

WC West Chester Area School District 2023-24 GRADE 6 COURSE DESCRIPTION GUIDE

The mission of the West Chester Area School District is to educate and inspire our students to achieve their personal best.



Middle School 101 Information Night - Wednesday, February 22, 2023

5th Grade Parent Meetings - Wednesday, May 3, 2023

Fugett Middle School

Office: 484-266-2900

Peirce Middle School

Office: 484-266-2500

Stetson Middle School

Office: 484-266-2700

PURPOSE

The intent of this Course Description Guide is to provide students and parents with descriptions of courses offered in the middle schools of the West Chester Area School District. Our 6th Grade Guide is designed to support our students and families through the transition as they move from elementary school into middle school.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE SELECTION TIMELINE

DATE	EVENT
January 27, 2023	Completed Music Selection Form due
February 22, 2023	Middle School 101 Parent Information Night
March 2023	Parent Conferences with current 5th Grade teacher
Wednesday, May 3, 2023	5th Grade Course Selection Night
Mid August	6th Grade Parent Orientation Nights - principals will send information in the summer.



SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSIGNMENTS

6th grade... A New Adventure!

Think back on a time when you just started something new. Maybe a new team, a new job, a new school year! How did you feel? I bet if you are honest, you felt excited but also scared and probably AWKWARD. That is exactly how our students should be feeling - a mix of nervous excitement.

While this transition may be evoking a lot of different emotions in you and your children, it's ok to let them know you are nervous too because these feelings are healthy! During this time it's important to validate your student's feelings as many are anxious about getting lost, having to change classes, and opening their lockers. All of these concerns are normal parts of the move to middle school but they will look to you, the adults at home, for normalizing these concerns and for modeling that while they have concerns. Just remember...these transitional worries are temporary!

Middle School is also an exciting time to meet many new people and get to work with teachers who will share so much information throughout their middle school career. We encourage families to have conversations about how to make introductions to new classmates, the importance of asking for help when necessary and staying organized. Practicing these skills will help prepare students and quell some of those middle school jitters. In 6th grade, everyone is a new student so the whole grade is going through it together!

As your child starts their middle school adventure, don't hesitate to reach out to their support team - their counselor, teachers and administrators. Email is often the easiest way to reach any of these individuals who want to help your 6th grader find middle school success. We look forward to joining you on this middle school journey!

Your 2023-2024 6th Grade Counselors,

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WHAT ARE THE GRADING PERIODS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL?

In middle school, we shift from trimesters into marking periods. Each marking period reflects one-quarter of the academic year, or approximately 9 weeks of study. Almost all of the courses students will take in middle school will be full year courses. The only exception will be in some unified arts courses. For a more detailed description of our unified arts offerings in 6th grade, please go to page 11.

HOW ARE GRADES REPORTED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL?

In middle school, each teacher will assess students throughout their course. The purpose of any academic assessments is to measure and evaluate student achievement levels to ensure that all students are meeting the appropriate grade level standards. Using the information from these assessments, teachers will adjust their instruction to support all learners. Teachers will then synthesize these assessment data points and provide a marking period grade as a point of feedback to students and families on their progress in meeting the appropriate grade level standards.

GRADING SCALE

A+= 97-100	A = 93-96	A- = 90-92
B+= 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+= 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
F = below 70		



WEST CHESTER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

2023-24 MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTION GUIDE

6TH GRADE ACADEMIC COURSES

LANGUAGE ARTS - ENGLISH

All sixth grade English classes include the study of a variety of texts: novels, poetry, short stories, drama, and nonfiction, which includes speeches, biographies, autobiographies and editorials. Integrating reading, speaking, listening, writing, and viewing skills encourages critical thinking and effective communication. Students also study grammar, spelling and vocabulary according to a grade level scope and sequence.

The specific data points that middle school principals will consider for placement into sixth grade reading and English courses are as follows: teacher recommendation, historical and current PSSA performance in reading and writing, and fifth grade reading and writing report card grades. Principals may also consider additional data points that may be available for individual students.

ENGLISH 6 ACCELERATED HONORS

This course is recommended for avid readers, advanced writers, critical thinkers and those who have a passion for Language Arts. This class teaches students to analyze, explain, and evaluate elements of literature and write at an accelerated pace.

ENGLISH 6 HONORS

This class teaches students to analyze, explain, and evaluate elements of literature and writing at a challenging pace.

ENGLISH 6 GRADE LEVEL

This class teaches students to explain, evaluate, and analyze elements of literature and writing at a continuous pace.

LANGUAGE ARTS - READING

READING THROUGH TIME 6 HONORS

This course is for self-directed students who apply advanced reading strategies independently across all content areas.

READING THROUGH TIME 6

This course is for students who need additional instruction and practice in developing reading skills and strategies in all content areas.

READING PLUS 6 - INTERVENTION

Reading Plus is an intervention course designed to provide support to students that need additional instruction in the area of reading. Instruction will be provided by a reading specialist. Students who are required to take this course will be selected based on need as determined by multiple criteria. Students will have a prioritized need, either phonics or comprehension, and will be enrolled in the appropriate Reading Plus class. This course replaces World Cultures and Geography.

SECONDARY ENGLISH COURSE SEQUENCE

6th Grade	ENGLISH GRADE LEVEL	ENGLISH HONORS	ENGLISH ACCELERATED HONORS	
7th Grade	ENGLISH GRADE LEVEL	ENGLISH HONORS	ENGLISH ACCELERATED HONORS	
8th Grade	ENGLISH GRADE LEVEL	ENGLISH HONORS	ENGLISH ACCELERATED HONORS	
9th Grade	ENGLISH CAREER & COLLEGE PREP	ENGLISH HONORS	ENGLISH ACCELERATED HONORS	
10th Grade	ENGLISH CAREER & COLLEGE PREP	ENGLISH HONORS	ENGLISH ACCELERATED HONORS	
11th Grade	LANGUAGE CAREER & COLLEGE PREP	LITERATURE CAREER & COLLEGE PREP	ENGLISH HONORS	AP LANGUAGE & COMP.
12th Grade	LANGUAGE CAREER & COLLEGE PREP	LITERATURE CAREER & COLLEGE PREP	ENGLISH HONORS	AP LITERATURE & COMP.

STUDENTS WHO EXCEL AT ONE LEVEL MAY PROGRESS TO A HIGHER LEVEL THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

MATHEMATICS

All sixth grade Math classes study content as outlined by the Pennsylvania Core Standards, Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content. This includes: Positive & Negative Numbers and the Number Line, Fractions & Decimals, Ratios, Rates, Percent, Algebraic Expressions, Equations & Inequalities, The Coordinate Plane, Area of Polygons, Surface Area & Volume, Statistics, and Measures of Central Tendencies.

The specific data points that middle school principals will consider for placement into sixth grade math courses are as follows: teacher recommendation, historical and current PSSA performance in math, and fifth grade math grades. Furthermore, all students will take the Orleans Hanna Algebra Prognosis Test in the spring of their fifth grade year. Student scores on the Orleans Hanna Algebra Prognosis Test will not include points for self-reported grades in math, science, English or social studies. These results will serve as an additional data points for placement in 6th grade. Principals may also consider additional data points that may be available for individual students.

Our building-based Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) team will communicate with families if students are identified as needing additional math support.

MATHEMATICS 6 ACCELERATED HONORS

This course is designed for students who have demonstrated the prerequisite skills needed to study math at a high level and a rigorous pace. The curriculum is aligned to provide extensions and enrichment to focus on abstract and complex problem solving.

MATHEMATICS 6 HONORS

This course provides students with experiences to further build the foundational concepts necessary for the higher study of math. It is intended for students who are continuing the development of their abstract reasoning. Exposure to higher-order problem solving is prevalent within the challenging pace of this course.

MATHEMATICS 6 GRADE LEVEL

This course focuses on abstract thinking and provides an introduction through concrete and numeric examples. The transition to abstract problem solving occurs at a continuous pace with a focus on supporting a strong foundation of math knowledge.

MATH PLUS 6 - INTERVENTION

This course replaces a 2 day Unified Arts class

Math Plus is designed to provide intense, formal math intervention. Students who are recommended to participate will be selected based on need as determined by multiple data. Math Plus is in addition to a student's core math class.

LEVEL CHANGES AFTER THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

Students may consider level changes after September 15th. Level changes will be honored provided they are in the best interest of the student and seats are available as a result of a level change.

Course changes into or out of a performing music after September 15th will only be processed after the completion of the marking period in which the request was made. These changes can be processed if there are available seats in the newly requested course(s).

SECONDARY MATHEMATICS COURSE PROGRESSION

6th Grade	MATH 6 GRADE LEVEL	MATH 6 HONORS	MATH 6 ACCELERATED HONORS	
7th Grade	MATH 7 GRADE LEVEL	MATH 7 HONORS	ALGEBRA 1 (7) ACCELERATED HONORS	
8th Grade	MATH 8 GRADE LEVEL	ALGEBRA 1 (8) HONORS	GEOMETRY 8 ACCELERATED HONORS	
9th Grade	ALGEBRA 1A	ALGEBRA	GEOMETRY	ALGEBRA 2
10th Grade	ALGEBRA 1B	GEOMETRY	ALGEBRA 2	PRE-CALCULUS
11th Grade	GEOMETRY	ALGEBRA 2	PRE-CALCULUS	CALCULUS
12th Grade Electives	ALGEBRA 2 STATISTICS COMPUTER SCIENCE	PRE-CALCULUS STATISTICS COMPUTER SCIENCE	CALCULUS STATISTICS COMPUTER SCIENCE	CALCULUS STATISTICS COMPUTER SCIENCE

SECONDARY MATHEMATICS:

Course content and pacing are offered at various levels of ability to meet the needs of students. The goal of each course is to challenge, but not overwhelm, students. Students should consult with their current math teachers to help determine appropriate levels. The most rigorous course level offered is AP/ Accelerated Honors followed by Honors. Career & College Prep courses are taught at a college-prep level. Below is a listing of the levels at which each course is offered:

Algebra 1:	Honors, Career & College Prep
Geometry:	Accelerated Honors, Honors, Career & College Prep
Algebra 2:	Accelerated Honors, Honors, Career & College Prep
Pre-Calculus:	Accelerated Honors, Honors, Career & College Prep
Calculus:	AP-BC, AP-AB, Honors
Statistics:	AP, Honors

ALL STUDENTS MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THREE MATH COURSES TO GRADUATE.

SCIENCE

SCIENCE 6

The sixth grade science curriculum emphasizes the nature of science and the scientific method which facilitates an appropriate vertical alignment from the elementary science program to the middle school sequence. In accordance with the Pennsylvania State Standards and Assessment Anchors, the principles of life science are taught. Topics include the nature of science, cells, heredity, kingdoms of life, and environmental science. The course utilizes guided inquiry laboratory activities and reading strategies. It offers students a variety of opportunities for acquisition of content and skill development that facilitate their understanding of the process of science and prepares them to become actively engaged in their future learning experiences.

SOCIAL STUDIES

WORLD CULTURES AND GEOGRAPHY

In World Cultures & Geography, 6th grade students will study the world by studying the regions of North America, Latin America & the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Students will learn about the government, geography, economic systems of our global societies, in accordance with the Pennsylvania State Standards. In each region, students will engage in a historical analysis to understand our modern world.



WHAT ARE UNIFIED ARTS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL?

Unified Arts courses allow students to continue their study of some content areas, such as music, art, health & physical education from their elementary experience. It is also an opportunity for students to explore new content areas, such as Computer Science, Family & Consumer Sciences, and Technology Education. Students will have two periods of unified arts each day, rotating through the variety of courses offered.

THE 6-DAY CYCLE

In elementary school, students rotated through their unified arts classes on a 4 day cycle, with art, health & physical education, library, and music meeting once per 4 day cycle. Because of the wealth of offerings at the middle school, we expand our cycle into 6 days. Most students will experience the same unified arts courses in 6th grade, with the only exceptions being the music options and any interventions designed to support student learning. Below, you will see how the unified arts pair with each other to offer our students a robust and exciting exploration of the unified arts.

Full Year Courses:

The following classes meet for 2 days out of the 6 day cycle for the entire year.

- [Music](#) - Students have the option of selecting Band, Chorus, Orchestra or Classroom Music.
- [Physical Education](#)

Semester Courses:

The following classes meet for a semester. A semester is half of one year, so these classes are scheduled for Marking Periods 1 & 2 or Marking Periods 3 & 4.

- [Art](#) - This class will meet 4 days out of the 6 day cycle.
- [Health](#) - This class will meet every day out of the 6 day cycle.

Quarter Courses:

The following classes will meet for a quarter, which is one marking period. Each of these courses will meet for 2 days out of the 6 day cycle.

- [Computer Science Fundamentals](#)
- [Computer Science Applications](#)
- [Consumer Studies](#)
- [Food Science](#)
- [Introduction to Technology Engineering](#)
- [Robotics & Circuitry](#)

A SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule is provided to our students and their families as a SAMPLE only. Our school based teams work hard to ensure that all students have a schedule that allows students to achieve their personal best.

SAMPLE Marking Period 1

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Computer Science Fundamentals (Quarter Course)	Computer Science Fundamentals (Quarter Course)
Health (Semester Course)					

SAMPLE Marking Period 2

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Food Science (Quarter Course)	Food Science (Quarter Course)
Health (Semester Course)					

SAMPLE Marking Period 3

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Consumer Studies (Quarter Course)	Consumer Studies (Quarter Course)
Art (Semester Course)				Introduction to Technology Engineering (Quarter Course)	Introduction to Technology Engineering (Quarter Course)

SAMPLE Marking Period 4

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Physical Education (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Music (Full Year Course)	Computer Science Applications (Quarter Course)	Computer Science Applications (Quarter Course)
Art (Semester Course)				Robotics & Circuitry (Quarter Course)	Robotics & Circuitry (Quarter Course)

UNIFIED ARTS COURSES

ART

Emphasizing techniques, tool use, care and safety in the art room, students learn the arts of different cultures through projects utilizing a variety of media. Vocabulary and writing exercises are included in lessons to reinforce new concepts.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

COMPUTER SCIENCE FUNDAMENTALS

Computer Science Fundamentals is the first in a series of computer science courses offered for middle school students. This sixth grade course introduces the concepts of computer science such as hardware, software and networking while teaching computer skills in word processing, multimedia and spreadsheets. Digital Citizenship topics are reviewed and practiced throughout the course.

COMPUTER SCIENCE APPLICATIONS

Computer Science Applications is the second course for 6th grade students. Students build on skills from the first course and are introduced to basic concepts of computer programming through flowcharts, algorithms and applications of the coordinate plane.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

FOOD SCIENCE

This course introduces students to wellness and healthy food choices as outlined by the principles of the USDA's My Plate guidelines. Students explore laboratory and equipment safety, the science of food safety and food borne illness, accurate measuring techniques, chemical changes that occur during food preparation, healthy meal planning and lab procedure guidelines. Students participate in food experiments by applying these concepts. They critique their performance as members of a team.

CONSUMER STUDIES

Through the examination of physical, emotional and social needs of the family, the young adolescent learns to distinguish needs and goals across the lifespan. They explore a variety of housing options to suit family structures. Using computer technology, students create a "dream room" involving a budget and purchasing strategies.

HEALTH

The Health Education Program is designed to motivate and encourage active student participation in developing life skills for optimal emotional, mental, physical, and social health. The curriculum is aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Health, Safety & Physical Education and is delivered in a variety of teaching styles to optimize and accommodate student learning. A main goal of the program is for students to apply the knowledge gained to make healthy lifestyle decisions.

MUSIC

Students may register for ONE performing ensemble class (band, chorus, orchestra) OR they will be enrolled in Classroom Music.

BAND

Students who play band instruments are given the opportunity to perform many styles of literature from classical to contemporary. The development of technical skills, musical knowledge and self discipline, as well as learning to work together as a unified organization, are important elements of the band program.

Prerequisites: Essential technical skills on a band instrument as prescribed in the district band curriculum and approval by the band director.

CHORUS

Each grade level practices and performs varied selections of choral literature while working toward developing tone, intonation, diction, blend, balance, and breathing techniques. Furthermore, students will continue to improve their music literacy, ear-training/audiation skills, and sight-reading abilities. Chorus is designed for students who have a high level of interest in singing and improving their vocal skills.

STRING ORCHESTRA

Students who play string instruments are given the opportunity to perform many styles of string ensemble/orchestral literature ranging from baroque to jazz. Students develop their technique and their knowledge of scales and rhythms as well as their sensitivity to style and character of the music. As a community of people, members of the string orchestra learn to work together with self discipline toward a common goal: excellence in performance.

Prerequisites: (1) essential technical skills on a violin, viola, cello or double bass and (2) approval by the elementary and middle school string directors.

CLASSROOM MUSIC

All Classroom Music students study a variety of topics, including music theory, music history, instrumentation, composition, musical careers, recording, and the music industry. They actively participate in musical performance while learning about the basic elements of music through our keyboard lab and various musical technologies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education Program provides cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning opportunities aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Health, Safety & Physical Education in order to gain a better appreciation, working knowledge and understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through physical activity. Students engage in a wide variety of activities including team sports, cooperative games, personal fitness, lifetime pursuits, team building and indoor rock climbing. Classes are differentiated to meet all levels of ability and students are encouraged to optimize their participation by being prepared with a required uniform.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION TO TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING

Students are introduced to the engineering design process. Students learn how technologies are created, modified, and how they impact every day life.

ROBOTICS AND CIRCUITRY

Students learn to program robots to devise solutions to challenges based on real-world scenarios. Students also explore circuitry concepts used in many electronic devices and products.

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS (6TH-8TH GRADES)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT (ELD)

English Learners (EL) in the West Chester Area School District represent over 38 different native languages. In the 2022-23 school year, the District had more than 540 active ELs. The goal of the West Chester Area School District's ELD Program is to facilitate the development and attainment of English proficiency and academic achievement of students whose native or first language is not English and to ensure equitable access to academic content, school resources, and programs. The foundation for the curriculum is a standards-based curriculum aligned to the English Language Development Standards and the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards.

GIFTED PROGRAM

The WCASD Middle School Gifted Education Enrichment Program supports individualized instructional programs tailored to fit the needs of each identified gifted student. Students can select from a range of courses and topics based on their interests. The variety of course offerings range from Model UN to Language Forensics and Science investigations. In addition to the course offerings, the Middle School Gifted Program also engages students in seminars, field trips, regional competitions, independent study, and guest speaker events.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education services are provided at the middle school for those students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Services include a variety of supports as determined appropriate for each individual child by the IEP team.



SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2023-24

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"to educate and inspire our students to achieve their personal best."**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The middle school administration would like to commend the efforts of the department chairs of Fugett Middle School, Peirce Middle School, and Stetson Middle School for their cooperation in making this Course Description Guide a reality. Through their collective vision, we have been able to bring West Chester Area School District's middle school model into a unified organization that will provide consistency while enlightening our students with an exciting and fulfilling educational experience.



This booklet was produced by the
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Communications Office