



## Welcome to Gan Nitzan!

Welcome to the Gan Nitzan community. We are so happy to be your guides as you and your children begin your journey through JCDS! We love spending time with your children each day as we learn, explore and play with them. Please know that we are here to support you as well. If there is anything you would like to discuss, or any questions that you have, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

The best way to communicate with us is via email. We will try our best to respond within 24-36 hours. Because we are with your children most of the day, we do not often have opportunities to check our email during the day. If you are sending an email that needs to be seen immediately, please call Aliza, the Office Manager, at 617-972-1733 and leave us a message with her.

We look forward to hearing from you!

### Karin and Marisa- Gan Nitzan teachers

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## Specials and Week Schedule

Each day, students in our classroom engage in reading and writing activities, mathematical explorations, Hebrew conversations, *T'fillah* and explorations of Jewish holidays, life cycle events and/or Chumash. We also have classes that meet on a weekly or semi-weekly basis:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
PE	Art PE	Engineering Dance	Engineering Music	<i>Shirah</i> with Oren

## Parent Communication

Thank you for being our partners in educating your children. **The best way to contact us is by email at [gnteachers@jcdsboston.org](mailto:gnteachers@jcdsboston.org)**; that email will go to all Gan Nitzan teachers. We will be sending out weekly emails with important information, including curricular highlights, upcoming events and general school information. Be sure to be on the lookout for those!

We formally meet with parents three times during the year for conferences in August/September, November, and March. Written progress reports are sent in January and June. We are available at other times to meet with you on an as requested basis; please just reach out!

## Birthdays in Gan Nitzan

We hope all children will have an in-school birthday celebration! To arrange your child's in-school birthday party, please contact the teacher team. In the case of summer birthdays, you might consider arranging for an in-school birthday party at the end of the school year. In Gan Nitzan, birthday celebrations generally take 30 minutes. Typically, birthdays are celebrated between 8:30-9:00 am or in the afternoon from 2:30-3:00 pm. Parents (and siblings) may come to the classroom with an allergy-friendly, certified-kosher treat. All treats must be packaged so that ingredient lists are available to the classroom teachers. We strongly encourage fruit or, if your child is set on something else, a healthy alternative. Please let the teachers know what snack you are planning to bring so they can advise you of any allergies. As for the birthday celebration itself, we encourage parents to bring photos and to tell the class the story of the birthday child's name. Trivia quizzes and read-alouds are also very popular. You can expect the students to sing "Happy Birthday" in English and Hebrew and to present a special birthday book to the student.

## Backpack Checklist

Snack and lunch – Nitzanim work hard and are hungry! Please pack extra food, and consider sending non-perishable snacks to leave in the cubby

Water bottle – Please take them home to clean daily!

Sneakers for P.E. – Please make sure that your child wears or brings sneakers on Mondays and Tuesdays for P.E. class.

During the winter (best if left at school):

Hats, mittens, snow pants, boots - We will go outside whenever possible. Make sure your children are always prepared. Students are not allowed to play in the snow without snow pants, boots and gloves.

Change of clothes - shirts, pants, underpants and socks. At least one set, but extras are better!

## Class Expectations

A midrashic source teaches us: “דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה” “*derekh eretz kadma l'Torah*.” (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah, ch.1) The path of proper conduct precedes the study of Torah). We interpret this to mean that proper conduct precedes all learning. Therefore we have committed ourselves to a social curriculum based on **מידות** *middot* “values,” that are integrated within our academic learning.

Activities in Gan Nitzan allow for active participation. We believe that all our students can behave in the classroom in a manner that is appropriate for a five and six year old. To this end students and teachers worked together to create a set of classroom rules. These expectations address respect for self and others, respect for classroom materials, and respect for the learning environment in the classroom.

## Curriculum

When one walks into the Kindergarten classroom, one will see children playing. During this time, so much is taking place. Play based learning incorporates children's ideas and interests into planned experiences and routines. It offers a variety of play spaces, such as art, dramatic play, sensory materials, and building as well as provides choices for the children. It is a jumping off point to extend what they are learning and link it to their own lives and the curriculum. The teachers during this time interact with, and observe children to gain insights into their skills and knowledge and are responsive to children's comments and answers to questions. The teachers provide modeling and instruction when required and offer suggestions and encourage children to learn from each other.

## Literacy

Children play games and participate in activities that strengthen phonological and phonemic awareness, including rhyming, sound segmentation and blending. They work on acquiring decoding skills and reading for meaning with expression, using classroom charts, print in the room and with books that we match to their individual stages of reading development. Students apply their knowledge as they write, representing their ideas with pictures and writing.

In Gan Nitzan, Best Guess spelling (or inventive spelling) is used in literacy. Inventive spelling is when children listen to the sounds they hear in words and write down the letters that make those sounds. Words might be represented by one letter (often the beginning letter) at first, and the end and middle sounds will eventually be added.

Conventional letter formation, spacing, and punctuation develop throughout the year. We use the Foundations program, which provides research-based phonics and literacy programming. This program makes learning to read fun while laying down the groundwork for lifelong literacy. Foundations provides children of varying learning abilities with a foundation for reading and spelling using a structured, sequential,

and cumulative phonics/spelling program with multisensory teaching techniques. The children will have a chance to write during Foundations lessons, writing workshop lessons and during play. They will be composing- using a combination of drawing, dictating and writing- opinion, informative and narrative pieces.

Students have many opportunities to explore books and stories. They have time to look at books individually, to hear books during Read Alouds, and even act out stories. We integrate other areas of our Kindergarten curriculum as much as possible to create a well-rounded literacy experience.

## **Math**

Students develop mathematical skills in a number of ways. They practice writing the numbers of objects that they sort, graph, or count for a variety of different real life purposes. They work to achieve correct number formation, including directionality of numbers and proper place value. The Kindergarteners will be exposed to both Digi blocks and the Savvas Curriculum. Digi blocks are a hands-on, discovery approach to learning and teaching number sense, Base Ten, and arithmetic operations, all using tangible manipulatives. The Kindergarten curriculum includes the following content and skills:

- Counting and Cardinality: Knowing number names, counting in sequence, and writing numbers 0-20
- Counting and Cardinality: Counting to tell the number of objects.
- Counting and Cardinality: Comparing numbers.
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Understanding addition as putting together and adding to, and understanding subtraction as taking apart and taking from.
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Representing and solving addition and subtraction word problems.
- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Working with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations for place value.
- Measurement & Data: Describing and comparing measurable attributes.
- Measurement & Data: Classifying objects and counting the number of objects in each category.
- Geometry: Identifying and describing shapes.
- Geometry: Analyzing, comparing, creating, and composing shapes.

## **Engineering**

Kindergarteners learn to think like engineers. Students use a five-step engineering design process to tackle challenges they encounter. They ask questions about a problem's unique criteria and constraints. They imagine multiple solutions to the problem. They plan and draw out blueprints for designing a solution. They create prototypes of technologies to solve the problem. They improve on their technology's design.

This engineering process is carefully guided to help students identify problems around them, to feel empowered to solve problems, to notice differences in the properties of materials, to choose appropriate materials and designs to solve problems, and to appreciate that problems have multiple solutions. Gan Nitzan will design varied technologies this year to solve real world problems including: a trash collector, a shelter, a bridge, noisemakers, and circuitry. The students will also do Scratch Jr coding and work with KIBO robots.

## Hebrew

We focus on Hebrew language development through a multitude of units and modalities. Additionally, we focus our Jewish Studies learning through Torah, Holidays, *T'fillah* and *Brachot*. Our Hebrew and Jewish Studies program is joyful, steeped in culture and hands-on experiences, and supported with songs, games, and a love for Jewish Living.

In Gan Nitzan, we cover the following units:

- Hebrew Alphabet
- Routine: This includes days of the week, schedule, Hebrew months, weather, colors, numbers, and greetings.
- Seasons
- Clothes
- Food
- Body
- Family

## Torah

We will learn about the following stories:

- Creation of the world
- Noah's Ark
- *Yetziat Mitzrayim* (Exodus from Egypt)

## Holidays

We will learn about the traditions of each holiday. With each holiday unit, the students will learn a related set of Hebrew words and songs, read books, and do crafts.

## T'fillah and Brachot (Prayers and Blessings)

We will learn and recite the following prayers and blessings:

- *Modeh/Modah Ani*
- *Mah Toru*
- *Ivdu*
- *Hallelu*
- *Shma and Veahavta*
- *Osed Shalom*
- *Adon Olam*
- *Hamotzi Lechem Min Ha'aretz*
- *Boreh Pri Ha'adamah*
- *Boreh Pri Ha'etz*
- *She'hakol*
- *Boreh Minei Mezonot*
- *Le'hadlik Ner Shel Shabbat*
- *Boreh Pri Hagafen*

**Zones of Regulation**

At this age, a large part of our curriculum is socially based. The Zones of Regulation is a way of talking about thoughts and feelings in a way that is concrete and clear. The Zones language helps students learn to better identify and describe their emotions with the goal of increasing their self-regulation and problem-solving skills.

**Milestone Event**

The Kindergarten curriculum culminates in our Milestone event: *Mi Am?* (Who am I?) This special event is a time to celebrate our year-long learning. Throughout the year, we reflect about our identities and who we are. Each unit taught is tied in and connected to this occasion.



## Welcome to Kitat Oren!

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We look forward to hearing from you!

### Ashley and Ziva, Kitat Oren Teachers

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Each day, students in our classroom engage in reading and writing activities, mathematical explorations, Hebrew conversations, *T'fillah* and explorations of Jewish holidays, life cycle events and/or Chumash. We also have classes that meet on a weekly or semi-weekly basis:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Music P.E.	Engineering	Art	Engineering P.E.	Dance

## Parent Communication

Thank you for being our partners in educating your children. Please reach out to us to let us know what is happening at home and what you are hearing from your child. We welcome your thoughts, comments, questions and concerns and love to hear from you! Email is the quickest and most convenient way for you to get a hold of us, but please give us 24 hours to answer. **The best way to contact us is by email at [orenteachers@jcdsboston.org](mailto:orenteachers@jcdsboston.org)**; that email will go to Ziva and Ashley.

We will continue to email out updates on our curriculum. Additionally, you can always check SmugMug (<https://jcds.smugmug.com/>) for photos from special events and daily classroom activities.

We formally meet with parents three times during the year for conferences in August/September, November and March. Written progress reports are sent in January and June. In addition to the regularly scheduled conferences, feel free to reach out to us and set up a time to meet with us if needed.

## Backpack Checklist

Every Day:

Snack and lunch – 1<sup>st</sup> graders work hard and are hungry! Please pack extra food, and consider sending non-perishable snacks to leave in the cubby

Water bottle - best are the kinds that don't spill

Monday and Thursday, please have your child wear sneakers for PE. It is a good idea to wear sneakers daily so students can run well outdoors and move freely during dance.

During the winter (best if left at school):

Hats, mittens, snow pants, boots - We will go outside whenever possible. Make sure your children are always prepared! Students are not allowed to play in the snow without snowpants, boots and gloves.

Change of clothes – all students should have a change of clothes (including socks and underwear in a box or bag in their cubby). Please make sure to add seasonally appropriate clothing, and send in new clothing if your child uses their extra clothes.

## Rules and Expectations



A midrashic source teaches us: “לתורה קדמה ארץ דרך” “*derekh eretz kadma l'Torah*.” (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah, ch.1) The path of proper conduct precedes the study of Torah). We are guided by this principle in first grade and at JCDS. Learning of all sorts is important – Torah, Hebrew reading, math – but none of that is as important as learning to treat each other with Kavod. In our social curriculum we teach students how to care for others, work well in a group and respect peers and adults. We reinforce this by “catching” students’ positive behavior such as cleaning up without being asked, or finding ways to help each other. Group projects, games, and special Kitat Oren routines such as the way we begin and end our day help students take responsibility for their own actions while building skills to work as a group.

Social lessons also include areas of focus on the seven Habits of Mind and Heart. We encourage and model a stance in which mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning. All subjects incorporate group work and teamwork activities. We seek to create learning opportunities that foster creativity, persistence, and collaboration.

We begin each day with a morning meeting. The goals of this time are to build community and welcome each other as we begin the day. Our days usually end with a team effort to clean the room (nikayon) and a group reflection. Students have jobs and responsibilities in the classroom which rotate weekly. Our classroom expectations and rules were developed by the students as a group and signed by every member of our community. We also use class discussions about common issues to focus on problem-solving together. All of these activities and lessons include connections to Jewish values and Torah stories.

All students learn differently and have different needs. As we are focusing on how we can support all learners, we are teaching strategies for active learning. For example, we have a designated break space in the back of the room for when students need it, either by their request or by ours. In the break space, students have tools such as noise-canceling headphones and a timer available to them. We teach the purpose and parameters of a break. Additionally, we teach the idea that “fair” means everyone gets their needs met. We all have different needs and learning styles while we share the same space. This teaching fits with our habit of empathy and multiple perspectives.

Finally, the principles of *Derech Eretz* are threaded throughout the daily curriculum. Morning T’fillah provides a natural opportunity to discuss such concepts as *Tzelem Elohim* - being created in the image of God - and *G’milut Hasadim* - acts of lovingkindness. Humash lessons are studded with examples of our ancestors’ behaviors that we strive to emulate, such as Avraham’s risk taking and *Sh’lom Bayit* (peace in the home), Rivka’s initiative and generosity and Yosef’s capacity for forgiveness. In this way, through formal and informal systems of behavior management, we provide the building blocks for our first graders to eventually become responsible and compassionate citizens of the 21st century.

## Curriculum

The first grade year centers on the theme Mi Anachnu (Who Are We?), building on the kindergarten theme of Mi Ani (Who Am I?). This theme integrates most of the elements of the first grade curriculum and provides a context for our social studies curriculum. We begin by thinking about our classroom community before considering what it means to be part of a school community and eventually how we can become good citizens of our world. Our goal is to give students the tools to be upstanding members of their *kehillah*

(community) and ask questions and participate in their communities to help make our world a better place for all people. We integrate *middot* (Jewish values) that are part of our *t'fillah* and Chumash curriculum whenever possible.

## **T'FILLAH**

*T'fillah* (prayer) is integral to JCDS' pluralistic education and is one of the ways we provide a common grounding in Jewish practice and values. It expresses our core identity as a living, celebrating Jewish community. Building on the *T'fillot* learned in Gan Nitzan, in Oren we add: *Birchot HaShachar*, B'rachot before and after the Sh'ma (*Yotzer Or/E-l Baruch/Or Chadash; Abavah Rabbah*); *Avot* and *G'vurot* sections of the *Amidah*; and *Baruch SheAmar*. On **May 19<sup>th</sup> from 8am-10am**, we celebrate Oren students receiving their first siddur at the milestone event, Chagigat HaSiddur. Children lead the entire Shacharit service, embellishing it with original commentary, explanation, song, and dance.

## **CHUMASH**

The two goals of the first grade program are: the development of an understanding of the narrative flow of the book of B'reishit/Genesis, including characters, places, biblical phrases and selected verses; and the development of the ability to embrace these stories as a source of values, moral commitments and personal connection. For each unit we ask, "What does the story say?" and "What does the story mean to me?" In the first half of the year, we will cover the five stories in *Sefer B'reishit* that precede *Parshat Lech L'cha*: Creation, Gan Eden, *Kayin V'Hevel*/Cain and Abel, Noach and *Migdal Bavel*/Tower of Babel. We then study the stories of the *Avot v'Imahot* (Matriarchs and the Patriarchs). Each story is told in Hebrew with assorted props.explore an underlying central question and discuss core value. The ultimate goal of the Oren Chumash curriculum is for students to develop a love of Torah study for its own sake, and to see themselves as important links in the ongoing chain of Jewish history.

## **HEBREW עברית**

The daily Hebrew lessons in the Lower School consist of small group activities and individual work in "centers." The instructional model is based on teaching the four aspects of the language: reading, speaking, writing and listening. The method includes simulations, which are as close as possible to real-life communication, in which students are encouraged to use the language interactively and naturally. During the lesson, the teacher models or demonstrates a language situation in the context of a topic taken from the students' immediate environment. The teacher then provides sample opportunities for students to practice the situation they have just seen and later, similar ones. The teacher tries to remove herself as soon as possible from being the speaker to allow students to talk among themselves. In order to expose the children to natural language experiences, we utilize mostly 'authentic' materials, such as Israeli songs, video clips, poems and chants, stories and dances.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

Weekly Social Studies lessons incorporate literacy skills such as oral comprehension, writing, and reading. First grade provides the first introduction to social studies. This year, lessons focus on learning American symbols, mapping- specifically in relation to Massachusetts, Civics- how we can be upstanders in our classroom/community, and local infrastructure- familiarity with the purpose behind local city buildings.

## **LITERACY: READING, WRITING, SPEAKING, AND LISTENING**

Students' language skills develop at varying paces throughout the year. Literacy in first grade is an immersive process that takes many forms: explicit phonics instruction, comprehension, speaking and listening, writing for varied purposes, and fostering a love of books.

JCDS uses a literacy program called Foundations in grades K- 2. Foundations is an integrated literacy curriculum that includes instruction in fluency, phonics, spelling, and handwriting. Foundations helps break down language explicitly and systematically and emphasizes word study, phonemic and phonological awareness, vocabulary and letter formation. Foundations places an emphasis on decoding, vocabulary, spelling and handwriting. The program also improves student writing by making it easier for children to form the letters and correctly spell words to express their ideas. The approach builds reading skills including fluency and prosody.

Students listen to many books read aloud to them across subjects. These are used to teach reading vocabulary and comprehension concepts such as:

- asking and answering questions about key details in the text;
- retelling stories, including key details and identifying the central message of the text;
- identifying the main characters, setting, problem and solution of texts;
- comparing and contrasting characters' experiences;
- making predictions;
- making text-to-text and text-to-self connections; and
- identifying and using various text features in informational books to locate key facts and information.

Students write often, for varied purposes and audiences. Students will write about their own lives, engage in creative writing, and learn to edit and revise their work. Spelling begins with a focus on sounding out words and will progress as we study word patterns and phonics concepts. The published writing pieces will include an opinion piece, an "All About" book, and a personal narrative.

## **MATH**

JCDS uses Investigations by Savvas as the primary mathematics guide for Gan Nitzan (K) through Alon (4<sup>th</sup> grade). Investigations topics broadly center on mathematical thinking, communication of mathematical ideas and problem-solving skills and strategies. The students' learning will also be supplemented with the Digi Blocks curriculum. Digi blocks are a hands-on, discovery approach to learning and teaching number sense, Base Ten, and arithmetic operations, all using tangible manipulatives. The first grade curriculum includes the following content and skills:

- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Representing and Solving problems involving addition and subtraction within 20.
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Solving word problems that call for the addition of three whole numbers.
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Understanding and applying properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Work with addition and subtraction equations, such as determining the unknown whole number in an equation.

- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Extending the counting sequence to 120.
- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Understanding and working with numbers in terms of tens and ones.
- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Comparing two-digit numbers with the symbols of  $<$ ,  $=$ , and  $>$ .
- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Using Place Value understanding to add and subtract.
- Measurement & Data: Measuring lengths indirectly and by iterating length units.
- Measurement & Data: Telling and writing time to the hour and half-hour.
- Measurement & Data: Representing and interpreting data.
- Geometry: Composing two-dimensional shapes to create a composite shape.
- Geometry: Partitioning circles and rectangles into equal shares.

Math instruction will focus on making ideas concrete, and helping students build a repertoire of strategies they can use to solve problems, and then explain their thinking and eventually check their work.

## **ENGINEERING**

First graders are introduced to multiple fields of engineering. They appreciate the unique problem-solving skills of optical engineers, ocean engineers, electrical engineers, packaging engineers, material engineers and agricultural engineers. Students are guided to use the engineering design process to solve varied engineering challenges. They develop the ability to persevere, to collaborate, to make data driven decisions, to tinker, and to iterate.

After exploring related background science units, students will design technologies to solve real world problems including: windmills that do work, a lighting system, model submersibles, water filters and programming KIBO robots and Scratch Jr. animations.



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**Michal and Naomi, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teachers**

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Judith Werner	School Counselor	<a href="mailto:judithw@jcdsboston.org">judithw@jcdsboston.org</a>
Derek Lichter	School Nurse	<a href="mailto:derek@jcdsboston.org">derek@jcdsboston.org</a>
Chavah Goldman	Director of Learning & Teaching	<a href="mailto:chavahg@jcdsboston.org">chavahg@jcdsboston.org</a>
Avital Fux	Lower School Hebrew Support	<a href="mailto:avitalf@jcdsboston.org">avitalf@jcdsboston.org</a>
Vered Singer	Art Teacher	<a href="mailto:vereds@jcdsboston.org">vereds@jcdsboston.org</a>
Rebecca Wagh	ELL Teacher	<a href="mailto:rebeccabw@jcdsboston.org">rebeccabw@jcdsboston.org</a>

## Specials and Week Schedule

Each day, students in our classroom engage in reading and writing activities, mathematical explorations, Hebrew conversations, *T'fillah* and explorations of Jewish holidays, life cycle events and/or Chumash. We also have classes that meet on a weekly or semi-weekly basis:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Dance/Music Engineering	P.E.	P.E. Art	Dance/Music	Engineering

## Parent Communication

Thank you for being our partners in educating your children. Please reach out to us to let us know what is happening at home and what you are hearing from your child. We welcome your thoughts, comments, questions and concerns and love to hear from you! Email is the quickest and most convenient way for you to get a hold of us, but please give us 24 hours to answer. **The best way to contact us is by email at [aravateachers@jcdsboston.org](mailto:aravateachers@jcdsboston.org)**; that email will go to Naomi and Michal as well as the rest of Team Arava.

We will be sending out bi-weekly, Friday afternoon emails with important information, including curricular highlights, upcoming events and general school information. Be sure to be on the lookout for those! We find that it is often useful to read parts of these with your children so they can add more details about what they learned and how they perceived the learning experiences.

Once homework begins, we will also send out an email each week explaining the assignments for that week. This will involve a reading log and Hebrew reading.

We formally meet with parents three times during the year for conferences in August/September, November and March. Written progress reports are sent in January and June.

We are usually available at drop-off in the morning for a brief chat. End of the day is a more challenging time. We are available at other times to meet with you as requested, so please feel free to reach out.

## Backpack Checklist

Every Day:

Snack and lunch – 2<sup>nd</sup> graders work hard and are hungry! Please pack **extra food**, and consider sending non-perishable snacks to leave in the cubby

Water bottle - best are the kinds that don't spill

Change of clothes – all students should have a change of clothes (including socks and underwear in a box or bag in their cubby). Please make sure to add seasonally appropriate clothing, and send in new clothing if your child uses their extra clothes.

On Specific Days:

On Fridays, the students will bring their School-Home Folders. Please remind your child(ren) to bring the folders back on Monday as the folders are also used to take home other work.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, please have your child wear sneakers for P.E.

During the winter (best if left at school):

Hats, mittens, snow pants, boots - We will go outside whenever possible. Make sure your children are always prepared! Students are not allowed to play in the snow without snowpants, boots and gloves.

## Rules and Expectations

A midrashic source teaches us: “לְתוֹרָה קְדָמָה אֶרֶץ דֶּרֶךְ” “*derekh erez kadma l'Torah*.” (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah, ch.1) The path of proper conduct precedes the study of Torah). We interpret this to mean that proper conduct precedes all learning. Therefore, we have committed ourselves to a social curriculum based on *middot* (values) that are integrated within our academic learning.

### Classroom Expectations

**Monitoring Our Feelings** - On the file cabinet in the classroom, green, yellow, blue and red squares are posted. When they come into the room in the morning, after recess and at any other time when they feel a change in mood, the students move their name magnets to the color box that matches their feelings. A person in green could be described as happy, focused and ready to learn. A person in yellow may be experiencing stress, nervousness, excitement, wiggles, silliness, etc. A person in blue may be feeling sad, sick, or tired. A person in red may be experiencing anger, devastation or extreme frustration. This system allows the students to self-monitor their feelings, and it helps the teachers better recognize when a check-in or intervention is needed. On a similar note, please let us know if you are aware that your child is coming into school in an agitated state; it is very helpful for us to have this information so that we can best address your child's needs.

**Taking Responsibility** - A goal in Arava is for the students to begin to take responsibility for their own needs and learning. To enable this to happen, we have begun to teach the students how to use strategies to address these needs, such as taking a break, getting noise-canceling headphones, moving to a quiet spot and/or using a privacy divider.

**Taking a Break** - One of the strategies that the students can use is to take a five minute break in the classroom break space. This space is an area for students who need either a cognitive or physical break, and it has tools and visuals inside to help students with both of these needs (i.e. a stress ball and sit-and-move cushion for a physical break and a Rubics cube for a cognitive break). There is a gross motor physical break space outside the classroom as well.

## Curriculum

Arava is a Year of Exploration! Students will be encouraged to reflect upon themselves and to consider the world in which they live, from their personal world consisting of family, school, and neighborhood to the more abstract concepts of Massachusetts, America, Israel, and the world at large. Please be aware of the following key dates where we can celebrate our learning with you:

- Wampanoag Then and Now...Tuesday, November 22, 8:30-9:30am
- Chumash Milestone...Friday, February 3, 8-10am

**T'fillah** (prayer) is integral to JCDS' pluralistic education and is one of the ways we provide a common grounding in Jewish practice and values. It expresses our core identity as a living, celebrating Jewish community. Students in Arava will expand the scope of *T'fillot* they know and recite as part of their routine. The class has regular opportunities for *Iyyun T'fillah*-focused study on individual *T'fillot* and the experience of *T'fillot* overall. *B'rachot* and *T'fillot* that the students will expand upon or experience in Arava for the first time include: *Ashrei*, *Amida-mastery of opening B'rachot*; *Kedushah*; *Sim Shalom*, *Y'hareich et Beit Yisrael* and *Min ha Meitzar*.

### **Literacy**

Our literacy curriculum gives equal focus to expressive and receptive communication. Children have multiple opportunities daily to speak in both small and large group forums, to actively listen to and understand one another, and to engage in written communication. Our curriculum is delivered through explicit instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and group share. Literacy in second grade is an immersive process that takes many forms: explicit phonics instruction, comprehension, speaking and listening, writing for varied purposes, and fostering a love of books.

JCDS uses a literacy program called Foundations in grades K- 2. Foundations is an integrated literacy curriculum that includes instruction in fluency, phonics, spelling, and handwriting. Foundations helps break down language explicitly and systematically and emphasizes word study, phonemic and phonological awareness, vocabulary and letter formation. Foundations places an emphasis on decoding, vocabulary, spelling and handwriting. The program also improves student writing by making it easier for children to form the letters and correctly spell words to express their ideas. The approach builds reading skills including fluency and prosody.

Throughout the year, the students will learn and practice the reading comprehension skills below:

- asking and answering questions about key details in the text;
- retelling stories, including key details and identifying the central message of the text;
- describing how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges;
- explaining what dialogue is and how it can reveal characters' thoughts and perspectives;
- identifying characters, setting, problem and solution of a text;
- making mental images to support their understanding and recall of the text;
- making text-to-self and text-to-text connections when reading literary texts;
- identifying the main topic and purpose of informational texts; and
- using various text features (i.e. captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes) to locate key facts or information in a nonfiction text;



Students write often, for varied purposes and audiences. Students will write about their own lives, engage in creative writing, and learn to edit and revise their work. Spelling begins with a focus on sounding out words and will progress as we study word patterns and phonics concepts. The published writing pieces will include an opinion piece, an informative text, and a personal narrative.

### **Chumash -- Sefer Bereshit**

Our study of Tanakh uses an inquiry based approach, developing habits of the mind for openness to diverse ideas, creative thinking, and a way of life guided by moral standards in a respectful learning environment. In Kitat Arava, we conduct an in-depth exploration of the *parshiyot Lech-Lecha* and *Vayerah*. Students will be introduced to the characters of our Avot (the patriarchs) and to members of their immediate families, and their extended families, as well. We will examine these relationships, and compare the morals and values of the biblical period to the ones we have today. Students will also be introduced to various well-known *midrashim*, and will be encouraged to provide their own interpretations.

We will focus on the following:

- Hebrew reading from text – identifying the Perek (chapter) and Pasuk (verse)
- Number/Letter equivalents in Hebrew
- Beginning to understand the grammatical structure of the Chumash
- Beginning to identify and discuss big ideas from the text

### **Hebrew**

The instructional model used in Arava is based on simulations, which are as close as possible to real-life communication, where students are encouraged to use the language interactively and naturally. During the lesson, the teacher models or demonstrates a language situation in the context of the topic at hand, which is always taken from the students' immediate environment. Following the demonstration, she provides ample opportunities for students to practice first the situation they have just seen, and later similar situations. The teacher tries to remove herself as soon as possible from being the speaker, in order to allow students to talk among themselves. Second grade curricula include units that are taken from the children's immediate environment and they include: getting acquainted, telling about myself, the Tishrei holidays, weather, clothing, Channukah, family, Purim, classroom, Pesach, Israel's Independence Day and birthdays.

### **Social Studies**

Our goal is to give students the tools to be upstanding members of their *kehillah* (community), ask questions, and participate in their communities to help make our world a better place for all people. We also explore how the surrounding environment and circumstances affect people's lives. Major 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade units include interdisciplinary studies of: the Wampanoag People before the 1600s and today; immigration to Ellis Island in the turn of the century, integrated with learning about immigration experiences today; and a mini-unit around elections.

### **Math**

JCDS uses Investigations by Savvas as the primary mathematics guide for Gan Nitzan (K) through Alon (4<sup>th</sup> grade). Investigations topics broadly center on mathematical thinking, communication of mathematical ideas and problem-solving skills and strategies. The students' learning will also be supplemented with the Digi Blocks curriculum. Digi blocks are a hands-on, discovery approach to learning and teaching number sense, Base Ten, and arithmetic operations, all using tangible manipulatives. The second grade curriculum includes the following content and skills:

- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Representing and Solving problems involving addition and subtraction within 100;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Fluently adding and subtracting within 20 using mental strategies;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Working with equal groups of objects to gain a foundation for multiplication;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Solving one- and two-step word problems within an unknown number to solve for.
- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Understanding that the three digits of a three-digit number represent the amount of hundreds, tens and ones;
- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Counting within 1000 and skip-count by 2s, 5s, 10s and 100s;
- Number & Operations in Base Ten: Fluently adding and subtracting within 100 using strategies based on place value and properties of operations;
- Measurement and Data: Measuring and estimating lengths in standard units;
- Measurement and Data: Telling and writing time to the nearest 5 minutes;
- Measurement and Data: Solving word problems involving money;
- Measurement and Data: Representing and Interpreting Data with Picture and Bar Graphs; and
- Geometry: Reasoning with shapes and their attributes.

## **Engineering**

Second graders are introduced to multiple fields of engineering. They appreciate the unique problem-solving skills of optical engineers, ocean engineers, electrical engineers, packaging engineers, material engineers and agricultural engineers. Students are guided to use the engineering design process to solve varied engineering challenges. They develop the ability to persevere, to collaborate, to make data driven decisions, to tinker, and to iterate.

After exploring related background science units, students will design technologies to solve real world problems including: parachutes, alarm circuits, hand pollinators, plant packages and programming KIBO robots and Scratch Jr. animations.



## Welcome to Kitat Erez!

Welcome to the Kitat Erez community. We are so happy to be your guides as you and your children continue your journey through JCDS! We love spending time with your children each day as we learn, explore and play with them. Please know that we are here to support you as well. If there is anything you would like to discuss, or any questions that you have, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

The best way to communicate with us is via email. We will try our best to respond within 24-36 hours. Because we are with your children most of the day, we do not often have opportunities to check our email during the day. If you are sending an email that needs to be seen immediately, please call Aliza, the Office Manager, at 617-972-1733 and leave us a message with her.

We look forward to hearing from you!

**Miriam, Meg, Uri, and Catherine, the 3rd Grade Teachers**

**Kitat Erez Teachers:** [erezteachers@jcdsboston.org](mailto:erezteachers@jcdsboston.org)

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Shalom Krinsky	Erez Classroom Assistant	shalomk@jcdsboston.org
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Laura Ball	Director of Physical Education	laurab@jcdsboston.org
Judith Werner	School Counselor	judithw@jcdsboston.org
Derek Lichter	School Nurse	derekl@jcdsboston.org
Chavah Goldman	Director of Learning & Teaching	chavahg@jcdsboston.org
Avital Fux	Lower School Hebrew Support	avitalf@jcdsboston.org
Vered Singer	Art Teacher	vereds@jcdsboston.org
Rebecca Wangh	ELL Teacher	rebeccabw@jcdsboston.org

## Specials and Week Schedule

Each day, students in our classroom engage in reading and writing activities, mathematical explorations, Hebrew conversations, *T'fillah* and explorations of Jewish holidays, life cycle events and/or Chumash.

We also have classes that meet on a weekly or semi-weekly basis:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Science	P.E.	Science	Music/Dance	
Music/Dance		Art	P.E.	

## Parent Communication

Thank you for being our partners in educating your children. Please reach out to us to let us know what is happening at home and what you are hearing from your child. **The best way to contact us is by email at [erezteachers@jcdsboston.org](mailto:erezteachers@jcdsboston.org)**; that email will go to Miriam, Meg, Uri and Catherine.

We are often busy with the students during drop off and pick up. Feel free to **set up a time to meet** with us so we can give you our full attention.

We email a **weekly newsletter** to let you know what is happening in class.

Each family is welcome to choose up to three of the following to celebrate their child's birthday in school:

1. Send in a snack. (We have 19 students, and all packaged food must be marked kosher.)
2. Donate a book to the classroom library (new or used!)
3. Send in a five-minute activity for the class (examples include word searches, trivia questions, or baby videos of the birthday child).

Children with birthdays while we are not at school are welcome to choose another day to celebrate (i.e. the closest school day, or a half birthday). Please email us to coordinate the best day.

## Backpack Checklist

All Year Long:

Orange homework folder – This should go back and forth to school each day. Please help your child to empty the “stay at home” side and make sure the “homework” makes it back to school!

Snack and lunch – Third graders often get hungry. Please pack **extra food**, and consider sending non-perishable snacks to leave in the cubby

Water bottle - best are the kinds that don't spill

On P.E. days, students should wear/bring sneakers.

On Wednesdays (when Erez is in the Makerspace), students must have closed-toe shoes.

Change of clothes – all students should have a change of clothes (including socks and underwear in a box or bag in their cubby). Please make sure to add seasonally appropriate clothing, and send in new clothing if your child uses their extra clothes.

During the winter (best if left at school):

Hats, mittens, snow pants, boots - We will go outside whenever possible. Make sure your children are always prepared! Students are not allowed to play in the snow without snow pants, boots and gloves.

## Rules and Expectations

A midrashic source teaches us: “לתורה קדמה ארץ דרך” “*derekh eretz kadma l’Torah*.” (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah, ch.1) The path of proper conduct precedes the study of Torah). We interpret this to mean that proper conduct precedes all learning. Therefore, we have committed ourselves to a social curriculum based on *middot* (values) that are integrated within our academic learning.

### Classroom Expectations

The **Erez class worked together to develop rules** to allow each of us to achieve our hopes and dreams this year:

1. Respect others and yourself
2. Pay attention
3. Work with the community
4. Be patient
5. Do your best work
6. Have fun

Students are expected to do their own best work and support others. If something is hindering their performance - hunger, distractions, social conflict - they are **encouraged to self-advocate** for what they need.

Students have the opportunity to “**take a break**” as needed. This is an opportunity to remove themselves from the group for a brain or body break while remaining in the room. After a few minutes, they successfully reenter the group.

Please note that **each day begins at 7:55am** with morning work followed by morning meeting. Thank you for bringing your children on time.

Third grade is a year of tremendous growth, and each student is an integral part of the community.

## Curriculum

### Literacy

Our literacy curriculum gives equal focus to expressive and receptive communication. Children have multiple opportunities daily to speak in both small and large group forums, to actively listen to and understand one another, and to engage in written communication. Our curriculum is delivered through

explicit instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and group share. In 3rd grade literacy, we continue to use word attack skills including decoding unfamiliar phonetic elements, syllabication, and compound words. Our main focus is on continuing to develop and practice comprehension strategies. Throughout the year, the students will learn and practice the reading comprehension skills below:

- asking and answering questions about the text and using evidence to support their thinking;
- retelling stories and determining the central message of fables, folktales and myths;
- describing characters in a text and explaining how their actions contribute to the sequence of events;
- distinguishing their own points of view from that of the narrator or characters;
- engaging in book group skills to converse about a text; and
- comparing and contrasting two texts about the same topic.

In writing lessons, the students will have opportunities to rehearse the writing process (brainstorm, organize ideas, write rough drafts, self-edit, incorporate teacher corrections, and write a final draft). They will learn the skills of revisiting a piece of work, adding detail, and incorporating voice and word choice. The students will also address the writing conventions of mechanics and simple grammatical structures. The published writing pieces will include an opinion piece, an informative/explanatory text, and a narrative.

## **Math**

JCDS uses Investigations by Savvas as the primary mathematics guide for Gan Nitzan (K) through Alon (4<sup>th</sup> grade). Investigations topics broadly center on mathematical thinking, communication of mathematical ideas and problem-solving skills and strategies. The students' learning will also be supplemented with the Digi Blocks curriculum. Digi blocks are a hands-on, discovery approach to learning and teaching number sense, Base Ten, and arithmetic operations, all using tangible manipulatives. We also supplement these curricula with more complex/open-ended problems from a variety of sources, including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and Math Kangaroo.

The third grade curriculum includes the following content and skills:

- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Representing and Solving problems involving multiplication and division;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Understanding the properties of multiplication and the relationship between multiplication and division;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Multiplying and dividing within 100;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Solving 2-step word problems using the four operations;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Assessing the reasonableness of answers using mental calculation and estimation;
- Number and Operations: Using place value understanding to round whole numbers to the nearest 10 or 100;
- Number and Operations: Fluently adding and subtracting within 1000;
- Number and Operations: Developing understanding of fractions as numbers;
- Measurement and Data: Telling and writing time to the nearest minute, and measuring intervals in minutes;
- Measurement and Data: Understanding concepts of area, and relating area to multiplication and addition;

- Measurement and Data: Recognizing perimeter; and
- Geometry: Reasoning with quadrilateral shapes and their attributes.

## Social Studies

Social Studies in third grade focuses on New England History. We begin by studying three Indigenous groups pre-contact with Europeans, as well as reviewing what they learned about the Wampanoag in second grade. From there, we study early exploration of New England by Europeans in the 1500's and 1600's. Then, we move into a study of the Pilgrims and Plymouth colony. Finally, we end the year by studying the Massachusetts Bay Colony, including an age appropriate study of life for Black People and the effects on the Indigenous Peoples. We also practice a variety of nonfiction text study and research skills including:

- Using text features (headings, key terms, pictures and captions, maps and legends, and an index) to make predictions about what a text will tell us and to locate information
- Identifying the main idea and supporting details of a passage
- Summarizing information in a nonfiction text using brain frames

## Hebrew

The thematic units for third grade Hebrew are Starting Anew / Seasons (Fall), Seasons (Winter) / *Chanukah*, Home / *Pesach*, Israel (*Yom HaAtzmaut*) / school. Each thematic unit incorporates:

- Clear linguistic goals that enhance students' abilities to function in the language.
- Language models which are delivered through a variety of authentic materials.

The materials in the units - texts, songs, interviews, etc. - expose students to the language as it occurs naturally in a Hebrew-speaking environment. Each unit utilizes all four elements of language acquisition: speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

## T'fillah

Each day, students have a different kind of *t'fillah* (prayer) experience: singing the repertoire of learned Shacharit (morning) *t'fillot*, alternative *t'fillah*, learning new *t'fillot*, *minchah* (afternoon prayers), *Kabbalat Shabbat*. We will explore what it means to be a member of the *kehal* (community) and to be a good *shaliach tzibur* (community leader of *t'fillah*). We will also learn new *t'fillot*: the *Kedushah*, an overview of the rest of the *Amidah*, *Aleinu*, and more of *Hallel*.

## Chumash

Students study Chumash in the book of *B'reishit* (Genesis) where they left off in second grade. They begin with *Parashat Toldot*, where the Torah switches to the story of *Yaakov* (Jacob), and continue through the stories of *Vayetze* and *Vayishlach*. Students learn text-navigating skills as they read the text directly from their *chumashim* (copies of the Torah text). They talk about why we study Torah and work to make it a sweet part of our day. By the end of the year, most students will be able to:

- Identify and understand key words, root letters, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Use key words to understand the context.
- Locate answers to specific questions in the text.
- Establish personal connections to the material.

- Explore the implications of various biblical narratives and empathize with the biblical characters involved.
- Understand that *midrashim* (Biblical exegesis) help interpret the biblical text.
- Distinguish between *midrash* and the Torah text.
- Navigate and read a Rashi commentary from a chumash.

## Science

We use Mystery Science which features video-based and inquiry-driven units. Each lesson begins with a “curiosity question” that is commonly asked by students, like "How can you predict when it is going to storm?" The exploration videos guide classroom discussions and are followed by a hands-on activity and/or experiment.

The Science topics covered in third grade are:

- Stormy Skies (Weather and Climate): Students investigate and make predictions about the weather through careful observation of the clouds and wind. Students also learn to differentiate between weather and climate and use models to reveal global climate patterns.
- Invisible Forces (Forces, Motion, & Magnets): Students explore the forces all around them. They investigate the effects of balanced and unbalanced forces, the pushes and pulls of bridge structures, and the effects of friction on the motion of objects. Students also explore the power of magnetic forces and investigate firsthand how these forces can be used to help us in our everyday lives.
- Animals Through Time (Fossils, Animal Survival, & Heredity): Students develop an understanding of how animals and their environments change through time. Fossils provide a window into the animals and habitats of the past. Analyzing the traits of animals provides evidence for how those traits vary, how they are inherited, and how they have changed over time. Students also examine how the environment can affect inherited traits and determine which animals will survive in a particular environment.
- Power of Flowers (Plant Life Cycle, Traits & Heredity): Students discover how plants reproduce by exploring the process of pollination and fruiting. They also investigate how plant traits are inherited from parent plants, and how favorable plant traits can be enhanced by humans via artificial selection.





## Welcome to Kitat Alon!

Welcome to the Kitat Alon community. We are so happy to be your guides as you and your children continue your journey through JCDS! We love spending time with your children each day as we learn, explore and play with them. Please know that we are here to support you as well. If there is anything you would like to discuss, or any questions that you have, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

The best way to communicate with us is via email. We will try our best to respond within 24-36 hours. Because we are with your children most of the day, we do not often have opportunities to check our email during the day. If you are sending an email that needs to be seen immediately, please call Aliza, the Office Manager, at 617-972-1733 and leave us a message with her.

We look forward to hearing from you!

**Hallie, Inbal, and Anna, the 4th Grade Teachers**

**Kitat Alon Teachers:** [alonteachers@jcdsboston.org](mailto:alonteachers@jcdsboston.org)

FACULTY & STAFF		EMAIL
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Alla Shimron	Dance Troupe Teacher	<a href="mailto:allas@jcdsboston.org">allas@jcdsboston.org</a>
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Maya Clarke	LS Learning Specialist	<a href="mailto:mayac@jcdsboston.org">mayac@jcdsboston.org</a>
Elah Grandel	Music Teacher	<a href="mailto:elahg@jcdsboston.org">elahg@jcdsboston.org</a>
Catherine Ross	Science Teacher	<a href="mailto:catheriner@jcdsboston.org">catheriner@jcdsboston.org</a>
Lauren Panzano	LS Director of Support Services	<a href="mailto:lauren@jcdsboston.org">lauren@jcdsboston.org</a>
Laura Ball	Director of Physical Education	<a href="mailto:laurab@jcdsboston.org">laurab@jcdsboston.org</a>
Judith Werner	School Counselor	<a href="mailto:judithw@jcdsboston.org">judithw@jcdsboston.org</a>
Derek Lichter	School Nurse	<a href="mailto:derek@jcdsboston.org">derek@jcdsboston.org</a>
Chavah Goldman	Director of Learning & Teaching	<a href="mailto:chavahg@jcdsboston.org">chavahg@jcdsboston.org</a>

## Specials and Week Schedule

Each day, students in our classroom engage in reading and writing activities, mathematical explorations, Hebrew conversations, *T'fillah* and explorations of Jewish holidays, life cycle events and/or Chumash.

We also have classes that meet on a weekly or semi-weekly basis:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Art  Music	Science	P.E.  Trope	Dance Troupe (optional)  Science	P.E.

## Parent Communication

Thank you for being our partners in educating your children. Please reach out to us to let us know what is happening at home and what you are hearing from your child. **The best way to contact us is by email at [alonteachers@jcbsboston.org](mailto:alonteachers@jcbsboston.org).**

We look forward to communicating with all of you throughout the year. Some of the ways we will be communicating are:

- Class website, which includes summaries of what we have done or what we are going to do as a class, homework information, important announcements, etc
- Check-ins with a parent at drop-off or pick-up.
- Brief individual emails highlighting something great your child did that day.
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Progress Reports (January and June)

We are available at other times to meet with you on an as-requested basis; please just reach out to us!

## Backpack Checklist

All Year Long:

Snack and lunch – Alonim often get hungry. Please pack extra food, and consider sending non-perishable snacks to leave in the cubby. If your child needs utensils to eat their lunch, please pack them.

Water bottle

On Wednesday and Friday, students should wear/bring sneakers for PE

Layered clothing – the temperature in the building vacillates!

During the winter (best if left at school):

Hats, mittens, snow pants, boots – We will go outside whenever possible. Make sure your children are always prepared!

Change of clothes – Feel free to leave dry shirts, pants, and socks at school. Even 4<sup>th</sup> graders' clothing can get wet through their snow gear.

## Rules and Expectations

In Alon, the focus of our year is on taking responsibility. We use multiple strategies throughout our classroom to help Alonim develop the ability to be independently responsible for their behavior, their learning, and their community.

**Routines** – Students learn best when they know what to expect. We have created routines for different situations and times in our classroom, for example, what to do when you first arrive to school, and what to do when lining up. We have visual aid posters located throughout the classroom for Alonim to use as a reminder resource if they are not sure what to do at a specific time.

**Break Space** – We feel that it is important for Alonim to understand that taking a break is socially appropriate. In Alon, we encourage Alonim to take a short break when they feel their mind or body needs it. We have a designated space in our classroom where Alonim can choose an activity to either calm down or wake up their body and/or brain depending on what they need. When a student enters the break space they set a three minute sand timer. During these three minutes Alonim have the option of taking a body break or a brain break. Our goal is to keep Alonim in the classroom as much as possible and we feel this break space has been very successful so far this year.

**Open Circle** – Twice a week, our class participates in Open Circle, a unique, evidence-based social and emotional learning program. Open Circle helps proactively develop children's skills for recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships, and problem solving.

## Curriculum

### *T'fillah*

4th grade is a period of significant growth in students' understanding and mastery of *T'fillot*. We focus both on the *keva* - formal skills - and *kavanah* – personal connection - in prayer. We spend time discussing the role of a *Shaliach Tzibur* as well as the role of a member of the *Kahal* and what our responsibilities are to our community when we have these roles. Alonim complete learning several *t'fillot* that they began learning in grades K-3, such as the complete *sh'ma*, the complete *Amidah*, and the complete *Birkat hamazon*. In addition, Alonim learn Torah trope throughout the year and have the opportunity to read Torah during one of our Thursday morning *t'fillot* led by Oren Kaunfer, Madrich Ruchani.

### Humanities

Humanities integrates language arts and social studies. Through partner work, small group work, and literature circle discussions, students practice listening, sharing ideas and learning how to build on the thoughts and comments of others. Reading includes nonfiction, historical fiction, poetry, and fictional novels. At all times, students develop inferencing skills, find text to support claims, and study character development, and look at language usage in the texts. Students write in response to prompts to demonstrate their comprehension, to express their opinions, and to show how they connect to the text. Throughout the year, the students will learn and practice the literacy skills below:

- drawing inferences and supporting these inferences with evidence from the text;
- determining a theme of a story or poem;

- summarizing a text;
- identifying character traits and describing a character in depth, using evidence from the text;
- explaining how figurative language enriches a text;
- comparing and contrasting the different points of view from which stories are narrated;
- engaging in literacy circles to analyze texts;
- determining the main idea and supporting details of an informational text;
- integrating information from two texts on the same topic; and
- explaining events, concepts or ideas of a historical text.

In writing lessons, the students will have opportunities to rehearse the writing process (brainstorm, organize ideas, write rough drafts, self-edit, incorporate teacher corrections, and write a final draft). They will learn the skills of revisiting a piece of work, adding detail, and incorporating voice and word choice. The students will also address the writing conventions of mechanics and grammatical structures. The published writing pieces will include an opinion piece, an informative/explanatory text, and a narrative.

The social studies curriculum is designed to be integrated with language arts. In the fall, Alonim learn about identity and explore this concept through the text Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen! Other learning includes a unit about the Civil Rights era in the United States as a foundation for exploring the civil rights struggles of today. This will be taught through informational texts, Lions of Little Rock, One Crazy Summer, and Glory Be. The fourth grade will also learn about the Harlem Renaissance, with a focus on the poetry. Alonim also read Number the Stars as part of a mini-unit about being an upstander.

### **Chumash**

We have three major foci in our Tanakh studies in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Our first focus is on students becoming literarily astute readers of the Hebrew text. We learn many biblical Hebrew grammar rules, key vocabulary, and spend time learning how to parse text to better understand it. Our second focus is *havruta* study, where students learn to see the text as a partner in their studies, listening to what it is saying and interpreting it using their individual schemas. Our final focus is on students embracing Torah study for its own sake. We work on seeing the Torah text as a guide to our moral lives and encourage students to find connections between the stories they are learning and their own lives. The text studied during 4<sup>th</sup> grade includes a summary of the story of Joseph and portions of the first 15 chapters of *Sefer Sh'mot*, The Book of Exodus. In conjunction with our Tanakh studies, we are also learning about *Haggadat Pesach*. We delve deeply into the themes of slavery and freedom through reading commentaries, *Midrashim*, and using the skills we have learned in our *havruta* studies to learn from one another. Our studies of the *haggadah* culminate in a milestone that takes place right before Pesach.

### **Hebrew**

In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the Hebrew units move from the students' immediate surroundings to the wider world around them. Each unit includes clear linguistic goals that enhance students' abilities to function in the language and language models which are delivered through a variety of authentic materials. The materials in the units - texts, songs, interviews, etc. - expose students to the language as it occurs naturally in a Hebrew-speaking environment. Each unit utilizes all four elements of language acquisition: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. We begin the year with a unit about ourselves, where we both review and expand the students'

vocabulary and ability to summarize information in Hebrew. We then continue on to a unit about cities, which begins with a focus on each student's neighborhood.

## **Mathematics**

JCDS uses Investigations by Savvas as the primary mathematics guide for Gan Nitzan (K) through Tamar (5<sup>th</sup> grade). Investigations topics broadly center on mathematical thinking, communication of mathematical ideas and problem-solving skills and strategies.. Our goals for Alonim are to develop an understanding of mathematical concepts and be able to apply them, explore multiple ways to solve problems, explain their thinking written or verbally, and work within a group to solve multi-step problems. We seek to achieve our goals by sharing ideas in small groups and large groups, playing a myriad of math games, engaging in discussions about problem solving strategies, and exploring the mathematical challenges all around us.

The fourth grade curriculum includes the following content and skills:

- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Solving multi-step word problems involving the four operations, including problems in which remainders must be interpreted;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Gaining familiarity with factors and multiples;
- Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Generating a number or shape pattern that follows a given rule;
- Number and Operations in Base 10: Applying Place Value understanding to multi-digit whole numbers;
- Number and Operations in Base 10: Fluently adding and subtracting multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithms;
- Number and Operations in Base 10: Multiplying multi-digit whole numbers using equations, rectangular arrays, and/or area models;
- Number and Operations in Base 10: Finding whole number quotients and remainders with up to four-digit dividends and one-digit divisors;
- Number and Operations-fractions: Extending understanding of fraction equivalence and ordering;
- Number and Operations-fractions: Building fractions from unit fractions;
- Number and Operations-fractions: Adding and subtracting mixed numbers with like denominators;
- Number and Operations-fractions: Understanding decimal notation for fractions, and comparing decimals;
- Measurement and Data: Making line plots to represent and interpret data;
- Measurement and Data: Understanding and measuring angles; and
- Geometry: Drawing and identifying lines and angles, and classifying shapes by properties of their lines and angles.

## **Science**

Students in Grade 4 science will take a largely data-driven approach to science as they continue to apply steps of the scientific method to all learning. In the first semester, students will engage in an interdisciplinary unit that combines the cultivation of positive habits in the areas of sleep, physical activity, mental wellness, and healthy eating with human anatomy. We will use heart rate monitors to measure resting and aerobic heart rate. Students will learn how data is collected and disseminated and how to communicate about data. We will also build a model of a neuron first in Tinkercad and then using the Glowforge. In the second semester, students will learn about energy. Major activities will include building models that exemplify

energy in various states as well as a class-wide debate that students will prepare for in teams. Throughout the year, students will be asked to consider ways they can extend their work using materials and machines in HaSadna.