



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 solve those problems. 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 Balanced Literacy. This approach does not rely on any one method of teaching reading and writing. Instead, it integrates all the best practices that research has shown to be effective. Balanced Literacy uses a workshop approach to teaching reading and writing. This means that children learn to read by being read to, by reading high quality children’s literature that is at their reading level, by talking about what they read, and by writing about what they read. In addition, they receive direct instruction in phonics, word study, and comprehension strategies to support their development. Children learn to write in authentic ways by examining outstanding examples of writing, by talking about writing, applying what they have examined and talked about to their own writing, and through direct instruction in the grammar, spelling, writing forms, and writing skills and processes. Children’s skills are evaluated frequently, so that they may be taught in small, flexible groups that focus on the skills that they need when they need them

Science concepts and skills are acquired through hands-on units. Our K, 1st, 2nd, and 5th grades use Battle Creek Science units. These materials have been developed and tested at the Battle Creek Math and Science Center. Based on the State of Michigan Curriculum Framework, these science units are organized to allow children to carry out investigations, talk and write about their observations and understandings, and discuss ways to test them. They learn scientific concepts by doing what scientists do. Our 3rd and 4th graders engage in science through project-based units developed by Michigan State University; they use language literacy and mathematical tools to develop usable science knowledge.



Engage NY is HFA: Elementary School's 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.

TCI's Social Studies Alive is the primary social studies program. It teaches students about the world around them in ways that make them excited to learn every day. TCI uses a hands-on multi-sensory approach to developing mastery of social studies concepts and skills. In addition to reading and writing about Social Studies, students participate in short, memorable experiences that help them grasp important concepts. Children are provided with opportunities to express their learning in multiple ways, including by drawing and acting things out. With TCI's elementary programs, students don't just learn social studies. They learn to love social studies.

HFA: Elementary School students learn design thinking in four 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.

Daily Responsive Classroom activities help students gain social skills that are 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).