



# 2016 - 2017

# Curriculum

# *in the* Middle Schools

*Excellence Without Exception*

## PRINCIPALS

### Bristow Middle School

Mr. Steven Cook, Principal

Mrs. Jacqueline Colon, Assistant Principal

### King Philip Middle School

Ms. Joy Wright, Principal

Mr. Justin Gusy, Assistant Principal

Mr. Marc Kotler, Assistant Principal

### Sedgwick Middle School

Mr. Andrew Clapsaddle, Principal

Ms. Melissa Behrens, Assistant Principal

Mr. Frank Cardona, Assistant Principal

## What Your Child Will Learn In

Grade  
6

Dear Families,

It is a pleasure to share our 2016-2017 *Curriculum in the Middle Schools*, a brief overview of all areas of the Grade 6 West Hartford Curriculum. In this brochure, you will also find descriptions of our Unified Arts program, School Counseling, Library Media Services, and Gifted Programs. Our curriculum is based on the Connecticut Core Standards and provides instruction on the essential skills and understandings necessary for success on both district and state assessments.

Inherent in our curriculum is the belief that every student can and should learn. Instructional strategies that your child will experience include but are not limited to: collaboration, active and direct learning, problem solving, guided discovery, independent activities, and differentiation.

This curriculum comes alive in the hands of our talented teachers who are committed to ensuring that our students reach their highest potential. We are dedicated to accommodating children's diverse needs, the way they learn, their experiences and interests, and to facilitating continuous educational growth. If you should have any questions about your child's curriculum, your classroom teacher is the best source of information.

No single document can fully explain the rich and complex nature of the school curriculum and instructional goals. We know that learning is optimized in a partnership with families, teachers, and schools. Working together, we can use your experiences as a family and our work in the classroom to create a respectful climate of academic success, healthy personal and social development, and joy for lifelong learning.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Vicinus, Jr.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment



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## English Language Arts

Students entering sixth grade will have read literature from a wide variety of genres such as mythology, folktales, and fables from around the world. They will have studied classic and contemporary fiction, poetry, and literary nonfiction related to historical and scientific topics. They will apply this prior knowledge to the year's overarching theme of exploring new perspectives.

Sixth grade students will study why point of view is important in literature through the analysis of a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts. Through the examination of fantasy and realistic literature, students will explore the elements of fiction and informational text; they will identify and analyze complex characters, text structures, and the development of theme. They will explore these themes through the close reading of works such as *Tuck Everlasting* or *The Westing Game*.

In addition, the year will center on three types of writing: narrative, expository, and argument. Students will engage in the writing process at least once a quarter, including the use of graphic organizers, drafting, and peer/self-revision to publish their work. By the end of sixth grade, all students will demonstrate their understanding of the writing process through one expository essay, one narrative, and one persuasive piece presented in an electronic portfolio. In their literary analysis, research essays, narratives, and oral presentations, students will draw on multiple sources, including literary, informational, and multimedia texts. Students will write in a variety of genres including response to literature, narrative, persuasive, and expository as they develop writing portfolios. Students will continue to develop their vocabulary while investigating unfamiliar words from literature and using them in their own working vocabulary. Additionally, students will advance their communication skills as they explore various methods of presentation, including multimedia. Students will also develop and structure ideas in order to strengthen their argumentation skills exhibiting these in class discussions, debates, and presentations.

By the end of sixth grade, students will have a deeper understanding of new and varied perspectives. With this knowledge of point of view and perspective, they will be ready to critically examine the search for self-identity.

## World Languages

The World Language Curriculum incorporates the National Standards and the State of Connecticut Frameworks for World Languages. Students may study Chinese, French, or Spanish. Our program goals focus on:

- Communication: to use language in three modes: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational
- Cultures: to understand cultures through products, practices and perspectives of speakers of that language
- Connections: to understand relationships of language to other disciplines and new frontiers
- Comparisons: to develop insight into one's own language and culture as well as those of the new language
- Community: to apply language beyond the classroom in a global setting

In grade 6, listening and speaking skills are emphasized to build upon the elementary language experience. Reading and writing are provided regularly as the students develop these skills and integrate them with the others. Students complete a variety of performance tasks and are encouraged to speak the language as much as possible. Students are able to ask and share information about themselves, their families and friends, talk about school, shopping, food and other topics. Many geographic and cultural topics are woven throughout the different themes, including Canada, China, and Mexico.

## Mathematics

The Middle School Mathematics Grade 6 Curriculum incorporates the Connecticut Core Standards for Mathematics (CCS-M). The program goals focus on the following content domains:

- Ratios and proportional relationships
- The number system
- Expressions and equations
- Geometry
- Statistics and probability

In all grades, the following mathematical practices are integrated throughout the program:

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

In grade 6, the major themes include extension of understanding and application of ratios, rational numbers, one-variable equations and inequalities, area, surface area, volume, data distribution, and variability of a data set.

## Science

The sixth grade science program focuses on science investigational skills and concepts in the earth and life sciences. Students engage in performance tasks that involve the design and implementation of experiments focused on specific questions or problems. Our curriculum is based on the National Science Education Standards and the State of Connecticut Grades 6-8 Science Frameworks. The course includes the content and skills to be assessed by the grade eight science CMT including the state's curriculum embedded performance task, "Dig In!" in which the students investigate the relationships between soil properties and water absorption and soil properties and percolation rate.

During sixth grade, students explore the following concepts and skills:

- Scientific Method: Learning about science as a process.
- Experimentation: Students perform lab experiments and utilize science investigational skills, including predicting, observing, measuring, graphing, interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating.
- Earth Science: Geology — Movements of the earth's crust (i.e., an exploration of plate tectonics, volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and natural disasters).
- Earth Science: Geology — The Rock Cycle (i.e., igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks).
- Earth Science: Astronomy — movements of the earth, moon and planets, and an exploration of the seasons, phases of the moon, eclipses, and tides.
- Earth Science: Meteorology — the factors that affect local weather conditions and the causes of wind.
- Life Science: Major world biomes and exploration of food webs, ecological cycles, photosynthesis, aquatic habitats, populations, biodiversity and extinction, and predator-prey relationships.

## Social Studies

The purpose of history and social studies is to prepare students to ask and seek answers to meaningful questions and prepare them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become informed participants in an ever-changing global community and to act responsibly to improve its condition. The social studies curriculum is aligned with the national College, Career, and Citizenship (C3) frameworks as well as the Connecticut state social studies curriculum frameworks. Key disciplinary content and skills, as well as core literacy standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening are embedded within our curricula. Our curriculum is driven by student inquiry and requires students to engage with compelling questions in order to understand the world around us and take informed action based on their learning.

In addition to disciplinary content, students are equipped with the tools necessary to engage in inquiry. In particular, students will learn to:

- Recognize, develop, and articulate compelling questions.
- Gather and evaluate sources and then use evidence to understand the complexity of multiple social studies topics.
- Explore multiple perspectives to develop their own understanding of history and social studies topics.
- Engage in conversations and share their understandings of the world around them.

The sixth grade social studies program begins a two-year program in world regional studies. Students will cover one major region each marking period focusing on the history, geography, economics, and politics of the region. Students should take away from each unit a sense of place and an understanding of contemporary issues affecting the region. The regions of study in sixth grade are: Middle America and the Caribbean; South America; Western and Eastern Europe; and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, students will practice research and argumentative writing skills with an emphasis on developing claims and supporting claims with evidence.

## Library Media Services

The library media program in the middle school continues to build on the foundation skills taught in grades K-5 for students to become critical users of information and readers for lifelong learning. *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* published by the American Association of School Librarians provides the framework for instruction. By the end of grade 8 students will:

- Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.
- Demonstrate adaptability by changing the inquiry focus, questions, resources, or strategies when necessary to achieve success.
- Respect copyright/intellectual property rights of creators and producers.
- Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions and create new knowledge.
- Use the writing process, media and visual literacy and technology skills to create products that express new understandings.
- Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess.
- Show an appreciation for literature by choosing to read for pleasure and expressing an interest in various literary genres.



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## Unified Arts

Our middle school students participate in 36-day unified arts rotations in the areas of physical education, music, art, health, and technology education in grades 6 through 8. The following pages include descriptions of the curriculum. Below please find a sample student schedule of Unified Arts courses throughout the grade 6 year.

	Morning	Afternoon
Rotation 1	PE	Art
Rotation 2	Health	Music
Rotation 3	Tech Ed	PE
Rotation 4	Art	PE
Rotation 5	Music	Tech Ed

Note: The Unified Arts Program is delivered slightly differently at Bristow Middle School where there are 6 rotations, each lasting for 30 days. The UA curriculum and the courses are identical to the other two middle schools with the only difference being that at Bristow, physical education and health are combined into one course of study called "Wellness." Every student will be in a wellness rotation at any given time throughout the year.

## Music

The middle school music curriculum includes classroom instruction for all students in grade 6 and is aligned with State and National Standards to ensure a comprehensive and sequentially appropriate experience. The elective program includes band, orchestra, and choral ensembles. Further extension and enrichment of the curriculum is offered through co-curricular ensembles: jazz band, select string, and vocal ensembles.

### Performance Ensembles

Performance ensembles focus on building individual and ensemble skills through a broad selection of music literature. Components include:

Blend	Ear Training	Posture
Bow Control	Expression	Sight Reading
Breathing	Intonation	Tone Quality

Instrumental students also receive small group instruction focusing on individual technique within a specific instrument grouping.

### Classroom Instruction

Students continue the development of musical skills from elementary school. Reading, writing, improvisation, and listening skills are emphasized. The music of Mexico and Canada, as well as songs and dances from around the world, are included in the curriculum.

## Visual Arts

The middle school curriculum, like that of the elementary and high school levels, encompasses art production, art history, aesthetics, and art criticism. The content and processes are shared among these four components. In addition, all processes and concepts addressed through this program foster visual literacy skills. Students produce works of art that express their personal experiences and reflections about different cultures and artists.

The curriculum is grounded in the State and (1994) National Standards to ensure that high expectations for student learning are maintained. Within the curriculum there are required concepts, artists, cultural time periods, vocabulary, techniques, and processes to be mastered by students at each grade level. The curriculum is currently being revised using the National Core Arts Standards DRAFT (2015) (NCAS) as a guide.

Middle school students have the opportunity to experience many art forms such as:

Drawing, painting, printmaking, graphic design, technology applications, textiles, and architecture.

Listed below are suggested artists/cultural artistic periods. Every teacher may add to these with additional artists/cultures.

(Sample assignments appear in italics)

- Claude Monet, Louise Nevelson; optional: Romare Bearden, Roy Lichtenstein
- Impressionism, Non-Objective Art, Collage, OP Art
- *Assemblages/sculpture, Mexican milagros, linear perspective drawings, printmaking, observational drawing*



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## Physical Education

The goals of physical education are for students to develop fitness and skills in the movement areas of dance, adventure education, and sports. An integral part of physical education is the development of the responsible and respectful behaviors in both cooperative and competitive activities. The sequential and varied experiences contribute to the total well-being of each student. Concepts, strategies, rules, sportsmanship, teamwork, and basic movement skills are all woven into the offerings. After-school intramurals provide additional times for students to participate in fitness activities according to their interests.

Sixth grade students will participate in a number of activities that may include the following:

- Invasion sports (basketball, flag football, lacrosse, soccer, Ultimate Frisbee)
- Dance
- Fitness
- Track and Field
- Volleyball

A change in clothing is required for healthy participation. Shorts, t-shirts, sneakers, and warm-up suits for colder weather are appropriate attire.

## Health

Health education emphasizes students developing healthy lifestyles.

Fundamental to developing healthy lifestyles are opportunities to learn to apply health literacy skills. These skills include decision making, goal setting, effectively communicating, accessing information and resources, analyzing what influences our actions, and advocating a healthy position. These align with National and State Standards.

Students practice these skills using different health contents. The major topics are listed below.

- Tobacco
- First aid
- Puberty, reproductive systems

## Support Services

Special Education, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), remedial reading services, and math support are available for students who may need them.



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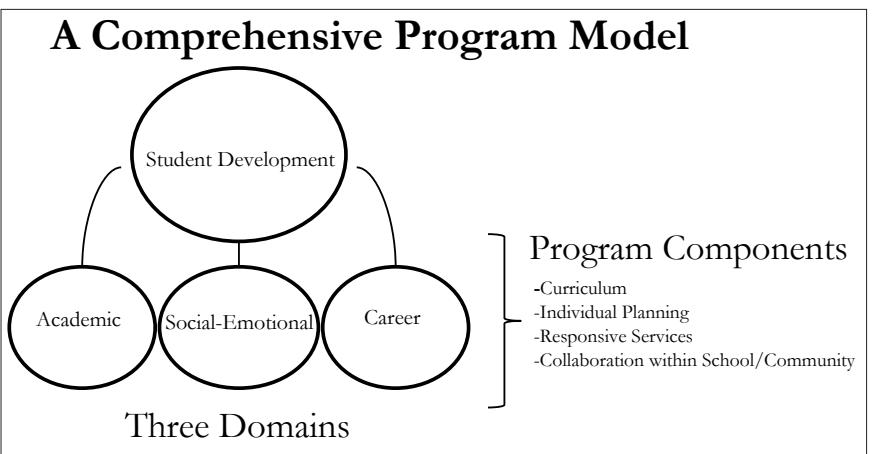
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## School Counseling

### Program Model

A comprehensive school counseling program model is planned, preventative and measurable. It is based on developmental theory and designed to meet the needs of all students as they progress from grades K-12. Content standards define what students should know and/or do at each grade level and provide a scope and sequence for program implementation.



### Service Delivery

School counselors provide skills and experiences that promote student academic, social-emotional and career development. These skills and experiences are provided through both **Direct** and **Indirect** services and define the nature and role of today's school counselor.

**Direct Services** are face-to-face interactions between the counselor and students.

Examples include:

- Implementing (teaching) the school counseling curriculum
- Goal Setting
- College and Career Readiness Activities
- Individual/Group Counseling
- Crisis Intervention and Responsive Services

**Indirect Services** are interactions the counselor has with others on behalf of students.

Examples include:

- Advocacy to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all students
- Consultation with parents, school-based personnel and community agencies
- Collaboration within and outside the school community
- Program coordination and management
- Leadership initiatives to enhance student learning and promote healthy development

### Sources:

- A Guide to Comprehensive School Counseling Program Development : State of Connecticut: State Board of Education 2008
- American School Counselor Association (2012). The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, Third Edition. Alexandria, VA: Author



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## Enrichment – QuEST

The QuEST Program in the middle schools is a continuation of the school-wide Gifted Program that begins at each elementary school in fourth grade. QuEST's student population at the middle schools is comprised of students identified for program participation during their elementary or middle school years. A student who is nominated for QuEST in the middle school is reviewed by the student's team of teachers, the QuEST teacher, and program coordinator before a final determination is made. Middle school students recommended by a content area teacher for independent research, group problem-solving activities, and other QuEST opportunities may also participate.

The program offers a variety of options for challenging the learning of these highly capable students.

- Students may be involved in advanced level investigations within any academic or artistic area of personal interest. In each case, the QuEST teacher facilitates student learning by guiding students' research and product development using higher level thought processes and investigative procedures. The student may spend one, two, or three years researching a topic and developing a project to be presented to appropriate audiences.
- CT History Day, Fox Video, and Community Services Projects are a sampling of additional challenging learning opportunities that may be facilitated by the QuEST teacher. QuEST students or other recommended students elect to participate in these activities.

Middle school QuEST teachers are one resource supporting the social and emotional needs of high ability learners who may, at times, encounter difficulties related to peer relations, underachievement, poor work study habits, perfectionism, over sensitivity, over excitability, asynchronous development, and lack of self-regulation.

Additionally, the QuEST teacher at each middle school serves as a resource person to all content and special area teachers throughout the building. Support may be offered through training teachers in the processes of curriculum differentiation, as well as collaboratively planning differentiated units of study. QuEST teachers may assist in finding speakers or presenters to enrich classroom study, and may serve on a variety of committees supporting middle school programming.

