

Cornville Regional Charter School

Parent Information Packet 2015-2016

... THE IDEAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Every hour of every day . . .each learner (simultaneously)

- ✓ *Is met at his/her level of learning*
- ✓ *Is using one of his/her best learning styles*
- ✓ *Is learning skills and concepts with content of high interest to him/her*
- ✓ *Understands the relevancy of what he/she is learning*
- ✓ *Is challenged and successful*
- ✓ *And, looks forward to coming back tomorrow*

At CRCS we truly believe and live up to the vision that students learn at different rates and in different ways. We believe in creating the ideal learning experience every hour each day. This packet is designed to answer questions about some of our programming that makes this vision a reality. While this is not an exhaustive list of what we do, it gives an overview for some of the essential pieces that we have put in place and continue to expand each year. In this packet is a copy of our daily schedule and the following pages touches upon many of those blocks of time. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate in contacting Mr. Works at 474-8503.

SCHEDULE

Cornville Regional Charter School Daily Schedule 2015-2016					
Yellow indicates "common times" which means we can flexibly group students and there are no schedule barriers in doing so.					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:15	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
8:15-8:45	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Thinking Skills (8:15-8:45)
8:45-9:45	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	HOM (8:45-9:15)
					Snack (9:15- 9:30)
9:45-10:00	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Learning Coach (9:30-10:30)
10:00-10:45	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	
10:45-12:00	Math	Math	Math	Math	Friday Seminar (10:30-12:00)
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess
12:30 - 1:00	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess	Lunch/recess
1:00 - 1:40	AE/L/M/A/PE Sci Power Goals Structured Research Independent Learning	Science/SS Seminar	AE/L/M/A/PE Sci Power Goals Structured Research Independent Learning	Science/SS Seminar	Dismissal at 12:45pm
1:45 - 2:2	AE/L/M/A/PE Soc Power Goals Structured Research Independent Learning		AE/L/M/A/PE Soc Power Goals Structured Research Independent Learning		
2:30 - 3:10	AE/L/M/A/PE Sci/SS Power Goals Structured Research Independent Learning	SIGS/AE	AE/L/M/A/PE Sci/SS Power Goals Structured Research Independent Learning	SIGS/AE	
3:15-3:30	Closing Circle	Closing Circle	Closing Circle	Closing Circle	Staff time

AE = Agricultural Education / L= Library / M = Music / A = Art / PE = Physical Education

POWER GOALS

General Overview:

- Power Goals are times when learners can focus on a specific target or goal.
- Math, Reading, and Writing are considered Power Goal Times.

Is this different than last year?

- Last year we taught math, reading, and writing using a power goal approach so there is no change. We are just calling it by its name to be transparent. That way parents know the language when teachers are talking about their child's day.
- The difference from last year is that teachers are doing target specific power goals for their homeroom students even though those same students may be in different seminars. We can still look at the homeroom groupings, look at clusters or common targets needed, and provide additional instruction, or focused instruction around it.

Are there other times besides the morning that learners are working on "power goals?"

- In the afternoon students are in their homeroom groupings on Mondays and Wednesdays for specials, which means there are times they are not in a special. It is during these times that teachers can specifically work on Power Goals with students. The teacher can look at their homeroom student's targets and identify a need to work on persuasive writing or author's point of view and ideally connect it back to a seminar or other learning opportunity.
- During Student Interest Groups we want to eventually build in the Habits of Mind targets, such as "listening with empathy and understanding" or "persisting".

Does working on Power Goals look the same for all learners?

- Absolutely not! Every classroom will look different based on the needs of the students.
- Older students may be engaged in what we call "independent learning time", which is where students are working independently on a project or assignment. This can include research projects or meeting with the teacher individually/small group on a focused task around one of their targets/goals.
- Younger students such as our 5 year olds may be working on creative play or structured center activities. They may also be engaged in independent learning time, but it will look different than what the older students are doing...and of course...not as independent!

LEARNING COACH

General Overview:

- Each student will be assigned a Learning Coach.
- Each learning coach is a highly qualified teacher.
- Ideal group size is between 10-12 with mixed ages 5-14.
- The Learning Coach and your child will be together for their time at CRCS.

What happens between the student and Learning Coach during this time?

- Each student meets with their Learning Coach one on one every week or two.
- The Learning Coach and student discuss what targets they have worked on this week, what targets they are going to be working on, what their interests are, or how things are going socially and academically.
- The Learning Coach can bring valuable information such as student interests to the larger staff meetings, which can help drive future course or unit offerings.
- The template we are considering using is attached. This gives parents the opportunity to “see” and “know” what their child has worked on and where they are headed.

What happens while the Learning Coach is meeting with students?

- Students can engage in “Learning Buddies”, which means they will participate in reading or math activities in pairs.
- Students should be able to articulate what targets they are working on and how that is matched to the activities they are engaged in. For example, a student should know they are playing a card game that works on multiplying single digit numbers.

Will my older child be “babysitting” younger children?

- Absolutely not! It is critical that all students’ needs are being met. Sometimes a younger student can “quiz” an older student with higher level flashcards or some other review type activities.
- Since we are all doing Learning Coach time at the same time, we can pair up similar age group pairs for the Learning Buddies time while the teachers conference with individual students. For example, having similar age groups working together allows the opportunity for Learning Coaches to collaborate and mix/pair up learners that may need to practice similar targets during that time, especially if the rooms are adjoining or close in proximity.
- Having mixed age ranges allows for a sense of community. When a child is on the playground and needs a hand, they have an older student that knows them. They have a whole support network of students from various age levels that they have formed a strong relationship with.

Why are Learning Coaches important?

- Learning Coaches fulfill a “guidance role” to a degree. Basically, it gives every child the opportunity to connect with an adult within the building.
- The relationship between the Learning Coach and child and/or the Learning Coach and family is important because it will grow over time.
- We move students based on their needs and interests and having multiple teachers can be a challenge for parents. Having a point person insures that parents have a stable and constant contact for any questions or concerns.

SEMINARS

General Overview:

- You can think of a seminar as a multidisciplinary unit that integrates multiple subject areas. For example, there may be a weather unit that integrates science, reading, and art together.
- Our Science/Social Studies Seminars will be offered for 2 days each week and the class length is 80 minutes.
- Teachers have taught interdisciplinary units for decades, including our teachers. The difference is that we are able to give students choice and customize activities school wide. We are not limited by a grade level or schedule so we can truly provide many opportunities for students.

When I hear seminar I think a lecture...is my child going to be sitting and “listening” to a lecture?

- Absolutely not! The term seminar refers to a multidisciplinary unit, which lends itself to project based activities and hands on opportunities.
- Students should be actively engaged in their learning and a seminar brings a sense of relevance and meaning to their topic of study.
- Project based learning is important to build understanding and seeing connections between multiple subjects is invaluable.

What happens when my child is in a seminar?

- Students will work on a unit of study that offers targets they need to work on. For example, if we notice there are a large group of students that need to work on mapping skills, then teachers can create units that will incorporate these targets into their instruction.
- Hands on activities, project based learning, and investigation type activities should be typical in these seminar opportunities.

Why is choice important?

- Motivational theory shows that when learners have **choice & voice** in their learning, engagement increases and meaning is easily constructed.
- Having simple choices such as choosing between a Civil War Unit or Colonial Times can make a big difference in a student’s level of enthusiasm for studying. The individual learning targets can be met despite the actual topic and the student walks away being more invested in their learning.

What is a Friday Seminar? How is it different than a Social Studies or Science Seminar?

- The Friday Seminar doesn’t necessarily have to be Science/Social Studies based.
- Ideally there should be a “service learning” or connection to the community integrated into the unit. This may mean that students travel occasionally off campus, speakers may visit, or there is a connection with a local organization. For example: A unit that incorporates going to the food cupboard, animal shelter, or involving our community heroes (firefighters, police, paramedics) may not have students traveling off site, but may have guest speakers. On the other hand, doing a public service announcement for the local food cupboard and then followed by visiting may make the unit of study more relevant and meaningful. Service learning is important because it gives purpose, but it also creates a bigger sense of community.

SEMINARS CONTINUED

I notice that there is no formal reading, writing, or math classes on Friday?

- Since we are not having formal isolated instruction in those content areas it is crucial that students are working on their individual targets during this time. This is an opportunity to apply their learning targets in a meaningful and relevant context.
- Teachers can easily “see” what targets students need with our Empower Software. This allows teachers to create and customize activities around the needs of the students in the seminar opposed to them just doing an activity that was created for the unit.

Are seminars like Student Interest Groups?

- The basic premise that students have choice and can sign up for their first, second, or even third choice is something that you will find in both SIGS and Seminars.
- While Student Interest Groups (SIGS) might not necessarily be based around academic learning targets, these seminars are deeply rooted in academics.
- Seminars have more time and can go into greater depth, which is important for seeking mastery.

SPECIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

General Overview:

- Every child will have 40 minutes of the following in their homeroom groupings:
 - Agricultural Education
 - Music or Art
 - Physical Education
 - Library
- These “special experiences” deepen student understanding by allowing students the opportunity to get exposure, gain an appreciation, and develop their talents.
- We have an Agricultural Education Teacher, a librarian, a Physical Education Instructor, two local musicians and two local artists who provide these special learning opportunities.

How large are the class sizes?

- Classes are taught in a variety of sizes depending on the program.
 - Music and Art are taught in groups of 7-9 students, which **gives a similar feel to “private lessons”**. We feel strongly that students don’t need exposure, they need a deep experience with a medium and can be given more attention in a small group.
 - During Physical Education time, the older students are in combined classrooms with approximately 30 students. This is done purposefully so that there are adequate numbers for forming teams. Students have to learn how to take turns and be supportive of their teammates. Physical Education classes work at developing the social/emotional side of students while building their social and team building skills.

How long do Art and Music classes last?

- Music and Art classes will run in 18 week sessions.
- Sometimes the artist may switch after 6 or 12 weeks to give students more variety.

What will my child learn in music?

- We are continually trying to build a strong music program and our local musicians have developed the following plan:
 - Ages 5-8 year olds will have dance and vocal instruction with 2 musicians who will team teach. The ratio remains 1:8 but students will have the benefit of one musician providing live music while the other one may be teaching about long/short notes during a song.
 - Ages 9-11 year olds will have violin lessons.
 - Ages 12-14 year olds will have music theory and foundations of music.
- Students will learn more than how to read music, they will learn how to become a musician and develop a stronger appreciation for this art form.

I thought CRCS was an Agricultural Based School...why is there a specific class?

- In the interest of teaching the whole child and providing a well rounded educational experience, we do offer an Agricultural Education program and some units have Ag. Ed integrated into the learning opportunities. Nevertheless, we are not an agricultural based school and not everything revolves around the Ag. Ed. program. Likewise, not everything revolves around Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) or even the Arts. We do however, offer strong programs in each of these areas and we are proud that they continue to grow and expand.
- We have an Agricultural Integrationist who does help teachers integrate Ag. Ed into their units of study and also assists with developing seminars. This is true for science as well.

TECHNOLOGY

General Overview:

- We firmly believe that technology is a tool that can enhance instruction, streamline certain tasks, allow for skill based review, and compile student work.
- Technology cannot replace a teacher or valuable experiences.

Will my child be “plugged” into their iPad all day?

- Absolutely not! The iPad is a tool just like a pencil, book, or paper. Students can use the iPads to build fluency for previously learned skills such as math fact practice, documenting their work, and/or creating projects.
- Some classrooms use the iPad for taking notes and journal activities. This allows for a digital compilation of their work and notes over time. For example, our 5 year old students complete math activities using blocks and manipulatives, yet they use the iPad to take a picture and put that in their math journals.
- Every classroom looks different when they use technology because different activities require different tools. Some classrooms utilize the tools more depending on what is being taught and finding the most efficient and effective way to teach the concept and/or skill.
- Older students tend to have their iPads out more often, particularly because they enjoy listening to music while they work. Even though they are using their iPad for music, they are reading a book, writing a paper, or completing other assignments.

Will my students have a “choice” to use an iPad?

- We firmly believe in giving students choices whenever we can. Most situations students can “choose” to write by hand or use their iPad. Exceptions to this are when the product is digital.

Is writing always done on the iPad?

- As a society, writing is a critical skill for communicating and students need to be able to formulate a thought and convey their ideas in a concise manner. Traditionally, students were taught writing where they had to write a rough draft, edit, copy it over, edit again, copy it over, and so forth. What that does is force students to dislike writing because it makes it a tedious process rather than about the content. Using technology, students can focus on their thoughts, ideas, and grow as a writer. That does not mean that we don't practice the other elements such as spelling, editing, and handwriting.
- Students often have a choice between iPad writing and/or paper, but more often students choose the iPad because it is more efficient and provides immediate feedback.

Does my child need to take their iPad home?

- No. We believe that family time is just that...time with the family. Nightly reading with a family member and playing a math game has more benefit that completing a worksheet. We expect parents to do those types of activities on a nightly basis and they do not require an iPad.
- In the event a child has work to finish, most of the information is “cloud” based and can be accessed from various devices.
- If a student has an Apple product at home they can sign in with their CRCS Apple ID and all of the apps we have purchased will be available as “purchased” in the App Store.
- If a family chooses to have their learner take their iPad home, they can do so after meeting with Mr. Works, completing a few forms, and paying an annual \$75 insurance fee.

THINKING SKILLS & HABITS OF MIND

General Overview:

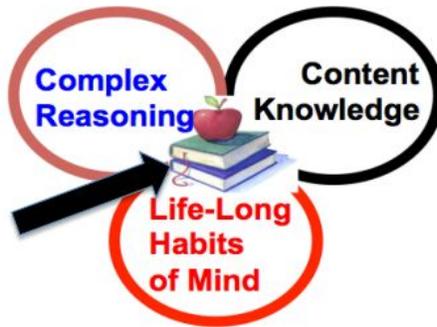
- Thinking Skills, also known as Complex Reasoning, are those skills that help our learners think about their thinking. They are used to extend and refine knowledge.
- Habits of Mind are problem solving skills that are necessary to effectively operate in society. They promote reasoning skills, insightfulness, perseverance, and creativity. With these skills, our learners will be able to work through real life situations that arise in a thoughtful manner, and it gives them specific strategies to use so that a positive outcome will follow.

When will Thinking Skills and Habits of Mind be taught?

- On Friday mornings, each of these topics will have a 30 minutes block of time where explicit teaching will be done. Beyond the explicit teaching of each Thinking Skill and Habit of Mind, these topics will also be interwoven into all power goal times as well as during seminar times to be sure these skills are being practiced daily.

Why are Thinking Skills and Habits of Mind important?

- Teaching students how to think about their thinking as well as incorporate these Habits of Mind into their daily lives will support them long beyond their years here at CRCS. These are skills that will help our learners be a more productive member of society.
- Thinking Skills and Habits of Mind are both an integral part of the Maine Cohort for Customized Learning curriculum which we use through Empower. The image below will show what should be put into each lesson. Planning should happen within these 3 circles.



Thinking Skills Examples	Habits of Mind Examples
Recognizing/Recalling Symbolizing Integrating Classifying Constructing Support Deductive Reasoning Decision Making	Persevering Listening with Understanding and Empathy Managing Impulsivity Understanding One's Learning Style Cultivating Creativity and Imagination Maintaining a Growth Mindset

LUNCH MENU & SIGN-UP

August/September 2015		CRCS Lunch Menu								
LUNCH	31st	Monday	1st	Tuesday	2nd	Wednesday	3rd	Thursday	4th	Friday
		BBQ Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Yeast Rolls, Fresh Tomato & Cucumber Salad		Ham & Cheese Wraps with Lettuce & Tomato, Fruit Salad		Baked Penne Alfredo with Chicken & Broccoli, Caesar Salad		Beef Enchilada w/Sour Cream, Marinated Black Bean Salad, Fiesta Corn		Hamburger Pizza or Cheese Pizza, Garden Salad, Sliced Melon

Welcome Back to School! Thank you for participating in your school nutrition program! Our on-campus agriculture program and the local food system thank you for supporting local agriculture through this school nutrition program. Look for menu items highlighted in **green** or **blue** to show you yummy local ingredients! We are looking forward to another tasty year!

Please communicate all food "allergies" to your school a.s.a.p. so we can avoid using any life threatening ingredients. Doctor's notes must be submitted to school to verify all food allergies.

From the Kitchen:

Ingredients from GWH campus – romaine lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, green peppers, fresh herbs, pole beans

Ingredients from local farmers – hamburger and whole wheat flour!

- Signing up for lunch the first week of school can be done in 2 different ways. Below you will find a QR code which will take you to the sign-up sheet. Feel free to use any of the available iPads and the QR Reader app to sign up. There are also laptops available that are open to the link if you would prefer to sign up that way.



- On a weekly basis, the link to the sign-up sheet can be found on our website or a weekly reminder email including the link will be sent home.

HOMEROOM PLACEMENT

General Overview:

- It is important that students have a wide variety of peers who are going through the same developmental, social, and emotional stages at the same time.
- Birthdays are one criteria we use to help with homeroom placement, however we also recognize that some students are more mature than others and students are growing at different rates.

Will my child have a homeroom with students a lot younger or older than them?

- The range within a homeroom depends on our enrollment numbers. Ideally we want to keep students clustered around their social and emotional needs. Typically this does follow suit with their age and we find that homerooms typically range from 1-2 years apart.

Will my child have the same homeroom teacher all year?

- We try and keep homerooms stable throughout the year, however, we also recognize that students do grow at different rates and social groupings have to change to accommodate the child's social and emotional development.

Is homeroom based on grade level?

- Not necessarily. We look at the students' ages, but also their peers and social dynamics. Some students have more friendships and connections with a certain group of students. We want students to be connected and have a variety of friendships. Our homerooms are very flexible if they need to be, particularly if there is a conflict that is not easily solved.

STUDENT INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

General Overview:

- The purpose of Student Interest Groups (SIGS) is to expose students to a wide variety of experiences while bringing in the community.
- Student Interest Groups are offered 2 days per week for approximately 8 year olds and above. There are typically between 12 choices each day, however some choices are not developmentally appropriate for all students. For example, welding would be a better fit for our oldest students while yoga would be suitable for all ages.

Which students have SIGS for 1 day only?

- Students who are approximately ages 5-7 will have a SIG like class every 6 weeks that is based on mindfulness and yoga type activities and/or art based activities.
- Since there is quite an age span between 5-14 year olds, we can concentrate a wider variety of SIGS for the younger learners one day each week.