

Learning in Grade Six



Valley Stream District 13 Curriculum Overview

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new school year! This guide was developed by the professional staff of Valley Stream District Thirteen in order to provide you with important information about your child's educational program. It is offered to support parents and guardians in achieving the home-school collaboration necessary to afford our students the opportunity to reach their maximum potential. It is our hope that this document will serve to help you understand the learning goals for your child, as well as facilitate communication with your child's teachers.

District Thirteen supports a cohesive, developmentally appropriate, New York State Standards-based curriculum. A full listing and description of the New York State Learning Standards can be found at [http:// www.emsc.nysed.gov/top/learning.html](http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/top/learning.html). We offer a varied and challenging instructional program, in a nurturing environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. By working together we can provide our children with the richest educational experience possible. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact your child's teacher, your principal, or me.

I look forward to a successful school year.



Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lison, Ed. D

Superintendent of Schools

Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen Goals

1. To foster positive dispositions and improve student performance in English Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening).
2. To improve students' ability to think, reason, problem solve, and compute mathematically.
3. To differentiate instruction in order to meet the diverse learning needs of our students.
4. To teach students to respect and appreciate differences between and among people and cultures around the world.
5. To foster a sense of responsible citizenship in a caring and respectful community of learners.
6. To teach students positive strategies for conflict resolution.
7. To challenge students to construct a deeper understanding of the world around them through an inquiry based approach to science and social studies.
8. To infuse technology applications into all areas of the curriculum.
9. To develop abilities, talents, and creativity in music, art, and physical education.

INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS

Students in the sixth grade will experience a language arts curriculum based on the belief that growth in literacy is an active, developmental process. Skills and competence for speaking, listening, reading and writing are integrated and infused into all curriculum areas. Through exposure to a variety of literary genres (e.g. fiction, non-fiction and poetry), sixth grade students will have opportunities to:

Oral Communication · Share opinions, observations and information with others · Listen as a respectful audience · Share information that is accurate and relevant to discussions · Listen to oral passages from short stories, poetry and “how-to” books for comprehension and direction · Prepare and deliver a variety of oral reports, using public speaking skills · Organize thoughts to articulate clearly and confidently before a group

Reading

- Read a variety of literature from different genres, including short stories, novels, poems, essays, biographies, newspapers, magazines and speeches for information and enjoyment
- Evaluate fiction by examining character(s), plot, setting, conflict, point of view and author’s purpose
- Analyze poetry and appreciate its rich, descriptive language (e.g. similes, metaphors, personification) and repetitive, rhythmic patterns, uncovering its meaning and aesthetic response (mood)
- Evaluate non-fiction by determining clarity of material, accuracy of information, freedom from bias, and author’s message and style
- Develop good organizational, note-taking and study skills · Predict, draw conclusions/inferences, and form opinions about a variety of literary and informational texts based upon their prior knowledge and textual information
- Identify the most important ideas and themes in poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts (e.g. magazine and newspaper feature articles, textbooks and primary source documents)
- Expand their vocabulary through their knowledge of word structure cues (e.g. root words, prefixes, suffixes and derivatives), as well as through the use of the dictionary and thesaurus
- Use appropriate technology to foster the development of the above listed skills, strategies and dispositions

Writing

- Write for a variety of audiences and purposes—responses to literature, to tell a story, to inform others and functional or procedural writing (e.g. “how-to”)
- Write business letters, letters of persuasion and journal entries, understanding the specific format of each
- Use and follow the phases of the “Writing Process” (i.e. planning, pre-writing, drafting,

INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS-continued

- conferring, revising, editing and publishing) to produce pieces that contain clear ideas, rich descriptions and detailed information, while also reflecting proper punctuation, sentence structures and paragraphs
- Work collaboratively with classmates and teachers when planning, revising and editing own work, and the work of others
 - Write and edit various literary forms, such as poetry, plays, short stories, folktales and essays
 - Use library media center resources to organize research material for oral and written reports
 - Organize information by note-taking, outlining, summarizing and synthesizing
 - Utilize databases, desktop publishing and presentation software to research, analyze and present information

MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY (MSTe)

“Education begins with the curiosity of the learner.” -John Dewey

The most effective way for elementary students to construct a foundation in Mathematics, Science, and Technology is through hands-on experiences. The Valley Stream District Thirteen Mathematics, Science, and Technology Curricula are based upon both the National and Statewide Standards. Students are guided in active and extended inquiry, using mathematical analysis, inquiry based approaches, and engineering design, as appropriate, to pose questions, and seek answers. The focus is thus on student understanding of content information and inquiry process skills. Students are motivated to make and discuss with their peers their own discoveries, while drawing conclusions, which reflect a multitude of ways to reach a solution. This empowers the students to become independent thinkers who are enthusiastic about mathematics, science, and technology education.

MATHEMATICS

The sixth grade Mathematics Curriculum focuses on five process strands: problem solving, reasoning and proof, mathematical communication, connections, and representations. Interweaved into these process strands are five content strands: number sense and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, and statistics and probability. The entwining of these content strands and process strands will allow our children to become mathematically proficient in conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and problem solving. Our district’s Mathematics Curriculum has been aligned with the revised New York State Standards for Mathematics. <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov>

CONTENT STRANDS

Number Sense and Operations

- Understand, represent, and use numbers in integer, fraction, decimal, percent, exponential, and expanded notation forms
- Understand and apply ratios, portions, and percents through a wide variety of hands-on explorations
- Recognize prime and composite numbers
- Understand the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers, fractions and decimals

MATHEMATICS
CONTENT STRANDS- continues

- Understand reference frames
- Estimate and round numbers to trillion
- Define and identify the commutative and associative properties of addition and multiplication
- Define and identify various properties of addition and multiplication
- Locate and order rational numbers on a number line (positive and negative)
- Add, subtract, multiply, divide fractions, mixed numbers with unlike denominators
- Identify the multiplicative inverse of a number
- Represent fractions as repeating decimals
- Find multiple representations of rational numbers
- Evaluate numerical expressions using order of operations (including exponents of two and three)
- Represent repeated multiplication in exponential form vice versa
- Evaluate expressions having exponents where the power is an exponent of one, two, or three

Algebra

- Use number models and number sentences
- Understand uses of variables
- Understand problem representations in problem solving
- Understand variables and open sentences
- Create, solve and explain 2-step equations
- Translate 2-step verbal expressions in algebraic expressions
- Use substitution to evaluate algebraic expressions
- Geometry
- Understand angles and rotations
- Calculate area and volume of various polygons both on and off a coordinate plane
- Investigate circles and Pi
- Identify and classify geometric solids and polygons
- Identify acute, obtuse, and right angles
- Explore tessellations and transformations
- Identify and plot points in all four quadrants

Measurement

- Use linear measurements
- Draw and measure plane geometric figures using rulers, compasses and protractors
- Identify equivalent customary, metric and equivalent metric units of capacity
- Estimate volume, area, and circumference of geometric solids and polygons

MATHEMATICS
CONTENT STRANDS- continues

Statistics and Probability

- Collect, organize, analyze and display data and make predictions
- Use spreadsheets to create graphs, tables and charts to interpret data
- Analyze the difference between mean, median, mode, and range using stem and leaf plot
- Develop the concept of sampling when collecting data from a population and decide the best method to collect data for a particular question
- List possible outcomes for compound events
- Determine the probability of dependent events
- Determine the number of possible outcomes for a compound event by using the fundamental counting principle

SCIENCE

The sixth grade science program is correlated and aligned to the key ideas, and major understandings developed from the New York State Learning Standards. Units of study emphasize hands-on student centered experiments with a sound balance between process and content.

The units listed below will engage students in exploring life science, physical science, and earth science:

I. LIFE SCIENCE (Biology)

- Plants and Animals (Cell Parts)
- Biomes
- Body Systems

II. PHYSICAL SCIENCE (Physics and Chemistry)

- Gravity and Motion
- Weight and Mass
- Newton's Laws
- Light and Sound
- Exploring how Properties of Matter can be Changed

SCIENCE - continued**III. EARTH SCIENCE**

- Plate Tectonics
- Earthquakes and Volcanoes

HEALTH

Sixth grade students will continue to learn about good health habits and the conditions necessary for physical and emotional well-being.

They will:

- Learn about injury prevention and personal safety
- Develop an awareness of good nutrition
- Understand the functions of the body
- Learn about human growth and development and the cycle of life
- Identify the causes of HIV/AIDS and explore illness prevention
- Learn about substance abuse prevention
- Explore community health and safety
- Appreciate self worth
- Develop strategies to avoid abduction

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

The social studies curriculum offers students the opportunity to become actively involved in the world around them by providing them with a variety of experiences that will ultimately prepare students to be informed, responsible citizens. Essential skills and strategies are taught through an inquiry-based approach to learning, utilizing a variety of informational resources including: textbooks, trade book, technology/internet resources and relevant primary source documents.

The sixth grade social studies program allows students to explore cultures of the Eastern Hemisphere. This helps promote respect and a greater understanding of cultural and geographical differences.

Students will study geography, Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Ancient China and India, the Middle Ages and Western Europe, the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, World War I and World War II as topics in the curriculum.

Students will:

Geographic

- Identify various types of maps, understand key, scale, longitude, latitude and time zones
- Know seven continents, four oceans, the Equator, Prime Meridian, Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn and the International Dateline
- Understand how the environment affects a particular region

SOCIAL STUDIES -continued

Economic

- Learn how people throughout history have had to solve basic economic problems that have affected the growth and development of civilizations
- Understand supply and demand

Social/Cultural

- Appreciate different cultures
- Understand and appreciate contributions past cultures have given to present civilizations
- Understand the impact of various religions

Political/Historical

- Understand how present day government has been influenced by governments of past civilizations · Read and summarize information from newspapers, magazines and electronic information to form intelligent opinions

LIBRARY

The mission of the Library Media Program is to create lifelong readers and seekers of information.

Our aim is to have our students feel comfortable and at home in any library within the United States and to be able to locate and retrieve any information sought. Our students must be able to access, evaluate and use information from various sources and formats. Using this newfound knowledge, our students will be able to think critically, construct meaning, and solve problems.

Our program is designed to provide our students with a spiral approach to developing literacy and research skills. This approach is defined by the New York State Standards and the American Association of School Libraries' Information Standards for Student Learning. The Library Program is an integral part of the school community. The sixth grade Library Program includes:

Information Literacy

- Introduction to a variety of authors, illustrators, fiction genres, fables, legends, tall tales, biography, poetry, magazines, nonfiction, and award winning materials: Caldecott and Newbery · Using print, CD-ROM and online encyclopedias: locating topics, selecting keywords, navigating the index and cross references, and topic vs. keyword search
- Using the Internet effectively to answer reference questions: online based reference materials (Galenet, Proquest etc.), introduction to search engines and Boolean search terms, i.e. widening or restricting a search with the words and/or/not
- Evaluating Internet sites: distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying the source of a web site

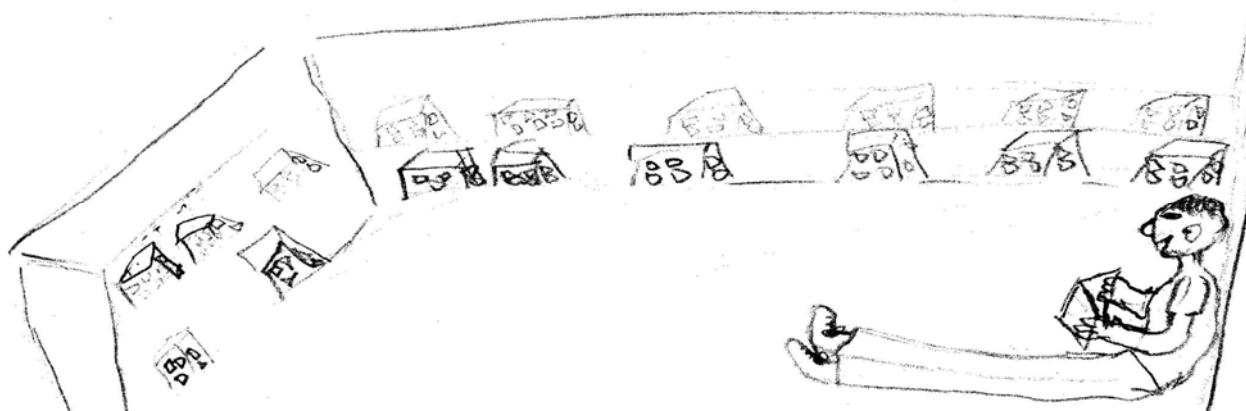
LIBRARY -continued

Independent Learning

- Using the OPAC to search for information in three ways – title, author, subject, understanding how the call number identifies the type of book and the book “address”, and using the call number to locate material
- Identify and use appropriate sources of information: dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedic, atlas, specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias to answer reference questions
- Reading enrichment and encouragement: booktalks, oral reading, storytelling, creative writing and drama

Social Responsibility

- Active participation in class discussions
- Review of the concept of copyright or ownership of ideas, understanding that a bibliography gives credit to



ENRICHMENT

The purpose of the enrichment program is to provide all students the strategies for higher order thinking skills across all curriculum areas. The Talents Unlimited Program is designed to help teachers recognize and nurture the cognitive abilities and talents in all children. This multiple talent approach develops critical and creative thinking skills and enhances self-image.

This program will

- Develop five talent areas – productive thinking, communication, forecasting, planning and decision making
- Recognize that all children have abilities and talents in a variety of areas
- Provide the opportunities for problem solving and critical and creative thinking throughout the curriculum

ART

Our visual arts curriculum is derived from the New York State Standards for the Arts at the Elementary Level. In a program of sequential learning and discovery, students explore a wide range of media and techniques in their art work. Encouraging creativity, using problem-solving techniques, developing visual literacy and analysis, and learning about cultures and their artistic contributions are important aspects of our program.

Art teachers in each building maintain a portfolio of examples of students' work from kindergarten through grade six.

ART -continued

In SIXTH GRADE children...

- •demonstrate creative problem-solving by refining and developing work by drawing on prior knowledge and experiences.
- •access information through a variety of sources to generate ideas for artwork, providing for more mature expression and meaning.
- •continue to use graphic software to create images which indicate a knowledge of design elements.
- •learn about selected periods in art history and artistic expression in other cultures through interdisciplinary study.
- •explore the ways in which art expresses the beliefs and values of a particular period of time or culture.
- •create a series of projects in different materials based on the same idea or theme.
- •use art terms to describe and reflect on personal work and the work of others.

MUSIC

The general music curriculum begins in kindergarten and is broadened, developed and practiced from grades one through six. The material which is covered can be organized into fundamental areas of music knowledge and expression. The four main areas which comprise the music curriculum throughout the elementary school years are: the singing voice, rhythm, melody and other musical elements. Various units of musical study are developed from the following curriculum criteria for grade six, as students:

- Use classroom instruments for creating music composition
- Make decisions using knowledge of temp, dynamics, tone color and form
- Begin the study of various periods of music – Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Impressionistic
- Increase vocal range and sing in three parts
- Perform in various tempi (both on recorder and classroom music instruments)
- Include dynamic changes within the performed music
- Learn and practice conducting routines in double and triple meter
- Study music which is related to their class study of ancient cultures and Medieval times
- Write traditional music notation using music staff paper
- Learn simple chord structure and create melodies based upon triad and seventh chord structure

The performing group program, both choral and instrumental, is offered to students in grades 4 through 6. The ensemble groups rehearse before and after school and occasionally at noon hour. Formalized choral training may begin as early as third grade, however the major emphasis of the choral experience is concentrated in grades 4 through 6. Some of our youngsters are also involved in stage acting as an outgrowth of the choral program. In fourth grade, beginning instrumental students receive half hour, biweekly lessons for one full year. The beginning instrumental curriculum is geared towards the mastery of note reading and performance skills. The fifth and sixth grade intermediate level students participate in the band and orchestra program. The intermediate instrumental curriculum is dictated by the more advanced material programmed for performance. In addition to attending rehearsals, these students receive a half hour lesson, one

MUSIC -continued

time per week. Some of the performing groups showcased are the Concert Band, String Orchestra, Advanced Chorus, Primary Choir, Jazz Ensemble, Combined Chorus and Marching Band. The groups perform for various school and community related events.

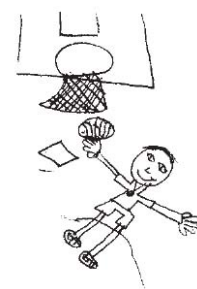
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The overall aim of elementary physical education is to provide for the optimal physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth of children in light of their needs and interests.

Students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness. Participate in physical activity and maintain personal health. Students will acquire the knowledge and ability necessary to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment. Students will understand and be able to manage their personal and community resources.

In Sixth Grade children...

- Will design personal fitness programs to improve cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength and endurance.
- Will attain competency in a variety of physical activities and proficiency in a few select complex motor and sports activities.
- Will be able to identify safety hazards and react effectively to ensure a safe and positive experience for everyone.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply the decision-making process to physical activity.
- Participate in major team and individual sports.
- Use proper sports terminology and strategy in game situations.
- Continue to develop self-assessment skills.



Artwork by Sharice Bolasingh

SPECIAL EDUCATION

District Thirteen offers students with disabilities an appropriate educational program designed with specific goals and objectives that meet individual needs. The district is committed to the attainment of goals that emphasize excellence in all students regardless of disabilities.

The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) is responsible for recommending appropriate services for the preschool population, based on evaluation results. Similarly, the committee on special Education (CSE) recommends appropriate services for our school-aged youngsters.

Programs and services are based on students' current evaluations, assessments of abilities and needs and development of goals and objectives that are included in a child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

A wide spectrum of special education related services and programs such as resource room, speech, counseling, occupational and physical therapies, participation in a collaborative inclusive classroom, and placement in self-contained classes are available with District Thirteen to support the needs of students with disabilities within the general educational setting.

SPECIAL EDUCATION -continued

Valley Stream District Thirteen prides itself on building close working relationships between the CPSE, CSE, school staff, school district administrators, parents and community to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

PROGRAM FOR GIFTED STUDENTS Grades 3-6

The pull-out portion of the Enrichment Program is designed to meet the needs of identified highly gifted students who have been screened and evaluated. Each student will be encouraged to achieve their maximum potential. The program will be structured around creativity; problem solving and research; scholarship and interpersonal relationships.

The program will enhance the student's ability to:

- Demonstrate higher level thinking skills – critically examine and judge information and ideas; generate unique, creative concepts; define, investigate and solve real problem situations
- Acquire and produce original knowledge – process information to yield “new” knowledge; express ideas or knowledge in a project form; share that product with an appropriate audience
- Relate what is learned to personal growth – understand the implication of ideas and issues; develop confidence in self to accomplish intended goals

SUPPLEMENTAL READING, WRITING AND MATHEMATICS

District Thirteen provides small group instruction for children in grades one through six who require remedial assistance in reading, writing and mathematics. This instruction is provided by specialists who work closely with the classroom teacher. The district provides supplemental instruction designed to support students by developing and enhancing skills and concept development necessary for success.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Approximately twenty foreign languages are spoken by youngsters in District Thirteen. The ESL program, currently a small group pull-out program, contains four basic components: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The overall goals of the ESL Program are to:

- Enable the learner to achieve communicative and linguistic competence in English, including learning in the content areas.
- Facilitate the socialization and acculturation process by integrating limited English proficient students and their English-speaking peers into extracurricular activities.
- Develop the learning strategies and classroom behaviors that are necessary for academic success

It is our hope that these guides provide parents with the essential information about our K-6 curricula necessary to support their children's learning at home.

UNITY

I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was a young child's mind,
And they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher; the tools he used
Were books and music and art;
One, a parent with a guiding hand
And a gentle, loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled,
With a touch that was deft and sure,
While the parent labored by his side
And polished and smoother it o'er.
And when at last their task was done
They were proud of that they had wrought,
For the things they had molded into the child
Could neither be sold nor bought.
And each agreed he would have failed
If he had worked alone.
For behind the parent stood the school,
And behind the teacher the home.

Anonymous

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