

Sousa Elementary School: Spotlight on the schedule

At Sousa Elementary School in Mesa, Arizona, an educator team consisting of one lead teacher, three certified teachers, one special educator and three MLFTC residents supports a multi-age group of 104 first and second graders. The team is also joined by four specials teachers, a retired teacher who assists with reading assessment and instruction, and a Title I instructional assistant who supports personalized literacy instruction.

Example schedule at a glance

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7-7:30 a.m.	Homeroom				
7:30-8 a.m.					
8-8:30 a.m.	Writer's Workshop	Reader's Workshop	Interdisciplinary learning time	Reader's Workshop	Writer's Workshop
8:30-9 a.m.					
9-9:30 a.m.	Recess		Math	Recess	
9:30-10 a.m.	Phonics			Phonics	
10-10:30 a.m.	Personalized literacy instruction			Personalized literacy instruction	
10:30-11 a.m.	Lunch & recess				
11-11:30 a.m.	Specials: Tech	Math	Specials: Origami	Science & social studies: Project-based learning	Math
11:30 a.m.-Noon	Explore Factory		Team-building		
Noon-12:30 p.m.					
12:30-1 p.m.		Specials: PE			
1-1:30 p.m.		Specials: Music	Team-building	Specials: Music	
1:30-2 p.m.	Social-emotional learning		Social-emotional learning		

Example schedule at a glance

Homeroom: Students begin each day in one of four homerooms where educators check in with students and take attendance.

Reader's Workshop, Writer's Workshop and Math: Students remain in their homeroom groups but move between classrooms (and educators) for reading, writing and math.

Reader's Workshop: During Reader's Workshop, educators are working to shift how students view reading instruction by focusing on learners becoming readers and framing learning around skills that "good readers" use. Students select their own books that match their interests and reading levels, which helps to ensure decoding and fluency skills aren't barriers to reading comprehension.

Two educators in adjoining learning spaces teach Reader's Workshop at the same time of day. When students transition from the mini-lesson to independent reading, the educators teaching these sections typically open the doors connecting their classrooms in order to pull students from both classrooms into targeted small-groups for guided reading lessons. Pulling students from two separate homerooms for targeted instruction allows educators to more efficiently tailor instruction to students' needs.

Writer's Workshop: Writer's Workshop units are framed around overarching, authentic themes like crafting true stories or writing a non-fiction book to teach others about a topic of interest. During this time, educators take the complex task of writing and break it down into smaller skills so that students are able to build incrementally toward completion of a larger-scale writing project. Students are encouraged to take risks and express themselves through writing topics they choose.

Math: As with Reader's Workshop, two educators in adjoining learning spaces teach math at the same time of day. When students transition to independent practice, the educators teaching these sections typically open the doors connecting their classrooms in order to pull students from both classrooms into small groups for targeted re-teaching. Pulling students from two separate homerooms for targeted instruction allows educators to more efficiently tailor instruction to students' needs.

Phonics and personalized literacy instruction: Following recess four days a week, students transition to phonics instruction and personalized literacy instruction in small groups. Students not in need of reading intervention join a group that engages with [Achieve3000 Literacy](#), an adaptive program focused on accelerating literacy growth.

Science and social studies: Project-based learning: The team takes a project-based learning approach to science and social studies instruction, planning instruction in five-week units that scaffold from first to second grade standards.

Specials: Students attend specials four days a week.

- Monday, Tuesday and Friday specials are led by educators who work across grade levels to teach technology, music, physical education and media/library. During this time, educators from the core team meet to analyze student learning data, plan for regrouping students according to areas of interest and areas of need and plan for upcoming cross-curricular lessons.
- On Wednesdays, educators on the core team lead specials on topics about which they are passionate. For example, educators have offered specials on origami, yoga, Spanish and Google Slides. Student rosters for these specials are based on students' preferences, and offerings change quarterly.

Explore Factory: Students complete an "I wonder..." statement (first graders) or pose a question (second graders), make a plan for what they will create or use to help answer their question, implement their plan and then share their results during an oral presentation.

Interdisciplinary learning time: On Wednesdays, the team uses morning meeting time to connect an idea from social studies, science, math or social-emotional development to a book and an art project.

Team-building: Twice a week, students engage in team-building time. On Wednesdays, all 104 first and second graders meet outdoors for team-building activities in groups that cross homeroom enrollment. On Thursdays, students engage in team-building activities within their homerooms. The purpose of this time is to build and maintain positive and collaborative culture within the community.

Social-emotional learning: The team teaches social-emotional learning lessons four days a week using the Harmony Social & Emotional Learning curriculum augmented by additional lessons developed by the team in response to student needs.