THE Peck SCHOOL

Lower School Curriculum Guide

2026-2027

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Kindergarten

In the **homeroom** setting, students engage in the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, and social studies. These foundational subjects are taught primarily by the Homeroom Teacher and the Associate Teacher, who work collaboratively to create a supportive and engaging learning environment.

LANGUAGE ARTS

READING

The kindergarten reading curriculum, which utilizes the Orton-Gillingham approach, focuses on building a strong foundation in phonics and phonemic awareness through explicit, structured, and multisensory instruction. Lessons are carefully sequenced to introduce concepts in a logical progression, ensuring students master each skill before moving on. The curriculum also emphasizes the development of rhyming skills as a key component of phonemic awareness and includes regular exposure to a variety of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, to build comprehension, vocabulary, and a deeper appreciation for language. Instruction is taught in small, flexible groups that allow for individualized support, growth, and enrichment. This responsive grouping ensures that all students receive the targeted instruction they need, whether it reinforces foundational skills or provides advanced challenges, while fostering confidence, independence, and a love of reading.

WRITING

Developing fine motor skills is a vital component of the kindergarten program, as it lays the foundation for confident, legible writing. Through the D'Nealian handwriting program, in conjunction with the Orton-Gillingham approach, students learn correct letter formation and proper pencil grip in a structured, sequential manner. These practices support not only early writing development but also prepare students for cursive handwriting, which is introduced in Second Grade. Kindergarteners are given frequent opportunities to express themselves through journal writing, poetry, and other engaging tasks connected to various units of study. Fine motor skills are continually strengthened through a variety of multisensory activities designed to reinforce hand strength, coordination, and precision.

SPELLING

The kindergarten spelling curriculum is grounded in the Orton-Gillingham multisensory approach, which supports early literacy development through structured, hands-on methods. Students engage in daily spelling practice using techniques such as pounding and tapping out sounds, writing on sound lines, and using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies to internalize spelling patterns. Instruction includes both real and nonsense words to strengthen phonemic awareness and ensure students can decode and encode words independently. In addition to phonetic spelling, students also learn high-frequency sight words to build automatic word recognition. This comprehensive approach helps students develop confidence in their spelling abilities while laying a strong foundation for future reading and writing success.

MATHEMATICS

Kindergarten math instruction follows a concrete-pictorial-abstract progression to build a strong foundation in number sense and problem-solving. We emphasize composing and decomposing numbers, reinforcing all concepts through hands-on activities with math manipulatives, cooperative math centers, and peer collaboration. Daily math routines include counting and representing the elapsed number of school days, participating in and analyzing a daily survey, as well as reading and using a calendar. Teachers use small, guided groups to differentiate lessons and meet students' individual needs. Weekly homework journals offer engaging and authentic tasks to encourage family participation.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Central to the kindergarten experience is the grade-level essential question: *How do we learn?* Through various activities in all content areas, students learn about learning. In social studies, kindergarten students learn about the natural world and cultures from around the globe. Two in-depth units, focusing on the penguins of the world and on discovering the beauty and diversity of the Central American rainforest, are highlights of the year. The Scholastic magazine *Let's Find Out* is shared weekly, providing students with nonfiction articles related to their studies. In addition, the social studies curriculum allows students to explore their own culture and that of their classmates. Family projects, for example, encourage students to share their family makeup and customs, fostering a deeper sense of belonging within our classroom. Students learn from each other about the origin of their name, their cultural foods, holidays, and celebrations. Family flags are generated to act as a springboard for these discussions at the start of the year. In this way, students explore the similarities and differences that make up our vibrant school community. At the same time, the kindergarten looks to forge wider relationships within the community. The Peck Mystery Reader is an opportunity for the faculty and staff to welcome the kindergarten class by sharing a favorite book. Similarly, fourth-grade buddies partner with the kindergarten class monthly to collaborate on fun activities.

Our **Intensive Special Classes** provide students with concentrated and focused instruction in key creative, scientific, and technical disciplines. Unlike daily subjects, these classes operate on a rotating basis, meaning students delve deeply into a single unit of study before moving on to the next.

ART

Kindergarten students are introduced to the basic elements of art alongside notable artists. The development of fine motor skills is continually emphasized as each child begins to learn the language of art and its application to the creative process. Material exploration, overlap, use of a horizon line, simple perspective, composition, and color theory are introduced. Meaningful connections are made with the kindergarten curriculum throughout the year.

SCIENCE

Students in kindergarten engage in science concepts as they explore topics in life, physical, and Earth science. Kindergarten students learn about the natural world through a sequence of hands-on

activities exploring the *what*, *how*, and *why* of nature. Focus is given to discerning living and nonliving objects, making observations about the weather, and how pushes and pulls create motion. Principles of design are introduced during engineering design challenges, providing an opportunity for students to develop problem-solving skills, think creatively, and learn from mistakes. The class focuses on hands-on explorations and sensemaking, which allow students to demonstrate their understanding in varied formats.

TECH & DESIGN

Technology skills in kindergarten are developed through an integrated approach that directly supports academic learning goals. Young learners are introduced to what it means to be responsible digital citizens as they learn to navigate iPads for the first time and properly care for their devices. Creative multimedia tools, such as Seesaw, empower students to express their ideas and demonstrate their understanding in transformative ways. The building blocks of computational thinking and design are introduced through foundational programming and robotics. Using programs like Kodable and hands-on tools like Beebot robots, students learn to create sequences of commands, test their logic, and debug mistakes. Students visit the Kindergarten Idea & Design Lab to engage in design projects that build their capacity to think creatively and try out different solutions to problems.

In addition to the core curriculum and intensive rotations, Lower School students participate in **Specials Classes**. These lessons occur regularly throughout the year, ensuring steady, ongoing development in areas essential for well-rounded growth. The class lengths and meeting frequencies are tailored to be age-appropriate and maximize learning.

BUILDING BELONGING

Our commitment to cultivating character and belonging throughout the community is a key part of what makes us Peck. This work occurs on multiple fronts: through Reach Across and family-style dining; through athletics, assemblies, concerts, and handshake—and through intentional programming across the K-8 sequence. Through age-appropriate, affirming, and empowering lessons, students are given skills to better connect with others and their own experiences, as the dignity and gifts of each individual are appreciated. In kindergarten, Building Belonging lessons include creating a family flag, learning to identify what makes them special, and discussing making friends and feelings.

LIBRARY

In kindergarten library classes, students learn about the role of the library, how to locate and select books, and experience the joy of choosing something “just right” to read. Students also learn about library citizenship, including the responsibility to borrow, care for, and return a library book. Students are encouraged to explore books across different genres and are introduced to the roles of authors and illustrators in book creation. Students are introduced to children’s book awards and complete an in-depth look at Caldecott award winners.

MUSIC

Kindergarten students musically express themselves through singing, dancing, creating, playing instruments, and performing. The primary goal of the kindergarten music program is to enable each child to fully realize their innate musical instincts, articulated as: *tuneful* (to sing with expression), *'beat-ful'* (to feel the beat), and *artful* (to respond to the expressiveness in music).

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORTS

Kindergarten physical education focuses on developing fundamental motor and spatial skills through engaging, creative activities that blend sport-specific techniques with character development. Students learn through verbal and visual introductions and by participating in small- and large-group games that emphasize movement, coordination, and cooperative play. The program prioritizes building basic sports skills, fostering a joy of physical activity, and cultivating essential character traits like good sportsmanship, fair play, and teamwork. By presenting fun challenges that inspire participation and mutual support, the curriculum aims to create a positive foundation for lifelong physical engagement and personal growth.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

In kindergarten, the primary focus is on supporting students as they transition into the Peck community and begin building a foundation of social-emotional skills. Through literature, small-group instruction, and whole-class activities, students are introduced to a variety of social concepts and begin to develop self-awareness and emotional understanding. They engage with the Zones of Regulation framework to explore their emotions and recognize the somatic (physical) cues associated with different feelings, helping them learn how to identify, manage, and express their emotions effectively. Lessons are closely aligned with Peck's InDeCoRe values.

SPANISH

Kindergarten Spanish provides a robust learning experience at a time when young minds are particularly geared toward language acquisition. Students practice using conversational Spanish during lunch through a special program called *Vamos a Comer*. With engaging stories, songs, games, movements, and repetition of expressions and vocabulary, the kindergarten curriculum offers a compelling and fun language environment that helps develop confidence in all students. By the end of the school year, all basic directions are given in Spanish, and students are encouraged to respond in kind. Every Lower School student "travels" to three Spanish-speaking countries over the course of the year, immersing themselves in the nuances, richness, and wonders of those cultures.

Note: For native and heritage Spanish speakers, small group instruction with a dedicated teacher provides grammar, reading, and writing skills at the appropriate level

Grade 1

In the **homeroom** setting, students engage in the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, and social studies. These foundational subjects are taught primarily by the Homeroom Teacher and the Associate Teacher, who work collaboratively to create a supportive and engaging learning environment.

LANGUAGE ARTS

READING

The first-grade curriculum builds upon the foundational skills developed in kindergarten through a structured, sequential approach that follows the continued scope and sequence of the Orton-Gillingham program. Instruction remains multisensory and is delivered in small, flexible groups to meet the diverse needs of learners. Students deepen their decoding skills by learning to break apart and read multisyllabic words, while also developing fluency and comprehension. As they begin reading chapter books, students participate in rich book discussions that explore key story elements such as character, setting, plot, and theme. Vocabulary building is woven throughout the curriculum, helping students expand their language and understanding as they grow into more confident and thoughtful readers.

WRITING

In first grade, as emerging writers grow more confident, they begin to construct complete sentences while building structure, clarity, and stamina through a Writers' Workshop approach. Throughout the year, young writers explore multiple genres, including narrative stories, persuasive letter writing, instructional how-to guides, creative fairy tales, and informative nonfiction pieces. Guided by rich mentor texts and interactive anchor charts, students learn to identify and apply key story elements to enrich their work. Instruction emphasizes the complete writing process—from brainstorming and drafting to revising, editing, and publishing. By studying high-quality literature and engaging in daily authentic practice, students build confidence, express their unique voices, and develop foundational literacy skills. To support the editing process, students are taught to use the CUPS strategy: checking for Capitalization, Understanding (clarity), Punctuation, and Spelling, when reviewing their work. Through the continued use of the Orton-Gillingham approach, students receive explicit, multisensory instruction to reinforce proper pencil grip, spacing, and consistent letter formation. Emphasis of the D'Nealian print style supports a smooth transition into cursive writing in second grade.

SPELLING

The first-grade spelling program is thoughtfully integrated throughout the year, reinforcing students' understanding of sound-symbol relationships through engaging multisensory activities, interactive games, and meaningful homework practice. Weekly spelling lists and dictation exercises are aligned with specific phonemic concepts, following the structured sequence of the Orton-Gillingham methodology. Students learn and apply spelling rules to both real and nonsense words, building transferable skills. Emphasis is placed on applying correct spelling in daily writing, helping students

internalize patterns and rules as they develop greater confidence and accuracy in their written communication.

MATHEMATICS

The first-grade math curriculum establishes a strong mathematical foundation by guiding students through a progression from concrete experiences to pictorial representations and finally to abstract thinking. Students actively engage with concepts using manipulatives, games, and cooperative learning to solve real-world problems. Teachers use small-group instruction to effectively differentiate lessons and address students' individual needs. A major focus in first-grade math is extending students' understanding of addition and subtraction within 20 and developing more sophisticated problem-solving strategies. First graders also deepen their understanding of place value by thinking in groups of tens and ones to describe and compare two-digit numbers. Key curriculum components emphasize number sense and fact fluency in addition and subtraction. Other highlights include learning about linear measurement, geometry, collecting and organizing data, and telling time to the nearest half hour.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The social studies curriculum explores the grade-level essential question: *What is a community?* By investigating different types of communities, professions, services, and maps, students gain a better understanding of how people work together and the different roles that form a community. Students learn firsthand about collaboration and helping others through their hands-on design and construction project to build a three-dimensional town.

Our **Intensive Special Classes** provide students with concentrated and focused instruction in key creative, scientific, and technical disciplines. Unlike daily subjects, these classes operate on a rotating basis, meaning students delve deeply into a single unit of study before moving on to the next.

ART

First-grade students make great strides in their creative development. They delve deeper into material exploration, honing their skills and techniques. Overlap, use of a horizon line, simple perspective, composition, and color theory are reinforced. The students build upon their collection of basic symbols to create visual images, and their repertoire of familiar artists, both masters and contemporary artists, is expanded.

SCIENCE

Students in first grade explore their world through the lens of the five senses. This class introduces skills and practices used by scientists, allowing students to explore the needs of plants and animals, the behavior of light and sound, and solve problems using the engineering design process. Small group investigations and design challenges provide ample opportunities for collaboration. Student presentations of data and design products during showcases promote the development of explanation and communication skills and provide opportunities to give and receive feedback.

TECH & DESIGN

First-grade students continue to build upon their foundational technology skills through an integrated classroom approach. As they grow as empowered learners and digital citizens, they use creative multimedia tools like Book Creator to express their thoughts and ideas in new and dynamic ways. Students expand their computational thinking skills by using programs like Scratch Jr. to animate characters and scenes, coding multiple characters to interact with one another. As innovative designers, they tackle authentic design projects, such as building a model house for a classmate. This process teaches them how to give and receive constructive feedback, allowing them to iterate and improve upon their original creations.

In addition to the core curriculum and intensive rotations, Lower School students participate in **Specials Classes**. These lessons occur regularly throughout the year, ensuring steady, ongoing development in areas essential for well-rounded growth. The class lengths and meeting frequencies are tailored to be age-appropriate and maximize learning.

BUILDING BELONGING

Our commitment to cultivating character and belonging throughout the community is a key part of what makes us Peck. This work occurs on multiple fronts: through Reach Across and family-style dining; through athletics, assemblies, concerts, and handshake—and through intentional programming across the K-8 sequence. Through age-appropriate, affirming, and empowering lessons, students are given skills to better connect with others and their own experiences, as the dignity and gifts of each individual are appreciated. In first grade, Building Belonging lessons include what it means to belong, embracing uniqueness, celebrating difference, how to notice and handle emotions, and the importance of kindness.

LIBRARY

In library class, first graders learn to locate fiction and nonfiction books in the library, listen to stories actively, and develop an appreciation for the author's craft. Books chosen for read-aloud support the classroom curriculum and link thematically to seasonal and cultural events. Students enjoy an expanded selection of books while browsing the shelves and learning about library citizenship, including proper book care and responsible borrowing.

MUSIC

Music students in first grade continue to develop as *tuneful, beat-ful, artful musicians,* while singing with healthy singing voices, feeling the beat, and responding expressively to music. The students' innate musicianship is nurtured through activities that include pitch exploration, group and solo singing, instrument playing, movement exploration, folk dancing, and creative expression.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORTS

First-grade physical education expands on kindergarten foundations, introducing more complex motor skills and sport-specific techniques through progressively challenging activities. Students engage in structured learning experiences that combine verbal instruction, visual demonstrations, and strategic gameplay. The curriculum emphasizes skill refinement, introducing more nuanced

sports strategies while continuing to develop critical character traits, such as good sportsmanship, strategic teamwork, and personal accountability. Through increasingly sophisticated challenges and cooperative games, students build upon their basic motor skills, develop a deeper understanding of movement principles, and cultivate a more intentional approach to physical activity and collaborative play.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

First graders continue to strengthen their social skills while deepening their ability to recognize emotions and apply appropriate coping strategies. Students build upon the foundational skills developed in kindergarten and are supported as they navigate the important transition into a more structured learning environment. Social-emotional learning (SEL) lessons include read-alouds, small group activities, and engaging classwide programming designed to help students grow in self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills. Lessons are closely aligned with Peck's InDeCoRe values.

SPANISH

First-grade Spanish is conversational and immersive, creating an engaging and stimulating environment in which students continue developing their confidence and communication skills in Spanish. Through a comprehensible-input approach that incorporates storytelling, interactive teacher-created materials, songs, movement, and hands-on activities, students acquire language naturally in meaningful contexts. Students are encouraged to use only Spanish in the classroom, fostering both listening comprehension and spontaneous communication from an early age. New vocabulary in Grade 1 centers on students' immediate surroundings and everyday experiences, including classroom objects, letters, numbers, days of the week, months, clothing, food, and animals. Throughout the year, students also explore the rich cultures of the Spanish-speaking world by "traveling" to three different Spanish-speaking countries, engaging with authentic traditions, celebrations, and cultural perspectives.

> *Note: For native and heritage Spanish speakers, small group instruction during class time teaches grammar, reading, and writing skills at the appropriate level with an additional teacher.*

Grade 2

In the **homeroom** setting, students engage in the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, and social studies. These foundational subjects are taught primarily by the Homeroom Teacher and the Associate Teacher, who work collaboratively to create a supportive and engaging learning environment.

LANGUAGE ARTS

READING

In second grade, small-group instruction utilizes leveled chapter books, including series such as the Magic Tree House and Cam Jansen series to name a few, to deepen students' understanding of story elements. Through these texts, students practice identifying plot, setting, and character development while strengthening their ability to make inferences. Guided reading groups ensure all students receive targeted support and enrichment, promoting growth at their individual levels while cultivating confidence and engagement as readers. Beyond small groups, whole-class read-alouds serve as a platform for teachers to model fluent reading, illustrate text organization, and reinforce essential literacy concepts. Students continue to develop their decoding abilities and apply word attack strategies with greater independence. Using a structured literacy approach with explicit instruction based on the Orton-Gillingham methodology, daily reading routines reinforce phonics, fluency, and comprehension skills. Fluency is supported through regular Orton-Gillingham-based fluency drills, which help students build accuracy, pacing, and expressive reading. An integrated approach to content ensures that reading exercises relate to other academic areas as well, allowing students to build connections and understanding. For example, students will read about Native Americans in support of the social studies curriculum and will explore character development as a part of Peck's Building Belonging and InDeCoRe programs.

WRITING

In second grade, students are introduced to the writing workshop model through the *Jump Into Writing* program, which helps students discover and express their unique voice as a writer. The program empowers students both academically and emotionally by helping them build confidence and skill in written communication. Writing is approached as a process, with lessons intentionally structured to guide students through key stages such as brainstorming, drafting, conferring, editing, and publishing. Along the way, grammar skills are taught and reinforced within the context of their own writing. Cursive handwriting is introduced in September using the D'Nealian style, and students work toward proficiency by the end of the year. Through consistent practice and hands-on learning, students begin to experience the creativity and purpose that writing offers.

SPELLING

The second grade spelling program is built on Orton-Gillingham methodologies, utilizing a multisensory approach to strengthen sound-symbol connections and rule application. Weekly spelling lists are specifically designed to align with these phonetic rules, ensuring a structured and consistent foundation for language development through both classwork and homework.

Assessments focus on students' ability to apply spelling patterns accurately in writing and dictation tasks. Grammar instruction is woven throughout the curriculum, with targeted lessons on sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization and parts of speech, ensuring students build a strong foundation in written conventions.

MATHEMATICS

The second-grade math curriculum significantly expands foundational skills, ensuring students build a deep conceptual understanding of new concepts through a progression from concrete experiences to pictorial representations to abstract thinking. Core learning includes place value relationships with three-digit numbers, exploring more sophisticated addition and subtraction strategies, and strengthening fact fluency throughout the year. Dedicated units introduce students to geometry, linear measurement, money, time, and the foundations of multiplication. Learning is actively supported using hands-on manipulatives and math games. Teachers use differentiated, student-centered approaches and small-group activities to accommodate all levels of understanding and ensure every student receives ample support and enrichment. Second grade is also the first year students are eligible to participate in the challenging and fun Continental Math League, a nationwide math problem-solving competition.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The grade-level essential question: *How does learning about myself and others help us connect?* is a lens through which students are able to draw connections between early American life and their own experience in the modern world. The social studies program provides an in-depth exploration of Native Americans and a continued investigation of map skills. Students study Native Americans by geographic regions, taking into account the tribe's indigenous dwelling, clothing, artifacts, modes of transportation, customs, traditions, and methods of farming and gathering food. Emphasis is placed on how each tribe adapts to the specific geographic area.

Our **Intensive Special Classes** provide students with concentrated and focused instruction in key creative, scientific, and technical disciplines. Unlike daily subjects, these classes operate on a rotational basis, meaning students delve deeply into a single unit of study before moving on to the next one.

ART

Second-grade students study the basic elements of design (line, color, value, shape, texture, and space) in various forms found in nature and art. Projects using new techniques and mediums are introduced, leading children to greater realistic representation. In conjunction with their social studies unit on Native Americans, second-grade artists explore various Native American arts and crafts and develop an understanding that art is a universal language.

SCIENCE

Students expand their knowledge of animals and plants, as well as the concept of structure and function, by observing the relationships and interdependence between living and nonliving things. They investigate the diversity of species, adaptations, and the interdependence of plants and

animals. Students also continue to practice data collection and interpretation while learning about the properties of materials and the Earth's changing surface through real-world laboratory activities. Small group investigations provide ample opportunities for collaboration, and presentations of data and design products promote explanation and communication skill development.

TECH & DESIGN

In second grade, technology is woven into the academic curriculum, empowering students as creative communicators and computational thinkers. They explore a variety of multimedia tools like Book Creator, iMovie, and Scratch Jr. to demonstrate their knowledge in dynamic formats. Building on their coding skills, students engage with programming and robotics to solve problems. A key focus is learning to think like designers; students learn to look closely at objects and systems, find opportunities for improvement, and tackle authentic challenges using the design thinking process. This method of building empathy, prototyping solutions, and iterating based on feedback provides an empowering approach to problem-solving that benefits all areas of their learning.

In addition to the core curriculum and intensive rotations, Lower School students participate in **Specials Classes**. These lessons occur regularly throughout the year, ensuring steady, ongoing development in areas essential for well-rounded growth. The class lengths and meeting frequencies are tailored to be age-appropriate and maximize learning.

BUILDING BELONGING

Our commitment to cultivating character and belonging throughout the community is a key part of what makes us Peck. This work occurs on multiple fronts: through Reach Across and family-style dining; through athletics, assemblies, concerts, and handshake—and through intentional programming across the K-8 sequence. Through age-appropriate, affirming, and empowering lessons, students are given skills to better connect with others and their own experiences, as the dignity and gifts of each individual are appreciated. In second grade, Building Belonging lessons include the importance of building a caring community, support, and how to be supportive, and we belong to different groups but are uniquely ourselves.

LIBRARY

During their library classes, second-grade students begin to differentiate between fiction and nonfiction and learn how to locate texts by genre within the library. As students advance in their reading, they are encouraged to explore and develop personal interests and check out books from various genres. Students will engage in thematic read-alouds aligned with their classroom curriculum, national library initiatives, and seasonal and cultural events. Students begin to build foundational research and digital literacy skills by learning how to ask questions, locate information, and navigate some of the library's electronic resources, including ebooks, audiobooks, and research databases.

MUSIC

Second-grade students continue to develop musical independence and skills, building on a strong foundation that will lead to music literacy. The students' innate musical potential is nurtured

through singing, dancing, creating, and listening. Notation reading, ensemble playing, and expressiveness are experienced through the use of boomwhackers, melody bells, drums, and unpitched instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORTS

Second-grade physical education expands on first-grade foundations, introducing more refined sport skills and strategic awareness. Students explore movement through engaging small and large group activities that develop spatial understanding and basic game strategies. The curriculum focuses on enhancing motor skills, improving coordination, and introducing more complex movement patterns. Students continue to develop teamwork skills, learning to work cooperatively and understand the importance of positioning and collaborative play. Emphasis remains on good sportsmanship, fair play, and supporting teammates. Through fun, structured activities and games, students build confidence, improve physical abilities, and begin to understand the deeper elements of team dynamics and personal athletic potential.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Second graders continue to build upon their social-emotional foundation developed in their earlier years by engaging in a variety of activities that support their growing understanding of themselves and their peers. As their communication skills—both verbal and nonverbal—become more complex and nuanced, students begin to explore and reflect on their social interactions more deeply. These experiences help them strengthen empathy, develop self-awareness, and navigate peer relationships with greater confidence and understanding. Social-emotional learning (SEL) lessons include read-alouds, small group activities, and engaging classwide programming designed to help students grow in self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills. Lessons are closely aligned with Peck's InDeCoRe values.

SPANISH

Second-grade students continue to develop practical communication in Spanish using the comprehensible-input methodology, a technique that incorporates storytelling, teacher-developed materials, and engaging projects. Second-grade students use digital platforms to create a record of their work and engage in hands-on games as a way to practice verbal skills. The use of different visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic manipulatives enhances the immersive experience. Building upon previously learned vocabulary and expressions, students engage in simple Spanish conversations about their feelings, needs, weather, seasons, clothing, food, and families. Exploring cultures of the Spanish-speaking world, every second grader "travels" to three different Spanish-speaking countries during the course of the year.

> *Note: For native and heritage Spanish speakers, small group instruction during class time teaches grammar, reading, and writing skills at the appropriate level with an additional teacher.*

Grade 3

In the **homeroom** setting, students engage in the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, and social studies. These foundational subjects are taught primarily by the Homeroom Teacher and the Associate Teacher, who work collaboratively to create a supportive and engaging learning environment.

LANGUAGE ARTS

READING

In the third-grade reading curriculum, an emphasis is placed on developing reading comprehension across a variety of genres, including non-fiction, short stories, and fiction such as *The Hundred Dresses, The Lemonade War, Third Grade Angels, and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Students engage in whole-group lessons followed by differentiated small-group instruction. This approach allows us to target specific comprehension strategies, such as identifying main ideas, making inferences, and summarizing, while encouraging a love of reading through diverse and engaging texts. The Orton-Gillingham method continues in third grade, supporting all learners through a structured, multisensory approach that reinforces foundational literacy skills.

WRITING & GRAMMAR

In third grade, students develop their writing skills through the *Jump Into Writing* program, which follows a workshop model that includes brainstorming, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. Building on the skills learned in second grade, students learn to expand sentences with details and context to enhance clarity and meaning. They write in a variety of forms, including personal narratives, informational pieces, fairy tales, poetry, literature responses, and multi-paragraph compositions. Themes from our character education program are often used to inspire and guide writing topics, helping students connect their learning to real-life values and experiences. In addition, students continue to practice D'Nealian cursive, with ongoing practice in correct letter formation to build fluency and legibility in their handwriting, and their use of the CUPS strategy (Capitalization, Understanding, Punctuation, and Spelling).

SPELLING

The spelling program provides direct instruction in spelling and morphology skills using a kinesthetic and phonetic-based approach rooted in the methodologies of Orton-Gillingham. An emphasis is placed on the solid understanding and application of specific spelling rules to support accurate reading and writing. In addition, students are introduced to morphology, where they learn to analyze word parts, such as prefixes, suffixes, and base words, by creating word sums. This practice strengthens their understanding of word structure and meaning, while also expanding their vocabulary and supporting overall language development.

MATHEMATICS

The third-grade math curriculum significantly expands on foundational skills, focusing on both computational fluency and deep conceptual understanding. Students will master addition and

subtraction of four-digit numbers and achieve automaticity with multiplication and division facts through 10. Students are also introduced to strategies for multiplying and dividing with multi-digit numbers to build a conceptual understanding of these advanced operations. New concepts are introduced using a proven concrete-pictorial-abstract progression, empowering students to not only solve problems but also explain their mathematical reasoning clearly in speaking and writing. Major new areas include the introduction of fractions and geometric measurement (area and perimeter). Students also refine their measurement skills by working with mass and liquid capacity and becoming more precise in telling time. Instruction is differentiated through small group teaching, student-centered activities, and cooperative games, ensuring all students receive the optimal balance of reinforcement and appropriate challenge. Third graders are eligible to participate in the challenging and fun Continental Math League, a nationwide math problem-solving competition.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Throughout their third-grade year, hands-on and project-based social studies activities provide students with an immersive and lasting learning experience. The grade-level essential question: *How do your experiences shape who you are?* asks students how they think, connect, and grow through engagement and experiences. In third-grade social studies, students tackle an in-depth study of the United States with its many landscapes, traditions, and cultures. Each student adopts a state and becomes an expert through an age-appropriate research process utilizing a variety of informational texts.

Our **Intensive Special Classes** provide students with concentrated and focused instruction in key creative, scientific, and technical disciplines. Unlike daily subjects, these classes operate on a rotational basis, meaning students delve deeply into a single unit of study before moving on to the next one.

ART

Stimulating projects are created using new mediums. The Masters, as well as contemporary artists, are studied. Each student will improve his or her drawing skills while learning shading, modeling, and drawing from life. Third-grade students can, with greater confidence, discuss their impressions of a work of art using appropriate terminology and referencing key artistic elements. In conjunction with the social studies curriculum, third-grade students further explore the visual symbols of their adopted state in the art room.

SCIENCE

In third grade, there is a greater focus on the integration of science, engineering, design thinking, and technology in a way that builds students' sense of agency and develops their facility with tackling complex problems. New concepts and relationships regarding the Earth, its inhabitants, and the surrounding environment are explored in this course. The concept of force and motion is investigated through hands-on activities and design challenges, as are the foundations of inheritance and the characteristics of weather and climate. Individual and small group collaborations promote critical analysis of first-hand data, sensemaking, and communication.

TECH & DESIGN

Technology skills are developed through an integrated approach, directly supporting academic learning goals. Students learn to use digital tools to become empowered learners, responsible digital citizens, innovative designers, knowledge constructors, creative communicators, computational thinkers, and global collaborators. Students begin to work with Google Workspace to create documents, drawings, and presentations. Creative multimedia applications such as Book Creator, Canva, and WeVideo allow students to express their thoughts and ideas in a transformative way. Students continue to build their coding and robotics skills through the use of Lego WeDo, Dash and Dot robots, and Scratch programming. In addition, keyboarding is emphasized with frequent individual practice using All the Right Type. Students continue their design work through an iterative process that encourages creative thinking and problem-solving.

In addition to the core curriculum and intensive rotations, Lower School students participate in **Specials Classes**. These lessons occur regularly throughout the year, ensuring steady, ongoing development in areas essential for well-rounded growth. The class lengths and meeting frequencies are tailored to be age-appropriate and maximize learning.

BUILDING BELONGING

Our commitment to cultivating character and belonging throughout the community is a key part of what makes us Peck. This work occurs on multiple fronts: through Reach Across and family-style dining; through athletics, assemblies, concerts, and handshake—and through intentional programming across the K-8 sequence. Through age-appropriate, affirming, and empowering lessons, students are given skills to better connect with others and their own experiences, as the dignity and gifts of each individual are appreciated. In third grade, Building Belonging lessons include self-confidence and character, understanding disabilities, stereotypes and assumptions, civil rights and justice, and the importance of treating others with respect.

LIBRARY

In their library classes, third-grade students gain greater facility and develop a fuller awareness of the range of materials available for research and pleasure reading. Students are encouraged to navigate the library's genre-based organizational system independently by utilizing the library's digital catalog to explore various resources and more advanced pleasure-reading books. They also begin accessing age-appropriate research databases to support classroom inquiry and build foundational research skills. In addition to library read-alouds connected to the classroom curriculum, seasonal and cultural events, and national library initiatives, students are introduced to a higher-level electronic and audiobook collection curated for students in Grade 3 and above.

MUSIC

Third-grade students' musical skills, techniques, and literacy continue to advance through singing, listening, moving, creating, improvising, and playing instruments. Each student's potential is nurtured through the use of quality literature, including authentic folk songs and dances. The third graders continue to develop *tunefully, beat-fully, and artfully* through more complex singing games,

activities, and dances. Music reading skills and ensemble playing are augmented through the use of hand chimes and barred instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORTS

Third-grade physical education emphasizes skill refinement and strategic development through comprehensive intramural sports experiences. Students focus on improving basic motor skills and sport-specific techniques through challenging activities and games that introduce more complex positioning and team strategies. The curriculum develops a working knowledge of seasonal sports while cultivating a healthy spirit of competition. Significant emphasis is placed on strengthening InDeCoRe values, positive sportsmanship, and collaborative teamwork. Through structured and engaging experiences, students learn to balance individual skill development with collective team dynamics, creating a foundation for athletic growth and personal character development.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

In third grade, students continue building their social-emotional skills by deepening their interpersonal skills and managing more complex social dynamics. Key areas of focus include self-advocacy, emotional awareness, and conflict resolution. Third graders participate in the Lunch Bunch series, where they apply InDeCoRe values to real-life situations and reflect on their daily experiences. Peer relationships and problem-solving strategies are explored through discussions and activities that encourage internalization of core social-emotional concepts. Social-emotional lessons in the classroom incorporate read-alouds, small group work, and interactive classwide activities—all thoughtfully aligned with the InDeCoRe values.

SPANISH

Third graders are introduced to a more formal grammar program that further builds upon their Spanish skills. They continue to work on their listening comprehension skills, asking and answering questions in complete sentences. An important focus of the program is to develop practical communication in Spanish using the comprehensible-input methodology, a technique that incorporates storytelling, teacher-developed materials, and engaging projects. Students act out situations: ordering food in a restaurant, buying clothes in a store, or bargaining over the price of goods, such as might occur in a typical *mercado o un restaurant* in a South American city. Third-grade students are also introduced to express their favorite *pasatiempo* (hobbie) and create a wonderful presentation about themselves and their *pasatiempos.* Third graders continue their cultural “travels” by learning about three different Spanish-speaking countries.

> *Note: For native and heritage Spanish speakers, small group instruction during class time teaches grammar, reading, and writing skills at the appropriate level with an additional teacher.*

WOODWORKING

Third graders are introduced to their first experience in woodworking. Children learn about woodworking safety and the proper use of several hand tools, including saws and tools for measuring. The use of abrasives and the application of wood finishes are discussed. A plan of procedures is reviewed so children understand the sequence of steps, from start to finish, for a simple project they will make.

Grade 4

In the **homeroom** setting, students engage in the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, and social studies. These foundational subjects are taught primarily by the Homeroom Teacher and the Associate Teacher, who work collaboratively to create a supportive and engaging learning environment.

LANGUAGE ARTS

READING

The fourth-grade reading curriculum is literature-based and integrated across subjects. Core texts such as *Daniel at the Siege of Boston, I Survived the Revolutionary War, Esperanza Rising,* and *Front Desk* allow students to make robust connections to the social studies program. Students engage with a wide range of texts in small group settings, exploring themes, the grade-level essential question (*How do people face challenges?)*, and content that enhances their understanding of historical and cultural topics. Instruction focuses on building vocabulary, developing inferential comprehension skills, and strengthening fluency in oral reading. Students are encouraged to express their interpretations of texts through written responses and class discussions, or presentations. Auditory comprehension is also supported through group read-alouds and guided literary conversations, promoting active listening and critical thinking.

WRITING & GRAMMAR

The fourth-grade writing curriculum is centered around the *Jump Into Writing* program, which provides a structured and engaging approach to developing strong written communication skills. Students learn to write in a variety of forms, including poetry, personal narratives, opinion-editorial pieces, and literature responses. Additionally, students learn research and report writing skills using a range of nonfiction texts. Using the CUPS strategy (Capitalization, Usage, Punctuation, and Spelling), students focus on grammar and mechanics while progressing through all stages of the writing process—from brainstorming and drafting to revising, editing, and publishing. Throughout the year, students are encouraged to develop and refine their ideas with clarity and creativity.

MORPHOLOGY

The spelling curriculum in fourth grade emphasizes a structured, multisensory approach rooted in Orton-Gillingham (OG) methodologies. Morphology is the major focus, enhancing students' understanding of how words are built by examining roots, prefixes, and suffixes. This deepens their grasp of word structure and meaning, while also strengthening their ability to decode unfamiliar words. By exploring word parts and patterns, students expand their vocabulary and improve both spelling accuracy and overall language skills in a more meaningful and lasting way.

MATHEMATICS

The fourth-grade math curriculum is designed to develop a deep understanding of numbers and significantly boost student confidence while tackling more complex mathematical concepts. Students explore the challenging concepts of multi-digit multiplication and long division through a

balanced approach, using visual models and concrete manipulatives to build a strong understanding before moving to standard algorithms. A major focus is placed on solving challenging multi-step word problems and open-ended tasks that require critical thinking. Furthermore, students expand their understanding of fractions—including comparing, adding, and subtracting—and introduce the concept of decimals and the relationship between the two, while also deepening student knowledge of measurement and geometry. Concepts are developed through the use of manipulatives, cooperative activities, and critical thinking exercises, with a strong emphasis on math vocabulary. Students use precise mathematical language to communicate, explain, and justify their thinking in detail, turning them into articulate young mathematicians. Fourth graders are eligible to participate in the challenging and fun Continental Math League, a nationwide math problem-solving competition.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Students learn about the birth of the United States and the over two-hundred-year history through the lens of the grade-level essential question: *How do people face challenges?* Students look at major events over the course of our country's growth:from Colonial America through the writing of the Constitution. This allows students to better understand where we have come from and how understanding our past will enable us to move forward. Additionally the fourth grade explores the immigration of various groups of people into the United States through Ellis Island and Angel Island focusing on the late 1800s through the mid 1900s. Throughout their immigration study, students deepen their understanding of the factors that lead people to immigrate as well as the challenges and successes faced.Research techniques, use of technology, and hands-on activities present students with a variety of approaches to engage with this rich subject.

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ART

Fourth-grade students build on their previous art experience and now begin to view and execute the basic elements of design and drawing in a more sophisticated manner. In addition to contemporary artists and the Masters, students also study American and world folk art. Because fourth graders can successfully express a mood through their work, they can begin to critique that work, as well as make thoughtful judgments about the art in their environment. Writing about their work through brief artist statements accompanies their artwork throughout the year.

SCIENCE

Fourth graders continue to participate in a program that highlights science, engineering, and design thinking. Through their extended work in the course, students prototype solutions, present original experiments, and become tenacious and agile problem solvers. At the same time, students continue to build their lab skills through observation, measurement, and the formulation of hypotheses. Emphasis is placed on logical thinking and problem-solving. Dynamic Earth systems are explored

through research, experimentation, data collection, and presentations. Students also investigate energy transformation and the relationship between structure and function in various organisms. Health and wellness are also prioritized through the lens of how living things grow and change.

TECH & DESIGN

Technology skills continue to be developed through an integrated approach, directly supporting academic learning goals. Fourth graders learn to use digital tools to become empowered learners, responsible digital citizens, innovative designers, knowledge constructors, creative communicators, computational thinkers, and global collaborators. Students continue to explore the more advanced features of Google Workspace and work collaboratively with classmates. They program robots, prototype original solutions, and work through multiple iterations based on feedback and testing. In addition, students refine word processing skills, as well as keyboarding fluency, using *All the Right Type* and various typing games. Students continue their design work through an iterative process that encourages creative thinking and problem-solving.

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BUILDING BELONGING

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LIBRARY

Fourth-grade students visit the library throughout the school year, utilizing the library's books, electronic books, and databases. Students are encouraged to select and read books from various genres and to expand their reading repertoire as they acclimate to more advanced texts. As their independence grows, students develop greater expertise in using the library's digital catalog to locate and access materials efficiently. They also strengthen their research skills by navigating age-appropriate databases, identifying reliable sources, and learning the foundations of citing digital resources. Library read-alouds build on the classroom curriculum, national library initiatives, and seasonal and cultural events. Genre immersion, resource navigation, and the importance of pleasure reading are all areas of emphasis in grade four.

MUSIC

Fourth-grade students are regularly engaged in singing, moving to music, learning to read music, creating music, and listening to, analyzing, and evaluating music and music performances. In addition, students play a variety of musical instruments, including barred instruments, drums, hand chimes, and ukuleles. Carefully selected materials are utilized for their aesthetic value to the program and provide a framework whereby students learn to understand and appreciate their own historical and cultural heritage, as well as those of other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORTS

Fourth-grade physical education advances athletic development through comprehensive intramural sports experiences that emphasize skill refinement, strategic thinking, and personal growth. Students focus on improving sport-specific techniques, game strategies, and spatial awareness through challenging activities that develop complex team dynamics. The curriculum cultivates advanced athletic skills while prioritizing leadership development, collaborative teamwork, and nuanced decision-making. Students continue to strengthen InDeCoRe values, exploring the intricate balance between individual performance and collective success. Through structured, engaging experiences, fourth graders learn to apply sophisticated strategies, demonstrate positive sportsmanship, and understand the deeper principles of athletic participation and team interaction.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

In fourth grade, students continue to build upon the social-emotional skills developed in earlier years. Now in their final year in the Lower School, this pivotal time places emphasis on leadership, community impact, and effective communication, helping students navigate interpersonal challenges and strengthen their self-confidence. Fourth graders participate in the Lunch Bunch series, where they apply InDeCoRe values to real-life situations in a supportive peer setting. Social-emotional lessons in the classroom include read-alouds, small group work, and interactive classwide activities—all thoughtfully aligned with skill development and Peck's InDeCoRe framework.

SPANISH

In fourth grade, students learn to conjugate verbs in the singular form and use them in sentences. Use of other grammar rules (such as noun-adjective agreement) prepares students for Peck's Upper School language program. Students enhance their listening, reading, writing, speaking, and pronunciation skills with the use of student-centered activities. By practicing useful verbs and adding practical vocabulary, students can communicate about their daily lives and needs. This year, students read and reflect on a novel entirely in Spanish titled: *Yo Soy Carlos,* and create their own version as their final project in Lower School Spanish. The cultivation of respect and understanding for different cultures, as well as the development of a global perspective, is honed through discussions of current events and the study of the rich traditions and history of several Hispanic countries.

> *Note: For native and heritage Spanish speakers, small group instruction during class time teaches grammar, reading, and writing skills at the appropriate level with an additional teacher.*

WOODWORKING

Following a review of safety rules, children make a folk toy that ties to the history of the United States. Fourth graders work together to formulate a basic plan of procedures for its completion. They explore various methods of project joinery and finishing. Fourth-grade students continue to develop respect for hand tools and the woodshop, for their own work, and for that of others.