

MATH AND SCIENCE INVESTIGATORS GRADES 4 AND 5 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How has this program been developed? A *district* committee of principals, curriculum specialists and teachers, with input from community, recommended this program. Fourth grade mathematics teachers from across the district developed materials and piloted the model in 2007-08.

Do the same students participate as investigators for every unit?

When students demonstrate a high level of mastery on a pre-assessment, they extend their learning by participating in Math or Science Investigators. The group of students will change with each unit depending on their performance on the pre-assessment.

Should I expect my child to do well on the pre-assessment?

Students are not expected to know content that has not yet been taught. The pre-assessment provides information to teachers on the instructional needs of the individual student. The pre-assessment grade is not recorded unless the student scores a 90 or better.

Should I be concerned if my child does not score well on the pre-assessment? No. Students are not expected to demonstrate mastery on content for which they have not received instruction.

Is compacting the only differentiation students will experience? No. Compacting is one differentiation strategy. Information from the pre-assessment will provide data for teachers to employ additional differentiation strategies for all students.

What differentiation will occur in Language Arts and Social Studies? Language Arts and Social Studies instruction provides many opportunities for student choice, open-ended assignments, accommodating student interests, and personal responses.

Will my child work as a Math or Science Investigator every day of the unit?

Occasionally there will be classroom activities identified by the teacher as beneficial for all students, even those working as Investigators. These may be assessed, and may occasionally require homework.

My child has been identified for the Challenge program. Should I expect him/her to participate in Math and Science Investigators? Children are identified for Challenge based on general intellectual ability, not subject specific aptitude. While some

students identified for Challenge may exhibit strength in the areas of math and science, it is not expected that all will do so on a regular basis.

How are grades assigned? Unit grades reflect mastery of unit objectives. For students who demonstrate mastery of unit objectives by scoring 90% or higher on the pre-assessment, that grade serves as the assessment of unit mastery. Consequently, all assignments designed to bring about mastery of unit concepts are not necessary for these students. The pre-assessment grade will replace the grades on these assignments.

The unit grade may be improved through high quality work on replacement tasks.

For students who do not score 90% or better on the pre-assessment, the pre-assessment grade will not be recorded. The data collected can be used to design instruction for these students

Will I know when my child is participating as a Math or Science Investigator? Your child will be able to tell you if he or she is working on Math or Science Investigator replacement tasks.

Will Math and Science Investigators have homework? Homework assignments are designed to reinforce instruction that occurs in the classroom and provide opportunities for practice as children work toward mastery of curriculum objectives. Children who have already demonstrated mastery will work on replacement assignments for enrichment and extension, and are not expected to complete the traditional assignments as well. Parents who believe their children will benefit from completing the traditional homework assignments while working as a Math or Science Investigator may request that the teacher provide those assignments to the student.

If your question is not answered here, please submit your question to [Alene Zimmer](#).