



**“Lego” ~Loving Every Growth Opportunity**  
**Room 506, Diverse Learners**

Hello Parents and welcome to the 1st Quarter for the 2023-24 school year in **Math & ELA**.

A little bit about me: my name is Maureen Kovac. I have been teaching at Cassell School for 30 years. I love what I do and am fortunate to have been part of the Cassell family this whole time. I have taught special education as well as ELA within the General Education Junior High Setting. I am a parent of three girls ages 24, 21 and 13. I know all the emotions that go along with entering a new school year. I hope we can work together so your child has a successful year!! Below is an overview of what we will be doing in class regularly for math, reading, and writing.

### **Math**

We will be following the common core standards aligned to a new math series called *Envision*. Students will be exposed to grade level material through this series, with accommodations and modifications in place as needed. In order to achieve personal benchmark goals and to allow for extra practice, supplemental resources will be added. The 3rd grade students will start with a unit on multiplication, and the 4th & 5th graders will start with place value. We will also engage regularly in small cooperative math talk groups. Math talks will allow for the students to collaboratively share strategies and learn from each another. This

activity should deepen their engagement in math and promote social skills. Homework may not be given everyday in **math**. But when assigned, it should serve as a refresher/extra practice for the skills learned that day. It shouldn't be too lengthy. The students should study their math facts at home daily starting with the 2's, then the 3's, and so on... (generally every 2-3 weeks, we move on to a new fact family).

The classes will also have opportunities for differentiated instruction and through computer based programs like IXL, Splash Math and Kahoot. These online resources will be used in addition to the weekly math units studied. The computer based math practice should provide personalized learning, while motivating them through challenges, competitions, and rewards. The students will be able to explore new topics while using interactive practice. IXL will provide extra practice and reinforcement of select math skills. It's a great tool for reviewing previously learned skills or even new concepts. Some Fridays , we will play Kahoot, a computer based learning platform where the kids can practice math skills we studied. Kahoot promotes math as non threatening, challenging, and fun for most kids.

### **Reading & Writing**

The reading period is broken up into 4 stations. The students will be placed into small groups to help diversify instruction and meet individual needs.

#### **Reading lessons will include:**

1) Word Study- our class will be using "Foundations" for phonics and Spelling practice. Spelling tests will be given every Friday for the words we studied that week. Weekly spelling lists will be passed out on Mondays.

2) Guided Reading Groups- reading warm up packets and Reading Milestones will be used for individual or small group lessons to help strengthen skills in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

3) Silent Sustained Reading (SSR)- The students will get comfy in our classroom and read a chosen story appropriate to his or her reading level independently with comprehension being assessed.

4) Read A Loud- class novel. We will be reading a high interest novel together aloud everyday. My hope is that they will love the novel we are reading together and not want the period to end!!!

The curriculum we are mirroring is the Reading Arc Program. Silent reading is an important component with Arc. The students should read everyday silently (in school and at home) a book of choice that is appropriate for their independent reading level. They will keep a weekly "Reading Log " to track any reading they do Monday through Thursday at home. A parent or guardian should initial the log after the reading is completed (at least 15 minutes daily). On Fridays I will check reading logs.

### **Writing:**

Grammar, parts of speech study and the mechanics of writing will be covered through a series called *Grammar Workshop*. The students have workbooks that they can write in. Homework will be assigned from that book when appropriate. In addition to practicing proper mechanics and parts of speech for writing, we will transfer those skills into weekly paragraph writing assignments. Composition notebooks are needed for that. Paragraph writing will be done and shared in class with a writing rubric to assess. They can write or type their paragraphs. The

students will become familiar with Google Docs and a tool called voice typing which will help them write their essays. They will also learn how to use an accessibility tool called screen reader where their essays can be read back to them orally. That will help them proofread their work and make any necessary edits.

Students should be prepared daily with necessary supplies and completed homework. For **reading** homework they are required to:

A) read every night for 15 minutes and log it onto a reading log with a parent signature

B) complete a page in an assigned spelling packet, Monday-Thursday. They will have a test on their spelling words of the week on Friday.

Feel free to email or send a note in your child's planner about any homework issues. I allow for late assignments with a deduction of 10 points per day for missing assignments. Absent work is not considered late.

**Weighting Items in Gradebook: Formative Assessment 40%, Summative assessments 50%, Homework 10%**

I am available to talk should you have any questions or concerns during the year or you can email me: [madonovan1@cps.edu](mailto:madonovan1@cps.edu) . Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,

Maureen Kovac