

Students Entering 6th Grade in 2012-13

The GCISD strategic plan, LEAD 2021, states that GCISD “will transform from a teaching platform to a learning platform by designing engaging, differentiated work for students toward the accomplishment of the GCISD mission and strategic objectives. In maintaining high expectations for all students, GCISD will create structures at all levels that maximize the potential of all students through rigorous curriculum and instruction. Curriculum, instruction, and student performance will reflect college and career readiness standards.” Four tenets of college readiness will be reflected in all 6th grade curriculum:

Key Cognitive Strategies – Intelligent behaviors necessary for college and career readiness

- Inquisitiveness
- Intellectual Openness
- Reasoning
- Interpretation
- Precision and Accuracy
- Problem Solving
- Critical and Creative Thinking

Key Content Knowledge and Skills – Utilizing the key cognitive strategies in each of the core content areas

- Reading, writing, inquiry and research across the curriculum
- Use of data to develop understanding
- Use of technology to enhance learning

Academic Behaviors – Behaviors that are necessary for success in all content areas

- Study Skills
- Notetaking
- Communicating
- Time Management
- Academic Integrity

Contextual Skills and Awareness – Interpersonal and social skills that enable students to interact with a diverse cross-section of peers and experts toward success in postsecondary endeavors

- Collaboration
- Global Empathy
- How to interact with people from other backgrounds and cultures
- How to demonstrate leadership in a variety of settings
- “College Knowledge” – formal and informal information, stated and unstated, necessary for both gaining admission to and navigating within the postsecondary system

All students entering 6th grade in 2012-13 will be enrolled in college readiness core courses and will learn grade level standards through rigorous curriculum and instruction. Previously labeled “On-Level” and “Pre-AP” courses have transformed into “College Readiness” courses that reflect the intent of LEAD 2021 and will prepare ALL students with the content, skills, behaviors, and habits of mind to be successful in all post-secondary endeavors. College readiness courses will be phased-in beginning with school year 2012-2013 in 6th grade, and in each subsequent year will grow to include the next grade level.

Gifted and Talented (GT) students are served through the Discoveries program (an integrated language arts and social studies class) as well as through Accelerated Math and Accelerated Science. Students who are not identified as GT also have the opportunity to enroll in Accelerated Math and Accelerated Science. These two

accelerated courses cover content from multiple grade levels with compacted curricula. Due to the increased pace and rigor of these courses, *recommended* criteria for student success will be considered for enrollment.

Recommended Criteria for Accelerated Math / Accelerated Science

- 115+ on an aptitude test for specific subtests
- 85th percentile on an achievement test in math and/or science
- 85 GPA in the specific subject area
- Students who can master rigorous curriculum at a fast pace (a year and a half of content in one year)
- Self-motivated / strong work ethic
- Strong reading, writing and math skills
- Enjoys problem solving
- Time management
- Collaboration

Students who do not meet the recommended criteria for Accelerated Math and/or Accelerated Science yet desire enrollment in these courses should contact school personnel (counselor/principal) to discuss the process for admission.

Please continue to the next page for sixth grade required courses.

SIXTH GRADE REQUIRED COURSES

All core area courses will reflect the tenets of College Readiness. Students entering 6th grade will learn grade level standards through rigorous curriculum and instruction. Gifted and Talented (GT) students are served through the Discoveries program (an integrated language arts and social studies class) as well as through Accelerated Math and Accelerated Science. Students who are not identified as GT also have the opportunity to enroll in Accelerated Math and Accelerated Science. These two accelerated courses cover content from multiple grade levels with compacted curricula. Due to the increased pace and rigor of these courses, *recommended* criteria for student success will be considered for enrollment. These criteria along with GT requirements appear at the front of this booklet. One course in Fine Arts is required during 6th, 7th or 8th grade. *Please make course selections carefully as switching courses during the year may result in missed content.*

College Readiness LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading Course No. 0603

English Course No. 0604

This course infuses the tenets of College Readiness with grade level content standards. Students are challenged through learning experiences as they make meaning of content. Students develop deep conceptual understanding and 21st Century habits of mind as they learn and apply skills and concepts.

Students in sixth grade language arts participate in a course of study which includes advanced oral and written language development. Note taking, oral presentations, study of word origins, critical reading and writing skills and multiple opportunities for research are major instructional targets. Critical reading skills are developed through a wide variety of diverse materials including classical and contemporary literature and informational texts.

Students are expected to analyze information from multiple sources to form relationships among ideas. Students are expected to communicate written ideas effectively by maintaining focus and coherence, developing ideas fully, expressing their unique voice or perspective, and increasing proficiency of conventions such as spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Sixth grade students are scheduled into one English class and one reading class, which make up the language arts program.

WORLD DISCOVERIES

Reading Course No. 0616

English Course No. 0617

Social Studies Course No. 0618

Meet qualifications for GT placement

This course infuses the tenets of College Readiness with grade level content standards. Students are challenged through learning experiences as they make meaning of content. Students develop deep conceptual understanding and 21st Century habits of mind as they learn and apply skills and concepts.

This course replaces Language Arts (reading, English) and social studies. The World Discoveries class at the sixth grade level will provide the opportunity for identified gifted/talented students to see the relationship between reading, writing, and history. Included in the course will be the study of art, music, literature, architecture, geography, culture, government, and folklore of the cultures of the contemporary world. Students are expected to communicate written ideas effectively by maintaining focus and coherence, developing ideas fully, expressing their unique voice or perspective, and increasing proficiency of conventions such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. World Discoveries provides opportunities for extended learning, possible field trips to local historical sites, and hands-on experiences. *This course requires a high level of reading, comprehension, and writing skills. A significant time commitment will be needed for this course and should be considered before enrolling. There may be additional material costs associated with this course for which the student will be responsible.*

College Readiness SOCIAL STUDIES: World Cultures

Course No. 0642

This course infuses the tenets of College Readiness with grade level content standards. Students are challenged through learning experiences as they make meaning of content. Students develop deep conceptual understanding and 21st Century habits of mind as they learn and apply skills and concepts.

This course is a study of people and places of the contemporary world and their historical development. The concepts of limited and unlimited government are introduced and the students describe the nature of citizenship in various societies. Institutions common to all societies of government, economics, education, and religion are compared. Respect for cultural diversities of the world is highlighted as a citizenship skill. Map and globe skills, chart and graph skills, reading, writing, and problem solving skills are stressed throughout the course.

College Readiness MATH

Course No. 0622

This course infuses the tenets of College Readiness with grade level content standards. Students are challenged through learning experiences as they make meaning of content. Students develop deep conceptual understanding and 21st Century habits of mind as they learn and apply skills and concepts.

Focal points in mathematics at grade six are using ratios to describe proportional relationships, geometry, measurement, probability, and adding/subtracting decimals and fractions. Problem solving strategies, language communication, connections within and outside mathematics, and formal and informal reasoning are emphasized. Students are expected to use these processes together with technology and other mathematical tools to develop conceptual understandings and solve problems

ACCELERATED MATH

Course No. 0626

This course infuses the tenets of College Readiness with grade level content standards. Students are challenged through learning experiences as they make meaning of content. Students develop deep conceptual understanding and 21st Century habits of mind as they learn and apply skills and concepts.

This course meets the needs of the district's accelerated and gifted/talented mathematics students.

All of sixth and part of seventh grade TEKS objectives are compacted to prepare the student for Accelerated Math in seventh grade. Students should possess advanced facility with numbers and have a sincere interest in mathematics.

Recommended criteria for success in this course can be found in the front of the Program of Studies.

College Readiness SCIENCE

Course No. 0632

This course infuses the tenets of College Readiness with grade level content standards. Students are challenged through learning experiences as they make meaning of content. Students develop deep conceptual understanding and 21st Century habits of mind as they learn and apply skills and concepts.

Grade 6 science is interdisciplinary in nature with a focus on physical science. Enduring understandings in Science transcend disciplinary boundaries and include change and constancy, patterns, cycles, systems, models, and scale. As students engage in inquiry-based scientific investigations and reasoning they will learn science in the following conceptual strands: Matter and Energy; Force, Motion and Energy; Earth and Space Science; and Organisms and Environments.

ACCELERATED SCIENCE

Course No. 0636

This course infuses the tenets of College Readiness with grade level content standards. Students are challenged through learning experiences as they make meaning of content. Students develop deep conceptual understanding and 21st Century habits of mind as they learn and apply skills and concepts.

This course meets the needs of the district's accelerated and gifted/talented science students.

This science course is interdisciplinary in nature with a focus on physical science and life science. Sixth grade and a portion of seventh and eighth grade TEKS are combined in this course. Students should have a sincere interest in science. Enduring understandings in Science transcend disciplinary boundaries and include change and constancy, patterns, cycles, systems, models, and scale. As students engage in inquiry-based scientific investigations and reasoning they will learn science in the following conceptual strands: Matter and Energy; Force, Motion and Energy; Earth and Space Science; and Organisms and Environments. Students will receive compacted instruction including standards from sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

Recommended criteria for success in this course can be found in the front of the Program of Studies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH

Course No. 0650

The emphasis in the sixth grade PE program is on understanding, measuring, monitoring, and improving the relationship of physical activity and health as a lifetime skill. Students acquire physical skills through instruction, demonstration, practice and assessment. These various skills will be used in drills and/or lead-up games for a variety of individual and team sports. Through the use of technology, students will learn to measure their own performance more accurately and develop plans for improvement. **Students are required to suit out in proper uniform.**

In **health education** an emphasis is placed on acquiring knowledge and skills regarding healthy behaviors, understanding puberty and the reproductive process. Abstinence-based programs such as Choosing the Best, Aim for Success, and Life Skills Training are major components in providing this health information. Play It Safe, a TEKS-based program, addresses a variety of contemporary topics such as sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and other pertinent issues in an age-appropriate manner. Parent previews will precede presentation of all materials related to human sexuality.

Please continue to the next page for frequently asked questions and answers.

2012-13 Sixth Grade Courses FAQ

The WHY

Q – Why is the district making changes in the 6th grade core course offerings?

A – GCISD believes we have a moral imperative to provide a rigorous curriculum that ensures college and career readiness for all students. We are aligning our practices with this belief. This opens pathways for more children to take advantage of the most rigorous curriculum and instruction.

Q – Why not just keep Pre-AP?

A – The College Board does not endorse locally developed Pre-AP courses. In the current system, skills and habits of mind necessary for college and career readiness are presumed. In a college readiness curriculum, these are embedded. GCISD has adopted and employed College Board resources and strategies, and will continue to do so through the College Readiness courses.

The College Board strongly believes that all students should have access to preparation for AP and other challenging courses, and that Pre-AP teaching strategies should be reflected in all courses taken by students prior to their enrollment in AP. The College Board discourages using "Pre-AP" in the title of locally designed courses and listing these courses on a student's transcript, because there is no one fixed or mandated Pre-AP curriculum that students must take to prepare for AP and other challenging coursework. Rather than using Pre-AP in course titles, the College Board recommends the adoption of more comprehensive Pre-AP programs that work across grade levels and subject areas to prepare the full diversity of a school's student population for AP and college. (<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/preap/index.html>)

The HOW

Q – How will teachers address all ability levels and assure that my child is challenged at and beyond his/her ability level?

A – Teachers will design experiences that target state standards while providing all students means of delving deeper into content. Teachers will continue to engage in professional learning experiences to refine and enhance instructional practices.

The WHAT

Q – What courses will be available for my child in 6th grade?

A – All 6th graders will be offered a college and career readiness curriculum in core area subjects. In math and science, students will be offered accelerated courses. Students who qualify for Gifted and Talented (GT) will be served through an integrated language arts and social studies course called World Discoveries as well as through accelerated courses in math and science.