

Ready for Middle School Indicators: On the Path to College and Careers

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) partners with families and the community to ensure that all students develop the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in the 21st century. The school system's mission states that HCPSS expects each student to graduate ready "to participate responsibly in a diverse and changing world." Although there is no single pathway to college and careers, achieving the readiness indicators listed below gives students the college and career advantage.

Academic Achievement	Academic (Learning) Behaviors	Attendance and Punctuality	Extracurricular and Community Involvement	Responsible Behavior and Positive Attitude
Marked on or above grade level in reading and mathematics in grades 3-5 Scored proficient or advanced on reading and mathematics MSA/Mod-MSA/Alt-MSA for grades 3-5	Identified as exhibiting satisfactory or outstanding learning behaviors on the intermediate report card (grades 3-5)	Attended school 96% or more of 180 days Arrived at school on time each day	Participated in school and/or community activities of interest	Followed school-wide behavioral expectations

More Tips for Preparing Your Child for Success

- 1. Develop confidence and competence.** Tell your child you believe in him/her. Share your pride and positive expectations with your child. (Say, "I know you are capable. You can do it.")
- 2. Model peaceful ways to resolve disagreements.** (Say, "Excuse me." or "I'm sorry.")
- 3. Commend effort and persistence.** (Say: "Remember how you learned to play a new video game, and you really stuck with it, even though you were frustrated?")
- 4. Read and do math with your child.** Take advantage of the words found on food labels, boxes, and signs in the home and community. Have your child count objects and money and measure using guess and check strategies. (Say, "Guess how many raisins are in that box?")
- 5. Encourage your child to discover his or her talents and interests and to take risks.** (Say, "Would you like to learn to play ball?")
- 6. Develop responsibility and organization by giving your child age-appropriate tasks** such as:
 - Getting clothes and backpack ready for school the night before.
 - Using his or her own alarm clock to arrive at school on time.
 - Planning for visits to a friend's house, birthday parties, etc. to teach organization. (Ask, "What needs to happen first?")

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ECPS.10

Laying the Foundation for Grades 3-5 and Beyond

A Guide for Parents of Elementary School Students

You are Your Child's First Teacher

It matters what you do! You are your child's first teacher. You can help your child become a good thinker.

One way to do this is to ask thoughtful questions while he/she is doing his/her homework.

Before your child starts, say, "What are you doing? Do you have the supplies you need?"

During homework time, say, "If you get stuck and don't know what to do, how will you get help?"

After your child says the homework is complete, ask, "What did you learn?" Say, "Tell me how you got the right answer."

Reading and Mathematics Content Highlights for Students in Grades 3-5

READING

Students in grades 3-5 experience a wide range of reading materials. Attention is devoted to instruction of both literary and informational text. **Literary text** includes short stories, mysteries, realistic fiction, chapter books, fairy tales, myths, poetry and plays. **Informational text** includes social studies, health and science units. Students read textbooks, biographies, online materials and functional documents such as maps, recipes and directions. Intermediate students read silently at a conversational rate and automatically use a wide range of word-solving strategies while focusing on meaning. In oral reading, students continue to read with accuracy and expression. Readers learn to adjust their rate of reading based on the type of text and their purpose for reading. Readers learn to monitor their comprehension by recognizing when they lose understanding, and are then able to apply different strategies to regain meaning. Vocabulary instruction will focus on teaching students various ways to unlock the meaning of unfamiliar words. Students will learn to express their understanding of text orally and in writing.

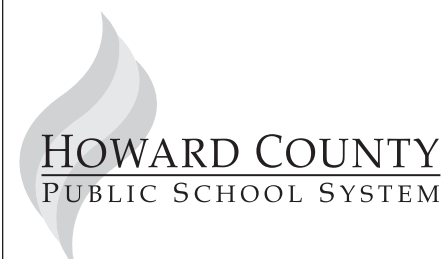
MATHEMATICS

Students in grades 3-5 learn about numbers and computation, geometry, data, measurement, and early algebra concepts.

The central focus of these grades is the development of number sense and early algebra concepts. Ideas about numbers include place value, comparison, computation, fractions and decimals. Algebraic concepts in these grades include expressions, equations, function tables, and finding unknowns.

Students also learn about characteristics of special polygons, how shapes can be moved, and how three-dimensional figures are related to two-dimensional shapes in geometry. Students measure attributes of objects including length, width, capacity, area, perimeter and volume, using tools and formulas. Interpreting graphs and finding mean, median, mode and range are included in the study of data.

How students think about and use mathematics skills is also important. In these grades, students learn to solve problems, develop reasoning, connect concepts, and represent and communicate their understanding orally and in writing.



Students entering third grade should be able to:

- Decode words by applying knowledge of the following sounds when attempting to read unknown words: long vowel sounds, r-controlled sounds, blends and diagraphs.
- Use knowledge of letters, words and sentences to read unknown words.
- Recognize at least 200 words automatically in second grade level text (sight words).
- Demonstrate fluent reading behavior by reading aloud with expression, reading at a rate that is conversational, and focusing on details only when meaning is unknown.
- Demonstrate an understanding of literary text by summarizing and identifying connections between pictures and story.
- Demonstrate an understanding of informational text by identifying the important facts and identifying a connection between illustration and text.
- Demonstrate a wide vocabulary by making associations between known and unknown words, identifying new words and word meanings, identifying antonyms and synonyms, and using newly learned words in conversation.

Tips for Preparing Students for Third Grade Reading at Home

- Turn reading into something special. Get children their own library card, read with them, and buy them books as gifts.
- Talk about what you see and do. Talk about everyday activities to build your child’s background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension.
- Read different types of books to expose your child to different types of text. Some children prefer nonfiction books.
- Encourage your child to summarize a story in a few sentences and to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend text.
- Use the time spent in the car for word play. Talk about words with multiple meanings, e.g., how “tail” means a part of an animal and “tale” is a type of story. How many other homonyms can your child think of? When children are highly familiar with the meaning of a word, they have less difficulty reading it.
- Visit these websites:
<http://readingrockets.org>
http://www.hcpss.org/parents/parent_tips.shtml
<http://www2.hcpss.org/met/media/currlinks/currlinksK-5.html>.

Tips for Preparing Students for Third Grade Mathematics at Home

- Count things.
- Practice estimating.
- Practice basic facts.
- Talk about numbers when you’re at a store or restaurant.
- Practice adding easy numbers like 14 + 33, in the car.
- Make up riddles about numbers. For example, “I’m thinking of a number that is greater than 80 but less than 90.”
- Make up numbers and ask children what number is 10 more, 10 less, 20 more, 20 less, etc.
- Play “make 10” or “make 100” by telling your child a number and asking what number is needed to make 10 or 100. For example, “I have 7. What do I need to make 10?” Or, “I have 40. What do I need to make 100?”
- Visit the Elementary Mathematics SMART pages for lots of great ideas at <http://smart.hcpss.wikispaces.net>.

Students entering third grade should be able to:

- Recall basic addition and subtraction facts quickly.
- Skip-count by 2, 5, 10 and 100.
- Read, write and make numbers to 999.
- Make combinations of 10 and 100.
- Compare numbers by telling which is greater.
- Add and subtract two and three-digit numbers.
- Identify simple polygons by their attributes.
- Estimate quantities.
- Recognize if their answer is reasonable.
- Describe their understanding orally.
- Solve simple word problems involving addition or subtraction.
- Recognize patterns with shapes or numbers.
- Read and understand bar graphs and pictographs.

Learning Behaviors on the Report Card

Listed below are the behaviors that are important to academic learning. These behaviors are evaluated on the elementary report card.

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|---|--|
| • Responds appropriately to directions | • Recognizing rights of others with courtesy |
| • Follows established rules | • Takes appropriate risks |
| • Persists when thinking through problems | • Completes classroom assignments |
| • Exercises self-control | • Listens attentively |
| • Works with accuracy and precision | • Completes homework on time |
| • Works cooperatively with others | • Writes legibly |