



Math
program

Daily Math Class

Students have a daily math class for one hour, with Monday-Thursday being curriculum math and Fridays being math circles.

Most Hummingbirds are correctly placed in a leveled math group with one of the Hummingbirds teachers, typically in levels K-1 or 1-2. Students who need a higher level of math join the mixed-grade math groups with older students.

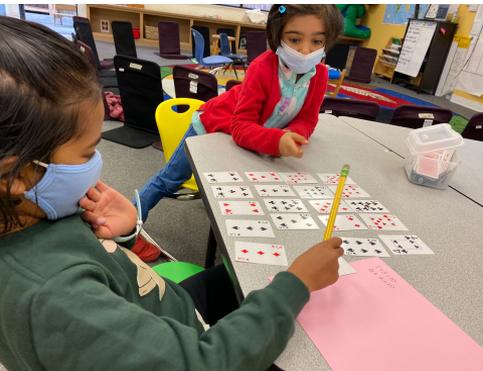
Our math levels would correspond to grades in other schools, however, at Helios we prefer to talk about Level 2 math instead of second grade math. This helps students understand that they are learning math that is “the right level for them” no matter what grade they are in.



Math Curriculum

At the kindergarten through 6th-grade level, we use the Singapore Math curriculum. This curriculum is particularly suited for gifted learners as it's paced and sequenced for increased depth and complexity:

- It covers fewer topics per grade level, but at a greater depth, and emphasizes mastery of each concept before moving on.
- It focuses on conceptual understanding before memorization of procedures and algorithms
- It emphasizes developing good problem solving and thinking skills by increasing problem-solving challenges
- It actively promotes multiple representations (pictures, words, numbers, manipulatives) and connections between them as part of making meaning and communication in mathematics.



Overview of Math Circles

Math Circles are complex, open-ended math challenges that students solve as a group.

Students work together to define mathematical questions, notice patterns, and test solutions, often discovering multiple approaches to the same problem. Students are doing the real-world work of mathematicians; beyond writing and solving symbolic math problems, they generalize, prove, and investigate unusual mathematical questions.

While many schools in the Bay Area offer a version of a Math Circle as an enrichment activity, Helios includes it in the regular curriculum.



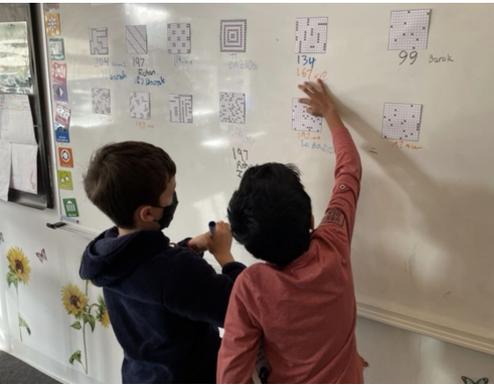
Weekly Math Circle

All students, from kindergarten to advanced math have a math circle on Fridays.

At all levels, students are encouraged to investigate a math problem and then ask their own mathematical questions and “what ifs” related to the problem they solved.

In upper levels, math circle topics often span several weeks, with student groups doing a deep investigation of a problem and presenting their solutions to the class.

We view math circles as an integral part of our math curriculum, not as an enrichment or after-school activity.



Placement

Students are placed into the math level that best fits their knowledge level. We want students to be appropriately challenged in their math class.

We evaluate and place students into their appropriate math levels at the beginning of the year based on their demonstrated readiness, classroom observations, and teacher evaluations.

Within a math group, teachers adapt daily activities to the observed learning needs of their students, which may include teaching content from another level.



What's Next

When Hummingbirds move up to the Hawks and Falcons, they are ready to join a math group in another room with teachers and students who are not in their homeroom. They have had a year of math instruction, and their content knowledge more closely matches their conceptual understanding and readiness to learn.

Students in the K-1 group typically enter Level 1 or Level 2, and students in the 1-2 group typically enter Level 2 or Level 3. They will be evaluated again in the fall to confirm their math level placement before math groups begin. Math group placement generally does not change during the school year.

Singapore math FAQ

What is covered in each level of Singapore Math?

- See [this document](#) for the K-6 math content

What is spiraling and how is it different from repeating content every year?

- Every year the same general topic might be repeated, but with a different conceptual emphasis. See [this document](#) for an example.

How is Singapore Math related to Common Core?

- Singapore Math incorporates Common Core standards at or before the assigned level. It also includes some learning goals not included in Common Core. [This document](#) describes where each concept is taught in Levels 1-5.

Navigation

