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# Fitzgerald Public Schools roll out new curriculum for elementary students this fall

*Science and English Language Arts programs will grow skills and support student achievement*

**WARREN, Mich.** – Students at **Fitzgerald Public Schools** will begin new science and English Language Arts programs, [Science Dimensions Program](#) and [Journeys Literacy Program](#), aimed at ensuring all students develop robust critical thinking and problem-solving skills to prepare them for college and jobs of the future, the district announced today.

“The **Journeys Literacy Program** and the **Science Dimensions Program** go hand-in-hand because strong reading comprehension is essential for deep scientific inquiry,” said **FPS Superintendent Barbara VanSweden**. “With these programs, we are leveraging technology to boost the curiosity, critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving skills that children need for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

The science program, which is for grades K-5, is the first curriculum built to meet the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) adopted by the Michigan Department of Education. Built with a digital-first mentality, this program makes maximum use of the district’s one-to-one technology initiative and provides an authentic approach to increasing student achievement in science.

Dimensions includes an engineering component to increase student understanding of phenomena-based learning, which is a key characteristic of the Next Generation Science Standards. Phenomena-based learning takes real-world situations scientists and engineers face and applies real solutions. Students will draw on skills in other areas, especially in reading comprehension and math, to find solutions. The curriculum also has strong supports for teachers to prepare them to lead engineering instruction.

The literacy program, which is for grades K-5, develops confident readers by engaging and meeting the needs of all learners at every reading level. The program, currently in use by 6.7 million students nationwide, has received rigorous review by researchers who found measurable gains for students using the program after the first year. The literacy program is one of several tools Fitzgerald has implemented in recent years to make sure all students are reading at grade level and beyond by the end of third grade. Those tools include updated assessments and individualized supports to give kids the one-on-one help they need.

“Community and board support for one-to-one technology made these curriculum advancements possible,” VanSweden said. “Our talented, dedicated teachers are eager to put these programs to work in the classroom. It will be exciting to see our students grow as a result.”

Both programs were created by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Students will have a single log-in for both and they will be able to log in from home.

The district will continue to update parents on the new curricula as the school year progresses. VanSweden encourages parents to contact their child’s building principal or teacher with questions.

Parents will learn more at upcoming open houses. Dates and locations are below:

- **Mound Park Upper Elementary**, Sept. 19 at 5:30-7 p.m.
- **Westview Lower Elementary**, Sept. 19 at 6:15-7:45 p.m.
- **Chatterton Middle School**, Sept. 20 at 6-7:30 p.m.
- **Schofield Early Childhood Center**, Sept. 27 at 6-7:30 p.m.

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