



Parent Guide to the Curriculum

at the **BROADALBIN-PERTH** Central School District

Sixth Grade

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED?

You play a very important role in your child's academic performance. Here are some things you can do to support your child's learning:

- ▶ Let your child know that education is the foundation for success.
- ▶ Know what your child is expected to learn in sixth grade.
- ▶ Help your child set high short-term and long-term academic goals.
- ▶ Designate a time and location to complete homework.
- ▶ Talk to your child about what is happening in school and constantly monitor progress.
- ▶ Advocate for your child.
- ▶ Share your child's strengths with your child and your child's teacher.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- ▶ Find books at your child's reading level at scholastic.com/bookwizard
- ▶ Practice math facts at multiplication.com
- ▶ Learn about the New York state curriculum at NYSED.gov

Broadalbin-Perth Elementary School is the first stop along our students' journey to graduation and college and career readiness. We hope to bring out the best in all of our students, academically, emotionally, and socially, through a challenging, yet caring, environment.

At BPES, we work to foster in our students independence, a strong work ethic, and a sense of pride in self, school, and community. Our teachers collaborate with each other and with families, and we expect similar collaboration among students as they develop the tools necessary to build the future they want.

The sixth grade offers new and exciting challenges. For the first time in their academic careers, students are in an environment of multiple classes, multiple teachers, and an increase in responsibility.

This guide is designed to provide you with an overview of what your child is learning. While we hope this will be a useful resource, we encourage you to partner with us, communicate with us, and celebrate with us as we work together to provide an outstanding experience for our students.

Questions to Ask Your Child's Teacher

When speaking with your child's teacher about academic progress, here are a few questions you may want to consider asking:

- ▶ What are the learning goals? Can you show me examples of student work that meets the learning goals?
- ▶ May I see an example of my child's work? How does it or doesn't it meet these learning goals?
- ▶ Is my child at or above grade level? What extra support is available? What can I do at home?
- ▶ What classroom routines do you have that should also be used at home?
- ▶ What kinds of questions could I ask my child on a daily basis about your class?

Talking to Your Child

Good conversations help our children see that we are interested in their lives. Here are a few conversation starters you may want to consider using:

- ▶ Tell me about the best part of your day.
- ▶ What was the nicest thing you did for someone today?
- ▶ What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
- ▶ Can you show me something you learned today?
- ▶ What's the biggest difference between this year and last year?
- ▶ What rules are different at school than our rules at home? Do you think they're fair?



Reading

Highlights of what your child will learn in sixth grade include:

- ▶ Reading and comprehending a variety of literary and informational texts.
- ▶ Reading closely, making logical inferences and drawing conclusions.
- ▶ Drawing evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- ▶ Determining central ideas or themes of a text and analyzing their development.
- ▶ Interpreting words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- ▶ Preparing for and participating effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners.
- ▶ Applying knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.



Writing

As students in sixth grade develop their writing skills, they will use a variety of strategies to plan, revise, and strengthen their writing as they work independently and collaboratively with adults and peers to produce texts, and to learn about and develop oral language/written language and reading/writing connections. Students in sixth grade will write for multiple purposes (to entertain, to explain, to persuade) and learn about various tools (print and digital) to produce, share, and publish writing.

Students in sixth grade will be able to:

- ▶ Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- ▶ Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- ▶ Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details and clear sequencing.
- ▶ Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.
- ▶ Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TEXTS READ IN SIXTH GRADE*

- ▶ Informational texts, high fantasy and science fiction, realistic fiction, traditional literature (including myths and legends), biography, memoir, autobiography, historical fiction, mysteries, satire, parody, allegory and monologues
- ▶ Fictional texts with structures that are unusual (e.g., flashback, flashforward), elaborate plots and subplots
- ▶ Nonfictional texts with a variety of formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)
- ▶ Text content that requires knowledge of history or current world events and may require the reader to take on diverse perspectives
- ▶ Textual themes that include the understanding of cultural diversity; complex themes that focus on human problems (war, hardship, social class and race barriers); and themes that present societal issues, especially those important to adolescents

CHARACTERISTICS OF SIXTH-GRADE READERS*

- ▶ Able to process and understand a wide range of texts, including all genres
- ▶ Most of reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well-established
- ▶ Can remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading
- ▶ Able to process a heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries
- ▶ Readers search for and use information from texts in an integrated way to better understand deeper levels of the text (e.g., themes, multi-dimensional characters)
- ▶ Able to apply prior understandings in a critical way when reading fiction and nonfiction texts
- ▶ Developing an understanding of abstract forms of literature, such as satire, parody, allegory or monologue

* Source: Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2011). *The Continuum of Literacy Learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann



Mathematics

In sixth grade, your child will learn to:

- ▶ Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions.
- ▶ Compute fluently with multi-digit numbers.
- ▶ Find common factors and multiples.
- ▶ Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers.
- ▶ Apply and extend previous understandings of arithmetic to algebraic expressions.
- ▶ Reason about and solve one-variable equations and inequalities.
- ▶ Represent and analyze relationships between dependent and independent variables.
- ▶ Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area and volume.
- ▶ Develop an understanding of statistical variability.
- ▶ Summarize and describe distributions of data.

PROJECT LEAD THE WAY

Sixth grade is a time of exploration — a time when students are figuring out what they're passionate about today and how that relates to who they'll become tomorrow.

PLTW helps empower students to lead their own discovery. The hands-on program boosts classroom engagement and excitement, drives collaboration, and inspires "aha!" moments and deep comprehension. And as students engage in PLTW's activities in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science, they see a range of paths and possibilities they can look forward to in high school and beyond.

In sixth grade, the PLTW modules are Design and Modeling, and Energy and the Environment.



Social Studies

Why is history so important? How do we learn about the past? How do we research history? These are essential questions sixth-graders explore while studying ancient history. Students study the environment, natural resources, physical features, time periods and people of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece and Rome, as well as medieval Europe.

The priority standards of sixth-grade social studies are:

- ▶ Geography, Humans, and the Environment of the Eastern Hemisphere
- ▶ Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures (First humans through the Neolithic Revolution)
- ▶ Time, Continuity, and Change (Early River Valley Civilizations)
- ▶ Development and Transformation of Social Structures (Comparative world religions)
- ▶ Power, Authority, and Governance (comparative classical civilizations)
- ▶ Global Connections and Exchange (Mediterranean World: Feudal Western Europe, The Byzantine Empire and the Islamic Caliphates)



Science

Sixth-grade science students analyze and interpret data as they participate in science activities and practices. Students explore concepts that cut across a number of scientific disciplines and cover a variety of topics, including:

- ▶ Structure and properties of matter
- ▶ The universe and its stars
- ▶ Earth and the solar system
- ▶ The history of planet Earth
- ▶ Earth's materials and systems
- ▶ Plate tectonics and large-scale interactions
- ▶ The role of water in Earth's surface processes
- ▶ Natural resources
- ▶ Natural hazards
- ▶ Weather and climate

Students also use skills that scientists and engineers use every day to investigate and solve problems, such as asking questions, developing models and interpreting data. Students' understanding grows as they begin to see the connections between what they learn from one year to the next and across subject areas.

Outside the Core

Art

The goal of the sixth-grade art program is to help students develop the skills and understanding necessary for them to create original works of art, make visual statements that will convey significant ideas and feelings to themselves and others in a creative way, and learn creative and analytical problem solving. Through art class, students develop a sense of accomplishment that promotes their personal self-worth.

During art class, students create art based on the principles of art and the elements of design in addition to learning the historical context in which art is made. They use a variety of media and applications while learning the proper artistic vocabulary for these processes. Students continue their exploration of color theory, line design, technical drawing, art history, sculpture, and painting.

Band

Students who took band in fourth and/or fifth grade are automatically enrolled in sixth-grade band. As sixth-graders, students continue to progress on their instruments by taking part in weekly band lessons and participating in a group band rehearsal every-other day.

Students are given several opportunities to perform. Select students may also participate in the all-county music festival and the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) solo festival.

Students who have not previously taken band may contact Ms. Bixby for information about joining.

Physical Education

In sixth grade, students participate in a variety of individual sports, team sports, and lifetime fitness activities, as well as Project Adventure activities and cooperative games. Students learn sportsmanship, teamwork, trust, problem-solving, and self-esteem.

Digital Fluency

In sixth grade, students extend their working knowledge in the areas of keyboarding, application use, effective internet research, internet privacy and safety, digital citizenship, operation systems, word processing, online graphics, and digital presentations. In this course, students engage in hands-on activities through exploration, problem solving, and collaboration with the use of robotics and programming in a peer group.

Music

In music classes, sixth graders learn about the following:

- ▶ **Reading Music:** Students learn about the musical staff, clefs, note names, note values, and other commonly used musical symbols. Each student composes an original piece of music that the teacher performs for the class.
- ▶ **Musicals:** Students watch and answer questions about “The Sound of Music.” They discuss the historical and social significance of this musical, including World War II and the travels of the real von Trapp family.
- ▶ **Instrument Families:** Students learn about woodwinds, brass, strings, percussion, and keyboards. Students have opportunities to play and hold instruments and learn about how each instrument is constructed.
- ▶ **Music History:** Students learn about the evolution of music over several hundred years, beginning with the Renaissance and continuing through the present day.

Special Education

- ▶ **Direct Consultant Teacher Services:** The sixth grade special education teacher provides direct support in reading, writing, and math in the general education classroom setting. Modifications and accommodations are provided so that each student has equal access to the curriculum, focusing primarily on priority state standards. The special education and general education teachers focus on improving organization skills, time management skills, reading, writing and math skills, as well as social/emotional skills.
- ▶ **Intervention Services:** Services and supports are provided to identified and unidentified students, such as the development of student support plans and incentive systems to increase academic performance and promote motivation to learn.
- ▶ **Consistent Communication:** The special education teacher communicates with parents, guardians, and caregivers to ensure that parent and student academic and social/emotional needs, questions, and concerns are addressed in a timely manner. This fosters a positive working relationship between parent and teacher, so that the student can experience success throughout the school year.