



Creativity. College. Career. It all starts here.

About Our School

Henry Ford Academy: Elementary School (HFA: Elementary School) is designed to develop students who perform well in traditional academic settings and possess a rare and extremely valuable capacity – the ability to work together in creative ways to solve real-life human problems. Our students will read, write and do math at grade level or above and will have a strong foundation in art and creativity and the thinking skills that will fuel success in the rest of their education and life beyond school.

Our Curriculum

Students at HFA: Elementary School study everything required by the State of Michigan as outlined in the Michigan Curriculum Framework. In addition, they learn the processes and ways of approaching problems of “design thinkers.” This means that they have many experiences exploring real-life problems and learning a specific way to understand and develop possible solutions. This allows students to apply the skills and information they are learning in their other studies in an interesting and real way.

HFA: Elementary School students learn to read and write using the Expeditionary Learning Curriculum.

This ELA curriculum is aligned with Common Core State Standards and offers either two or three hours of literacy instruction per day, depending on the grade level. Each grade level includes four modules, which span a full school year. The four modules allow students to build important content knowledge based on a compelling topic related to science, social studies, or literature. Each module uses rich, authentic text throughout.

HFA: Elementary School uses Engage NY as its core mathematics program. This curriculum develops skills in problem solving, reasoning and proof, mathematical communication, making connections, and representing mathematical concepts as required by the State of Michigan and the Common Core State Standards. Students participate in large group instruction, small group instruction, math discussions and practice activities to master skills. Students who do not master grade level standards receive supplementary instruction through Title I programs.

Science concepts and skills are by using hands-on units. Our K, 1st, 2nd, and 5th grades use Mystery Science units. Based on the State of Michigan Curriculum Framework and the national Next Generation Science Standards, these science units present core science principles as mysteries to be solved. Student work focuses on conducting investigations, collecting evidence, analyzing results and drawing conclusions. They learn scientific concepts by doing what scientists do. Our 3rd and 4th graders are engaging in science through project-based units developed by Michigan State University. In these units, student use language literacy and mathematical tools to develop usable science knowledge.



HFA: Elementary School students learn design thinking in multiple design thinking experiences or challenges each year. These activities give students the opportunity to innovate solutions to real-life human problems while at the same time applying concepts and skills from other disciplines (such as language arts, math, etc.). These experiences are based on HFA: Elementary School's design thinking courses and will, over time, develop students' understanding and ability to use design thinking processes, design thinking mindsets (ways of thinking) and design thinking dispositions (ways of being).

HFA: Elementary School students also participate in visual arts, physical education, health, music programs, and technology integration. In visual arts students create art, explore the nature and meaning of art, respond to art and study the history of art works. Physical education and health are taught using the award-winning chronic disease prevention program, Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC). In music, students learn concepts of music by singing, playing instruments, performing rhythms, moving to music, composing, and listening. Our school is fully equipped with the latest technology to support student learning.

HFA: Elementary School students participate in daily Responsive Classroom activities because getting along well with others and cooperating and following established behavioral guidelines is so fundamental to a productive and positive learning experience. The Responsive Classroom approach is based on the belief that the social curriculum is just as important as the academic content. This approach uses the following key strategies to develop social competence: morning meeting (start of the day routine), rule creation, interactive modeling (teaching children expectations by showing them); positive teacher language, logical consequences, classroom design that promotes independence and responsibility; working with families; and collaborative problem solving (using conferencing, role plays, and other strategies to solve problems with students).