

## WHY DO WE INVEST IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

- We want our teachers to constantly grow and learn. We want to study and understand the most current research in order to offer our students the best curriculum with the most effective approach. We are a school that concentrates on utilizing research-driven techniques rather than trends in education. Our faculty is top-notch due to an investment in constant growth and learning.
- We travel and explore what schools across the nation are doing to enhance learning.
- Our teachers attend and present at national conferences and workshops and seek out curriculum training specific to our needs.
- We are always interested in refining what we do.



# WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO

## WHY DO WE UTILIZE ERB (EDUCATIONAL RECORDS BUREAU) STANDARDIZED TESTING?

- ERB provides rigorous tests on essential standards and meaningful results that guide our decisions regarding curriculum, placement, and instruction.
- ERB assessments are research-based and were created with the advice of hundreds of ERB member school teachers, admission officers and administrators, both nationally and internationally. ERB partners with the best test developers in the world and combines the practical advice of its members with the expertise of test development professionals.
- The ERB test used in grades 3-8 (CTP-4) is a rigorous assessment for high achieving students in the areas of reading, listening, vocabulary, writing, science, and mathematics. The CTP helps compare reasoning ability to achievement.
- ERB test results provide both independent school and national school norms. The ITBS only provides national norms.
- Top independent schools across the nation choose the ERB to measure student achievement.



- Because most of these independent schools have admission standards, we are able to measure our students' performance against a selective group of high-achieving students across the nation.
- Independent school norms are important because they compare our students to those with whom they will be competing for admission to top colleges and universities.
- Our median percentiles are consistently significantly higher than national medians.



**BROOKSTONE SCHOOL**  
**WWW.BROOKSTONESCHOOL.ORG**

## WHY ARE WE MAKING CHANGES TO READING AND WRITING INSTRUCTION?

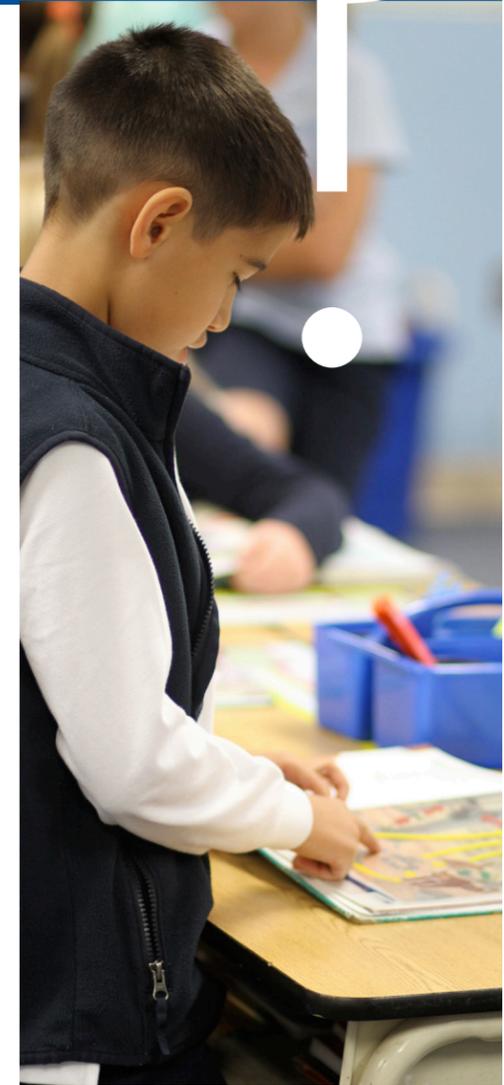
### READING:

Moving away from utilizing textbooks to teach reading, we are developing units of study that follow a workshop approach. Workshop allows students to do their reading work in real books, to read more books each week than they would using a reading textbook, and to learn at their own instructional reading levels. Teachers determine reading levels by giving ongoing reading assessments to identify individual student needs. This ensures that each child receives specialized reading instruction rather than whole group, one size fits all instruction. Classrooms are stocked with rich and varied literature, leveled and organized, so that students can easily access “just right books,” i.e., books that are appropriately challenging and meet their own interests. Units often focus on genres such as mystery, non-fiction, realistic fiction, etc., and mini-lessons teach specific skills, strategies, and text characteristics in line with the current unit of study.

Ample time is given each day for students to read. Assignments are relevant and typically involve written response to demonstrate student comprehension and knowledge of text characteristics. Basic reading skills, such as phonics and word study, are also taught within the framework of the workshop. One of the many highlights of the workshop approach is the teacher's ability to hold individual

reading conferences with students on an ongoing basis; thus teachers truly get to know each student as a reader.

- One-on-one assessments between the teacher and the student, such as the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, give us detailed information about reading rate, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.
- Students are most successful in learning to apply new reading strategies while reading books at their own instructional reading levels. One-on-one assessments provide teachers with critical information needed to guide students to appropriately challenging texts.
- Students must be given ample opportunity to navigate complex, content-rich text with expert instructional support. This involves learning to read and synthesize multiple sources of information.
- It is our goal for students to read for critical evaluation of material, stamina, and understanding of background knowledge.
- We value methods that provide opportunities for students to participate in book clubs, discussions, reading response journals, and partnerships.
- Students taking the SAT must read and process large amounts of dense information in a short period of time, which is particularly difficult for students who are not used to doing this.





- We are in the business of growing voracious readers. We aim to grow innovative learners who think critically, create passionately, and live fully.
- Our new approach to reading has already shown dramatic improvement on our students' ability in both fluency and comprehension.

#### WRITING:

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, Brookstone's lower school will be implementing the *Units of Study for Teaching Writing* developed by Lucy Calkins and her team of researchers at Columbia University's Reading and Writing Project and published by Heinemann. Like units of study for reading, these units focus on genres, with a particular focus on non-fiction writing. Students enjoy this approach as they are taught to live and work as writers, noticing, investigating, and reflecting on the world around them.

Students begin each workshop with a lesson that focuses on a particular skill or strategy related to the unit of study and then are provided time to write, as real writers do. The workshop approach allows teachers time to connect with each student as he/she practices new strategies and

### WHY "MATH IN FOCUS" (SINGAPORE MATH)?

Singapore Math is a problem solving centered curriculum based on the national math curriculum used in schools that desire to give students a deeper understanding of the concepts of mathematics beyond simply learning equations. Students learn concepts in greater detail through a three-step learning process. The steps

develops his/her own voice through writing. Grammar and punctuation are taught through workshop lessons where students are able to apply what they have learned to their authentic, purposeful writing.

- Our new writing curriculum provides students with more individual attention and allows teachers to differentiate with explicit, focused instruction.
- Students need to be able to express their ideas clearly in writing. We don't want students to simply copy sentences and change words. This isn't expressive; this is mimicking and doesn't teach them to write.
- We explicitly teach grammar and conventions while understanding that students need not only to be able to identify elements of written language but also know how and when to apply them effectively to clearly communicate ideas.
- We are making our students better writers by increasing the amount of time for writing in all genres in order to build confidence, stamina, and skill. It's important for students to begin in the youngest grades so they are able to build on these skills as they progress and advance.

are concrete, pictorial, and abstract. During the concrete step, students are engaged in hands-on learning experiences using concrete objects such as counters and chips. The pictorial step involves pictorial representations of various mathematical concepts. Finally, students solve mathematical problems in an abstract way by using

numbers, symbols, and algorithms. This model is followed for all concepts at all levels of the curriculum. Brookstone utilizes this approach in mathematics in grades K-6.

- We are growing math students with number sense and an ability to attack problems.
- There really is no such thing as "new math." The principles of mathematics have not changed, but approaches such as Singapore recognize the need to teach students multiple strategies for problem solving.
- During class time, we have moved away from rote practice and towards concept discussion by beginning with concrete examples, moving towards modeling, and finally to discovering the mathematical rule which they have helped to derive, ultimately creating engaged, motivated mathematicians.

### HOW WILL WE SUPPORT STUDENTS WHO ARE NEW TO THE SCHOOL?

- When students come to us from other schools, they often need temporary support to close learning gaps.
- We are skilled at recognizing these gaps, understanding how to approach them, and working to do what it takes for each student to enjoy success.
- We offer "Math In Focus" summer classes for students new to our school, and our math teachers hold tutorials after school for students who need extra support.
- Our Learning Center is available to provide students with support in reading, writing, executive function skills, and other specific areas of concern.
- The nature of the lower school reading and writing program is differentiated instruction, so when students come from other schools, the curriculum will meet them where they are and move them forward.

- Mathematical problems are age appropriate real world situations, and many encompass more than one skill. Students gain an understanding of the "why" in mathematics rather than just learning to apply a formula.
- In utilizing this curriculum, students are actively learning and teaching each other through guided discussion with peers.
- Teaching our students to think critically is the ultimate goal of our math curriculum.
- The faculty is able to center problems on real-world situations and make sense of mathematics and how it applies to circumstances which students might face on a day-to-day basis.

