

Curriculum and Methods

Saint Elizabeth Regional School offers a curriculum that meets State requirements and follows the guidelines of the Diocese of Allentown. Religion is the core of our curriculum and religion text and materials are updated regularly. Parents are the primary educators of their children, and their involvement is encouraged in the school.

Primary Grades K - 2

Religion – Religious concepts are developed through various activities that allow students to interact. Puppets, music, art, church visits, and guest speakers are used to enhance the learning environment and to stimulate discussion and understanding as the students learn about God the Creator and Jesus, the model for Christian living. Children learn about the Sacrament of Baptism and prepare to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. The Second Step program provides an opportunity for students to practice solving interpersonal problems in a non-judgmental and non-violent atmosphere.

Mathematics – Early mathematics skills are developed with an abundant use of manipulatives. Overhead transparencies are used regularly to demonstrate key concepts and to introduce group work activities. The National Standards are developed through the use of hands-on activities. Windows on Math, First in Math, and other interactive websites are used for motivation and practice. A Mathematics folder is provided for each student to demonstrate their problem solving skills.

Reading and Language Arts – The reading program integrates all aspects of Language Arts. Teachers model reading with children's literature using big books, trade books, and anthologies. Phonics, sight words, and vocabulary skills are interwoven throughout the lessons. Learning centers and small group work are integral elements of the program. Various activities are used to accommodate different learning styles of the students. Creative writing is presented and developed in the second grade. Varied samples of writings are placed into each student's writing portfolio, which then passes to all subsequent grades

Science – Students are introduced to basic Life, Physical, and Earth Sciences. Students are also instructed in the development of good basic health habits that emphasize nutrition and hygiene. Lessons are taught through weekly discussion, activities, and experiments. In keeping with new guidelines, daily physical activity will now be incorporated into lessons.

Social Studies – The focus in these grades is on family and community. Social Studies is incorporated into other subjects and includes book readings, worksheets, map skills, and weekly current event magazines. The Nystrom Program is utilized to reinforce vocabulary and community issues.

Intermediate Grades 3 - 4

Religion – The focus is placed on the child's understanding of the Church and the Christian Community. Instruction is provided to help each student form a Christian conscience and live the moral values taught by the Catholic Church. Frequent use of the Bible, prayers, meditations, art projects, music, and discussions helps children actively participate in their learning. The Second Step program provides an opportunity for students to practice solving interpersonal problems in a non-judgmental and non-violent atmosphere.

Mathematics – Students build on prior knowledge and continue to use manipulatives to problem solve and to develop a good understanding of new material. Multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals are being introduced and developed. Mental mathematics and estimation is practiced regularly. Journal writing is incorporated throughout the lessons, while *Windows on Math*, *First in Math*, and other interactive websites are used to enrich and reinforce concepts. Mathematics folders are provided for each student to demonstrate their problem-solving skills.

Reading and Language Arts – Literature-based reading focuses on fiction and non-fiction selections. Both whole and small groups activities are used to instruct all levels of learning. Trade books are used to reinforce and enrich young readers. English, Grammar, and Writing correlate with the reading series. Using the writing process, students are building on the many styles of communication. Required writing samples continue to be preserved in the writing folders and passed on to each successive grade.

Science – In these grades a greater emphasis is placed on science that includes topics on Physical, Earth, and Life Sciences, and the Human Body. The hands-on approach is used regularly to introduce and reinforce the various areas of Science. We utilize visuals, *Windows on Science*, experiments, computer programs, and presentations through the 4-H Club to motivate and enhance learning.

Social Studies – Historical and modern communities are at the heart of the curriculum. Students use a combination of textbooks, posters, maps, videos, current events, and individual and group projects to focus on the United States and Pennsylvania in particular. Unitedstreaming.com is used to enhance understanding of daily lessons. Computer research is introduced, modeled and encouraged to assist in completion of projects.

[Middle Grades 5 - 6](#)

Religion – Students are encouraged to develop their knowledge of Catholic doctrine and faith through lecture, group discussion, prayer, service projects, bible study, song, videos, and guest speakers. Understanding is enhanced through such activities as role-playing and related creative writing assignments. The Second Step program continues to be utilized to encourage and practice interpersonal problem solving.

Mathematics – Problem-solving and critical thinking skills are emphasized at this level. Students grow proficient in knowledge of concepts such as fractions, decimals, percents, and integers, while utilizing cooperative learning, peer tutoring, manipulative, graphing, games, computer software, and small group project assignments. Interactive websites are used to enhance understanding and provide skills practice. Mathematics problem-solving folders, which follow each student from grade to grade, contain selected examples of each student's developing skills.

Reading – Integration of the highest quality literature with creative exploration techniques allows students to develop a lifelong love of reading. Visits to the school library, role-playing, dramatization, discussion, and creative writing assignments help to establish the relationship between self-expression and literary evaluations. Students continue to add their most exemplary creative writing assignments to their folders.

Language Arts – Grammar and writing skills are fine-tuned through instructional techniques such as peer teaching, brainstorming, story webs, spelling bees, games, and puzzles. Students are required to complete writing examples modeling specific literary styles and incorporating correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Science – Students in grades five and six learn about living things, their systems and cell structures, animal adaptation, flower reproduction, ecology, and eco systems. A section on Physical Science centers on matter, motion, forms of energy, and simple machines. Earth Science topics include climate, weather, and astronomy. Understanding is reinforced through the use of unitedstreaming.com resources, interactive Internet websites, laser disc programs, *Time for Kids*, demonstrations, hands-on activities and related research projects. Scientific method is introduced and used to establish an organized way of solving proposed problems. Significant related current events are explored. A concentrated drug education program (D.A.R.E.) is implemented in sixth grade by the local police department.

Social Studies – Fifth grade emphasizes the explorers and early American history, including Native Americans, establishment of the thirteen colonies, the American Revolutionary War, and the Civil War. The sixth grade theme is ancient civilizations. Instructional techniques employed include cooperative learning groups, videos, current events, guest speakers, Weekly Reader, unitedstreaming.com resources, web-based research, and field trips. Providing discussion opportunities stimulates awareness of historical events.

[Junior High Grades 7 - 8](#)

Religion – At this level, students focus on building their relationship with Jesus through the Gospels and expanding their understanding of morality. A combination of textbooks, Bible reading, group discussion, role-playing, and creative projects allows a variety of opportunities for students to incorporate Christian values into their daily experiences. The Second Step program continues to be utilized to teach, encourage, and provide practice of interpersonal skills.

Mathematics – Prentice Hall Mathematics Course II and Course III reinforce and build on many skills acquired in fifth and sixth grades as well as introduce and develop the basis for algebra and geometry. Students frequently apply these skills to real life situations, further reinforcing their relevance. Algebra I is taught in eighth grade to students who have excelled all through the grades in mathematics class. Students continue to add to their portfolio-advanced techniques of problem solving.

Reading – Students are exposed to varied forms of literature, including short stories, drama, prose, poetry, myths, legends, and novels. A theme or genre format is employed to aid in understanding. Students keep journals in which they answer questions and complete related writing activities. Students use vocabulary books with a variety of assignments to enhance their knowledge of word usage. Students also continue to build their portfolio of creative writing.

Language Arts – Grammar skills and content knowledge are reviewed and reinforced. The mechanics of creative writing are studied in depth to encourage improvement in all aspects of writing. In eighth grade the students develop an in-depth ability to recognize and use complex sentences and verbals.

Science – Students in seventh grade study life processes and complete labs relating to functions of living things. The human body and health related issues comprise an important portion of the curriculum. Eighth grade students explore Earth and its atmosphere, as well as the other planets in our solar system. They complete related labs and appropriate research projects. Lessons frequently include opportunities for web-based research as well as enriching video experiences through www.unitedstreaming.com and www.NetTrekker.com.

Social Studies – Seventh grade social studies is a comprehensive trip around the globe covering cultures, climates, landforms, and politics. Current events are an integral part of the curriculum and students are encouraged to explore the many opportunities for learning outside the classroom. In eighth grade students follow the development of the United States from initial European exploration to the Civil War era. Lectures, discussion, debates, cooperative group learning and web-based research and activities are utilized to foster enthusiasm for learning.

Computer – Saint Elizabeth Regional School has a computer lab and a computer instructor. Kindergarten through grade eight have one period a week in the computer lab. The instruction that is given at each grade level builds on the knowledge learned from the previous year. In kindergarten through grade three, the emphasis is on developing keyboarding skills that are used in word processing and graphic drawing. Students in grades four through eight maintain skills and learn to create spreadsheets, databases, and multi-media presentations. An interactive whiteboard and websites have enriched the technology learning experiences in computer class. Kindergarten through eight, have two computers available in the classroom. One computer has Internet access and the other is equipped with age-appropriate learning software.

Specials – Art, music, Spanish, and physical education are the special classes offered each week to all grades. The curriculum for these specials are provided by the Office of Education or formulated by the teacher of each area mentioned.



Assessment – The Early Prevention of Childhood Failure test is given before entrance to Kindergarten. Each year the Iowa Test of Basic Skills is given throughout the Diocese of Allentown in March to Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Grades 3, 5, and 7 are given the Iowa Cognitive test each spring. Test results are communicated to parents and conferences are available upon request.

Academic Code – Honors are awarded at Saint Elizabeth Regional School according to individual effort, conduct, and achievement. The following is the criteria in grades five through eight for honors:

Distinguished Honors	95 and up for all major subjects with an average of 95 or above.
First Honors	90 and up for all major subjects with an average of 90 or above.
Second Honors	85 and up for all major subjects with an average of 85 or above.

Behavior and Effort

Distinguished Honors	O - Outstanding and VG - Very Good
First Honors	VG - Very Good
Second Honors	VG - Very Good, G - Good, and S - Satisfactory

Homework Policy – Homework not only includes written assignments but also study. Good study skills are vital in any academic setting. Students in grades 3 through 8 are expected to write their assignments in their assignment book each day and to complete homework and assignments when due. The amount of homework will vary from student to student. Generally the average amount of homework time would be as follows:

Grade 1 – 15 minutes	Grade 5 – 1 hour and 15 minutes
Grade 2 – 30 minutes	Grade 6 – 1 hour and 30 minutes
Grade 3 – 45 minutes	Grade 7 – 2 hours
Grade 4 – 1 hour	Grade 8 – 2 hours

Tests are always expected to be signed by parents. It is the responsibility of the student to make up any work missed because of absence.