Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

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To:	Somerville Public Schools School Committee
From:	Dr. Jessica Boston Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Academics
Cc:	Dr. Ruben Carmona, Superintendent Kathleen Seward, Coordinator of K-8 Humanities Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Paula O'Sullivan, Coordinator of K-8 STEM Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Date:	May 19, 2025
Subject:	Quarterly Academic Update: Curriculum Implementation for the 25-26 School Year

Purpose:
In alignment with the SPS Strategic Plan, our top academic priority is to adopt and implement high-quality, evidence-based, and culturally responsive curriculum. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the progress of the curriculum implementation at our elementary schools planned for the 2025-2026 school year. *This memo focuses on the English Language Art and Math curriculum that all students will receive in their classrooms (tier one).* All curriculum work is done in partnership and constant collaboration with our Multilingual Learner Education and Special Education Departments.

Background:
SPS started a robust pk-8 curriculum rollout plan in the 2023-2024 school year. Since then, teams of educators and administrators have partnered to work on successful curriculum launches, including extensive professional development, unit previews throughout the school year, targeted coaching, and the development and purchasing of new materials. This year (2024-2025 school year), we implemented the Fishtank curriculum in all grades 6-8 ELA classrooms. In math, we implemented the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum in all grades 3-5 classrooms with some early adopters in grades K-2.

Implementation of curriculum across subject areas is intentionally staggered. This is necessary to ensure that all educators and administrators have the knowledge, tools, and resources to successfully implement the plan. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Curriculum Rollout Timeline

Grade Levels	School Year 2024-2025	School Year 2025-2026	School Year 2026-2027
Kindergarten - Grade 2	ELA: No Curricular Changes	ELA: Early Adopters of the ELA Curriculum	ELA: Year 1 of Full Implementation of New ELA Curriculum
	Math: Early Adopters of IM	Math: Year 1 of Full Implementation of IM	Math: Continued Use & Monitor IM
Grade 3 - Grade 5	ELA: Curriculum Selection Committee	ELA: Year 1 of Full Implementation of New ELA Curriculum	ELA: Continued Use & Monitor of ELA Curriculum
	Math: Year 1 of Full Implementation of IM	Math: Continued Use & Monitor IM	Math: Continued Use & Monitor IM
Grade 6 - Grade 8	ELA: Year 1 of Full Implementation of Fishtank	ELA: Continued Use & Monitor Fishtank	ELA: Continued Use & Monitor Fishtank
	Math: Continued Use & Monitor IM	Math: Continued Use & Monitor IM	Math: Continued Use & Monitor IM

Curriculum Selection in Progress	Year 1 of Implementation	Study & Monitor Implementation

English Language Arts:

Curriculum Implementation

- **6th-8th Grade Fishtank Implementation:** Educators in 6th-8th grade are completing their first year of Fishtank implementation. It has been exciting to see students across the district engaging in deep discussions about the same high quality texts. We collaborated with the Learning Acceleration Network on our implementation, and this included classroom walkthroughs at the three target schools. The focus of PD over the year shifted from unit level planning to individual lesson planning.
- **Literacy Leadership Team With Support from Hill For Literacy:** This year, we formed a Literacy Leadership Team to review highly rated curriculum. We partnered with Hill for Literacy to support this work. This builds off our important work from last year which included surveying all staff and completing an extensive needs assessment. As a result, next year we are excited to implement a new, research-based curriculum.
- **Grades K-5 Curriculum Selection:** The final three curricula being considered are Imagine Learning: EL Education, Wit & Wisdom, and My View. Fundations is also being considered for third grade for foundational skills. The curriculum selection committee is making their final selections of the curriculum and will present a recommendation to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Academics by Friday, May 30.
- **Grades K-2 Curriculum Implementation:** The committee that has formed this year is selecting a K-5 curriculum. Since grades K-2 will be implementing Illustrative Mathematics in

2025-2026, they will be implementing the new ELA curriculum starting in 2026-2027. We are exploring the idea of having some early adopters with the new ELA curriculum in 2025-2026.

Professional Development

- **New Curriculum Training:** All grade 3-5 teachers will have an optional Professional Development this summer for implementation of the new curriculum. There will be additional professional development in August. In addition, all department meeting PD time will be used for new curriculum training for teachers in grades 3-5.
- **Unit Previews:** Unit previews will continue throughout the school year to help educators become familiar and plan for each upcoming unit.
- **Common Planning Time:** Educators may utilize Common Planning Time to collaborate with colleagues before units start and during units to enhance planning, look at student work, and norm on assessments and grading.
- **PD for Admin:** All Administrators who supervise SEU Unit A members received PD on Structured Literacy Routines and the Fishtank curriculum during All Team meetings.
- **MA Dyslexia Institute:** A team of educators along with Kathleen Seward participated in the MA Dyslexia Institute which culminated with the creation of a Dyslexia Action Plan for our district. Much of the work of the institute and the plan is establishing clear and consistent tier one instruction and assessment for all students in order to reach the goal of having all students reading fluently by the end of third grade. For more information, the plan is linked on the academics section of the SPS Website under "Resources."

Additional Considerations

- **Community Engagement:** Kathleen Seward presented about the curriculum selection process at School Site Council Meetings (as prescribed by the SPS Curriculum Review Process) and to the Somerville SEPAC. See Appendix A.

Mathematics:

Curriculum Implementation

- **Full Implementation in Grades K-2:** In the 2022-2023 school year, a math curriculum selection team selected Illustrative Mathematics for the K-5 math curriculum. Next year, we will conclude the implementation phase of the Illustrative Mathematics Curriculum with full implementation in grades K-2.

Professional Development

- **Unit Previews:** All K-2 department professional development time will be focused on unit previews for the upcoming IM unit. These unit previews are facilitated by our partners at Lesley University. They provide time for educators to become familiar with and collaboratively plan for upcoming units.
- **Common Planning Time:** Educators may use Common Planning Time with their District and School Teams to enhance planning, look at student work, and norm on assessments and grading.
- **Coaching:** Grades K-2 will be our coaching priority for the math coaches to support this curriculum implementation. Coaches also continue to adapt materials to support grades K-2 based on learning from this year's early adopters.
- **PD for Admin:** All Administrators who supervise SEU Unit A members will continue to receive PD aligned to Illustrative Mathematics. Next year, the focus will be on K-2 pedagogy for admin PD in math.

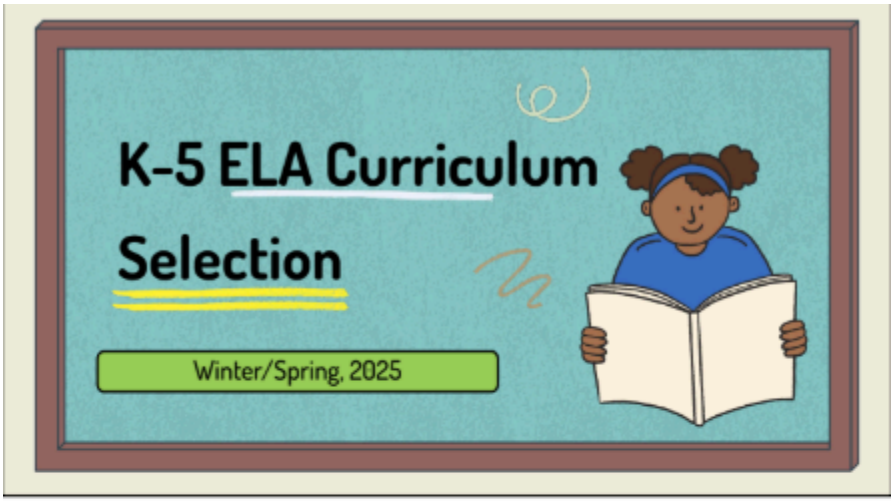
Additional Considerations

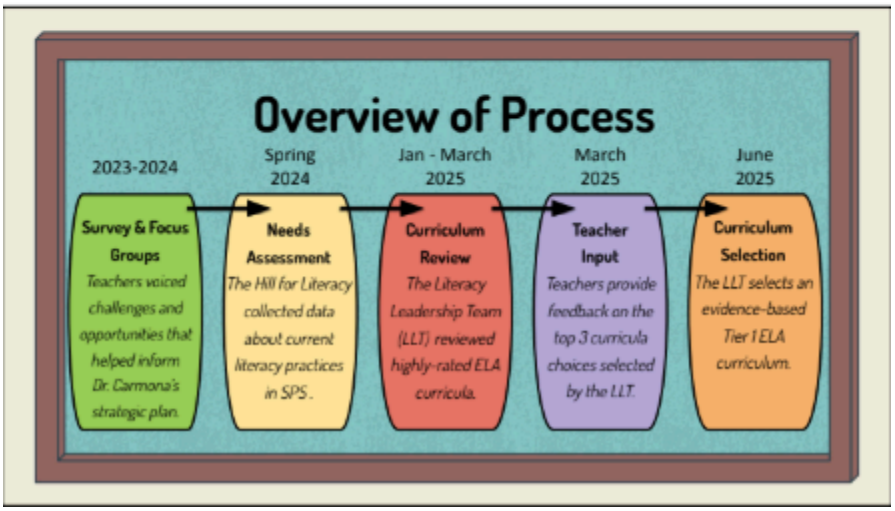
- **Community Engagement:** Paula O'Sullivan and the math coaches led three parent/guardian information sessions for grades 3-5 Illustrative Math. They will continue these next year and expand to grades K-2 as well. In addition, Paula hosted, along with the Equity & Excellence Department and SFLC, two community film screenings of "Counted Out," a documentary about the importance of numeracy for economic and civic engagement.

Challenges

- **There are currently multiple curricular rollouts** across subject areas. SPS curriculum leaders are mindful about not implementing too much at one time.
- **Time for professional development** and coaching to ensure a smooth curriculum rollout always presents a challenge. We currently address this challenge with school day professional development, and are exploring other ways in which we can ensure all educators and administrators have sufficient professional development and training.

Appendix A - K-5 ELA Curriculum Selection Presentation





Vision

Through high-quality curriculum and instruction, students will be confident, strategic, and independent readers, writers, listeners, and speakers who are able to use their literacy skills in and beyond the classroom and throughout their lives.

Mission

We are committed to ensuring literacy learning opportunities that provide equitable access to diverse, culturally affirming, and enriching literacy experiences. We are dedicated to using high-quality, systematic, evidence-based curricula and practices that develop foundational skills and foster higher-order thinking to support and empower all students to achieve grade-level performance across the four domains of language: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.


Data Sources
edreports
CURATE
THE READING LEAGUE
Publishers
GREAT MINDS
SAVVAS
imagine learning
Education


Perfection is like a unicorn...
mythical and impossible to find.
THERE IS NO PERFECT CURRICULUM, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHICH ONES HAVE GOOD BONES AND WHICH ONES DON'T.


The LLT reviewed 7 highly-rated ELA curricula...
Amplify.
CKLA
Benchmark
ADVANCE
imagine learning
Education
Reading
myView
LITERACY
Wonders


and chose 3 to look at more closely.
Amplify.
CKLA
Benchmark
ADVANCE
imagine learning
Education
Reading
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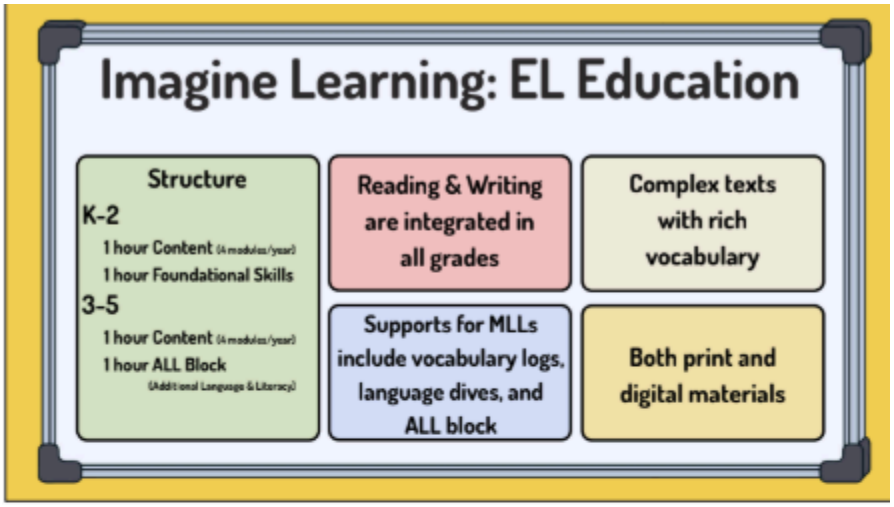
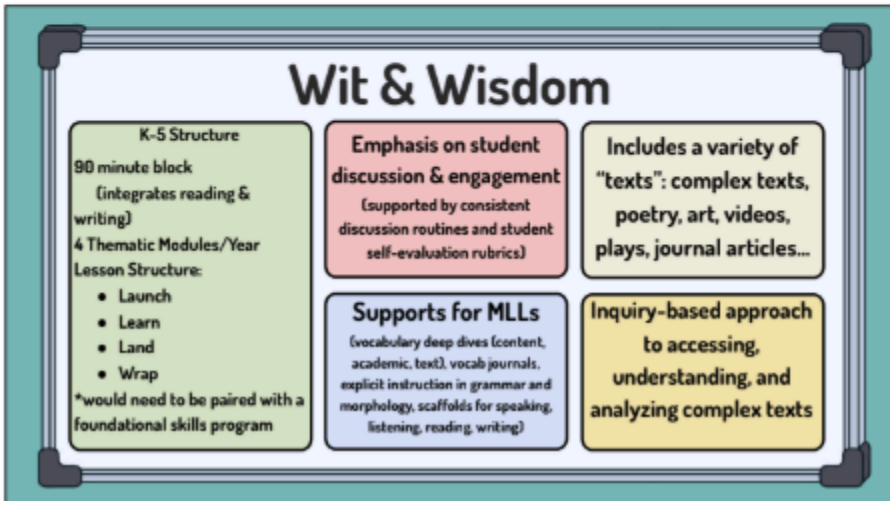
LITERACY
Wonders


Imagine Learning: EL Education
Structure
K-2
1 hour Content (4 modules/year)
1 hour Foundational Skills
3-5
1 hour Content (4 modules/year)
1 hour ALL Block
(Additional Language & Literacy)
Reading & Writing are integrated in all grades
Complex texts with rich vocabulary
Supports for MLLs include vocabulary logs, language dives, and ALL block
Both print and digital materials


Wit & Wisdom
K-5 Structure
90 minute block
(integrates reading & writing)
4 Thematic Modules/Year
Lesson Structure:
Launch
Learn
Land
Wrap
*would need to be paired with a foundational skills program
Emphasis on student discussion & engagement
(supported by consistent discussion routines and student self-evaluation rubrics)
Includes a variety of "texts": complex texts, poetry, art, videos, plays, journal articles...
Supports for MLLs
(vocabulary deep dives (content, academic, text), vocab journals, explicit instruction in grammar and morphology, scaffolds for speaking, listening, reading, writing)
Inquiry-based approach to accessing, understanding, and analyzing complex texts

Wit & Wisdom

Wit & Wisdom is a **content knowledge building** curriculum.
It does not include a foundational skills component.
If adopted, we would need a foundational skills program such as...

fundations®
Wilson Language Basics
(updated version)

OR

UFLI FOUNDATIONS

Wit & Wisdom

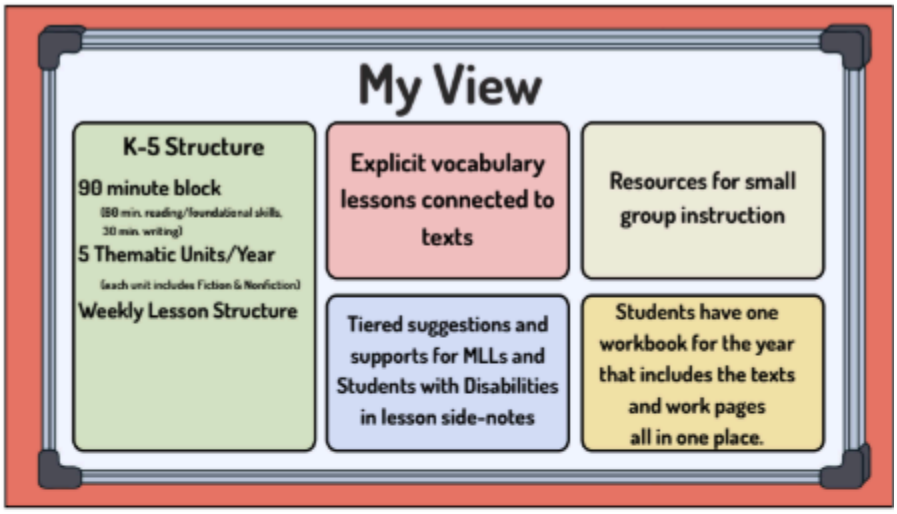
Foundational Skills + **GEODES** + **WIT & WISDOM®** = **Skilled Reading & Writing**

recognition of printed words

practice foundational skills alongside knowledge building

build knowledge and understanding of language, words, and ideas

skilled comprehension and creation of written language


My View
K-5 Structure
90 minute block
(60 min. reading/foundational skills,
30 min. writing)
5 Thematic Units/Year
(each unit includes Fiction & Nonfiction)
Weekly Lesson Structure
Explicit vocabulary lessons connected to texts
Resources for small group instruction
Tiered suggestions and supports for MLLs and Students with Disabilities in lesson side-notes
Students have one workbook for the year that includes the texts and work pages all in one place.


Questions?

Appendix B - Illustrative Math Grade 3-5 Info Session Slides

SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Welcome!
Illustrative Math
Grades 3-5 Info Session

You may want to have paper and pencil available!

Why *Illustrative Math* for K-5?

Recommended by SPS Math Curriculum Selection Committee in 2023:

- Problem-based curriculum that builds students' conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and problem solving skills.
- Has frequent opportunities for hands-on learning, student discourse, and group work.
- Creates a coherent K-8 math program.
- Aligned with the MA Curriculum Framework.

Illustrative Mathematics. LEARN MATH FOR LIFE

Agenda

- Introduction to *Illustrative Math* (IM)
- Addition and Subtraction
- Multiplication and Division
- Supporting Your Student At Home
- Questions

IM Grades K-5 Timeline Overview

Selection Year 2022-23	Year 1 2023-34	Year 2 2024-25	Year 3 2025-26
Curriculum Committee recommended *Illustrative Mathematics*.	Grades 3-5 early adopters	**All grades 3-5 educators teach IM.** Kindergarten - grade 2 early adopters in some schools	All K-5 educators implement IM.

IM is already the curriculum in grades 6-8.

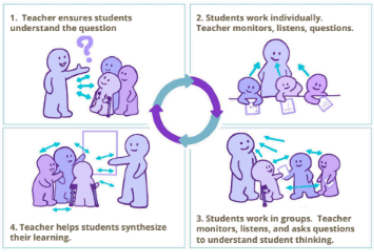
Illustrative Math and Problem-Based Instruction

- All students are capable learners of grade-level mathematics.
- Students learn math by doing math.
- Students are encouraged to use their current understanding of math, their lived experiences, and the world around them as resources for problem solving.

***MATH* HASN'T CHANGED ... THE WAY WE ASK STUDENTS TO ENGAGE WITH IT HAS!**

Addition and Subtraction

IM: The Student Experience



Addition and Subtraction: Prior to Grade 3

Grade Level	Range of Numbers
Kindergarten	Introduction to addition and subtraction **within 10.** • **Fluency within 5**
1st Grade	Addition and subtraction **within 20.** • **Fluency within 10** Begin adding and subtracting **within 100.**
2nd Grade	Addition and subtraction **within 100.** • **Fluency within 20** Begin adding and subtracting **within 1000.**

Fluency Expectations for Grades 3-5

Grade Level	Range of Numbers
3rd Grade	Addition and subtraction **within 1000.** • **Fluency within 1000** Introduction to multiplication and division **within 100.** • **Fluency with products of two single-digit numbers and related division facts**
4th Grade	Addition and subtraction **within 1,000,000.** • **Fluency with multi-digit numbers.** Introduction to multiplication and division of multi-digit numbers.
5th Grade	Multiplication and division of multi-digit numbers. • **Fluency with multiplying multi-digit numbers**

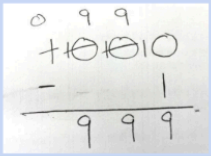
Addition and Subtraction: Strategies and Algorithms in Grades 3-5

1000 - 1

Student A:

"That is 1 less than 1000. So it's 999."

Student B:



Andre has $1,000. He spends $1. How much money does he have left?

How would you solve this problem?

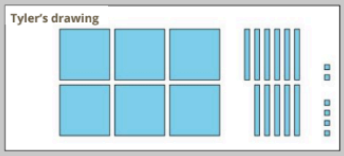
Lin had 362 blocks. Then she got 354 more blocks. How many blocks does Lin have now?

How would you solve this problem?

Grade 3 Addition

362 + 354

Tyler's drawing

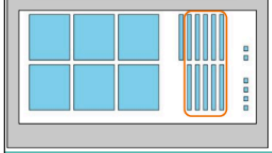


Lin's method

300 + 60 + 2
\+ 300 + 50 + 4
600 + 110 + 6

Grade 3 Addition

300 + 60 + 2
\+ 300 + 50 + 4
600 + 110 + 6



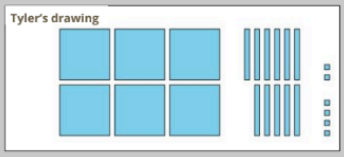
U.S. Standard Algorithm for Addition:

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
362	1 362	1 362
+ 354	+ 354	+ 354
6	16	716

Grade 3 Addition

Let's try some math! Use either method to solve **263 + 178**

Tyler's drawing



Lin's method

300 + 60 + 2
\+ 300 + 50 + 4
600 + 110 + 6

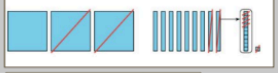
There are 391 people at the museum. There are 215 people on the first floor. The rest are on the second floor. How many people are on the second floor?

How would you solve this problem?

Grade 3 Subtraction

These students are solving **391 - 215**

Jada's drawing



Clare's algorithm

$$\begin{array}{r} {}^{8}3\,{}^{11}9\,\not{1} \\ -\ 2\ 1\ 5 \end{array}$$

Kiran's algorithm

$$\begin{array}{rrrr} & {}^{80} & {}^{11} & \\ 300 & +\ \not{90} & +\ \not{1} & \\ -\ 200 & +\ 10 & +\ 5 & \end{array}$$

In Grade 3, students are not expected to use a specific strategy. The goal is to **develop and understand strategies for adding and subtracting within 1,000!**

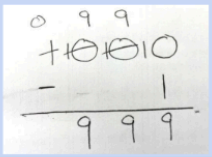
Addition and Subtraction: Strategies and Algorithms in Grades 3-5

1000 - 1

Student A:

"That is 1 less than 1000. So it's 999."

Student B:



Grade 4 Addition & Subtraction

These are strategies for solving **17,375 + 14,024:**

Strategy A:

$$\begin{array}{rrrrrrrrrr} & 10{,}000 & + & 7{,}000 & + & 300 & + & 70 & + & 5 \\ + & 10{,}000 & + & 4{,}000 & + & 0 & + & 20 & + & 4 \\ \hline & 20{,}000 & + & 11{,}000 & + & 300 & + & 90 & + & 9 \quad = 31{,}399 \end{array}$$

In Grade 4, the goal is to develop a conceptual understanding and procedural fluency of the **U.S. standard algorithm for addition and subtraction within 1,000,000.**

Strategy B:

$$\begin{array}{r} {}^{1} \\ 1\ 7,\ 3\ 7\ 5 \\ +\ \ 1\ 4,\ 0\ 2\ 4 \\ \hline 3\ 1,\ 3\ 9\ 9 \end{array}$$

Multiplication and Division

Multiplication and Division: Prior to Grade 3

Grade 2

5 + 5 + 5 + 5 =20

Introduction to **rectangular arrays.**
- Write equations to show the **total is sum of equal addends.**

Introduction to **skip counting.**
- Skip count by **2s, 5s, 10s, and 100s** within 1,000.

"5, 10, 15, 20"

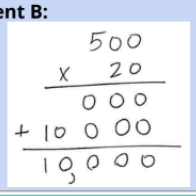
Multiplication and Division: Strategies and Algorithms in Grades 3-5

500 x 20

Student A:

"I know 500 x 2 is 1,000 so the product of 500 x 20 is ten times greater than 1,000. The answer is 10,000."

Student B:



There are 20 people. Each person has $500. How much money do they have all together?

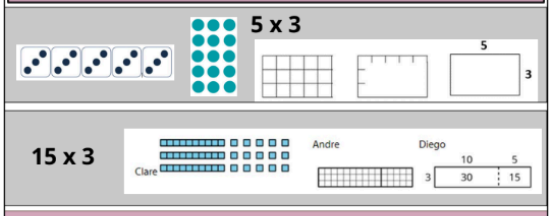
How would you solve this problem?

15 x 3

217 x 8

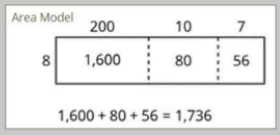
How would you solve this problem? **(Choose one)**

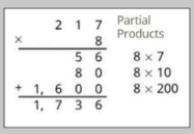
Grade 3 Multiplication



In Grade 3, students are not expected to use a specific strategy. The goal is to **develop and understand strategies for multiplying within 100!**

Grade 4 Multiplication

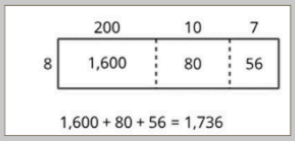


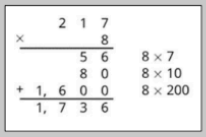


Let's try some math! Use either method to solve **45 x 3** or **245 x 3.**

Grade 4 Multiplication

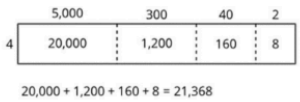
217 x 8

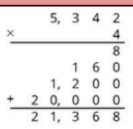




Grade 4 Multiplication

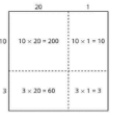
5,342 x 4



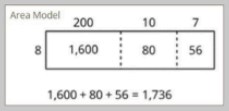


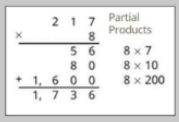
In Grade 4, the goal is for students to develop and use **multiplication strategies based on place value and the properties of operations.**

21 x 13

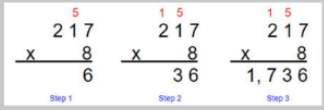


Grade 5 Multiplication





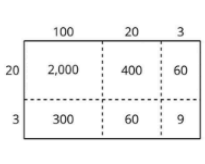
U.S Standard Algorithm for Multiplication:

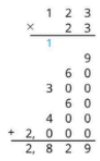


There are 78 players on 3 football teams. Each team has the same amount of players. How many players are on each team?

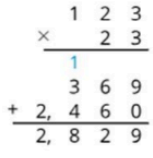
How would you solve this problem?

Grade 5 Multiplication





123 x 23

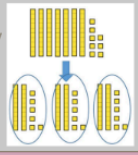


In Grade 5, the goal is for students to multiply multi-digit whole numbers using the **U.S. standard algorithm for multiplication.**

Grade 3 Division

78 ÷ 3

Jada's strategy



Kiran's strategy

$3 \times 10 = 30$
$3 \times 10 = 30$
$3 \times 6 = 18$
$10 + 10 + 6 = 26$

Clare's strategy

$3 \times 20 = 60$
$3 \times 6 = 18$
$20 + 6 = 26$

In Grade 3, students are not expected to use a specific strategy. The goal is to **develop and understand strategies for multiplying and dividing within 100.**

465 ÷ 5

How would you solve this problem?

Grade 5 Division

Breaking Apart 448

$160 \div 16 = 10$
$160 \div 16 = 10$
$80 \div 16 = 5$
$48 \div 16 = 3$
$448 \div 16 = 28$

Partial Quotients

```
      28
      3
      5
     20
16 ) 448
   −320   (20 × 16)
    128
   − 80   (5 × 16)
     48
   − 48   (3 × 16)
      0
```

In Grade 5, students find whole number quotients **using strategies based on place value, the properties of operations, and/or the relationship between multiplication and division.**

Grade 4 Division

465 ÷ 5

Breaking Apart 465

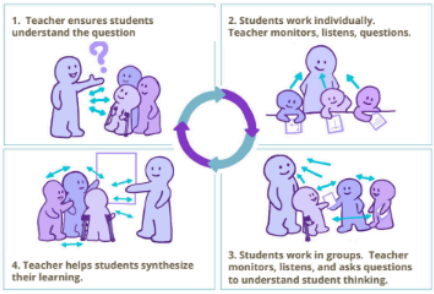
$400 \div 5 = 80$
$60 \div 5 = 12$
$5 \div 5 = 1$
$465 \div 5 = 93$

Partial Quotients

```
      93
      1
     12
     80
5 ) 465
  − 400   5 × 80
     65
  − 60    5 × 12
      5
  −  5    5 × 1
      0
```

In Grade 4, students find whole number quotients (sometimes with remainders) **using strategies based on place value, the properties of operations, and/or the relationship between multiplication and division.**

IM: The Student Experience



IM Units

Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
1	Introducing Multiplication	1	Factors and Multiples	1	Finding Volume
2	Area and Multiplication	2	Fraction Equivalence and Comparison	2	Fractions as Quotients & Fraction Multiplication
3	Wrapping Up Addition & Subtraction Within 1,000	3	Extending Operations to Fractions	3	Multiplying and Dividing Fractions
4	Relating Multiplication to Division	4	From Hundredths to Hundred-thousands	4	Wrapping Up Multi-digit Multiplication & Division
5	Fractions as Numbers	5	Multiplicative Comparison and Measurement	5	Place Value Patterns and Decimal Operations
6	Measuring Length, Time Liquid, Volume, Weight	6	Multiplying and Dividing Multi-digit Numbers	6	More Decimal and Fraction Operations
7	Two-dimensional Shapes and Perimeter	7	Angles and Angle Measurement	7	Shapes on the Coordinate Plant
8	Putting it All Together	8	Properties of Two-dimensional Shapes	8	Putting it All Together
		9	Putting it All Together		

Supporting Your Math Student at Home

Use this QR code to find ideas on how to support your math student at home.

Supporting Your Math Student at Home

- If you're not sure how to get started on a problem, that's okay! What can you try? Could you draw a picture or diagram? Could you make a guess? Could you describe an answer that's definitely wrong?
- If you're feeling stuck, write down what you notice and what you wonder, or a question you have, and then share that when it's time to work with others or discuss.
- Your job when working on problems in this class is to come up with ideas and share them. You don't have to be right or confident at first, but sharing your thinking will help everyone learn. If that feels hard or scary, it's okay to say, "This is just an idea . . ." or "I'm not really sure but I think . . ."
- Whether you're feeling stuck or feeling confident with the material, listen to your classmates and ask them about their ideas. One way that learning happens is by comparing your ideas to other people's ideas.

Source: *IM Information for Families*
https://im.kendallhunt.com/k5/teachers/teacher-guide/information-for-families.html

SHS Highlander Forum

April 15th 3:00-5:00pm

April 30th 6:30-8:30pm

What Questions Do You Have?

Illustrative Mathematics
LEARN MATH FOR LIFE

Family information for the Somerville Public Schools math curriculum can be found in English and Spanish at https://im.kendallhunt.com/k5/curriculum.html

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Thank you being here!

Please give us feedback!