Inspiring Excellence
Upper Merion Area School District
435 Crossfield Road • King of Prussia, PA 19406 • 610-205-6400 • Fax 610-205-6433 • www.umasd.org

Upper Merion Area School District
Curriculum Information for Parents and Community

Grade 3

Third Grade is the first year of the intermediate grades (3-5) during which students transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." In math, students are expected to solve problems using multiplication and division. We continue to provide a rich, supportive learning environment for the whole child: academically, socially, and emotionally.

All of our elementary classrooms begin the day with Morning Meeting, in which students actively participate in a circle for the purpose of greeting each other, sharing something about themselves, participating in an activity, and listening to the teacher's morning message. Later in the morning, students break into small groups for Excel, in which they get small-group reading instruction based on their skill level. Math and Science/Social Studies are the final academic subjects before recess and lunch. In the afternoon, students participate in English Language Arts and go to their Specials (Art, Music, Physical Education, and Library) classes. Third Graders attend Specials for a 40-minute period each day and an additional 30-minute period four days out of eight. Our elementary schools follow an 8-day schedule (Days A-H). Third-grade students are invited to sign up for strings (violin, viola, cello, bass) lessons.

If you have any questions regarding your child's educational program, please contact your child's teacher for more information.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)
Third Grade students develop academic communication skills through regular practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Visual and technological communication is integrated. Specific ELA skills in Third Grade include:
-Read and comprehend grade-level literary fiction, literary nonfiction, and informational text independently and proficiently
-Know and apply grade-level phonics, sight words, and word analysis skills in reading with accuracy and fluency
-Determine the main idea of a text, recount the key details, and explain how they support the main idea
-Explain the point of view of the author
-Describe how the author connects sentences and paragraphs in a text to support particular points
-Write informative texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information
-Write opinion pieces with reasons to support the opinion
-Write narratives to develop stories, real or imagined
-Write narrative nonfiction topics with definitions, facts, details, and illustrations
-Use a variety of words and sentence types to appeal to the target audience
-Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling
-Learn and practice the correct formation of letters in cursive writing
Upper Merion uses *Wonders* by McGraw Hill to teach Balanced Literacy. We use *Zaner Bloser* materials to teach cursive writing. Overall, our teachers instruct students toward the mastery of the Pennsylvania Core Standards.

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MATHEMATICS

Third Grade students investigate and explore more complex mathematical ideas than they have encountered in the past. They will be expected to know their multiplication facts by memory, add and subtract 3-digit numbers, start working with fractions, know elapsed time, and determine perimeter and area. Research has shown that students do better at complex math tasks and problem-solving when they can focus their cognitive energy on problem-solving rather than processing tasks. The mathematics they will use is exciting and lays the foundation for future math courses.

- Interpret products of whole numbers, e.g., interpret 5 x 7 as the total number of objects in 5 groups of 7 objects each.
- Determine the unknown whole number in a multiplication or division equation relating three whole numbers. For example, determine the unknown number that makes the equation true in each of the equations 8 x ? = 48, 5 = ? ÷ 3, 6 x 6 = ?.
- Apply properties of operations as strategies to multiply and divide. (Commutative property of multiplication, Associative property of multiplication, Distributive property)
- Understand division as an unknown-factor problem. For example, find 32 ÷ 8 by finding the number that makes 32 when multiplied by 8.
- Fluently multiply and divide within 100, using strategies such as the relationship between multiplication and division (e.g., knowing that 8 x 5 = 40, one knows 40 ÷ 5 = 8).
- Know from memory all products of two one-digit numbers (e.g., through 9 x 9).
- Solve two-step word problems using the four operations. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding.
- Use place value understanding to round whole numbers to the nearest 10 or 100.
- Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.
- Understand a fraction 1/b as the quantity formed by 1 part when a whole is partitioned into b equal parts; understand a fraction a/b as the quantity formed by a parts of size 1/b. (limited to fractions with denominators 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8)
- Understand a fraction as a number on the number line; represent fractions on a number line diagram.
- Understand two fractions as equivalent (equal) if they are the same size, or the same point on a number line.
- Recognize and generate simple equivalent fractions, e.g., 1/2 = 2/4, 4/6 = 2/3. Explain why the fractions are equivalent, e.g., by using a visual fraction model.
- Tell and write time to the nearest minute and measure time intervals in minutes.
- Measure and estimate liquid volumes and masses of objects using standard units of grams (g), kilograms (kg), and liters (l).
- Generate measurement data by measuring lengths using rulers marked with halves and fourths of an inch. Show the data by making a line plot, where the horizontal scale is marked off in appropriate units--whole numbers, halves, or quarters.
- Measure areas by unit squares and find the area of a rectangle with whole-number side lengths by tiling it, and show that the area is the same as would be found by multiplying the side lengths.
- Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving perimeters of polygons, including finding the perimeter given the side lengths, finding an unknown side length, and exhibiting rectangles with the same perimeter and different areas or with the same area and different perimeters.
- Recognize rhombuses, rectangles, and squares as examples of quadrilaterals, and draw examples of quadrilaterals that do not belong to any of these subcategories.

- Partition shapes into parts with equal areas. Express the area of each part as a unit fraction of the whole. For example, partition a shape into 4 parts with equal area, and describe the area of each part as 1/4 of the area of the shape.

SPECIALS

Art -- Third-grade art focuses on the work of some of Pennsylvania's most important artists. Students continue to develop their use of line, shape, color, texture, value, solid form, and space as they improve their skills as visual communicators. The district art show in May features student work.

Music -- In general music students listen, sing, connect, create, play, and move. Students learn to analyze beat, rhythm, tempo, form, pitch, dynamics, timbre, articulation, melody, harmony, and more. They learn and perform patriotic songs and world music, and play Orff instruments. All elementary students have access to the online curriculum available through *Musicplay*.

Health -- Our health education promotes wellness, personal responsibility, positive decision-making, and using S.M.A.R.T. goals. Students will study a variety of themes in health class that are taught at the age appropriate level for each topic. The health themes covered include: Social and emotional health, human growth and development, hygiene and disease prevention, nutrition and fitness, safety and injury prevention, and learning about the effects of drugs that help or hurt our bodies.

Physical Education -- In physical education students will learn about how lifestyle behaviors you develop now will have an impact on your wellness in the future. The curriculum is designed to promote physical fitness, effective communication, teamwork, sportsmanship and a determination to do your best. A basic tenet of the student's experience is that physical activity positively impacts your physical, mental, and social and emotional wellness. The main curriculum themes include: Movement (locomotor and non-locomotor movements), fitness (health and skill based fitness, manipulative games (throwing, kicking, sticking, bouncing), cooperative and creative games (working together), invasion games (soccer, basketball), net wall games (volleyball, tennis), recreational games (tag games, ga-ga ball, bocce), and safety (spatial awareness). Our goal is to have students up and moving 80% of their class time!

Library -- During library time, students listen to read-alouds, participate in lessons related to children's literature and research, and learn to locate and select books. School counselors provide lessons to students in place of some library periods.

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES

Science content centers on Life Science (e.g., animals and plants), Earth and Space Science (e.g., rocks and minerals, solar system), and Physical Science (e.g., forces and motion, simple machines). Social Studies content is based on citizenship, government, and Pennsylvania history.

Third Grade is the first grade-level in which students take PSSA tests in ELA and math.