



## “Readin’, Ritin’, and Recess at Hilldale”

A quality elementary education is based on at least three key factors: A well-rounded academic curriculum, ample, quality teaching materials, and quality teachers. Hilldale School has all of these! Over \$60,000 worth of new textbooks and instructional materials have been purchased during the past three years and significant improvements have been made in the facility and classrooms in order to facilitate the learning process. The curriculum has been restructured, so that it is now more comprehensive and provides both depth and breadth. Competent teachers have been hired who can take these materials and provide a challenging educational experience for all students. We can now proudly point to our strong program and ask prospective parents to compare our school when looking for a new school home.

It is important to note, however, that we strive to develop not only intellectual growth but physical development as well. Physical education and recess times are integral components in the school day. All Hilldale students get a structured physical education class twice a week taught by two credentialed teachers who have taught physical education at prior schools: Robert Baker in the lower school and David Sawyer in the middle/upper school. Our P.E. curriculum focuses on teaching students not only gross motor skills and specific sports skills for individual and team sports, but also on proper stretching for warm-up and cool-down times, healthy exercises, sportsmanship, team-work, and proper nutrition and health.

There are many professional organizations that advocate that “recess is an essential component of education.” (PDK Parent Page, Spring 2005). The National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in the State Department of Education state that “recess allows children to ‘switch gears’ mentally and to release energy (stress), which actually facilitates subsequent attention to academics and can minimize disruptive behaviors. (PDK Parent Page, Spring 2005) At Hilldale, even though the academics are of primary concern, the students get plenty of recess. They have a supervised recess time on our great playground for 15 minutes in both mid-morning and mid-afternoon. In addition, most students eat their lunches in 15-20 minutes and have about 25 minutes of additional lunchtime recess. Our academic day ends at 3:30, but the vast majority of our students participate in the extended care program, which we begin with another 30-minute recess and end with free play time.

Hilldale’s physical education program and recess times help our students stay physically fit while helping them concentrate during their academic classes. So while some people just focus on the 3R’s, “readin’ ritin’ and ‘rithmetic,” we offer a wide range of academic experiences including recess...