

BADGER RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL



COURSE HANDBOOK

SIXTH GRADE

2020-2021

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.

Badger Ridge continues with a Two-Way Immersion (TWI) program in sixth and seventh grades. Students in TWI are a part of the house concept, will learn social studies in Spanish in 6th grade, and science in Spanish in 7th grade, as well as enroll in Spanish Language Arts class. Also, instead of the World Language introductory class, students enrolled in TWI will take ¼ of Spanish Literature.

Badger Ridge continúa con el programa de doble inmersión (TWI) en sexto y séptimo grado. Los estudiantes en TWI p son arte del concepto de la casa, aprenderán estudios sociales en español en sexto grado y ciencias en español en séptimo grado, así como también se inscribirán en la clase de Lectoescritura del Lenguaje Español. Además, en lugar de la clase introductoria de Idiomas Mundiales, los estudiantes inscritos en TWI tomarán ¼ de literatura española.

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 courses, please call Badger Ridge Middle School at 845-4100.

Sincerely,

Alan Buss, Principal

SIXTH GRADE

Required Classes:

English Language Arts
Spanish Language Arts*
Math
Science
Social Studies*

Physical Education

Exploratory classes:

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

*Students in the Two-Way Immersion Program will receive Social Studies in Spanish and Spanish Language Arts during R2S time. They will also have a class in Spanish for one quarter instead of Intro to World Language.

Music – Must Choose One Class

Band

Orchestra

Choir

General Music

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS – SIXTH GRADE

REQUIRED CLASSES

Language Arts

The English/Language Arts classroom is taught using a workshop model with an emphasis on writing and reading skills. Our units of study in writing include narrative, informational, and opinion pieces. Grammar and usage are studied throughout the year. The writing process and speaking and listening skills are integral parts of instruction. During reading, the focus is on increasing reading comprehension using these strategies: predicting, inferring, questioning, connecting, summarizing, visualizing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Our units of study include elements of both fiction and non-fiction, and use novels, short stories, and a variety of other texts to read for information and enjoyment. Student choice, small group discussions, and speaking and listening skills are an integral part of instruction.

Math

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. Students will be offered opportunities to explore and potentially master the 7th and 8th grade Common Core Math Standards.

Science

The 6th grade science curriculum focuses on concepts related to astronomy, geology, and meteorology. Skills emphasized include safely using laboratory equipment to perform both group and individual experimental inquiries, designing quality experiments, collecting and analyzing data, and communicating results with evidence and reasoning. Strategies to read, comprehend and analyze informational science text from a variety of sources are also incorporated throughout the school year. Standards addressed are: space systems and patterns; earth history and geology processes, cycles and time scales; weather and climate; engineering and experimental design; human impacts on the world; and reading, comprehending and analyzing informational text.

Social Studies

The 6th grade social studies curriculum reviews map and globe skills, as well as the geography, people, and cultures of the Western Hemisphere. Sixth graders delve into the process of inquiry and service learning, as well as the discovery of cultures and geography of Canada and Latin American countries. Throughout the year there is a 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 on their iPads; Students in Two-Way Immersion will learn similar concepts with the content being in Spanish.

TWI Social Studies

Students enrolled in the District's Two-way Immersion program take Social Studies in Spanish at sixth grade. Bilingual units of study parallel the units of study in the monolingual classrooms and include thematic units on the themes of geography, Canada, the United States and Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, and South America.

TWI social studies encourages the development of critical thinking skills through inquiry as well as the appreciation and understanding of cultures and the world in which we live.

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 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.

R2S

R2S stands for Read to Succeed. The main emphasis of R2S is for students to engage in and build stamina around independent choice reading as well as activities that will immerse them in a literacy rich environment with the help of our LMC director and literacy staff. Students will be assessed using a common rubric that supports the following standard: "Independent reading of a variety of genres at a child's independent reading level" which will be reported to families on the progress report cards.

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 Science

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

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.

Advanced Mandarin 6

This course is for students who, having successfully developed basic language skills, are ready to increase proficiency in listening comprehension and in the speaking, reading and writing skills of Mandarin Chinese. Readings focus on the goal of developing vocabulary and fluency. Written and oral precision will be emphasized. Instruction includes cultural content. Prerequisites include participation in the Verona Area International School, VASD Mandarin Zero-Hour class, or a similar Mandarin immersion program from another school district.

Spanish Language Arts

Students in Two-way Immersion take Spanish Language Arts as part of their bilingual pathway. The Spanish Language Arts curriculum focuses on reading, writing, speaking, and listening in Spanish using the Spanish Language Arts Standards. Students will read novels, articles, poetry, short stories, and nonfiction in Spanish while they work to improve written and oral communication skills in Spanish.

TECH 2.0

Tech 2.0 provides students with an introduction of the Design Process, Computer Science, 3d- Design, and Robotics. While working on the Design Process, we integrate spreadsheet skills, presentation software (google slides, google sites), and productivity tools into our activities as well. While working on Computer Science topics, students are introduced to Javascript and learn how to code and manipulate, shapes, sprites, and text on the screen. Additionally, students are introduced to robotics and get to code robots to perform prescribed tasks and tasks that they make up. Students are also introduced to 3D design software and use this to print 3-d objects.

MUSIC EDUCATION

All sixth graders will enroll in one of the following music classes: Band, Orchestra, Choir, or General Music.

Band

Sixth grade band is a daily class for beginning wind and bells players. Students choose to play flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, horn, trombone, euphonium, tuba, or bells. Band students learn the basic skills of instrument position and playing posture, rhythm understanding and note reading are taught and reinforced. Students in band participate in three to four evening performances during the school year. No prior experience is required to participate in sixth grade band.

Orchestra

Sixth grade orchestra is a daily class for beginning string players. Students choose to play violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Orchestra meets every day and students learn basic string playing skills such as basic posture and position, tone production, music literacy, and general musicianship. Students in orchestra participate in 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 a daily class for beginning singers. Singers learn the use of their vocal instrument through correct posture, breathing, and exercises in tone production and movement. The elements of music are taught throughout every rehearsal. Students will participate in four concerts throughout the year. No prior experience is required to participate in sixth grade Choir.

General Music 6

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 programs 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. Our special education program follows a cross-categorical service delivery model which includes planning with regular education teachers. This model provides 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. These services address a diverse range of needs including: remedial, functional, pre-vocational, social-emotional, cognitive, and/or adaptive.

RESOURCE AREAS

We believe strongly in providing additional resources beyond the classroom materials to facilitate the learning of our students. The Library Media Center (LMC), which includes our library staff and technology staff, is a functional and integral part of instruction, and is used on a regular basis by all students. Additional resource areas are available for small group instruction, collaborative projects, and homework assistance.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

School Counselors

The counseling program is designed to help develop academic success, emotional awareness, and career exploration as students grow and develop throughout middle 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.

School 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 school 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 purpose of Curriculum and Learning Specialist is to ensure that students receive instruction based on their individual learning styles, needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Some of the tasks associated with this position include, but are not limited to:

- Collecting and disseminating information about programmatic needs of students
- Consulting with teams to develop strategies to meet individual student needs
- Facilitating the administration and scheduling of required state and local standardized assessments
- Facilitating curriculum development, revision, and articulation
- Providing professional staff development

UNITY Services

UNITY, Understanding the Needs and Individual Talents in Youth, is a resource to help support students who have traditionally struggled in the school setting--academically, socially, and/or emotionally. It services students in sixth, seventh and eighth grade with the greatest need. UNITY staff provides additional support in classrooms, student check-ins, small group support, find opportunities to connect with students during the day.

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. Students are identified for reading support based on multiple measures including standardized assessments and fifth grade teacher recommendations. Our Reading Specialist collaborates, plans and co-teaches with teaching staff, and is an integral part of universal classroom and best practices in literacy instruction.

Programs for English Learners

We welcome students from all cultures and backgrounds. In addition to learning science, math, social studies, language arts, and other academic content, English learners (ELs) 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 EL students to learn grade level content and English.

ESL and Bilingual in-class support

An English as a Second Language or Bilingual certified teacher works in collaboration with the classroom teacher in general education classes. The teacher works with students within the classroom, supporting individuals or small groups.

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 EEL students receive the same content as native speakers.

Assessment

In December and January, all English learners take ACCESS for EL.