



Mt. Lebanon School District

Elementary Curriculum

Grade 3 Curriculum

English Language Arts

Students at this level have an opportunity to read and analyze a variety of literature, including a balance of both fiction and nonfiction text. They continue to improve foundational skills related to decoding multisyllabic words and using context clues along with their growing knowledge of prefixes and suffixes to derive meaning. In the reading of fictional pieces, students analyze story traits to identify character, setting, conflict, and resolution. When reading nonfiction selections, they learn to utilize graphic features such as diagrams, headings, and captions to assist in comprehending the text. Materials include the anthology, shorter guided reading books to revisit vocabulary and comprehension skills, both picture books and novels, and a science/social studies library with connections to their curriculum in these areas.

Third grade students participate in Writer's Workshop as well. Writing pieces include informational text, narratives, procedural directions, and opinion essays. Teachers model effective writing strategies from authentic literature, including lessons on grammar skills to strengthen sentence structure. They guide students through the process of drafting, revising, editing, and publishing their pieces. This culminates in sharing their works receiving feedback from peers.

Mathematics

Third grade students expand their knowledge of the number system to 1,000 and develop a deeper understanding of whole number operations. They demonstrate an understanding of the place value system into 3-digit numbers, refine addition and subtraction strategies (with 3-digit numbers with sums and minuends up to 400), and maintain addition and subtraction facts with sums and minuends up to 20. Third grade students study multiplication and division to reason about factors and multiples, work with an array model of multiplication, master multiplication facts with products up to 100, develop strategies for division, and recall division facts connected to twos, fives, ones, and tens. They learn how to describe, summarize, represent, interpret and compare countable and measurable data. Students measure with standard units, understand and determine perimeter and area of planar shapes, measure angles and apply knowledge to compare various angles. Students also explore and classify geometric solids based upon physical attributes. They explore fractions and decimals to develop their ability to understand, represent, and combine these numerical representations. Graphs and tables are used to describe and represent a constant rate of change.

Science

Our science program enhances students' attitudes toward science and encourages their natural curiosity. It provides students with a substantial knowledge base of facts, concepts, and principles. We also teach students to use and apply science-related thinking and process skills (e.g. observation, questioning, data gathering, note taking, analysis, and hypothesizing). During each curriculum unit in science, students learn to work cooperatively in small groups with an emphasis on learning essential content and developing science process skills. Our science curriculum provides lessons and curriculum units in life science, physical science, earth science, and engineering.

In the Life Science unit students answer the questions: What elements in the environment affect an animal's survival? In what ways does the animal adapt to survive in a particular habitat? How do animals compare with each other structurally and behaviorally? What methods can we use to learn about animals? Students will answer these questions by caring for three different animals from three diverse habitats. To enrich this unit students also visit Bird Park. While there they get to observe animals in their natural habitats.

In the Physical Science unit students conduct a variety of physical and chemical tests to explore some concepts basic to general chemistry: physical and chemical properties and how to describe them, and changes that may occur when different solids and liquids are mixed together or separated. Students are introduced to solubility, filtration, evaporation, crystallization, acids, bases, and neutrals.

In the Earth Science unit students use their senses while performing and interpreting tests to classify and identify rocks and minerals. Their investigations enable them to see the connection between the properties of a single substance, such as a mineral, and a mix of substances, such as a rock. They recognize the relationship between the properties of rocks and minerals and how they are used. Students also demonstrate an understanding of Earth's relationship to the sun and moon.

In the Engineering unit students explore the properties of rocks and other materials in the context of the field of materials engineering. Hands-on activities and discussions introduce students to the Engineering Design Process, the work of materials engineers, and other engineering and technology concepts.

Social Studies

Students in third grade learn about good citizenship through our character education program. The main Social Studies concept is to understand where their community is located in relation to other places using map and geography skills. Students learn about the history of their community and how to live as constructive citizens within those communities. Students are introduced to the regions and physical geography of Pittsburgh, of Pennsylvania, and of some regions of the United States. Students explore artifacts from the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and extend their learning by participating in various regional field trips focused on Pittsburgh.

Art

In third grade, students explore the works of many famous artists including Wassily Kandinsky and Keith Haring. Students use a variety of materials to create Art that explores the ideas and imagery of the masters. Third grade students have the opportunity to create drawings, paintings, ceramic pieces, sculptures, and printmaking, while focusing on space as an element of design.

Vocal Music

Third grade students continue to develop the concepts and skills learned in second grade. Through singing, moving, and playing classroom instruments, students reinforce rhythms develop the ability to create and improvise repeated rhythm patterns (ostinato) within a song. Students are introduced to the note names on the five line staff and solfege singing syllables (do, re, mi, so, la). They expand their knowledge of melodic direction while singing and playing instruments. Students are introduced to beamed sixteenth notes and will listen to and write rhythms consisting of various note and rest values. In addition, students experience and review form in music and understand the difference between verse and refrain. All third grade students take a common assessment that measure their ability to perform and identify rhythm and melody patterns as well as their success in matching pitch while singing a short song.

Physical Education

The curriculum for physical education provides equal opportunity for students to create, learn, enjoy and participate in skill development through a variety of physical activities that have life-long value. These activities are designed to contribute to good physical, mental, social and emotional health. The activities are divided into six areas, team games, self testing, rhythmic, low organization, lifetime sports and fitness. In team games, students demonstrate the fundamental skills and apply learned knowledge. Self-testing activities help students analyze and evaluate their own performance and set realistic goals. Rhythmic activities use a variety of patterns and directions while low organization activities use fundamental movements and skills. Lifetime sports demonstrate the value of recreational activity and the fundamental skills of the game. Finally, fitness develops strength and endurance in the major muscle groups. Students also participate in fitness testing.

Library

In third grade, students visit the library weekly for a book exchange and a lesson. Lessons focus on choosing appropriate materials for independent reading and locating those materials in the library. The online library catalog (Destiny) is utilized and effective search strategies are taught (keyword, title, boolean logic). Students taught to differentiate between various forms literature and literary genres (biographies, folktales, fairy tales). In addition, students continue to learn about internet safety, security, fair use and etiquette through Common Sense Media's digital citizenship curriculum in partnership with the Mt. Lebanon Police Department..

Spanish

Students will begin their Spanish studies in third grade with a brief review of the thematic units from first and second grades. New units of study will include rooms and furniture of the house, numbers up through 59, telling time, feelings, daily routines, foods on a restaurant menu, and animals and their habitats. Throughout these units of study, students engage in four different areas of communication- listening, speaking, reading, and writing. You can expect your third graders to come home with more writing projects this year. As in previous years, the students will also continue with a specific cultural focus. This year, they will be learning about Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic- the three Spanish-speaking islands of the Caribbean. Plus, third graders will also get to complete more in-depth online research on one of the three Spanish-speaking islands of the Caribbean.

Technology Assured Experiences

Cyber/internet safety continues to be emphasized in third grade with regard to online activities such as gaming and shopping. Research projects become more complex, as students use multiple sources and learn note-taking skills. They learn to make simple graphs and are introduced to problem-solving software for mathematics.

Counseling

All third graders also participate in the school counseling program through regular classroom guidance lessons. This curriculum consists of structured lessons, facilitated by the school counselor within the classroom, designed to help students attain the academic, career and social/emotional competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The third grade classroom lessons focus on the development of academic success strategies and conflict resolution, diversity and inclusion, test-taking skills and career awareness. Units are flexible and may vary in order based on student needs and schedules.

Orchestra

Third grade strings offers students the opportunity to play violin, viola, cello or bass. Through small group like-instrument instruction, students develop instrument technique and musicianship. Weekly 30 minutes lessons begin in September and continue all year. Music reading skills and concepts are introduced and developed throughout the year. The year features a performance of combined Mt. Lebanon Elementary schools.