Washoe County School District
Family Guide to Learning
How you can help your child succeed in elementary school

6th Grade Curriculum Guide
This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of sixth grade as determined by the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS), our statewide academic standards. The NVACS describe what all students should know and be able to do from kindergarten through the 12th grade. The NVACS is a set of minimum expectations, not a curriculum, so decisions about how to help students meet learning goals remains in the hands of the District, schools, and teachers.

The guide focuses on the key concepts in literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies as well as library, music, computers, 21st Century Skills, and Social & Emotional Learning. If your child meets the expectations outlined in the NVACS, he or she will be well prepared for 7th grade.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact your child’s teacher.

For additional ideas for learning at home, or to learn more about the Nevada Academic Content Standards please visit us online at http://www.washoeschools.net/Page/1002.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading – Literature, and Informational Text

- Determine how authors use evidence from the text to support their arguments.
- Analyze the strength of the author’s argument.
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text.
- Locate specific details used by the author in a text to support a theme or central idea.
- Recognize and use features of digital text (e.g. hyperlinks, annotation tools).

Writing

- Write arguments to support ideas and opinions with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write texts that describe real or imagined experiences or events using an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- Compare and contrast thematically-based texts in different genres (e.g., stories and poems or historical novels and fantasy stories).
- Write routinely over short and extended time frames for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences both in print and digital formats.

Language

- Become skilled in determining or clarifying the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases.
- Be able to choose from a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Demonstrate a command of Standard English in both writing and speaking.
- Master specific skills in grammar and usage such as: pronoun case (subjective, objective, possessive); intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves); and pronoun number and person.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.

Speaking and Listening

- Create presentations for audiences that present information, findings, and supporting evidence that are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas while expressing their own clearly.
- Use digital tools to combine spoken text with other media, and incorporate feedback to improve these works over multiple drafts.

Supporting Your Child’s Learning at Home

- Talk about what they are reading and/or writing with questions such as: “Who is the audience for this piece of writing?” “What is this piece of writing?” Why did the author write this piece?”
- Include your child in conversations at adult gatherings, such as a meal with friends, informational lectures, and entertainment events.
- Read a text together that has important family or religious significance.
- Encourage your child to write daily at home for fun and reflection. Daily writing prepares students for longer pieces of writing by exercising writing muscles.
- Encourage your child to find and use online information when researching topics for school or personal interest.
- Encourage your child to create digital content, and share it with friends and family through tools like a family blog, and ask relatives to post comments.
- If you use social networking sites, consider creating collaborative posts with your child to help them understand appropriate online language and behaviors.
MATHEMATICS

Expressions and Equations
- 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 (output) and independent (input) variables.

The Number System
- Apply and extend understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions.
- Compute fluently with multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples.
- Apply and extend understanding of numbers to the system of rational numbers (comparing, ordering and graphing positive and negative numbers).

Statistics and Probability
- Think and reason statistically. Statistics is about using data to answer questions.
- Summarize and describe distributions.

Ratios and Proportional Relationships
- Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems (e.g., unit rates involving such topics as pricing and speed.).

Geometry
- Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume.

Supporting Your Child’s Learning at Home
- With your child, search for examples of fractions, decimals and percents in the newspaper, magazines, on the radio and on the television.
- Determine the best value per ounce of various items at the store.
- When you discover an interesting shape as you walk or drive through your neighborhood, discuss with your child whether it is a polygon.
- Encourage your child to use his/her knowledge of area and perimeter in everyday situations. For example, ask your child to measure the perimeter of your living room or the area of your kitchen table.
- Together, look for examples of how data are used in magazines, newspapers and on the television.
- Encourage your child to use digital tools and apps that support development of mathematical concepts and skills.
SOCIAL STUDIES

Essential History Skills

- Analyze primary (historical) and secondary (texts created after the fact in history) source documents.
- Write arguments and informational pieces using evidence from primary and secondary sources to examine history.
- Evaluate multiple perspectives in history.
- Use several types of maps, including those found online, to analyze the physical features of different regions of the world.
- Engage in civil discourse (conversation) about history using evidence from sources.
- Use the Internet to find information and create digital products.

Ancient World History (Pre-1300) and World Geography

- Describe and compare the physical and human features of the world, including using online sources.
- Identify cultural characteristics around the world.
- Compare and contrast cultural characteristics of ancient civilizations including: political systems, economic systems, the role of religion, social structures, intellectual and artistic traditions, and cultural geography.
- Explain the impact of major world events up to the Middle Ages.
- Describe economic systems used in the world.
- Identify migration patterns throughout ancient history.

Supporting Your Child’s Learning at Home

- Read primary source documents related to historical events, including those found online.
- Discuss the importance of culture and how it impacts history.
- Examine the culture of your family.
- Study the important geographical features around the world, using print and digital resources.
- Discuss appreciation and understanding of other cultures within the community.
- Watch and discuss the world news, and use social media and online tools to monitor events.
SCIENCE

Structures and Properties of Matter*

How can particles combine to produce a substance with different properties? How does thermal energy affect particles?

- The term “heat” as used in everyday language refers both to thermal energy and the transfer of that thermal energy from one object to another.

Energy*

How can energy be transferred from one object or system to another?

- A system of objects may also contain stored (potential) energy.
- Motion energy is properly called kinetic energy.
- Energy is spontaneously transferred out of hotter regions or objects and into colder ones.

Earth’s Systems

How do the materials in and on the Earth’s crust change over time? How does water influence weather, circulate in the oceans, and shape Earth’s surface?

- All Earth processes are the result of energy flowing and matter cycling within and among the planet’s systems.
- Water continually cycles among land, ocean, and atmosphere.
- Humans depend on Earth’s land, ocean, atmosphere, and biosphere for different resources.

Weather and Climate

What factors interact and influence weather and climate?

- Weather and climate are influenced by interactions involving sunlight, the ocean, the atmosphere, ice, landforms, and living things.
- The ocean exerts a major influence on weather and climate.

Human Impacts

How can natural hazards be predicted? How do human activities affect Earth systems?

- To help forecast natural hazards it is necessary to map them in a region and understand geologic forces.
- Earth’s environments can have different impacts, negative and positive, for different living things.
- Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing human impact on the environment.*

Supporting your child’s learning at home

- Encourage your child to observe, ask questions, experiment, find information online, and seek their own understandings of natural and human-made phenomena around them.
- Find a print or digital article about a scientific discovery and summarize what it tells you.
- Ask questions to link material learned in science class to real-world scenarios. Why does ice float? Why do astronauts weigh less on the moon? Why is asphalt hotter than concrete on a summer day?
Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems

How do organisms obtain and use matter and energy? How do matter and energy move through an ecosystem?

- Plants, algae, and many microorganisms use the energy from light to make sugars from carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and water.
- Within individual organisms, food moves through a series of chemical reactions.
- Growth of organisms and populations increases are limited by access to resources.
- Food webs are models that demonstrate how matter and energy are transferred between producers, consumers, and decomposers as the three interact within an ecosystem.

Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

How do organisms interact with other organisms in the physical environment to obtain matter and energy?

- Predatory interactions may reduce the number of organisms or eliminate whole populations of organisms.
- Biodiversity describes the variety of species found in Earth’s terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems.
- Changes in biodiversity can influence human’s resources.*

*Engineering opportunities that allow children to apply what they have learned in science and mathematics. These activities are based on real-world problems to see how science and mathematics are relevant to children’s lives.
Other areas of learning beyond the areas of reading and writing, mathematics, science, and social studies include:

Music

6th grade students may choose to be in beginning band, orchestra or choir. This is an excellent time to explore interests in playing an instrument and continue to explore vocal and general music concepts.

Sixth grade band, strings, and general music teachers will assist families with instrument choices. For students choosing to be in band or strings, families are encouraged to rent or purchase an instrument of their choice. Please see your band or strings teacher for instrument rental and purchase information.

In 6th grade students:
- Perform a varied selection of music alone and with others.
- Read and write music.
- Improvise melodic, rhythmic, and chordal patterns.
- Compose music with specified guidelines.
- Evaluate music and music performances.
- Demonstrate relationships between music, other arts, and disciplines outside of arts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of historical periods and cultural diversity of music.
- “Tinker” with digital apps and tools for creating music and understanding music theory.
- Experience digital music resources.

Library

- Information literacy by using the library catalog and digital sources to find resources by conducting author, title, subject, and keyword searches; assembling facts, opinions, and point of view; and organizing a product that presents different types of information.
- Independent learning by exploring a range of sources (in the library and online) to find information of personal interest or well-being and applying the information to real-life purposes; comparing and contrasting the various types of literature including mythology, short stories, drama, poetry, fiction and non-fiction; and evaluating the information-seeking process at each stage as it occurs and making adjustments.
- Social responsibility by recognizing books that reflect the heritage and culture of groups within the United States; recording resources used to prepare a bibliography and citing sources; following copyright guidelines; and helping to organize the contributions of the group into a product.
- Technology as a tool for learning while evaluating and sharing information in collaborative groups.
- Common behaviors used by independent learners in researching, investigating, and problem solving.
Computers
Sixth graders will continue to master their abilities to search for credible Internet sources and to use the information to understand academic content. They will understand the risks in posting personal information on-line. They will continue to practice using proper communication skills as they communicate with others on the Internet. They will also continue to develop resources to prevent and cope with on-line bullying. Sixth graders will collaborate with one another to create presentations, projects, and other publications using multimodal applications such as Microsoft Office products and online tools and apps. Students will include multimedia components such as images, sound, music, and other visual displays in their presentations. Students will access and use information ethically and legally. Students will be able to demonstrate command of keyboarding skills as they complete their projects, tutorials, and keyboarding lessons. Sixth graders will also practice mathematics through various interactive software products.

Social and Emotional Competencies
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process for helping children and adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically.

- Self-Awareness: Understands the complexity of emotions like jealousy, disappointment and pride to apply self-regulation techniques
- Self-Management: Applies strategies to manage stress and to motivate successful performance
- Social Awareness: Analyzes ways one’s behavior may affect the feelings of others and adjust behavior accordingly
- Relationship Skills: Able to listen, respecting diverse perspectives helping to resolve conflict so that all parties involved might get his/her needs met (win-win)
- Responsible Decision-Making: Considers rules and laws to distinguish between good and bad decisions before acting

21st Century Learning
Students need to be prepared for this rapidly changing world and it is critical that we give them a well-rounded experience that includes not only strong academic content, but essential skills that prepare them for careers and college and help them to think critically, solve real-world problems, speak and write clearly, and work productively with others. These competencies, known as 21st century competencies, include:

- Collaboration: working effectively in pairs or groups
- Knowledge Construction: generating ideas and understandings about the world
- Real-World Problem Solving and Innovation: defining and developing solutions to problems
- Use of Technology for Learning: using technology creatively to construct knowledge
- Self-Regulation: planning and improving work over time
- Skilled Communication: connecting and expressing ideas to an audience

Students in sixth grade will also be exposed to visual arts, physical education, and health concepts as applicable.