

The Aurora

Nov. 2026

Land Acknowledgment

In the spirit of reconciliation, Third Schools acknowledges and recognizes all Indigenous Peoples whose footsteps have marked these lands from time immemorial. Together, on this land on which we live, teach, learn, create, and play, we can honour the ways of knowing of Indigenous Peoples, and all peoples, for future generations.

Important Dates



Friday, November 20 - Updated IPPs Uploaded to SchoolCloud
Wednesday, November 25 - Student Success Meetings
Wednesday, December 2 - Run Santa Run
Wednesday, December 16 - Winter Concert

---

ursa Teaching Team For 2026-2027



Alexander, Susan – susana@thirdschools.ca – Senior High Math and Science
Ash, Jason – jash@thirdschools.ca – Elementary ELA, Math, Onsite Foods, Onsite PE
Bhavra, Sonita – sbhavra@thirdschools.ca – Junior High Math, Science, Health, Genius Hour

Ford, Graeme - gford@thirdschools.ca - Elementary/Jr High Drama
Guest, Melanie – mguest@thirdschools.ca – Elementary ELA, Math, Science, Health
Gilluley, Tracy – tgilluley@thirdschools.ca – Principal, Junior High ELA
Hiemstra, Erin - ehiemstra@thirdschools.ca - Junior High ELA and Math, Elementary Art and PE
Ingram, Dean – dingram@thirdschools.ca – Associate Principal Distance, Senior High Math and Science
MacKinnon, Thera – tmackinnon@thirdschools.ca – Associate Principal, Junior High ELA, Senior High ELA, Social Studies, Art
Parish, Tina – tparish@thirdschools.ca – Elementary ELA, Math, Social Studies, Junior High Social Studies
Sandig, Jonathan - jsandig@thirdschools.ca - Music
Snook, Isadore - isnook@thirdschools.ca - Senior High Math and Science
Watt, Jeff - jwatt@thirdschools.ca - Senior High Art

Principal Message



It is hard to believe that we are already halfway through November! The past few months have certainly been busy, and it has been wonderful to see how much our students have accomplished since the beginning of the school year. Across our online and onsite classrooms, students have been actively engaged in discussions, collaborating with classmates, exploring new ideas, and taking on challenges. One of the highlights of my role is visiting classes and seeing the enthusiasm, creativity, and connections that are developing. There is so much great learning happening throughout our ursa community!

It is especially encouraging to see the relationships our students are building with their teachers and one another. Whether learning from home or joining us onsite, students are finding ways to connect, share ideas, and support each other. Creating a strong sense of community is an important part of what we do at ursa, and it is wonderful to see this happening in our classrooms.

As we move through the second half of November, we are looking ahead to some exciting events. Preparations are underway for our **Winter Concert on December 16**, where we look forward to showcasing the talents of our Music and Drama students. We are also looking forward to our monthly Homeroom meeting for students in Grades 9–12. These gatherings

provide opportunities for our students to connect, build community, and explore topics that support their academic success and future planning.

Earlier this month, we recognized Remembrance Day, taking time to reflect on the sacrifices of those who have served and continue to serve our country. It was an important opportunity to consider the values of peace, gratitude, and community.

With December just around the corner, the coming weeks promise to be busy ones! Thank you to our teachers for their continued dedication, our families for their support, and our students for the enthusiasm and energy they bring to learning each day.

Wishing everyone a wonderful remainder of November!

Ms. Guest

Time in the larger world
With so much of our class time online, it is important to get outside and explore as well. The elementary science class has been looking at the ways in which different substances expand and contract at different temperatures and how these properties can be used to our benefit in thermometers. I encourage you to get outside and notice how engineers have solved the 'problem' of expanding and contracting materials in the everyday things that they build, such as roads, sidewalks, bridges, and playgrounds. How are different parts connected? Why do you think that is?



Mrs. Parish

Building Math Skills Through Everyday Life!
Math is all around us! One of the best ways to help your child strengthen their math skills is to connect classroom learning to everyday activities at home. Grade 4/5 students are developing their understanding of numbers, place value, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, measurement, and problem-solving.

Here are a few simple ways to practice at home:



- **Grocery Shopping:** Have your child compare prices, estimate the total cost, calculate change, or determine which item is the better deal.
- **Cooking and Baking:** Practice measuring ingredients, doubling or halving recipes, working with fractions, and reading measurements.
- **Time and Scheduling:** Have your child calculate how much time has passed, determine how long until an activity begins, or plan how much time is needed to complete a task.
- **Money:** Give your child opportunities to handle money, budget a small amount, calculate costs, and figure out how much money is left.
- **Sports and Games:** Use scores, statistics, distances, and game times to practice addition, subtraction, multiplication, and data skills.
- **Building and Measuring:** Encourage your child to measure objects, compare lengths, estimate distances, and explore shapes.

Math Through Reading

Books are another wonderful way to explore math concepts! Try reading some of these books together and talking about the math you notice in the stories.

- *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins—sharing, division, and equal groups.
- *A Remainder of One* by Elinor J. Pinczes—division and remainders.
- *Sir Cumference and the First Round Table* by Cindy Neuschwander—geometry and circles.
- *The Great Graph Contest* by Loreen Leedy—collecting information, organizing data, and graphing.
- *The Hershey's Milk Chocolate Fractions Book* by Jerry Pallotta—understanding fractions.
- *The Math Curse* by Jon Scieszka—finding math in everyday situations.

Practicing math is not always about worksheets. Everyday conversations are excellent ways to build their confidence and develop real-life math skills!

Mrs. Bhavra

In Health, students are exploring nutrition and Canada's Food Guide, learning about the importance of making balanced food choices and understanding the role of macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) in maintaining a healthy body. Students are discovering how different nutrients support our overall health, growth, energy, and well-being.

Students will be learning to:

- Interpret Canada's Food Guide and identify the components of a balanced, nutritious diet.

- Differentiate between macronutrients and micronutrients and describe their functions in the body.
- Identify food sources of essential nutrients and explain how they contribute to overall health.
- Explain how nutrition supports growth, energy, cell repair, and proper body functioning.
- Make informed food choices that support their personal health and well-being.



We will also be making connections to our Grade 8 Science unit on **Cells and Systems**, exploring how the nutrients we consume are used by our cells and how they help support the different body systems.

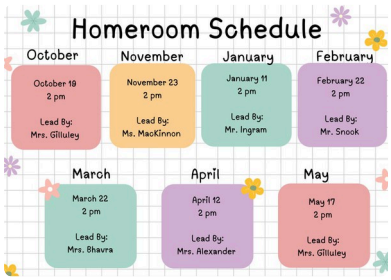
In Science, students will be learning to:

- Describe how cells are the basic building blocks of living things.
- Explain how cells obtain and use nutrients to carry out essential life processes.
- Identify the roles of major body systems, including the digestive, circulatory, and respiratory systems.
- Describe how body systems work together to deliver nutrients and oxygen to cells and remove waste.
- Explain the connections between healthy nutrition, cellular function, and the overall health of the human body.

Through these connections, students will develop a deeper understanding of how the food we eat fuels our cells, supports our body systems, and contributes to lifelong health and wellness!

Check out this video on digestion from TEDEd:
https://youtu.be/Og5xAdC8EUI

Grade 9–12 Homeroom – Connecting Beyond the Classroom



A reminder to all students in **Grades 9–12** that our next monthly Homeroom Block will take place on **Monday, November 23, at 2:00 pm**.

This month, Ms. Mac will lead an engaging session focused on **Careers and Scholarships**. We will explore opportunities for life after high school, career pathways, and scholarships that can help support your future goals.

Homeroom is a great opportunity to connect, ask questions, and gain valuable information to help you plan for your future. Attendance will be taken, and we encourage all students to participate!

We look forward to seeing you there!

Ms. Mackinnon



Shakespeare!!

All of my amazing students have completed their Shakespearean plays. Which is your favourite? If you loved A Midsummer Night's Dream or The Tempest, challenge yourself with these fun study games I created for my classes! Want to check out a great site to learn more about some of Shakespeare's greatest works with games, videos, and more! https://myshakespeare.com/

Shakespearean Games:
https://claude.ai/artifact/9Far5W1vdyE7g6Cuo64Bun
https://claude.ai/artifact/R9ZyyQAHzkbnXPKS2EaXPn

Mrs. Gilluley



What does it take to change, forgive, and find healing? These are some of the powerful questions our Grade 8B/9A English Language Arts students are exploring as we read *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelsen. As part of this novel study, we are learning about the Tlingit people.

Discovering the Tlingit People and Their Culture
The Tlingit (pronounced KLING-kit) are an Indigenous people whose traditional territories stretch across southeastern Alaska and parts of British Columbia and the Yukon. With a rich cultural heritage spanning thousands of years, the Tlingit have strong connections to the land, ocean, and natural world. Their culture places great importance on family, community, storytelling, and respect for the environment.

Tlingit society is traditionally organized into two main groups, Raven and Eagle/Wolf, with family clans playing an important role in identity and belonging. The Tlingit are also known for their remarkable artistic traditions, including intricately carved totem poles, weaving, and beautifully designed ceremonial regalia. Stories, songs, and dances help preserve history and pass knowledge from one generation to the next.
Today, Tlingit communities continue to celebrate their heritage, maintain their languages and traditions, and share their cultural knowledge with future generations. Their history and living culture offer wonderful opportunities for our students to learn about Indigenous perspectives, identity, and the importance of community.



Mr. Ingram



Math as a Way of Thinking
In every math course, I want students to do more than find answers. I want them to look for structure, choose a sensible strategy, and check whether their result makes sense. Our recent Math 10C unit on factors and products illustrates this approach.

A factor is one of the numbers you multiply, and the product is the result. Students learned to break numbers into their basic building blocks and to work backward from an area to the length and width that produced it. They compared methods, explained their reasoning, and checked their work by multiplying back out. In one question, students started with a 16 cm by 40 cm rectangle. They found the largest square tile that fits it evenly, then the smallest square that copies of the rectangle could build. The numbers were the same, but the two questions had different answers. Working out which question you are really asking is a skill that carries into building, budgeting, scheduling, and science.

You can practice this kind of thinking at home:
Plan a tiled backsplash or garden bed, and find a tile size that needs no cutting.
Split snacks or chores into equal groups with nothing left over.

Work out when two repeating events, such as a weekly practice and a shift every second week, will fall on the same day.

I want every student to feel comfortable asking for help. If your student would like another explanation or more practice, please reach out. Asking questions is a normal part of learning math. Students can book a time with me through the Calendly link on our course homepage.

Mr. Snook



Did You Know? The Amazing Number *e*!

This number has shown up in mathematics 30-1 class over the last few weeks.

Did you know that one of the most important numbers in mathematics is named after an 18th-century Swiss mathematician named **Leonhard Euler** (pronounced *OY-ler*)?

Euler was one of the most brilliant and productive mathematicians in history, making remarkable contributions to mathematics, physics, and engineering.

This fascinating number associated with Euler is known as **Euler's number**, represented by the lowercase letter **(e)**.

Like the famous number π, Euler's number is irrational, meaning its decimal digits continue forever without repeating in a predictable pattern.

But what makes **(e)** so special?

Believe it or not, this remarkable number appears naturally in situations involving **compound interest, population growth, radioactive decay, and even the spread of information and disease**!

And here's one final fun fact: Euler was so productive that he continued making major mathematical discoveries even after becoming almost completely blind!

So, the next time you see the number 2.71828..., remember that you're looking at one of mathematics' most remarkable constants—a number that helps us understand how our world changes!

Mathematics is everywhere, sometimes in places we least expect!

Mrs. Alexander

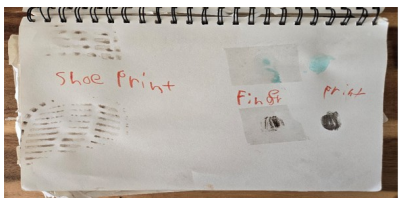


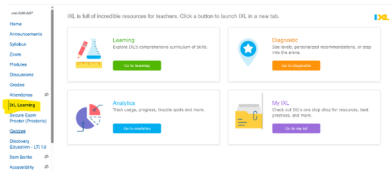
Learning in Action – From Math to Science Discoveries!
Students in Math 10-3, 20-3, and 20-2 have been exploring real-life applications of mathematics through measurement, unit pricing, currency exchange, surface area, volume, and trigonometry, connecting their learning to everyday situations such as shopping, cooking, packaging design, and construction. In Science Explorers, our young scientists became detectives, investigating fingerprints, shoe prints, and other clues to solve mysteries. They also explored light, colour, and optical illusions through exciting hands-on experiments. One of our elementary students even shared a shoe-print investigation, demonstrating curiosity and scientific observation skills!

IXL – Strengthening Math Skills, One Step at a Time!
Students can access IXL through Canvas to view their current skill levels and recommended skills for practice. These personalized recommendations help students focus on areas that need improvement, close learning gaps, and build confidence in math.

Staying on Track and Showcasing Creativity!
Regularly checking Canvas and completing outstanding assignments helps students stay on track. Projects carry significant weight in each unit and allow students to apply their learning while showcasing creativity and problem-solving skills.

“Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.”- Abigail Adams





Mr. Ash



Grade ⅝ Math Ash

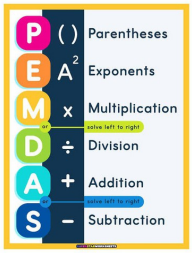
In math class, students have been learning how to tackle multi-step expressions using PEMDAS (Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication and Division from left to right, and Addition and Subtraction from left to right). By following these step-by-step rules, students are building confidence in breaking down complex number sentences so everyone arrives at the exact same answer.

Did You Know?

Unlike many mathematical formulas, the order of operations wasn't invented by a single person overnight, but rather evolved gradually over centuries starting in the 1500s and 1600s as algebraic notation developed. Mathematicians needed a universal agreement on how to read equations so that authors wouldn't have to write lengthy explanations at the start of every book. The catchy acronym "PEMDAS" itself wasn't formalized until the late 1800s and early 1900s, when the rise of standardized school textbooks created a need for easy memory tricks!

Practice at Home!

Looking for a fun way to reinforce these skills? Students can restore missing museum numbers while practicing their order of operations with the interactive PEMDAS Exhibit game on Math Playground, or customize which operations to practice on Math Mammoth's Online Order of Operations Game.



Ms. Hiemstra

During Art on Wednesdays, students have been exploring primary, secondary, and tertiary colours. They have been learning about colour theory through hands-on activities, including paint-mixing experiments that allowed them to discover how different colours can be created. We are working towards an artwork piece inspired by Ted Harrison that will be displayed at the Winter Concert.



Join Us

PDF **Santa Run 2026 Pledge Form.pdf** Download 375.4 KB

The holiday season is just around the corner, and we are excited to announce that our annual Third Schools Winter Concert will take place on Wednesday, December 16, in the evening!

Preparations are already underway, and we are looking forward to showcasing the talents of our Music and Drama students.

To help us plan the performances, we need all parents of students enrolled in Music or Drama to confirm whether their child will or will not be participating. Please take a moment to complete a form below, even if your child will not be attending.

Further details about the concert will be shared with families who confirm their participation. We look forward to a wonderful evening of music, drama, and celebration with our Third Schools community!

Concert Form


Tina Parish
Tina is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters