

North Shore Middle School
Grade Six
Academic Program Guide
2017-2018

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Know thyself, shape your world!

Dear Parents,

We believe that a robust academic program challenges students to think deeply about what they are learning, inspires students to seek out new ideas, and prepares students for the challenges the outside world offers. In talking to parents, teachers, and students in our community, our values about education become abundantly clear. We want our children to excel as:

- **Communicators**
- **Collaborators**
- **Thinkers (creative & critical)**
- **Problem solvers**
- **Innovators**
- **Individuals committed to themselves and others.**

With that in mind, our teacher's work throughout the school year and over the summer to carefully design curriculum and units of study aligned with the New York State Common Core Learning Standards and the specific abovementioned values held by our unique North Shore community. All of this work occurs under the leadership and direction of our administrative team, with an eye towards enriching and enhancing the quality of student learning throughout our school.

If you have questions about any of our programs, please feel free to contact any member of our administrative curriculum team at **277-7301** as follows:

Principal Curriculum Leader: Robert Dennis
Humanities Teacher Leader: Seth Gordon
STEM Teacher Leader: Amy DiMeola
Director of World Language and ENL: Ana Aguiar-Mady
Director of Fine & Performing Arts: Dalia Rodriguez
Curriculum Leader for Family & Consumer Science: Rachel Green
Asst. Director Special Education: Joseph Kisting
Director of Health & Physical Education: Don Lang

***STEM** stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics

We are proud of the academic program our school offers your children. We want North Shore Middle School to be a place where learning is challenging, joyful, and inspiring for our students. At the same time, we always strive to improve the quality of our work with your children and we are eager for your feedback and comments. As you begin your journey with us, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly if you are experiencing anything less than what is described within the pages of this academic program guide.

Sincerely,

Mr. Robert Dennis
Principal

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Grade Six Program Overview



“Know thyself, shape your world!”

As students begin learning in our school, we want them to understand that they have powerful voices that can impact the world around them. Our theme for the year in sixth grade is **“Know thyself, shape your world!”**

We want our students to learn that they can always improve in school and in life if they take time to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses and focus on self-improvement. Our teachers believe in a growth mindset and approach teaching and learning under the premise that all students can learn and excel in school when properly supported by caring teachers, parents, and peers.

When students are open to feedback, their potential for growth is unlimited! We also want our students to know that they are not passive passengers but must be active participants in shaping their own learning, lives, and the world around them.

To that end, we focus our students on four interdisciplinary essential questions that become relevant to them in every subject area. We want our students to understand how each subject they take is connected to larger ideas and concepts. While they learn subject matter in different classrooms, everything they are learning is related and relevant to living an interdisciplinary life. In order to help students think and learn in this manner we use the following overarching essential questions as they engage in all of their coursework in each discipline:

1. **How do you know something is true?**
2. **How can you use patterns to make sense of the world?**
3. **What changes and why?**
4. **How does mindset impact success?**

The pages that follow provide brief descriptions of each course that students take in sixth grade at North Shore Middle School, always keeping our essential questions at the heart of student learning.

THE ACADEMIC CORE



Social Studies 6: Social Studies integrates the skills of reading, writing, and research into an exploration of how human behaviors and actions in the past set the stage for our present world. Teachers tie the grade level essential questions into each unit of study as they learn about early peoples, the rise of ancient river valley civilizations, and how our ancient world paved the way for the modern world that we live in today. Students study how ancient Egypt, India, China, Mesopotamia, and classical Greece and Rome set the stage in the Eastern Hemisphere for the events unfolding in our world today, integrating a study of our past and its impact on our present.

Students meet for Social Studies every day for either 41 minutes (afternoon block) or 62 minutes (morning block). However, teachers and teams have the flexibility to meet for longer blocks of time (up to three forty one minute periods) or with different students depending on the projects or celebrations of student work going on within each team.

Science 6: Explores our universe from the *atom to the cosmos!* Students in Science 6 hone their scientific observation and inquiry skills in order to develop and test hypotheses using the Scientific Method. The grade level essential questions are embedded in the units of study, which are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Students will explore our world from various perspectives, including a study of matter and its interactions; the Earth's atmosphere, weather, and water; and the dynamic Earth and its geology. Our goal in this course is to help our students understand what it means to be a scientist, how to ask meaningful in-depth questions, how to research potential solutions and how to communicate results to various authentic audiences.

Students meet for Science every day for either 41 minutes (afternoon block) or 62 minutes (morning block). However, teachers and teams have the flexibility to meet for longer blocks of time (up to three forty one minute periods) or with different

students depending on the labs, projects, or celebrations of student work going on within each team.

English 6: Our ELA program incorporates and builds upon the Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop, with an intense focus on students writing and reading as much as possible in school while teachers provide students with differentiated coaching, support, or enrichment. While we use the Teachers College units of study, we adapt them by tying in our essential questions and providing students with multiple opportunities to read and write about Social Studies, Science, and other topics. We are also committed to teaching the basic research skills students need to be successful learners in all subject areas. It is our belief that the more students research, read, and write in middle school, the better prepared they will be for a life of reading, writing, communicating, and success!

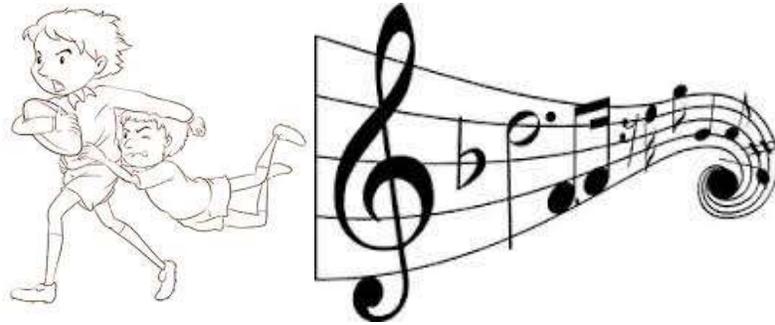
All students receive 41-minute or 62 minute periods of ELA daily (alternating) so that students have more time for reading and writing. Again, these periods are flexible as teachers/teams may manipulate meeting times to address the needs of students or to create specialized learning opportunities for students.

Math 6: Our Math program is aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and takes time to integrate Common Core 6 content as well as elements of the Common Core 7 program. This allows our students to begin a steady path towards Common Core Algebra for all in eighth grade. This 6th grade math course builds and deepens student understanding of the number system as well ratio and proportion, and introduces the concepts of algebraic expressions and equations.

As with our other core subject areas, lessons in Math 6 last for either 41 minutes (afternoon block) or 62 minutes (morning block). Additionally, teachers and teams have the flexibility to meet for longer blocks of time (up to three forty one minute periods) or with different students depending on student needs (enrichment, Academic support, etc.)

World Language 6: Our World Language classes meet for 41 minutes every other day in grade six. Students may choose to take French, Italian, Latin, Mandarin, or Spanish. Our fun but challenging language curriculum ensures that our students encounter rigorous language experiences that prepare them for advanced language studies throughout middle school and then high school. Whether students decide to continue learning the language chosen in the elementary schools or explore a new one, our language program promotes high quality listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through the lens of learning unique world cultures.

ART, MUSIC, & PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Art 6: All of our students participate in the Art 6 program. Because we believe that Art plays an essential role in education, we provide students with Art 6 for 41 minutes every other day throughout the entire school year. During that time our students are learning skills specific to creating pieces of art, establishing a vocabulary that allows them to understand and discuss works of art and thinking about what it means to view the world through the critical lens of an artist!

Physical Education 6: Students participate in PE every other day for 41-minute periods in grade six. Units of study are congruent with the NYS Physical education program and focus on team and individual sports. Physical Education 6 also focuses students on living healthy lifestyles and incorporates a wide array of fitness activities (like FUN FITNESS FRIDAY!) throughout the school year.

Music 6: Students have the opportunity to take music every other day for 41 minutes in one of four areas: *Band, Orchestra, Chorus, or Digital Music*. Each course is unique and focused on the National Music Standards, promoting musicianship, music appreciation, and creativity in the arts. This continues throughout your child's middle school experience with a focus on public ensemble performances. In addition, we provide small group lessons as a pull out program one time per week for students in Orchestra, Chorus, and Band. These pullouts only occur during non-academic classes throughout the school year. In other words, we do not pull students out of Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Art or World Language for small group lessons.

EIGHT-WEEK CYCLE COURSE PROGRAM



CYCLE COURSES: Are provided for 36-day, 41-minute sessions throughout the school year. Cycle courses are mandated by NYS in middle school and provide students with a wider range of learning activities connected to our larger academic program. We offer four Cycle courses and one enrichment class opportunity for all students at the middle school as follows:

Health Cycle 6: Our Health program in grade six focuses on hygiene, character education, and how students can positively contribute to their families, communities, and the world around them. In addition, students focus on healthy eating habits and living habits that promote long and successful lifestyles. Making good choices as they head towards young adolescence is also a major part of our Health 6 Cycle program.

Technology 6: This course incorporates aspects of the **National Project Lead the Way Science and Engineering** program and is part of our school wide STEM initiative to get students more engaged in Science Engineering, and Technology. Students design, build, and experiment with a wide range of projects in our technology lab using computers, hand tools, and small power tools.

Family & Consumer Science 6: This course covers the state curriculum for Family & Consumer Science through the lens of service learning. Everything students make or create in this course is used in some way to help others or to make a difference in our local community. Activities in this course include but are not limited to cooking, baking, sewing, and other essential home living skills.

GRADE SIX ENRICHMENT ELECTIVE CLASSES



Grade Six Elective Courses: We believe that students become highly engaged in learning when they are passionate about the topics they are studying. Therefore, we offer a wide range of enrichment opportunities for students to choose from as part of their Cycle area coursework. Grade six elective courses meet for 36 days, 41 minute learning periods per day. All of these courses were designed to incorporate research, technology use, and the following district values that promote students as: **Communicators, collaborators, thinkers, problem solvers, innovators, and individuals committed to themselves and others.** Students get to choose two of the following courses in grade six:

Design Squad: Design Squad gets kids thinking like engineers and shows them that engineering can be fun, creative, and something they can do. Students develop a working understanding of core science concepts, deepen their understanding of the design process, and increase their motivation to learn science, technology, engineering, and math. Can you design a container that will safely ship a Pringles chip to your home? Can you use toothpicks to create a bridge that can support the greatest amount of weight? Can you invent a holder for a 6-pack of soda cans that is animal-safe, sturdy, and easy to carry? Are you ready to join the squad and face these STEM challenges?

Wow...You Made What?: If you can imagine it...you can make it! Would you like to see a creative idea come to life? Do you want to solve a problem by inventing something? Join the "maker movement" and spend some time tinkering, designing, building, and learning about how things work. See if you can challenge yourself to build something using a variety of interesting materials. Build and invent to see science, engineering and art come to life and to bring out your inner maker.

Coding & Electronics: Have you ever thought about how something works - like your phone, radio, computer, or TV? In this course we will explore the different electrical components that go into these devices. We'll use the open source Arduino software and learn the C coding language to design and test circuits and control the functions of LED lights, servos, and motors...and find out what makes these electronics work the way they do. This hands-on experience with code and electrical circuits will give you the tools to create your own computer or mini robot of your own!!

MythBusters: Ever wondered if double-dipping really spreads germs? Does toast really always land butter-side down? Can you make a glow stick out of Mountain Dew, vinegar, and baking soda as claimed on the internet? Separating truth from fiction can be tough! In this elective we will endeavor to find the truth as we investigate claims using research and the scientific method. We will also watch episodes of *MythBusters* as inspiration and to analyze and critique the investigative methods demonstrated on the show.

Renewable Revolution: Do you enjoy working with your hands, recycling, and creating useful items out of trash? Then this is the course for you! Renewable Revolution will open students' minds to creating "green" structures and objects. A "green" structure can be anything that does not harm or impact the environment, and in this course you'll find that this can include furniture made of recycled materials, natural powered electrical sources, and home-grown food instead of purchased from a store. This class promotes environmental stewardship and mindfulness about reducing our carbon footprint.

Creative Writing: Find Freedom in Your Words! Do you love the writing workshop in English class and wish you had more time to write? In this course you will work with other young writers as you explore poetry, short stories, fantasy writing, and/or playwriting. You will finish this course with several polished pieces to publish and share with the world.

Viking Voice Newspaper: Would you like to write for a newspaper as a political writer, sports reporter or have your own editorial? Would you like to create your own comics, crosswords, cartoons, blogs or write for social media? Did you ever wonder what it takes to be a journalist? In this class you will learn the art of journalism and develop your voice and interests by contributing articles and editorials for our online student newspaper, the *NSMS Viking Voice!*

Criminal Justice: For our future judges and lawyers, this course is about discussion, debate, argument and proving your point with evidence. Here you will examine the law through a variety of criminal court cases as lawyers, judges and members of the jury. Did the accused break the law or were their rights violated during the process? Students will engage in Socratic Seminars, mock trials and debate surrounding important legal and ethical questions.

Documentary Film Making: Calling all filmmakers! In this class you will study documentary film making techniques. You will then research and explore current event or historical topics of interest, pick a focus, and create your very own documentary film to share with the world!!

Entrepreneurship: Do you have what it takes to be an entrepreneur? In this course, you will learn about famous entrepreneurs throughout history, how they started their businesses, and what made them so successful. You will learn how to solve problems, collaborate with business partners, develop a business plan for your own business idea, and come up with marketing and production strategies to sell your products. In the end, you will present your business plan to real life entrepreneurs (Think Shark Tank) to determine if your ideas have what it takes to make you the next North Shore Business Tycoon!

Current Events: Are you the type of person that is interested in the news, politics, the media and what is happening in the world? This course reviews the top news stories and digs deeper into the issues behind the news. In this class you will follow the top new stories, local news and then you can become a news analyst to debate what's important to you and showcase your learning in fun and lively atmosphere!

Public Speaking & Debate: When you speak, do people listen? After taking Public Speaking and Debate, they certainly will! This course aims to develop students' skills and confidence in the areas of public speaking, debate, research, and creative performance through exposure to in-class debates, performances, and other public speaking activities in a low pressure, joyful environment. Students will develop their own speeches, arguments, and presentations for the purpose of practicing and enhancing their ability to use their voice to inform, teach, inspire, and call others to action!

Theatre Workshop: Storytelling has existed at the heart of all cultures since the beginning of our species, and now you will have a chance to be part of that tradition. The theatre workshop is a crash course in all aspects of designing theatre. Students will write, perform, direct, design, and publicize scenes for a public performance. If you have ever wondered about what it takes to create the magic of the theatre, now is your chance to find out.

Guitar Workshop: The guitar has been one of the most influential musical instruments of the modern age. Since the invention of the electric guitar in 1931, musicians everywhere have begun picking and strumming with the volume turned up and dreams of rock stardom. The guitar is an incredibly versatile instrument that is important for any musician to have a handle on. Whether you have been taking lessons for years, or this will be your first time picking one up, Guitar Workshop 6 is for you. In this cycle class you will find a variety of personalized lessons to take your guitar playing to the next level. This class will culminate in a recital night! *Guitar ownership is **not** required.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING & STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES



Advisory 6: All sixth graders start their day in small advisory groups led by one of the teachers on their academic team. The goal of our Advisory 6 program is to provide students with a safe space to prepare for their day, to get support from their advisory teacher, and to ensure a successful transition into middle school.

During the first month of school advisory is a 30-minute period. Once students get comfortable with the transition to middle school, advisory lasts 6 minutes daily and 30 minutes on Fridays. In most cases, advisory is a time when daily attendance is taken, announcements are made, and quick “check ins” are made with the students. Our Friday extended 30-minute advisory periods are designed with the following purposes in mind:

- As a place that the teacher/mentor forges group unity through discussions and activities focused on successful learning.
- As a time for students to check in with each other and their teacher/mentor about how they are doing in school.
- As a time to learn and practice various skills such as organization, time management, study skills, school culture, website navigation, i-Pad use, and how to be successful students with a growth mindset.

Enrichment Services: While our middle school does not have dedicated Enrichment specialists, as is the case in our elementary school system, we do provide a wide range of enrichment opportunities for our students. We strongly believe that the best approach to enriching a student's learning experience at the middle level is by differentiating instruction within the context of a given classroom. In English, teachers will push students to read the most challenging books and will also provide individualized coaching to push students as writers. In Social studies, our teachers will provide a wide range of choices and opportunities as students complete a variety of challenging research projects throughout the school year. If students are willing to take on enrichment challenges, our teachers are eager to provide and support them.

In Math and Science, students have equitable access to enrichment activities by having the opportunity for a pullout on a rotating basis. By providing enrichment services in this manner, all students regardless of where they are in their academic journey will have the opportunity to experience the subject from a new perspective and be challenged to think differently about it. If you feel your child would benefit from additional enrichment opportunities or services, please contact your child's guidance counselor to discuss available opportunities in the appropriate subject area (277-7303).

Academic Support Services: We want all of our students to be successful learners within our school. At different times, students may need additional support. We offer academic support services for struggling students on an as needed basis. We use NYS assessment scores as well as teacher feedback and academic grades to determine which students need support in certain subject areas. If you feel your child needs additional support that they are not currently receiving, please contact your child's teachers or guidance counselor immediately (277-7303) so we can set up a meeting to discuss the wide range of support options that your child may need.

Lunch 6 Opportunities: Students participate in lunch for one period (41 minutes daily). Students are able to do many things during their lunch period unique to our school, including but not limited to the following activities: Outdoor recess, library time to study, read, or participate in book talks, tech lab to work on a technology projects, art room to work on an art projects, makerspace to work on creative endeavors, music room to participate in the "Jam Club", or the lunch and learn room to catch up on work with the support of a teaching aide. We also run student government and class board meetings during lunch and all students are encouraged to participate.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Grade six students are encouraged to participate in a wide array of after school clubs and activities. A club fair is held after school during the second week of school for the purpose of sharing with students the variety of activities available to them. Below are most of the activities that will be available to our sixth grade students:

StagE3 (Drama Club)	Viking Voice (Newspaper)	Yearbook	French Club
Spanish Club	Italian Club	Mathletes	Science Olympiads
Math Olympiads	Rocketry Club	Chess Club	Mock Trial Club
Student Government	Art Club	Builders Club	Chamber Choir
Chess Club	Gay Straight Alliance	Morning Chorus	Jazz Band
Jam (rock) Club	Chamber Orchestra	Organic Gardening	Robotics
School Store Club	Ski Club	Technology Club	Science Research Club