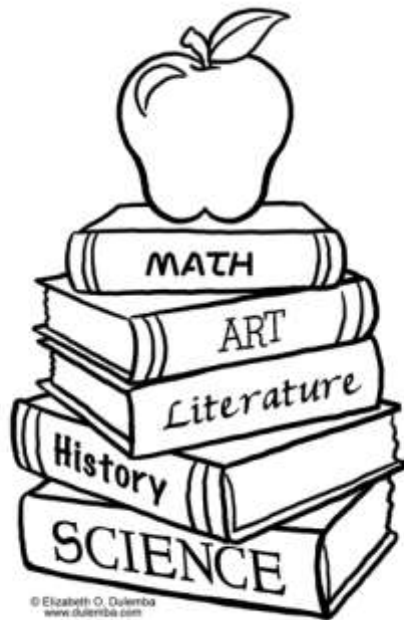


**VERONA AREA  
CORE KNOWLEDGE® CHARTER SCHOOL**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**



**CURRICULUM HANDBOOK  
Sixth GRADE  
2017-2018**

# Verona Area Core Knowledge® Charter School

740 N. Main Street  
608-845-4130



Verona, WI 53593  
608-845-4961 (fax)

*Rick Kisting – Director*

Dear Parents and Students:

Verona Area Core Knowledge® Charter School (CKCS) is proud of the Middle School choice we provide to students in the Verona Area School District. This handbook is designed to convey basic information about the core classes available at CKCS, as well as the Encore classes.

The CKCS Middle School curriculum is built around the Core Knowledge® Sequence. This curriculum does an excellent job of preparing your child for high school and educational endeavors beyond. Our Middle School provides a seamless transition for students from our elementary program. It also provides a well-balanced academic choice for students new to CKCS. The positive and supportive staff at CKCS provides high quality instruction in nurturing classroom environments.

Please review the materials and contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Kisting".

Mr. Rick Kisting  
Director  
608 845-4133

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamara Gunwall".

Ms. Tamara Gunwall  
Curriculum Coordinator  
608 845-4126

# **SIXTH GRADE**

## **Required Classes:**

Literature/Language Arts

Math

Science

Social Studies

Physical Education

Exploratory classes:

❖ Art

❖ Family and Consumer Education

❖ Intro to World Language

❖ Information and Technology Literacy

## **Music – Must Choose One Class:**

Band

Orchestra

Choir

General Music (quarter class)

# **COURSE DESCRIPTION – SIXTH GRADE**

## **REQUIRED CORE CLASSES**

### **Literature/Language Arts**

The CKCS sixth grade language arts curriculum includes writing and grammar skills, vocabulary development and selected literature. Students currently use the *Daily Oral Language*, *Vocabulary Workshop* and literature from a variety of sources. Students study classic poems by authors including Byron, Wordsworth, Longfellow, Angelou, Poe, and Kipling. Novels studied in sixth grade include *The Ghost of Blackhawk Island*, *Dragonwings*, and *My Brother Sam is Dead*. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is included in the Core Knowledge® curriculum and is aligned with the study of ancient Greece and Rome. Classical mythology, expository writing, research essays, and public speaking round out the curriculum.

### **Mathematics**

Students are tested and placed into a math course according to their instructional level, teacher recommendations, CKCS math guidelines, and test scores. Students who demonstrate advanced math skills may be placed into accelerated math classes and are provided coursework at their instructional level. Remedial and enrichment activities are provided within the classroom, as appropriate. Students study many math subject areas including numbers and number sense, fractions and decimals, ratio, percent and proportion, computation skills, problem solving skills, measurement, geometry, probability and statistics, and pre-algebra skills.

### **Science**

Sixth grade science curriculum covers the topics of Astronomy, Plate Tectonics, Weather, the Human Body, and Oceans. Students will be taught scientific content and lab skills through the use of textbooks, lecture, demonstration and hands-on experience. The Science sequence for middle school grades aims for more intensive and selective study of topics that were introduced in CKCS elementary school. Scientific method, formulating hypotheses, inquiry skills, research and documentation through written reports are key components to the curriculum. All students participate in the science fair second semester.

### **Social Studies**

World History for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade begins with a study of ancient civilizations introduced in earlier grades in the Core Knowledge® Sequence. Topics include Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome. The focus is on the legacy of enduring ideas from these civilizations – ideas about democracy and government. After studying these lasting ideas, World History looks at the Enlightenment, European Romanticism, Industrialism, Socialism and Capitalism and the Latin American Independence Movements.

### **Physical Education**

The main emphasis of the middle school physical education program is developing healthy bodies and healthy minds. Cardiovascular fitness and the development of lifelong fitness skills are a main focus at all grade levels. Instructors constantly 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.

## 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 Education

In sixth grade **FAMILY AND CONSUMER EDUCATION**, students explore several 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

In sixth grade, 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.

### Information and Technology Literacy

In Information and Technology Literacy (Info Tech) students will work on the following broad topics: programming, website design, network basics, keyboarding, internet safety, internet searching, word processing, graphic organizers, visual literacy/multi-media presentations, digital video, spreadsheets, and e-mail.

## MUSIC CLASSES

**All sixth graders must be involved in one of the music programs which include: Band, Orchestra, Choir, and General Music. Music class changes may be made only during the first three days of that semester and with the recommendation of the counselor.**

### Why take a music class in middle school?

There are many compelling reasons to study music in middle school. Many research studies have linked music instruction to higher achievement in math, reading, and general cognition scores. Music is academic, and the study of music in the ensemble setting combines these academic pursuits with the skills of teamwork, perseverance, and focus.

Music educators around the world argue for the inclusion of music in every child's education, not because they expect all students to become professional musicians, but because they believe that the skills gained in the music classroom are beneficial to all learners no matter what field of study they eventually pursue. The BRMS music department feels that these academic and social skills are an important part of learning, but offers one additional reason to study music in middle school. Over the years, we have met many students who had little experience singing or on an instrument when they entered sixth grade, but discovered a true passion for music once given the opportunity. This is not something that we take lightly. Regardless of whether it becomes a student's career choice, we strongly believe that students should take every opportunity to learn more about a subject which they are, or could become, passionate about.

### **Band**

Sixth grade band is the introduction to wind and percussion instruments. The basic skills of instrument position and playing posture, rhythm understanding and note reading are taught and reinforced. In addition, personal skills of responsibility, self-discipline and cooperation are improved. The sixth grade band performs several times during the year, demonstrating solo and small ensemble music, as well as full band.

### **Orchestra**

Sixth grade orchestra is a class for beginning string players. Orchestra meets every day and focuses on solidifying basic string playing skills such as basic posture and position, tone production, music literacy, and general musicianship. Students will complete a string method book and will begin to learn how to play together as a music ensemble. The orchestra has 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 an introduction to learning singing skills in a large group. Singers are taught the use of their vocal instrument through correct posture, breathing, and exercises in tone production and movement. Other concepts about music (form, style, sight singing, etc.) are taught throughout every rehearsal. In addition to music education, students will concentrate on the skills of cooperative learning and self-discipline. Students participate in several concerts throughout the year. A positive attitude toward music and trying new things is evident in this class!

### **General Music**

General Music is offered to those students who do not wish to take Band, Orchestra, or Choir. This class provides an overview of music 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 every student. 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. This model provides specially designed services for students with learning, speech, language, emotional, behavioral, physical, health, hearing, visual, developmental and/or cognitive 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.

## **RESOURCE AREAS**

We believe strongly in providing additional resources beyond the classroom materials to facilitate the learning of our students. One key resource area is the Library Media Center (LMC) which includes our technology staff. The LMC is a functional and integral part of our classroom instruction and is used on a regular basis by all students. This resource area is facilitated by certified Library Media Specialist and Information Technology coordinators. Additional resource areas are three grade level Learning Labs staffed by certified resource staff. Learning labs are available for small group instruction, collaborative projects, and homework assistance.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **School Counselors**

The counseling program is designed to help develop decision making skills, coping skills, communication skills, and study skills in 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.

### **Social Worker**

The primary function of the school social worker is to promote the emotional, social and mental wellbeing 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 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 Coordinator**

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

- Collecting and disseminating information about students who demonstrate programmatic needs associated with at-risk characteristics
- Collecting and disseminating information about students who demonstrate programmatic needs associated with gifted and talented characteristics
- Consulting with teams to develop strategies to meet individual student needs
- Facilitating curriculum implementation, development, revision, and articulation
- Providing staff development in the form of workshops and in-service
- Serving as a conduit for information related to sound educational practice

The curriculum coordinator is also involved in the development and evolution of long range goals which foster ways in which staff can work together to promote student learning.

### **Resource Teacher**

Our regular education resource teacher works with students in small groups. Focus is on reading and math. The resource teacher also meets with students during tutorial time daily or during Enrichment time to work on deficit skills students may have as well as to teach some organizational skills to help students meet with success in middle school.

## **Programs for English Language Learners**

We welcome students from all cultures and backgrounds. In addition to learning science, math, social studies, language arts, and other academic content, English language learners (ELLs) must also become proficient in English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). To meet students' needs and follow federal and state laws, Badger Ridge provides the following programs which allow ELL students to learn grade level content and English.

### **English Language Development**

A certified ESL teacher teaches English Language Development as a daily scheduled class. This class supplements the curriculum of the grade level language arts class, but also places an additional emphasis on learning the structure of the English language, as well as various forms of writing, listening and speaking. Additional topics may include content area vocabulary in math, science, and social studies.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL)**

A certified ESL teacher teaches ESL as a daily scheduled class. Topics may include survival vocabulary, basic conversation, as well as listening and pronunciation of the English language. Emphasis is placed on practical everyday English and communication skills.

### **ESL and Bilingual in-class support**

An ESL or bilingual teacher works in collaboration with the classroom teacher in general education classes. The teacher works with ELL students within the classroom, supporting individuals or small groups. Content area classes may include writing, reading, math, science or social studies vocabulary development.

### **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 ELL students receive the same content as native speakers.