

BADGER RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL



COURSE HANDBOOK

SIXTH GRADE

2018-2019

Dear Parents and Students:

This handbook has been developed to provide information for parents, guardians, and students about the courses and curriculum at Badger Ridge Middle School.

The curriculum features a strong skills development program, experiences of an exploratory nature, and extensive use of inquiry and discovery. It is our aim that every student is put on a path to be “High School Ready.”

The middle school creates a learning environment that provides stability, promotes self-confidence and is sensitive to the needs of each child. Within this environment, we strive to provide an education that allows the student to be exposed to a wide variety of positive educational experiences.

Additionally, school staff is working to provide more personalized experiences for students to access, engage in, and express knowledge, understanding, and application of expected learning.

We hope you will find the handbook to be a practical guide as you examine the required and elective course offerings.

If you do have any questions relating to our curriculum, please call Badger Ridge Middle School at 845-4100.

Sincerely,

Michael Murphy, Principal

SIXTH GRADE

Required Classes:

Language Arts

Math

Science

Social Studies

Physical Education

Exploratory classes:

- Art
- Family and Consumer Education
- Intro to World Language
- Information and Technology Literacy

Music – Must Choose One Class:

Band

Orchestra

Choir

General Music

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS – SIXTH GRADE

REQUIRED CLASSES

Language Arts

The sixth grade language arts curriculum focuses on reading, writing, speaking and listening. The writing component emphasizes writing with lessons and practice in grammar and the writing process, particularly paragraph structure (MEL-Con), narrative, expository, and persuasive writing. Through the use of novels, and with an increasing emphasis on informational text (nonfiction), sixth graders focus on vocabulary building, comprehension strategies, story elements and literary devices. To develop research skills, students are introduced to library resources, note taking strategies and ways to organize information. Students practice oral communication skills in the form of presentations, discussions, and oral reading. Students have specific time dedicated within the schedule to engage in reading and explicit reading instruction.

Math

The Math Department has seven general goals for all students so that they: (1) become mathematical problem solvers, (2) make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, (3) learn to communicate mathematically, (4) learn to reason mathematically, (5) learn to value mathematics, (6) become confident in their ability to do mathematics, and (7) are efficient and accurate at calculations. Students are expected to practice and demonstrate the standards for mathematical practice.

The 6th grade math curriculum is built off of the Common Core Mathematics Standards. Topics at the sixth grade level include real world problem solving, ratio and proportional relationships, whole number computation and estimation, number theory, decimals, fractions, percents, data analysis, graphing, and geometry. Students are expected to practice and demonstrate the standards for mathematical practice.

All 6th grade students will engage in Math 6 with the opportunity to engage in more complex math concepts through the Accelerated 7/8 Stretch Math curriculum. Any 6th grade student who demonstrates evidence of mastery in 6th grade and 7/8 Stretch Math curriculum standards will be eligible to engage in Math 8 plus Algebra as a 7th grade student.

Science

The sixth grade science curriculum incorporates a “hands-on” approach to learning about the nature of the scientific process. Group and individual lab work, teacher demonstrations, problem solving, and research support the conceptual material of astronomy, geology, meteorology and ecology topics. Students develop their skills of inquiry and gain confidence in dealing with the open-endedness of the scientific method.

Social Studies

In sixth grade social studies, students begin their year with a review of basic map and globe skills. Next, they examine the geography, people and cultures of the Western Hemisphere. Following this examination, they delve into the cultures and geography of Canada and the Latin American countries. Throughout the year there is continued emphasis placed on the five themes of geography and current events so that the students become more aware of the Global Community in which they live. Students further develop their research skills in their study of the Western Hemisphere by utilizing numerous updated technologies, including the middle school LMC and computer lab.

Physical Education

The main emphasis of the middle school physical education program is developing healthy bodies and minds. Cardiovascular fitness and the development of lifelong fitness skills are a main focus at all grade levels. Instructors constantly strive to boost student self-image through positive reinforcement.

Activities include: Cardiovascular health, fitness testing, team sports, dance, track and field, racquet sports, cooperative games, individual sports, and adventure education.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Each sixth grader takes art, family and consumer education, foreign language exploration, and information and technology literacy for a nine-week period. A brief description of each class is listed below.

Art

The art course in sixth grade focuses on the understanding of art through hands-on learning experiences. This course is designed to allow the student to be the artist and promotes creativity and originality. This course offers a balance of directed instruction, with an emphasis on the elements and principles of design along with offering student choice. In addition, students are encouraged to bridge an understanding of art in cultures through their own personal art experiences. Students develop a portfolio of their work and begin learning vocabulary to help reflect on their artistic creations.

Family and Consumer Education

In sixth grade **FAMILY AND CONSUMER EDUCATION**, students explore a number of areas related to the family and the individual. These areas are Sewing, Nutrition, Laundry, Human Growth & Development, Personal Financial Literacy and Bullying Prevention. The goal of the class is to promote independent living skills and attitudes as they become a young adult.

Introduction to World Language

In sixth grade, students will be introduced to Spanish. Most of the quarter will be spent learning basic Spanish vocabulary including colors, numbers, weather terms and calendar words, etc. Students will learn a bit about Spanish culture and will be able to carry on basic conversations in Spanish.

Prior to entering seventh grade, students will decide whether to continue world language instruction in either Spanish or German.

Tech 2.0!

Welcome to the awesome world of technology and Middle School! In Tech class, students can look forward to exploring the following broad topics: programming, robotics, internet safety, internet searching, multimedia presentations, spreadsheets, and e-mail. We also create water rockets as part of a STEM project that focuses on the design process. So far the record flight is over 15 seconds! Additionally, we explore designing and creating using 3d software and printers.

MUSIC CLASSES

All sixth graders must be involved in one of the music programs which include: Band, Orchestra, Choir, and General Music. Music class changes may be made only during the first three days of that semester and with the recommendation of the counselor.

Why take a music class in middle school?

There are many compelling reasons to study music in middle school. Many research studies have linked music instruction to higher achievement in math, reading, and general cognition scores. Music is academic, and the study of music in the ensemble setting combines these academic pursuits with the skills of teamwork, perseverance, and focus.

Music educators around the world argue for the inclusion of music in every child's education, not because they expect all students to become professional musicians, but because they believe that the skills gained in the music classroom are beneficial to all learners no matter what field of study they eventually pursue.

The BRMS music department feels that these academic and social skills are an important part of learning, but offers one additional reason to study music in middle school. Over the years we have met many students who had little experience singing or on an instrument when they entered sixth grade, but discovered a true passion for music once given the opportunity. This is not something that we take lightly. Regardless of whether or not it becomes a student's career choice, we strongly believe that students should take every opportunity to learn more about a subject which they are, or could become, passionate about.

Band

Sixth grade band is the introduction to wind and percussion instruments. The basic skills of instrument position and playing posture, rhythm understanding and note reading are taught and reinforced. In addition, personal skills of responsibility, self-discipline and cooperation are improved. The sixth grade band performs several times during the year, demonstrating solo and small ensemble music, as well as full band.

Orchestra

Sixth grade orchestra is a class for beginning string players. Orchestra meets every day and focuses on solidifying basic string playing skills such as basic posture and position, tone production, music literacy, and general musicianship. Students will complete a string method book and will begin to learn how to play together as a music ensemble. The orchestra has three to four evening performances during the school year. No prior experience is required to participate in sixth grade orchestra.

Choir

Sixth grade choir is an introduction to learning singing skills in a large group. Singers are taught the use of their vocal instrument through correct posture, breathing, and exercises in tone production and movement. Other concepts about music (form, style, sight singing, etc.) are taught throughout every rehearsal. In addition to music education, students will concentrate on the skills of cooperative learning and self-discipline. Students participate in several concerts throughout the year. A positive attitude toward music and trying new things is evident in this class!

General Music

General Music is offered to those students who do not wish to take Band, Orchestra, or Choir. This class provides an overview of music as a whole, and continues the elementary music classroom experience. Students will gain an appreciation of various types of music through both listening to and making music.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The middle school offers services that meet the needs of all of our students. Special education services address the individual needs of any student who meets state eligibility criteria for special education support. Our special education program follows a cross-categorical service delivery model which includes planning with regular education teachers. This model can provide specially designed services for students with learning, speech, behavioral, physical, health, hearing, visual, developmental and/or intellectual disabilities. Each student identified as having special education needs has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) as determined by an IEP team. Students may receive services on an individual basis, in small groups, and/or in the classroom.

RESOURCE AREAS

We believe strongly in providing additional resources to facilitate the learning of our students. One key resource area is our Library Media Center (LMC) which includes our literacy and technology staff. The LMC is a functional and integral part of our classroom instruction and is used on a regular basis by all students. This resource area is facilitated by a certified Library Media Specialist and an Information Technology coordinator. Additional resource areas are grade level Learning Labs staffed by certified resource staff. Learning Labs are available for small group instruction, collaborative projects, and homework assistance.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

School Counselors

The counseling program is designed to help develop decision making skills, coping skills, communication skills, study skills in school. Counselors address these issues in classrooms, small groups, individual meetings, and parent conferences.

Guidance groups are offered to all students. Those who express interest may be invited to join a group related to one of the following topics:

- Family Issues: How to live with parents and siblings
- Stress Management: How to relax and reduce stress
- Family Change: Separation, divorce and remarriage issues
- Concerned Persons: Caring about someone's abuse of drugs or alcohol.
- Grief/Loss: How to cope with the death or loss of a family member

Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the counseling staff at any time with questions or concerns.

Social Worker

The primary function of the school social worker is to promote the emotional, social and mental well being and adjustment of students. The school social worker provides direct and indirect services to students, parents and school staff. Services may include counseling and family intervention, groups, consultation with staff or parents, liaison with community agencies, classroom instruction, and coordination and implementation of district programs. The social worker role includes advocacy for children and families in the school system and community programs.

School Psychologist

The school psychologist at the middle school is an integral team member in helping to determine the educational needs of students who are experiencing difficulty finding success at school. The psychologist conducts formal

evaluations of students to determine placement in special education programs and informal evaluations of students to determine learning and/or behavioral difficulties. Other services provided by the school psychologist include teacher consultation, parent consultation, individual counseling sessions with students, and small groups focused on social/emotional/academic development.

Curriculum and Learning Specialist

It is the philosophy of the Verona Area School District that, given time and resources, every child can learn. The Curriculum and Learning Specialist facilitates the improvement of student and staff learning by providing leadership in the areas of curriculum development and implementation, professional development, instructional coaching, collaborative planning and data analysis.

Reading Support Services

Badger Ridge Middle School is committed to enhancing the reading performance of all students. To address the varying needs of middle school readers, a variety of approaches are used within the regular and resource classrooms. Each student's progress in reading is monitored through formal and informal assessments and observations. Our Literacy staff collaborates, plans and co-teaches with teaching staff, and is an integral part of universal classroom and best practices literacy instruction.

Programs for English Language Learners

We welcome students from all cultures and backgrounds. In addition to learning science, math, social studies, language arts, and other academic content, English language learners (ELLs) must also become proficient in English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). In order to meet students' needs and follow federal and state laws, Badger Ridge provides the following programs which allow ELL students to learn grade level content and English.

English Language Development

A certified ESL teacher teaches English Language Development as a daily scheduled class. This class supplements the curriculum of the grade level language arts class, but also places an additional emphasis on learning the structure of the English language, as well as various forms of writing, listening and speaking. Additional topics may include content area vocabulary in math, science, and social studies.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

A certified ESL teacher teaches ESL as a daily scheduled class. Topics may include survival vocabulary, basic conversation, as well as listening and pronunciation of the English language. Emphasis is placed on practical everyday English and communication skills.

ESL and Bilingual in-class support

An ESL or bilingual teacher works in collaboration with the classroom teacher in general education classes. The teacher works with ELL students within the classroom, supporting individuals or small groups. Content area classes may include writing, reading, math, science or social studies vocabulary development.

Accommodations made by the Grade Level and Encore Teachers

Grade level teachers modify the way they teach to make the content more understandable. They use visuals, realia (objects from real life used in the classroom), pacing (slower, explain difficult vocabulary), provide more individual help, repeat directions, use visual representations, post content and language objectives, etc. These accommodations are designed to ensure that ELL students receive the same content as native speakers.

