

# WHITEFISH BAY MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS



## STUDENT SCHEDULING INFORMATION: GRADE 6

### REQUIRED COURSES:

All sixth grade students are required to take “core” academic classes under an arrangement called the **House Concept**. A team of teachers will have the same group of students for the following subjects:

**Language Arts-6**  
**Literature-6**  
**Level I, II, III or IV Math**  
**Science-6**  
**Social Studies-6**

All students are required to use the agenda notebook provided by the school. If a student loses his/her agenda notebook, he/she must purchase a new one from the office.

### Directions:

- MAKE COURSE SELECTIONS VERY CAREFULLY.
- Once a course selection is made, students will be expected to stay with their decision, i.e., schedules will not be changed.
- The middle school exploratory courses are important to a student’s learning in that they provide:
  - Education in an area of the student’s interest.
  - Career awareness information
  - Incorporation of basic skills such as – reading, writing, listening, and expressing oneself
  - A broadening of the student’s life learning experiences.
- IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR CHILD’S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT YOUR CHILD’S GUIDANCE COUNSELOR.

**REQUIRED COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**

<b>Language Arts 6</b>	The grade 6 language arts curriculum is designed to develop fluent writers and speakers through practice in descriptive, informative, persuasive, narrative, and creative writing and speaking activities. The distinct areas of grammar usage, mechanics, vocabulary, and spelling receive direct instruction as well as instruction which is integrated within the written assignments and books read in literature.
<b>Literature 6</b>	Students will learn to become proficient and confident readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. In sixth grade literature, students read a variety of fiction and nonfiction books. The materials chosen for the curriculum are organized by the literary genres of adventure, biography, fantasy, folktales and fables, historical fiction, multicultural, and mystery. Books are selected for variety in such areas as character, setting and style. Reading strategies, the elements of literature and literary concepts such as foreshadowing, figurative language, and irony are taught through the books in the curriculum. This course is integrated with the language curriculum, enhancing the reading and writing connection.
<b>Level I Math</b>  - or -	The purpose of mathematics education is to build the high levels of mathematical skills, processes, thinking, and problem solving necessary to meet the challenge of a changing technological society. This course is designed as a transition from elementary mathematics to secondary mathematics. In Level I Math, students will know and understand arithmetic at a grade-appropriate level. Specific categories of information studied include number theory, fraction concepts, ratios, proportions and percents, and algebra. Specific categories include understanding and solving expressions, equations, and inequalities. Finally, the students will be introduced to and understand basic geometry.
<b>Level II Math</b>  -or-	The purpose of mathematics education is to build the high levels of mathematical skills, processes, thinking, and problem solving necessary to meet the challenge of a changing technological society. In Level II Math, students will know and understand at a grade appropriate level: language and patterns of algebra, number sense, operation of fractions, ratios, rates and proportions, percents, integers, geometry, counting and probability, and statistics. Study skills are emphasized through use of notebooks, displaying order, organization and accuracy.
<b>Level III Math</b>  -or-	The purpose of mathematics education is to build the high levels of mathematical skills, processes, thinking, and problem solving necessary to meet the challenge of a changing technological society. This course is designed as a preparation for high school algebra/geometry. In Level III Math, students will know and understand arithmetic at a grade appropriate level –including number theory, fraction concepts, rational and irrational numbers, ratios, proportions and percents, and data analysis and probability. Students will also know and understand algebra – including integers, equations, inequalities and graphing. Finally, the students will know and understand geometry – including circles, polygons, surface area and volume.
<b>Level IV (Algebra)</b>	The level IV Algebra program is an accelerated math course that parallels that of the algebra course at the high school. Students who successfully complete this course receive a statement on their high school transcript stating such completion, but do not receive high school credit. The course covers the foundation skills of linear algebra, including the rules of algebra, linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of equations, powers and exponents, quadratic equations, polynomials, factoring, proportions, functions and connections to geometry. Students will also be introduced to problem solving, aided by the use of school provided graphing calculators. Students who successfully master concepts covered in this course will be placed in geometry their freshman year at the high school.
<b>Science 6</b>	Students will develop the scientific knowledge skills and attitudes that enable them to make informed use of science in their lives. Grade six science is an integrated program consisting of physical, earth, and life science to help students experience the connections among and between the different branches of science and the application of science to their daily lives.
<b>Social Studies 6</b>	Sixth grade social studies is a year-long course that centers on ancient world history. The class begins with the history of early man (the Stone Age) and moves through time, concluding with the Middle Ages of Europe. With the aforementioned timeframe as a backdrop, students learn how archeologists, historians and geographers use evidence left by ancient groups, along with educated guesses, to piece together history. In the process, students learn to think like a social scientist as they examine a variety of primary sources, apply their learned knowledge to create historical hypotheses and defend their positions. The main goals of this course are to improve students' reading comprehension, writing ability, public speaking, critical thinking and standard test scores, while bringing history "alive" in an exciting and unique way.

# CHOOSING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Students may wish to discuss these questions with their parents:

- Personal interest: Am I especially attracted to one of the languages or to the cultures of the people who use it?
- Travel interests: Do I have a special interest in traveling where one of these languages is spoken?
- Vocational interests: Is knowledge of one of these languages helpful in the career(s) I am considering?
- Opportunities for practice: Is there someone with whom I could practice one of these languages? (not necessary)
- Family heritage: Am I interested in speaking the language of my relatives or ancestors?

Studying any foreign language broadens one's view of the world and makes other languages easier to learn. There is also a strong correlation between foreign language study and better performance in other subject areas and on college entrance exams.

LANGUAGE	WHERE SPOKEN	VOCATIONAL USE	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
FRENCH	France, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Monaco, much of Africa, French Guyana, parts of SE Asia, islands in the Caribbean Sea and Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans	International business / relations, travel, technology, literature, visual arts, film, music, dance, fashion, teaching, history, pharmaceuticals, medicine, Peace Corps, etc.	Spoken in nearby Quebec, Canada and in areas of New England and Louisiana  Use of French expressions in English Literature and conversation
GERMAN	Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and in communities in South America, the US, etc.	Science and technology, medicine, literature, international business, teaching, travel, military, visual arts, publishing, history, music, engineering, pharmaceuticals, etc.	Local German Heritage and culture (family, restaurants, etc.)  German-speaking communities in US (Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Iowa, etc.)
SPANISH	Spain, Mexico, most countries in South and Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Caribbean Islands, and in communities in the US	Health care, Peace Corps, government agencies, teaching, law enforcement, agriculture, travel, international business, archeology, visual arts, modern literature, etc.	Spoken by many people in the US in the Southwest, in large cities like Milwaukee, and in farming areas.  Opportunities to hear Spanish on radio and TV, and in Mexican restaurants

All sixth graders are required to take physical education which alternates daily with the World Language choice for the entire year.

<b>World Language 6</b>	This is the first part of the three levels, which begins in sixth grade and continues through eighth grade. Together, the three levels are comparable to the high school level I courses and are usually recognized by colleges and universities. <b>Any student who plans on taking a world language in the middle school must begin in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.</b> All five components of language study are included: listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture.
<b>Physical Education</b>	The physical education program takes the basic movements and skills that have been introduced at the elementary school level and progresses toward more complex movements through repetitions and sequencing of drills and game play. Sportsmanship and cooperation are stressed at all grades. Basic knowledge of rules and regulations as well as strategy of team and individual sports is taught. Lifetime skills and activities are introduced in sixth grade through activities such as jogging, tennis, badminton, inline skating, aerobics, power walking, and the use of heart rate monitors. A portion of each class is devoted to individual fitness. The curriculum supports personal fitness of each student, cardiorespiratory fitness, endurance, flexibility, agility, balance, muscular strength, speed, power and coordination.

**REQUIRED EXPLORATORY WHEEL:**

All sixth graders will rotate through the following five exploratory courses, running seven weeks in duration.

- Art 6
- Design & Construction I
- Computers
- General Music
- Health

<b>Art 6</b>	In art class, students explore a variety of media and techniques including drawing, painting, graphics, and sculpture. Emphasis is on the development of self-expression, self-esteem, perceptual awareness, creative potential, and aesthetic appreciation. Students will explore a right-hemispheric approach to art, learning how to enhance and trust their visual perception and translate that into visual representation. Units may include contour drawing with pencil and pen, painting in acrylics, relief printmaking and plaster or paper mache sculpture.
<b>Design &amp; Construction I</b>	This course is an introduction to problem solving and project planning through “hands-on” experiences. Engineering drawings will be emphasized with students learning measurement and hand drafting techniques. Construction processes, proper tool usage and safety will be taught when students use various tools and woodworking techniques to build a portable, folding “locker shelf” storage unit.
<b>Computers 6</b>	The goal of this course is to provide students with computer skills that will enable them to independently produce computer generated documents. From basic to advanced, every student will gain knowledge of computers and various software applications.
<b>General Music 6</b>	In general music, students gain skills necessary to understand, appreciate and create music. Units of study include style, rhythm, music history and composition. Each unit includes a multiple of concepts focusing on the six student music standards singing/performing on instruments; improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments; reading and notating music; evaluating music and music performances; and understanding music in relation to history and culture. Midi computer stations, keyboards, and a variety of rhythm instruments are used as tools to help students understand the concepts of how music is constructed.
<b>Health 6</b>	The Health and Human Growth and Development class is combined into an every-other-day semester course. The program’s mission will compliment the family by providing students with the knowledge and skills to understand their personal development and to make healthful decisions.

**ELECTIVE COURSES:**

Sixth graders not recommended for Academic Support may choose **ONE** of the following options:

- Option A: Band / Study Hall
- Option B: Choir / Study Hall
- Option C: Orchestra / Study Hall
- Option D: Band / Choir
- Option E: Band / Orchestra
- Option F: Choir / Orchestra
- Option G: Daily Study Hall

<b>Band</b>	This class provides the opportunity for students to study instrumental music with public performances as an end result. The literature used exposes the students to a variety of forms and styles, as well as instruction in musical elements. In addition to full-band rehearsals, band members will receive small-group lessons. Concert etiquette is also stressed.
<b>Choir</b>	This class provides the opportunity for students to study vocal music, with public performance as an end result. The literature used exposes the students to a variety of song forms and musical styles in two parts, as well as instruction in musical elements. Concert etiquette is stressed.
<b>Orchestra</b>	This class welcomes any student who wants to develop playing skills on a stringed orchestra instrument and has an appreciation of music. Based on teacher availability, small group lessons are occasionally provided. Several public concerts are provided.
<b>Study Hall</b>	Students who do not select an elective course will have a daily study hall. Those students who need extra support with academic classes are encouraged to select a study hall.

## 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE SUPPORT SERVICES:

Believing that all students can learn, Whitefish Bay Middle School provides a variety of support systems for students' academic success. These programs are designed to assist students in developing basic skills and productive work habits to better meet the expectations of our academic curriculum.

<b>Math Support</b>	In addition to the regular mathematics classroom instruction, students receive instruction in the <b>basic factual and functional math skills</b> . Daily work also consists of homework practice and review for quizzes and tests. This class is for students with below average grades in mathematics. Students may be placed in math support based on teacher recommendation, classroom performance and testing results.
<b>Reading Support</b>	Sixth grade reading support is a supplementary class for students needing <b>specialized help with reading skills</b> . Students receive small group reading comprehension instruction in content area material as well as literature. Also included are vocabulary development, fluency practice, word attack skills, and test taking strategies and preparation work. Students are placed in the course following a review of reading specialist administered test scores and grade level academic progress.