

# Principal's Bulletin



Mrs. Rehana Mattu  
Principal, Third Academy North



Mr. Joe Smith  
Principal, Third Academy South

## Evaluating Success: Our Accountability Pillars

Third Academy is accountable to you, our parents and guardians, as well as the Province of Alberta. Every year, Alberta Education surveys parents and guardians, students, and staff throughout the province to measure school performance. While parents and guardians receive a paper survey from Alberta Education through Canada Post, students and staff complete their surveys online. You should be receiving your survey in the mail in the next two weeks.

Third Academy is proud of our proven record of student success. We work with a challenging group of students and do what is necessary to provide a provide specialized programming and support which allows our students to flourish in multiple dimensions. At Third Academy, "It's special needs education, your child's way!" By working together, as a community, our students truly succeed.

Alberta Education's surveys are developed to measure school performance in several different "pillars" or domains ranging from "Safe and Caring Schools" to "Student Learning Achievement." As a generic survey, some of the questions asked are worded in a way that is not specifically applicable to schools providing special needs education. For example, while Third Academy's experienced, multicultural staff could provide second language instruction in many different languages, our focus is on developing literacy/numeracy skills in English as this is what our special needs student population really needs.

The purpose of this special bulletin is to highlight many of the ways Third Academy excels as a provider of quality special needs education. With these facts in mind, we hope that this year's survey results will be as positive as in the years gone by.

Most of you know that over the last few months Principal Joe Smith has been healing from an injury. I am pleased that Mr. Smith's condition is improving and he is now able to return to school. As part of his reassignment, Mr. Smith will be contacting all parents to following up on this bulletin.

**Rehana Mattu**  
Principal, Elementary and Acting Principal, Junior & Senior High



"Third Academy gives hope...hope for kids, families, and our collective futures."

Dr. S. Lal Mattu, Founder

### Inside this issue

Expressive Arts Program .....	2
Computer Use .....	3
Broad Variety of Subjects .....	4
Physical Literacy .....	4
Becoming Engage Citizens .....	5
Preparing for Work .....	5
School Improvement .....	6

## Expressive Arts Program

Children are naturally creative individuals and at Third Academy we provide all our students with the opportunity to develop their artistic side through our Expressive Arts program. We foster aesthetic development in three broad areas: Drama, instructed by Third Academy's Expressive Arts Lead Teacher, Mr. David Gillespie; Music, under the tutelage of Music Focus Teacher, Mr. Curtis Kennedy; and Visual Arts, instructed by our creative classroom teachers.

Unfortunately, many school systems consider even basic arts programs—visual arts, music, and certainly drama—as a luxury. However, at Third Academy we consider Expressive Arts an essential component of our learning model as it is directly related to all aspects of healthy child development. Through participation in our Expressive

sive Arts program your child develops fine motor skills, reasoning and decision making abilities, language and communication skills, visual learning, inventiveness, cultural awareness, pattern recognition, fine-tuned auditory skills, increased coordination, emotional development, improved imagination and intellectual curiosity, spatial intelligence, teamwork, creative thinking, responsible risk taking, self confidence, discipline, a sense of achievement, mastery of memorization, concentration, numeracy skills, physical development, emotional intelligence, self-regulation and many other benefits.

At Third Academy Expressive Arts embraces the entire curriculum from early elementary through to senior high. Research clearly demonstrates that Expressive Arts fosters personal, academic, and social success.

*“Research clearly demonstrates that Expressive Arts fosters personal, academic, and social success.”*

### Why Arts Education is Crucial

“Art does not solve problems, but makes us aware of their existence,” sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz has said. Arts education, on the other hand, does solve problems. Years of research show that it’s closely linked to almost everything we as a nation say we want for our children and demand from our schools: academic achievement, social and emotional development, civic engagement, and equitable opportunity ..... Comprehensive, innovative arts initiatives are taking root in a growing number of school districts. Many of these models are based on new findings in brain research and cognitive development, and they embrace a variety of approaches.... “ from edutopia.org





## Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection

“School systems need to find more effective ways to integrate technology into teaching and learning to provide educators with learning environments that support 21st century pedagogies and provide children with the 21st century skills they need to succeed in tomorrow’s world,” said Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills. “Technology is the only way to dramatically expand access to knowledge. To deliver on the promises technology holds, countries need to invest more effectively and ensure that teachers are at the forefront of designing and implement this change.” from oecd.org

## Computer Use at Third Academy

The use of technology in learning has been given great emphasis at Third Academy for the last few years. We have a large inventory of computer equipment available for student use, including a well-equipped computer lab and two rolling labs stocked with laptop computers. As well, we have a number of iPad tablets available for Third Academy students. Our computers and tablets are loaded with a variety of educational and professional software for use across the different grade levels.

To be effective as an educational tool, computer hardware must have suitable educational programs. Third Academy holds licenses to both local and internet-based software. But it’s not enough to have the equipment and software. Teachers must be able to integrate computer technology into their regular lessons. Third Academy teachers excel at incorporating computers into their students’ programming. For example, Elementary students enjoy reading and playing with “Raz-Kids” a reading program and “Mathletics,” a math program, which reward students’ success by allowing them the opportunity to play engaging computer games.

Junior and Senior High School students develop literacy/numeracy skills using Academy of Reading/Math. They also learn to use standard Microsoft programs, including Word and PowerPoint. This software helps develop typing skills, write reports and develop presentations, as well as helping prepare students for the workplace by developing marketable job skills. We have also recently introduced courses in computer programming.

Third Academy upgraded our internet service this year to allow faster access as well as to improve streaming of online educational material for classroom use. Our internet feed is filtered to block inappropriate material and restrict access to social media sites. We are posting class assignments to the [thirdacademy.ca](http://thirdacademy.ca) website and will be developing a Moodle site, an E-Learning platform.

With the assistance of Sharp’s Audio Visual, we are bringing SMART Boards/interactive digital whiteboards into all of our classrooms over the next month.

I thank both the North and South PACs for their support in ensuring our children have access to latest technology in their learning.

Raz-Kids



Academy of  
READING®  
Academy of  
MATH®



## Some of our Special Programs

- Literacy and Numeracy
- Health Program
- Expressive Arts
- Driver's Education (Knowledge)
- Broadcasting Course
- Cardboard Boat Building & Racing
- Variety of Science Labs
- Swim to Survive
- Computer Coding
- Our Lady Queen of Peace Ranch Visits
- Banff/Jasper Parks Fieldtrip
- Camp Horizon Fieldtrip
- Exploring Outdoors Program
- School Store Management
- Duke of Edinburgh
- School Clubs
- Exploring Calgary
- Personal Budgeting
- Work Skills
- Fundraising
- Physical Literacy
- Autism Unit
- Personal Development
- Speech and Language Pathologist
- Occupational Therapy
- Psychological Services
- Technology Unit
- Social Skills
- Antbullying Program (Pink Shirt Day)
- Concerts & Talent Shows



## Broad Variety of Subjects Offered to Students

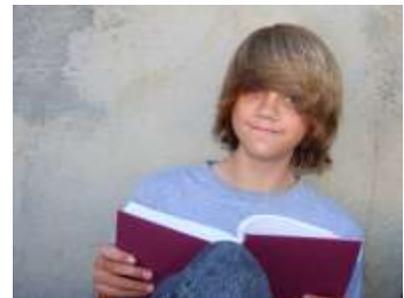
While Third Academy's core programming focuses in the areas of Literacy/Numeracy, Physical Literacy, the Expressive Arts, and Personal Development, we modify the standard Alberta Program of Studies to develop an individualized program for each of our students. As our programming is individualized, but delivered by two or more teachers in a classroom with a group of student-peers, students—and sometimes even parents/guardians—lose sight of the breadth of the subjects taught at Third Academy. In the elementary classrooms, in addition to the core academic subjects, great emphasis is placed on basic life skills including learning how to learn, self-control, hygiene and toilet-ry, cleaning-up, respecting self and others, and most important, being good, helpful and safe.

As needed, life skills are introduced or reinforced at the junior and senior high level. As

our students progress from tweens to teens, the added stressors of adolescence become evident both at school at home. Our therapeutic model helps our students understand and cope with their developing bodies and minds. It's not easy dealing with adolescents; regardless, our Grade 11 and 12 students are better equipped to become productive members of society.



*Personal Development is an Important "Subject" for Third Academy Students.*



## Physical Literacy

Active kids are healthy kids. The mind slows down when children are still for extended periods. Kids learn best when they regularly move their bodies. Third Academy students have ample opportunity to engage in play and sport, both in school and outside. The kids love the Astroturf in our gymnasium and our in-house fleet of school buses allows us to take our students to nearby fields and parks and even to the mountains for a day hike or a week-long adventure.

Third Academy's Physical Literacy Program encourages young minds and bodies to be active. Unlike traditional schools, our approach is largely non-competitive. We want all of our students to participate so that they can enjoy the mental and physical benefits of active living. And we want our students to develop skills so that they continue to participate in and enjoy as active and healthy adults.

## Becoming Engaged Citizens

To be a citizen means to make a difference in one's community. Third Academy is a very special institution. We are a community of teachers, support staff, students, parents/guardians, and supporters from the broader village around us. All members of our community are expected to assist us in helping our students by benefiting Third Academy through "community service". For most, this means some form of volunteer work.

Third Academy students are not only expected to follow the rules, do their best in their studies, and respect each other, but we also want them to demonstrate selfless giving. Our students engage in many forms of acts of kindness, whether this be helping other students with their work, being a "buddy" for a new student, assisting with our "Brown Bag Lunch Program," fundraising for the Calgary Food Bank or Operation Africa, cleaning up trash on Third Academy's section of Alberta's Adopt-A-Highway, singing songs at a Senior's Residence, and the list goes on and on.

It's remarkable that our children with special needs genuinely appreciate the need to contribute to their community. This is success. We continuously see Third Academy students use their strengths to assist others in overcoming the challenges that life deals us.



*"We continuously see Third Academy students use their strengths to assist others in overcoming the challenges that life deals us."*

## Preparing for the World of Work

Third Academy wants our graduates to be ready to enter the workplace or a post-secondary school. At Third Academy, workplace preparation does not begin in high school or even junior high. We begin developing skills that enable success in adulthood in our elementary classrooms.

Our emphasis on basic life skills is vital to this process. Our students need to be prepared to look after themselves and interact appropriately with others. These skills are required not only to succeed in the classroom, but are absolutely essential to succeed in the workplace.

Literacy/Numeracy development is another key component of workplace preparation. Students in the lower level classrooms learn basic money management skills by earning and spending "Classroom Dollars". Later they transition to real money by working as volunteer assistants in our School Store. These are real life lessons that are necessary for stu-

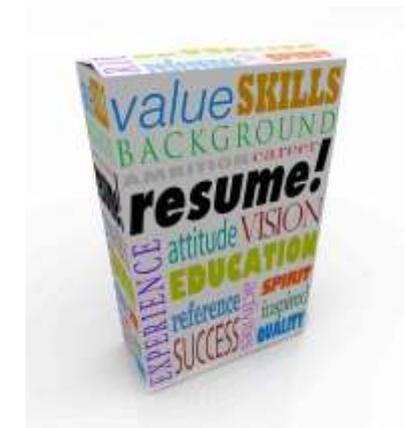
dents to begin to gain their independence.

Transportation independence is also a goal for our junior and senior high school students. Students are provided instruction on how to ride Calgary Transit buses and C-Trains through external trainers and in-house specialists.

Practical instruction is provided in job search techniques, resume writing, and interview skills. Our staff goes beyond the call of duty to assist our students to obtain a volunteer or paid job position while they are still in school.

Third Academy has a good working relationship with post-secondary schools in the Calgary Region. We take our students on post-secondary school tours, including Bow Valley College, SAIT, and Mount Royal University.

By working together as a community, Third Academy graduates are better equipped for making a successful transition to either the workplace or post-secondary studies.



## Highlights

- Harry Potter Theme: Both Fun & Educational
- Consolidated Central Campus
- Stronger Relationships with Service Providers including Renfrew, Providence, and Pacekids
- Greater Depth & Breath in Staffing
- 3 Provincial Psychologists
- Successful Gala and Run Santa Run!
- Higher Participation in Expressive Arts (Especially Music & Drama)
- Exceptional Winter Concert
- School Pride: Students and Parents Recommending Third Academy to Friends and Family Members
- PAC Funding for a New 47 Passenger Fieldtrip Bus
- Sensory Room Additions
- A New Color Photocopier
- New Laptops
- School Repainted
- Weekly Newsletters for Elementary and Junior/Senior High
- Increased Number of Fieldtrips

## School Improvement

Third Academy staff and administration works continuously to improve our learning environment. For the 2015-2016 School Year, we significantly increased the number of teachers in our classrooms while holding the number of students constant. This means improved support for you child.

Third Academy instills pride in our school community. Our teachers and other staff are proud of their school and its students. Our parents demonstrate their pride through their participation in our community, especially through volunteer work and involvement with the Third Academy North or Third Academy South PAC . Our students show their pride every day, by wearing their uniforms, coming to school with a smile, and, most importantly, succeeding.



Third Academy: It's Special Needs Education, Your Child's Way