



## **Griffin-Spalding County School System Rigorous Curriculum Design**

The Griffin-Spalding County School System has a three-year plan to create curriculum guides for teachers using the Rigorous Curriculum Design (RCD) model. Our district engaged in this work because we wanted to improve student learning.

During 2017-2018 school year, we created guides for English Language Arts, Math and Science. This is our first year teaching with the new guides. During the 2018-2019 school year, we will create guides for Social Studies, Modern Language and several PE and Fine Arts courses. During the 2019-2020 school year, we will continue this work for additional elective courses.

The curriculum guides serve as road maps that provide guidance to teachers to ensure that all students have access to a rigorous curriculum. These will be used in all of our schools. There has not been a change in the standards or what we teach. This is a change in how we teach.

To support this change, both principals and teachers have and will continue to receive professional learning to support the implementation of the curriculum guides.

## **What Has Changed for My Child This Year?**

- ❑ The curriculum guides are developed around engaging learning experiences. This means that students will participate in activities that connect to events and situations that occur in our lives and in the world. Students will be asked to think deeply about the topic they are studying, conduct investigations and use communication skills.
- ❑ The curriculum guides are written to help students see connections between different subjects. For example, students will see how Math is used in Science.
- ❑ Key vocabulary is identified in the curriculum guides. Students should be exposed to these words throughout their studies and learn what the words mean in the actual learning activities, not by looking them up in the dictionary.
- ❑ Students should know what they are studying throughout the year, and why they are learning it. Please ask your child(ren) to talk with you about what they are learning.
- ❑ Assessments are given before and after each unit to help teachers plan instruction for students. They are similar to state-wide Milestone assessments with opportunities to practice writing short essays (even in Math!).

## **Examples of Learning Experiences**

### **Elementary School (Science - explain why plants & animals survive in certain habitats):**

The Atlanta Zoo won a grant to create and design a new zoo habitat that focuses on one of the regions of Georgia, and you have just been hired to be the Habitat Specialist to do the job! You've been asked to design an exhibit at the zoo showcasing one of the regions of Georgia. In order to build the exhibit to house samples of both plants and animals from the region of Georgia, you need to research the plants and animals that live in that region and the characteristics that they have that allow them to thrive there. Your design will be presented to the director of the Atlanta Zoo for approval.

### **Middle School (English Language Arts - write a narrative paper):**

"For the Birds," "Tin Toy," and "Presto." Any of these titles sound familiar? They are some of Disney's top-ranked short films that date back to the 1980's. Disney's Pixar video shorts have been so successful that they are now interested in creating a sequel, but they need a skilled narrative writer to help them. Congratulations! You have been chosen as a screenwriter for Pixar Short films. You will create a narrative sequel to one of their most successful short films to

present to the creative directors at Disney. The creative directors will choose the BEST 5 narrative sequels to use for film production.

### **High School (Math - use units of measure to solve problems):**

Oxfam is a global organization working to end the injustice of poverty. Oxfam is currently developing plans to help develop third world countries by building community gardens that will help the community get fresh vegetables and help build up the local economy. You are a United States Department of Agriculture Representative that has been asked to work with Oxfam's board of community development.

Your task is to come up with a plan and present a plan for a community garden that lists the cost of the fencing, an irrigation plan with cost, and the design of four different plots of land along with the vegetables that will be placed in each plot and the cost of each vegetable. You must also research the benefits of building a community garden and the benefits of each vegetable chosen for the garden so that Oxfam can present these to the local communities.

For more information, please watch our RCD video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y\\_v1pFWjTfU&feature=youtu.be&disable\\_polymer=true](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_v1pFWjTfU&feature=youtu.be&disable_polymer=true)