DVD/VCR players and CD players. Digital cameras are used to capture images related to particular concepts, and record learning experiences. For example, a Kindergarten class might use photos to make their daily schedule, with pictures for each activity. Other classes gather memories on field trips, search for shapes on the Nature Trail, or compare facial expressions to describe emotions. Students use word processing machines, such as Alpha Smarts, to practice spelling words and keyboarding skills.

Each class has iMac computers, as well as access to Computers On Wheels (COWS). Children use these laptops to create PowerPoint presentations and iMovies as they study class and individual project topics. Musical compositions, such as the "Hello Chorus Song", are often created using programs such as Garageband. Classes use LCD projectors and a SMART Board to make learning more interactive. Students work closely with an adult when Internet access is involved. The Internet is often used for supervised research or email exchanges with students in other schools to enhance interactions between classes.

Teachers participate actively in Professional Development focused on technology uses in the classroom. Technology Integration Specialists in the district support teachers and their instruction as they use technology in new ways. Teachers and students are involved in different grants which focus on technology and provide equipment to classrooms and our school.

Parental Involvement

Education at John Lyman School is a partnership between home and school. Parental involvement begins each year with the very important *Parents Only* Open House. Each teacher reviews the classroom program and explains the curricula and expectations for the year. Representatives of John Lyman Parents' Association (JLPA) share information about their activities and offer varied opportunities for parental involvement.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's classroom and school-wide programs, as well as in the JLPA. Here are examples of some of the ways parents can get involved:

Classroom Volunteers

- Work with students individually or in small groups
- Check sight words
- Listen to students read
- Assist students with project work
- Make books
- Chaperone field trips
- Practice for Assembly shares
- Organize book orders
- Special projects

School-wide Support

- Gardening
- Nature Trail
- Reading Counts
- Writers' Wall
- Library helpers
- Residency planning
- Go Far
- Interdisciplinary Planning



Student Opportunities

The students at John Lyman School have many opportunities to be active participants in the school community. Students are encouraged to make choices that will foster their social, academic, and cognitive learning. Some ways students may participate are:

- Senate
- Instrumental lessons
- Band
- Chorus
- Art Board
- Literary Board
- Tech Crew
- Garden clean-ups
- Study Buddies
- Hello Chorus
- Rosa's Readers
- Governor's Reading Challenge
- Trail Committee
- Artist residencies
- Assembly
- Go Far
- Reading Counts



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. Some services include:

- Speech and Language
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Special Education
- ABA Services
- Counseling
- Outdoor Education
- Remedial Reading
- HOT Readers
- Remedial Math
- Summer School



