Berkshire Middle School

Sixth Grade Course Catalog

2026-2027



21707 West Fourteen Mile Road
Beverly Hills, MI 48025

Name _____

REQUIRED COURSES

All required courses will be held daily all year, except the Encore Rotation.

Social Studies

Throughout the year, 6th-grade students will immerse themselves in the integrated study of social sciences, history, geography, civics, and economics, focusing on ancient history. This comprehensive course delves into the civilizations of the ancient world, including the study of various river valley civilizations and the empires of Afro-Eurasia, as well as the exploration of Greece and Rome. Students will learn to analyze different types of evidence used by social scientists to understand human life in the past. Additionally, the course will cover the world's five major religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—providing students with insights into the diverse cultural beliefs that have shaped human history. The curriculum also examines the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, offering a broad perspective on global cultures and histories. By incorporating current events, the course also links past civilizations with contemporary issues, emphasizing their relevance to the world outside the classroom and their significance to students' lives today. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of ancient history and cultural diversity and encourages students to think critically about historical and current global challenges.

Language Arts

In 6th Grade Language Arts, students will engage in an integrated study that enhances their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and direction-following abilities. Emphasizing the analysis and synthesis of information, the course aims to boost students' independent reading skills while advancing their proficiency in various writing genres, including informational, narrative, and argumentative. Lessons on grammar and mechanics will be tied to anchor texts, allowing students to learn through the analysis of published works, culminating in capstone writing projects. Furthermore, in-class presentations will serve to reinforce their speaking and listening skills, fostering a well-rounded communicative competence.

Science

In the 6th Grade Science course, students will embark on an exciting journey of discovery, exploring foundational concepts in chemistry, Earth science, biology, and physics through introductory units on the particle nature of matter, the critical role of water in Earth's changes, the complex interrelations within organisms and ecosystems, and the fundamental principles of light and energy. Central to this course is the active engagement of students in the science and engineering practices and cross-cutting concepts of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which encourage them to think and act like scientists. Through hands-on investigations, students will build models, construct explanations, and delve into the scientific processes that explain the world around us. This immersive approach not only enhances their understanding of key scientific concepts but also fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to communicate scientific ideas effectively.

Math 6

Math 6 is a comprehensive, engaging course with a focus on problem-based learning. This course will cover all Grade 6 standards. Students study ratio and rate, learn to divide fractions by fractions, extend their understanding of numbers to include negative numbers, and understand and use variables.

Math 6/7

Math 6/7 is an accelerated course that will cover the majority of Grade 6 standards and about half of the Grade 7 standards by carefully compacting and aligning learning goals. The Math 6/7 course introduces students to many of the big ideas that are a cornerstone of middle school mathematics and beyond. Students study ratio and rate, learn to divide fractions by fractions, extend their understanding of numbers to include negative numbers, and understand and use variables. This course is intended to put students on a path to take Integrated 1 (a high school level course) during their 8th grade year.

Encore Rotation - {each course will be held daily for 10 weeks}

Art
The sixth grade art program is a ten week class designed as an exploration of art technologies, skills, artists, and careers. Two and three-dimensional art will be studied throughout this rotation. Art projects could include: zentangle portfolios, bleach painting, a study of art history, rubber carving and water based printmaking, and sculpture. The highlight of this class will be a metals project.

Engineering Technology
Engineering Technology is a ten-week course. The purpose of the course is to introduce students to engineering in a fun and engaging manner. Using a hands-on approach, students are taught the fundamentals of design and manufacturing. Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Safety are introduced through a variety of hands-on activities with a focus on problem-solving.

Physical Education
Students will participate in activities that are designed to help them understand and value physical activity and physical fitness and its contribution towards a healthy, active lifestyle. The lessons will also develop skills and game strategies in a variety of team and individual sports/activities. Students will develop skills that emphasize different aspects of fitness in the areas of fitness, net/wall activities, striking and fielding, invasion sports, and aquatics. Activities might include but are not limited to fitness training (cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, agility, and flexibility), conditioning, frisbee golf, badminton, volleyball, soccer, basketball, floor hockey and swimming.

Skills for Living
Students will be introduced to kitchen safety, measurement, and cooking skills with opportunities to apply these skills in lab situations. Basic life skills are stressed and include working cooperatively, caring for equipment, nutrition, and following directions. Other hands-on projects may be explored depending on the interest of the class.

ELECTIVE COURSES

All elective courses will be held all year every other day.

World Language
Students may decide to study world language in middle school. They may select from the following:

- Introduction to French
- Introduction to Spanish

These languages will concentrate on the basic skills of speaking, reading, listening, grammar writing skills, and cultural awareness. A textbook and/or district created curriculum will be used accompanied by other supplementary materials.

French Grades 6-8 = Level One at BPS High Schools (1 HS Credit)
Spanish Grades 6-8 = Level One and Two at BPS High Schools (2 HS Credits)

Course Name	Grade Level	Length	Content	Credit
Intro to French	6th	Every other day all year	French 1 Semester 1 Q1	N/A
French 1A	7th	Semester	French 1 Semester 1 Q2	0.5
French 1B	8th	All year	French 1 Semester 2	0.5
Intro to Spanish	6th	Every other day all year	Spanish 1 Semester 1	N/A
Spanish 1	7th	Semester	Spanish 1 Semester 2	1.0
Spanish 2	8th	All year	Spanish 2 Semester 1 & 2	1.0

Physical Education
Sixth grade students will spend time developing and improving upon previously learned skills in lifetime sports such as flag football, speedball, swimming, volleyball, soccer, floor hockey, bowling (bowling field trip), and basketball. Throughout the course, sixth graders will be exposed to numerous creative, and fun team-building activities such as: “Hot Lava,” “Build the Dome,” and “Survivor”. A variety of fun filled fitness activities are also incorporated throughout the year.

Reading Enrichment
This course is intended for already strong readers to enrich their reading skills through class discussions and inquiry-based projects about literature and topics of interest. Each of these inquiry-based projects requires students to read, write, research, and practice their critical thinking skills. Some of the projects that we have previously done include: creating book movie trailers, filming book character interviews, debating topics and books of interest, writing articles for the school newspaper after conducting research on a topic, etc. Students will be challenged to use critical thinking skills to dig deeper into texts in order to gain a greater understanding of what they are currently reading and/or have previously read. This course may require students to read additional novels/texts.

Music Options

Band
6th Grade Band is a fun, engaging class where students refine foundational music performance skills. Students will develop instrumental technique and artistic accomplishment through an inspiring curriculum. Participation includes **two mandatory evening concerts** per year, with regular field trips, social outings, and team-building activities. **Daily at-home practice is expected,** and students new to band are welcome. Students with no experience on a band instrument are strongly encouraged to take band and can email Mr. Burkett if they have any questions at mburkett@birmingham.k12.mi.us.

Orchestra

Sixth Grade Orchestra introduces and refines foundational music performance skills. Playing in orchestra promotes critical thinking, creativity, teamwork and discipline while learning about and enjoying music! The inspiring curriculum helps students develop instrumental techniques and artistic accomplishment. Students participate in two mandatory evening concerts annually, with regular field trips, social outings, and team-building activities. **Daily at-home practice is expected** as well as some written assignments, bi-weekly playing tests, and attendance at all performances. If you enjoy music, this class is for you! Any student that wishes to join the orchestra and has no previous experience is welcome!

Choir

6th Grade Choir is a fun, engaging class where students build foundational music performance skills. This beginning choir is open to all students; previous elementary school choir experience is not required. A wide variety of music including world, classical, pop and Broadway will be studied. Students will develop basic vocal techniques, musicianship, piano notation, ensemble skills, and music reading through daily warm-ups and exercises. **Participation in the MSVMA Choral Festival** (as a group) **is required** at this level. Participation includes **two mandatory evening concerts** per year, with regular field trips, social outings, and team- building activities.

COURSES RECOMMENDED BY TEACHERS

Math Lab (all year, every day)

Math Lab is taken alongside Math 6 as a separate math class designed to support and strengthen students' math skills. This course focuses on pre-teaching and reinforcing key concepts and skills taught in Math 6, while also addressing foundational prerequisite skills to help students build confidence and competence in math. By providing targeted instruction and practice, Math Lab prepares students not only for success in their current math class but also for future middle school and high school math courses. Assessments may be used to monitor progress and guide individualized support. Math Lab is taken in conjunction with College Prep Math (two math classes per day). **Teacher recommendation is required.**

Reading Lab (quarter, every day)

Reading Lab is a small group reading intervention that allows students to strengthen their vocabulary, practice fluency, and focus on using comprehension strategies (inferring, making connections, questioning, visualizing, etc.) within texts. Reading Lab allows students to learn and practice reading strategies through teacher modeling, cooperative learning, and independent practice. In this strategy-based course, students will benefit from this additional practice by using reading strategies for comprehension, decoding, and fluency when reading fiction and non-fiction texts. Students also have an opportunity to strengthen their writing skills through writer's workshop sessions. Students who qualify for this course typically fall below grade level in reading and would benefit from additional reading instruction. There is no additional homework in this class. A certified Reading Specialist, who is a member of the district reading department, will instruct this course. **Teacher recommendation is required.**

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals A (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals A is a class for newcomers to the U.S. Students learn English in the four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students learn interpersonal communication skills and begin developing the academic language needed to be successful in their content area classes. This class is based on English level rather than grade level, and students may be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals B (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals B is a language arts class that is aligned with the BPS language arts curriculum, with modifications to meet the needs of English language learners. Students work on the same reading and writing strategies, genres, literary analysis, and themes and skills as their native English-speaking classmates. The goal of this class is to help students develop increased fluency in their reading and to read increasingly difficult texts in English for multiple purposes. This class focuses on the application of multiple reading strategies in a variety of genres, the continued learning of high-frequency vocabulary, note-taking in academic settings and further development of listening and speaking skills. Students develop increased skill in the use of more complex grammatical conventions, such as identification of all parts of speech, singular and plural nouns, verb usage in past, present and future, subject-verb agreement, and compound and complex sentences. Writing skills are developed from the paragraph to the essay level using various organizational patterns. Students increase their proficiency in the use of multimedia as tools for language development. This class is based on English level rather than grade level, and students may be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals C (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals C is aligned with the BPS language arts curriculum, with modifications to meet the needs of English language learners. Students work on the same reading and writing strategies, genres, literary analysis, and themes and skills as their native English-speaking classmates. The goal of this class is to help students develop increased fluency in their reading and to read increasingly difficult texts in English for multiple purposes. This class focuses on the application of multiple reading strategies in a variety of genres, particularly with a focus on their ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and increase their independent reading. Furthermore, students continue to develop their mastery of academic vocabulary, note-taking in academic settings and more extensive listening and speaking skills. Students develop increased skill in the use of complex grammatical conventions, such as more sophisticated verb usage, comparatives and superlatives, prepositions, dependent and independent clauses, and compound and complex sentences. Writing skills are developed at the five-paragraph essay level using various organizational patterns. Students increase their proficiency in the use of multimedia as tools for language development. This class is based on English level rather than grade level, and students may be in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade.

Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals Tutorial (all year, everyday)
Language Arts for Emerging Bilinguals Tutorial is an elective offered to English language learners in ESL A, B, or C. In this class, students receive help with their content area classes such as science, social studies, math, and language arts. The staff works in conjunction with the mainstream teachers to provide additional support. Tutorial may also be used for more instruction in the English language or in American culture.