



Nurturing Confidence. Realizing Potential.

LOWER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Center School's curriculum is language-based, recognizing the role that language plays in academic success. Using the Pennsylvania Core Standards as a guideline, full curriculum instruction is offered through a structured, multi-sensory approach based on students' needs and designed to address each child's learning needs through small group instruction. Curriculum can be adjusted to be taught at an appropriate pace for a student's individual level of learning.

Reading

Reading is the cornerstone of the curriculum at Center School, and much of the day is dedicated to building literacy skills. The reading curriculum is language-based, multisensory, sequential, and structured to be cumulative. Direct instruction and explicit modeling are used to provide students with the tools necessary to develop sound comprehension skills. Material is chosen at the child's instructional reading level.

In the Lower School, foundational, vocabulary, and comprehension skills form the foundation of the curriculum. The foundational skills of phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency are explicitly taught in Wilson Foundations® or Wilson Reading System®. They are also incorporated into weekly spelling and reading lessons. Reading is taught in small group settings and focuses on the development of vocabulary and comprehension skills. Groups are created based upon students' instructional levels. Various frameworks are used for reading instruction which include the Directed Reading Thinking Activity and components of the Reading Workshop and Balanced Literacy Approach.

1st and 2nd Grades

Students interact with a variety of texts to gain an understanding of text structure. Vocabulary is emphasized to develop language and reading skills, and comprehension is explicitly taught.

3rd Grade

Students continue to interact with the text and understand text structure more deeply. Vocabulary continues to focus on sight word recognition and acquisition and use. More comprehension skills are introduced as students begin to engage more deeply in the reading process.

4th Grade

Students begin to move away from sight word recognition, and vocabulary development and usage is emphasized. Comprehension begins to focus on critical thinking and inferential skills.

5th Grade

Students continue to develop spelling skills with a greater emphasis on word structure. Students' vocabulary continues to develop on a deeper level, and comprehension, while still explicitly taught, begins to become more analytical in nature.

Wilson Reading System® and Wilson Foundations®

Wilson Reading System® is a research-based reading and spelling program for all ages. Its multisensory, structured curricula is based upon phonological-coding research and Orton-Gillingham principles. Wilson Reading System is used for groups of approximately five students.

Students receive instruction in:

- Phonemic awareness
- Decoding and word study
- Sight word recognition
- Spelling
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Oral expressive language development

Wilson Foundations® provides research-based materials and strategies essential to comprehensive reading, spelling, and handwriting. This program is geared towards students in grades K-3. Students receive instruction in critical foundational skills which emphasize:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics/ word study
- High frequency word study
- Reading fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension strategies
- Handwriting
- Spelling

All new students are assessed to determine their need for placement Wilson Reading System® or Wilson Foundations®.

Writing

In the Lower School, students begin to learn the steps in the writing process and receive continuous guidance and support. Emphasis is placed on proper sentence and paragraph structure. Students are guided in responding to prompts and topics.

1st & 2nd Grade

Students learn proper sentence structure and begin to focus on a topic when writing. Students write multiple sentences about a topic.

3rd Grade

Students learn to plan, revise, and edit with support as part of the writing process. Paragraph development is taught to include a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding statement.

4th Grade

Paragraph development is studied more closely, and multiple paragraph writing is introduced. Students continue to plan, revise, and edit in order to strengthen writing. Students learn about transitions in writing and begin to explore informal and formal language.

5th Grade

Students write in multi-paragraph form, and rewriting is introduced into the writing process. Students expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning and reader interest, and write with an awareness of style.

Math

The math curriculum in Center School is developed using a variety of methods to address students with or without a specific learning disability in math. Supplemental material pulled from Pearson's *Envision Math* is incorporated with numerous teacher-created materials and interactive media to develop a curriculum that focuses on computation skills, problem solving, and real life, practical applications. A full learning experience is reinforced through the use of manipulative materials to engage students in active learning. Numbers and operations, algebraic concepts, geometry, and measurement, data, and probability are incorporated to provide a well-rounded and sequential curriculum.

1st and 2nd Grade

- Manipulation of Numbers in 1's and 10's
- Visual Interpretations of Addition and Subtraction
- Basic Geometric Concepts including Fractions
- Introduction to Measurement and Data (Time and Money)

3rd Grade

- Multi-digit Arithmetic and Fractions
- Representation of Problems Using the Four Operations.
- Application of Shapes, Angles, and Fractions
- Utilization of Various Concepts and Tools for Measurement

4th grade

- Application of Place Value Concepts to the Four Operations, Fractions, and Decimals
- Word Problem Concepts
- Identification of Geometric Concepts including Polygons
- Compare and Convert Units of Measurement

5th Grade

- Utilization of all Operations for Numbers up to Billions and Decimals
- Introduction to Algebraic Concepts
- Geometric Concepts including Classification of Triangles and the Coordinate Plane
- Interpretation of Measurement and Data including Volume

Science

In Lower School, students explore science concepts through the use of *Delta Science Modules*, comprehensive kits that allow students to investigate key science topics through a combination of hands-on activities and content area reading. Students begin to investigate life, earth, and physical science topics throughout their time in Lower School. These exposures serve as a foundation to a deeper study as students enter Middle School.

1st and 2nd Grade

Life

- Life Cycles: Seeds to Plants, Butterflies to Moths

Earth

- Weather Watching
- Phases of the Moon

3rd Grade

Life

- Plant and Animal Growth and Adaptations

Physical

- Differentiating States of Matter

4th Grade

Earth

- Origin of the Solar System

Physical

- Electrical and Magnetic Energy: Constructing Electrical Circuits

5th Grade

Life

- Biomes: Building an Environment to Understand Life Cycles

Earth

- Weather's and Climate's Effect on the Earth

Physical

- Force and Motion: Simple Machines

Social Studies

The lower school uses TCI's *Social Studies Alive!* as a foundation for their curriculum and incorporates a variety of strategies for students. Students in the primary grades are exposed to social studies content through the discussion of big ideas focusing primarily around community.

In intermediate grades, instruction builds on the big ideas of primary grades with a focus on specific content to include government and history.

1st Grade

My Family and Community

- Schoolwide Behavioral Guidelines
- Families' Needs and Wants
- Map Skills
- Families and Holiday Traditions

2nd Grade

My Community

- Citizenship Within Three Types of Communities
- Consumerism
- Geographic Features and Uses of Our Environment
- Pennsylvania History (including local Native Americans)

3rd Grade

Our Community and Beyond

- The Responsibilities of Leaders and Citizens in the Community (Philadelphia)
- Resources, Goods and Services
- Geographic Physical and Manmade Features and Citizens Effects on Our Environment
- United States and World Culture

4th Grade

Regions of Our Country

- Principles, Ideals, and Leadership in Government
- Pennsylvania's Government and Economy
- Geographic and Manmade Features of Regions and Their Effects on Community
- The Effects and Impact of Pennsylvania and United States History

5th Grade

America's Past

- The Role and Responsibility of the United States Government
- Economics in United States History
- Geographic and Manmade Features of Regions and Their Effects on Community
- The Settling of the United States from Native Americans to the Civil War

Health

The health curriculum is introduced in fourth grade and continues through eighth grade. Features from the Pennsylvania Core Standards are incorporated into the curriculum along with components from McGraw-Hill Teen Health (in the Middle School) and teacher-made activities and materials. Students are taught to identify, recognize, explain, and analyze concepts of safe and healthy living. Health class is instructed for one semester.

4th Grade

- Healthy Beginnings and Nutrition

5th Grade

- Body Systems and Puberty

Physical Education

In the lower school, classes are devoted to skill development and fun activities with a focus on cooperation and good sportsmanship. The program includes:

- Games which reinforce skill development, fundamentals of movement, spatial orientation, and eye-hand coordination.
- Learning basic skills of team sports such as football, soccer, basketball, floor hockey, volleyball, and wiffle ball.
- Skill instruction in throwing, catching, kicking, shooting, batting, basic sports strategies and rules, formation, and creating plays.

Art

The art curriculum at Center School provides opportunities for students to develop skills necessary to perceive and respond to visual arts, to gain an understanding of them as an essential aspect of human experience, and to cultivate an ability to make aesthetic judgements. At Center School, a Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE) model is used. DBAE is a framework that ensures all students receive a rigorous study of the visual arts. DBAE presents a sound art curriculum including the following components: Art Production, Art History, Art Criticism, and Aesthetics. Each grade level works in a variety of media to explore the principles and elements of design in both three-dimensional and two-dimensional art work. Every year lessons build upon the former year, forming a foundation for understanding artistic principles. Many units in art are approached in an interdisciplinary manner with teachers from different classrooms teaching the same subject matter to reinforce learning. These components of the art program create a well-rounded art curriculum. Attention is focused on the following elements:

- Color Theory
- Line Types and Directions
- Shapes
- Genres: Portrait, Still Life, Landscape, Abstract
- Composition and Balance
- Patterns
- 3-Dimensional Works

Music

Center School offers Lower School students an opportunity to develop their music skills through a variety of musical exposures presented by Musicopia, a non-profit organization that brings music to school in the Philadelphia area. Musicopia helps students explore and develop their musical interests, learn how to play an instrument, and perform with their peers through school assemblies.