



Extraordinary Education. Timeless Traditions. Inspired Lives.

## What to Expect: Fourth Grade at Denver JDS

**Fourth grade builds upon previously learned skills, applying them and using them to make connections to the greater world. Students take added ownership of their own learning, focusing on refining their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.**

### Literacy

Fourth graders become sophisticated readers. They can use root words, context clues, and word endings to figure out new words. They spend long periods of time reading and writing on their own expository informational texts. Fourth graders relate characters and other story elements to their own lives and empathize with the characters most like them. Fourth graders also begin to use research tools such as a dictionary, encyclopedia, library, and the Internet to gather information independently on a topic. Most importantly, they start to learn to organize this information into paragraphs, essays, projects, and presentations that help students synthesize their learning. They develop a writing style where their personality comes through as well as skills to help them edit their work. Key fourth grade literacy units include personal narrative and poetry.

Our **Learning Resource Center** and **Gifted Learner Program** support Denver JDS teachers in challenging students across the academic spectrum and provide direct student support. Inside the classroom, flexible grouping and differentiation allows students to all be supported and encouraged to reach their potential. Additionally, through our **Focus on Growth Initiative**, teachers work with students to set individualized academic and social-emotional goals for the year, focusing on personal growth.

Denver JDS develops and fosters future-ready skills within our students to prepare them not only for today's world, but for the world of tomorrow. With an emphasis on creativity, communications, collaboration, critical thinking, and communities, we equip our students with the skills they need for success in any content area.

### Math

Our Math in Focus curriculum emphasizes mastery of basic mathematical concepts, number sense, mental math and problem solving. Fourth graders read, write, compare, add, subtract, multiply, and divide with very large whole numbers. They do equations with fractions and decimals and learn about prime numbers. They solve problems about factors (one of two or more numbers that can be multiplied) and multiples (a number that can be divided exactly by a smaller number) and explore geometry formulas for determining perimeter and area, and for measuring angles. Fourth graders figure out conversion problems, such as determining the number of minutes in an hour or ounces in a pound. They not only read graphs, tables, and charts but they are also able to create them from data they have collected.

## Social Studies

Fourth grade social studies moves from learning about our local community to focusing on the history of Colorado. Students learn about the first people to live in the area, explore changes in state populations over time, and examine how different people and cultures have adapted to and influenced the state. They learn to place major events in the state's history in chronological order and focus on local and state government structure. Students learn about the government offices responsible for making, enforcing, and interpreting state laws. Fourth graders explore the cultures of early Pueblo people in the Southwest and the Native Americans of the plains through historical fiction, non-fiction, and various activities to learn more about the different cultures. They also gain an understanding of how geography uses coordinates of latitude and longitude to locate continents and countries around the world. The fourth grade overnight is also connected to social studies, giving students an opportunity to explore their connections to Colorado.

At Denver JDS, instructional and educational technology are a key means of extending and enriching teaching and learning. **Technology** is infused throughout every one of our classrooms as a vehicle for enhancing student learning.

## Science

Fourth graders begin to compare complex systems in a complex manner. Students focus on the scientific process of making observations, precisely describing observations, inferring from observations, asking scientific questions, generating hypotheses, developing strategies to test hypotheses and reaching conclusions. Over the course of the year, this process is applied in several units, including those on the "Sun, Moon and Stars" and "Magnetism and Electricity." A highlight of the year is the project-based unit focusing on nutrition and exercise through which students create their own exercise videos.

## Judaic Studies

The fourth grade Judaic Studies curriculum integrates our *middot* (Jewish values) throughout the year. In *Chumash* (Bible) study, students use the narratives of Avraham and his descendants to focus on critical thinking by questioning and analyzing the text in an attempt to understand the lessons that are being taught and how they apply to our lives today. Students explore different narratives from the perspectives of the characters in order to gain deeper insights on the lessons being taught. Holidays are also integrated into the classroom, encouraging students to add a deeper level of understanding to these special days and their importance in our lives. *Tefilah* (prayer) focuses on *mincha* (the afternoon service) and the blessings of the *Amidah* prayer. Additionally, students learn about the importance of the Jewish community and the great value that it adds to our lives within our school community.

Our *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By) and *middot* (Jewish values) are lived everyday at Denver JDS, both inside and outside of the classroom. They are used as a basis of community building and character development across the curriculum.

## Hebrew

Using the Tal Am Hebrew curriculum, fourth grade students continue to work on all four aspects of language acquisition: speaking, reading, listening, and

writing. They write sentences and paragraphs in Hebrew, focusing on learning to write in past tense. Discussions in Hebrew and reading of important Hebrew works continue to develop the Hebrew skills in the students, and students also work toward reading Hebrew text without vowels. A major focus of the curriculum are the concepts of community and appreciation for diversity in our community. Students continue developing Hebrew reading, writing, and understanding using workbooks, posters, and songs as a means of Hebrew immersion with many opportunities to write and perform presentations in Hebrew, study historical Israel, and explore the culture and vibrancy of the modern State of Israel. In a culminating project students research and learn about places in Israel and become virtual tour guides in a classroom presentation about Israel.