



3rd Grade General Studies Purpose Statement Paulette Doulatshahi, 3rd Grade teacher

Education is a path of continued exploration. Learning is the success each student feels when new challenges are met and overcome. Nitzanim's classroom is an environment that nurtures a love of learning and sets solid foundations. Discovery and questioning are an integral part of the curriculum, along with appropriate vocabulary and skills acquisition. Each student in Nitzamin is challenged, yet confident and responsible throughout the learning process. Our curriculum and behavior plans are structured to allow students to share in the responsibility for their own learning and learning environment. This includes their desire for enrichment, behavior parameters and rewards, and becoming more skilled at their own time management. All learning is *interconnected*, not only in General Studies but also between the Jewish and General Studies' curricula.

In Language Arts, the *foundation* is the use of literacy tools: decoding, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, figurative language, and other literary elements. These are applied in oral language, listening, reading, and writing. Sentence and paragraph structure is introduced and practiced in the four types of paragraphs: narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. Oral and reading comprehension are emphasized, with students having opportunities to listen to literature being read aloud, to read aloud to a partner, to use Readers' Theatre or plays, and in whole-class reading. Students have opportunities to read both assigned and self-selected literature. They then *broaden their study* by reading, analyzing, and sometimes even producing themselves the many different *genres* of literature, classified as *fiction* (fairy tales, fables, folk tales/tall tales, legends/ myths, realistic fiction, historical fiction, mysteries, plays and poetry) and *non-fiction* (journals, magazines, biographies and autobiographies).

In Math, students rely heavily on their addition and subtraction Math facts, and acquire new ones in multiplication and division. Multiplication is practiced in class regularly, but also reinforced at home. *Grade level topics* studied include: place value; money; measurement (in time, metric units, perimeter/area, liquid measure, weight and temperature); multiplication facts; division facts; geometry and graphing (space figures, plane figures, segments, angles, congruent figures, lines of symmetry, tallies and bar graphs, picture graphs, and identifying patterns); division with quotients and remainders; fractions and decimals; and customary unit measurement (cups, pints, quarts, gallons, ounces and pounds). The "*language of Math*" is analyzed and incorporated throughout our curriculum, and the "*Problem of the Week*" is given most weeks to analyze and apply Math concepts learned, as well as to practice writing in and about Math. Further enrichment is given, as in *Math Madness Morning* at SJCS.

In Third Grade Social Studies, the students' understanding of community provides them with a *foundation* to study other communities and cultures. Vocabulary, map skills, and geography will be part of this foundation to ensure full comprehension.

Our first *area of discovery* is *Seattle*, followed by *Ancient Greece*. A visit to Pike Place Market is planned at the end of our *Seattle* unit. Integrating Language Arts and Social Studies, students in Nitzanim receive *Time For Kids* news magazine, monthly *TFK: Go Places* magazine, as well as the opportunity to complete a passport with visas from the places they have visited online at <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/>.

As a *foundation* in Science, students are introduced to the scientific process in SJCS' Science Lab. Students improve their scientific vocabulary, and observational skills and techniques, in order to express or document their findings. Students study *basics* such as land forms, ecology, plant life and animal life, and major units include *Salmon, Food Chemistry*, and our *Environment*. Third grade also participates in the Science Fair by writing and presenting biographies of famous scientists. A tour of the Issaquah Fish Hatchery and, of course, the yearly trip to my home to view native plants are planned to enrich their science experience.

Third grade has its own Website, which is used for web searches, web quests, and to access many "Cool Sites" for learning and enrichment.

Students are taught to look at art and, by using the concepts of Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), *understand* what they see. Their *foundation* is vocabulary acquisition, along with study in the four main areas of DBAE: aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and finally, art production. Areas of *further exploration* include *Art and the Environment* and *Faith Ringgold*. Third grade completes a salmon mural, each time unique, educational, and beautiful, at the end of the salmon science unit.