Dear Parents:

We hope you find this Curriculum Guide helpful. Over the past two years, members of the Strategic Planning Committee and Community Involvement Forums have expressed a desire for a curriculum guide for parents. The teacher teams working on these guides gathered information from the Colchester Curriculum Documents, which are based on state standards, and put them into an overview for each grade level. We will continue to refine the document and add a comprehensive parent support piece in future years.

We hope that this overview will assist you when you have conversations about classroom work with your child’s teacher, and as you reinforce learning concepts at home. We welcome your feedback as you use these Parent Curriculum Guides throughout the year. The Colchester faculty and administration appreciate your working with us to ensure that your children’s education is an effective and positive experience.

Best wishes for a successful school year.

Yours truly,

Colchester Faculty and Administrators
The basis of the WJJMS reading program is **student choice**. Students are expected to read a variety of genres throughout the school year, and at any given time, can be engaged in up to three texts. These include a read-aloud text, an in-school independently read text and an at-home independently read text. A strong focus of the reading program is on the explicit instruction of the four reading comprehension strands assessed by the Connecticut Mastery Test. Skill development is typically done through mini-lessons using the read-aloud text and is reinforced through the in-school and at-home independently read texts. An important component of the program is regular student to teacher and student to student conferences. These conferences focus on goal setting and response to text.

**Reading**

**By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:**
- Use information from the text to make predictions about what is read.
- Make connections between the text and outside experiences and knowledge.
- Use contextual clues to determine meanings of unknown words.
- Identify the author’s use of structure/organizational patterns.
- Determine the main idea (non-fiction) or theme (fiction) within a text.
- Use stated evidence from the text to draw and/or support a conclusion or a reaction.
- Select appropriate books according to interest and level.
- Use new vocabulary words in oral and written products.
- Develop opinions about what is read using specific examples and evidence from a text.
- Draw conclusions about the author’s purpose for including or omitting specific details in a text.
Writing

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:

- Use the writing process to compose an expository piece (compare/contrast, explain/tell) that is fully elaborated, with specific details, is fluent and shows strong organization.
- Use capital letters, end marks, commas, quotation marks and apostrophes correctly.
- Correctly apply grammar usage rules for subject-verb agreement, verb tense and pronoun reference.
- Complete a research paper.
- Make oral presentations that show appropriate consideration for audience, purpose and information conveyed.
- Pose questions, listen to the ideas of others and contribute own information and ideas in group discussion.
- Employ correct spelling in published writing using the *Puma No Excuses Spelling List.*

Through the writing process (plan, draft, revise, edit, publish and reflect), students have the opportunity to write in a variety of genres. Direct instruction of writing strategies is done through mini-lessons using authentic sources as examples of quality writing. Students receive ongoing feedback through both teacher and peer conferencing. Writing goals are established quarterly and agreed upon by both student and teacher as part of the self-assessment process. Each student builds a writing portfolio throughout their middle school years to demonstrate growth in written communication.
SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies helps students see people and events in their historical setting, and use information to be better citizens. It also allows students to gather data from maps, photographs, and media in order to distinguish between fact and opinion, answer questions based on information and see the relationship between history and other subjects they study.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:

Content (Ancient Civilizations):
- Identify the basic layout of the earth, including continents, hemispheres, and major bodies of water.
- Determine how the geography of a region influences the culture.
- Identify, using artifacts and primary sources, and recognize the eight elements of culture:
  - Economics, basic needs, government, family, attitude toward the unknown, communications, arts, and recreation
- Identify the location, and analyze the elements of culture of the following ancient civilizations:
  - Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and China
- Analyze how these ancient civilizations have influenced the way we live today.

Skills:
- Utilize reading strategies, such as venn diagrams, dual entry notes, seed discussions, etc., to comprehend and analyze content reading material.
- Analyze primary resource materials to research and understand content material.
- Cooperatively work with classmates to debate issues and create products.
- Respond both formally and informally to a persuasive prompt on a topical issue.
- Use research skills to create an expository essay with bibliography
- Use technology to research and produce work
MUSIC
General Music

Students in sixth grade participate in a variety of musical activities. They are encouraged to explore the lives and music of various composers. They also study basic music theory.

Middle School Choral

Middle school choral students will be grouped by grade level. They will begin developing their ensemble skills, improve their vocal production and learn to read music faster and with more detail. These skills will begin developing self-discipline and self-expression through their participation in the WJJMS choral program.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:
Demonstrate skills by performing:
- Basic musical notation.
- Basic solfege: do-sol in several keys.
- Sounds with breath support, in their vaugue and the correct pitch.
- Do their part understanding their role individually, by section, and group.
- Play in response to conductor/director’s gestures in tune, articulation, and dynamics.

Middle School Instrumental

Middle school instrumentalists will be grouped by grade level. They will begin developing their skills in self discipline, creativity and self expressions, through basic study of their instrument and participation in the WJJMS Band program.

By the end of sixth grade we expect students to be able to:
- Demonstrate instrumental skills by performing Major scales, Chromatic scales, and articulated and basic slur passages; Rhythms up to 4 sixteenths
• Demonstrate percussion skills by identifying proper technique on battery and pitched instruments.
• Demonstrate proper breathing and posture.
• Demonstrate proper rehearsal etiquette and their individual, section, and group role in the band.
• Demonstrate the proper response/adjustments to conductor/director’s demands of time, articulation, style and dynamics.

**VISUAL ART**

Visual art helps students to understand and apply appropriate techniques and principals of design in the creation process. Students select a range of subjects and ideas and learn to understand visual art in relation to culture and history. In addition, students reflect on their work and make connections between art and life.

**By the end of sixth grade, students are expected to:**
• Understand, select, and apply media techniques and processes in drawing, painting, print-making, three dimensional design and collage.
• Create pinch pot and coiling through hand building with ceramics.
• Be familiar with one point perspective.
• Understand and apply elements and principals of art such as line, shape, color, value, space, form, texture, movement and rhythm, contrast, emphasis and unity.
• Select and apply a range of subjects, symbols and ideas, including imagination, still life, landscape, portrait, animals and nature.
• Understand the visual arts in relation to style, history and culture.
• Reflect upon, describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate their own and others’ work.
• Make connections between visual arts, other disciplines, and daily life.
SCIENCE

In middle school, students are beginning to recognize the complex interactions between science, technology, and society. Being scientifically literate requires that students have an understanding of key science concepts and the ability to apply critical thinking skills to transfer their knowledge to the real world.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:

- Describe the effect of heating on the movement of molecules in solids, liquids, and gases.
- Explain how local weather conditions, including wind, are related to the temperature of the atmosphere.
- Explain how glaciers, weathering, and erosion create and shape physical landforms.
- Explain how rock layers are formed.
- Explain how human activity impacts the quality of surface and ground water.
- Explain the effect of gravity on the orbital movement of the planets.
- Explain how the regular motion and position of the earth, sun, and moon affect the seasons, phases of the moon and eclipses.
- Complete laboratory experiments using inquiry.
- Apply geometry and measurement to depict the earth’s rotation.

DESIGN AND ENGINEERING

Students in Design and Engineering learn the fundamentals of the design process and apply their learning to the main content areas of technology, and then concentrate on structural engineering and applied physics.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:

- Individually design, construct, and test balsa wood towers.
- Understand basic concepts relating to communication technology.
- Design and create electronic graphic projects such as fliers and business cards.
- Understand basic concepts relating to transportation technology, such as the laws of motion, force, and work.
- Experiment with these laws by designing, building, and testing propeller driven land and air vehicles.
**FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES**

Sixth grade FCS students are introduced a few of the many topics that fall under the umbrella of Family & Consumer Sciences. The course begins with consumerism, followed by basic nutrition and healthy habits, concluding with a unit on table setting and manners.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:
- Understand their rights and responsibilities as a consumer
- Understand “Nutrition Facts” label information
- Compare and contrast similar food product labels
- Understand the importance of nutrients and their function in the body
- Articulate the pros and cons of the “New Food Guide Pyramid”
- Analyze and evaluate their own eating habits
- Recognize a balanced diet
- Identify characteristics of a healthy person
- Know the dangers of eating disorders, steroid use, and obesity
- Know how to set the table correctly
- Understand why manners are important

**HEALTHY AND BALANCED LIVING**

Sixth grade students learn to live a healthy and active life through health and physical education classes. In sixth grade they learn how to stay healthy, avoid health risks and find information to help them make good decisions.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:
- Identify risk factors for developing diseases
- Identify the importance of physical fitness and healthy eating
• Access accurate health information
• Identify the emotional, physical and social factors related to puberty
• Apply and communicate positive decision-making strategies
• Use conflict resolution strategies and recognize the negative consequences of peer pressure
• Exercise without injury
• Improve their physical performance by changing the application of skills
• Show respect for diversity
• Recognize how their actions impact the participation of others

MATHEMATICS

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:

ALGEBRAIC REASONING
Extend numeric and geometric patterns and make predictions.
Solve real-world problems.

NUMERICAL AND PROPORTIONAL REASONING
Convert decimals (to ten thousandths) to equivalent fractions and vice versa.
Add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions and decimals, and apply to real-life situations.
Make estimates and approximations and judge whether results are reasonable.
Solve problems using a variety of computational strategies, including calculators.
Compare quantities using ratios, proportions, percentages and exponents.

GEOMETRY AND MEASUREMENT
Solve problems using measurement, and convert between measures of length, area, mass and capacity, using customary and metric systems.

Math develops students’ ability to reason and solve problems. In math, students have the opportunity to apply basic mathematical skills and concepts and make connections to real world problems across all disciplines. Students learn reasoning and effective communication of solutions and methods. Students become independent thinkers and share responsibility for their learning as they build new math knowledge.
Find perimeter and area of parallelograms, triangles, circles and irregular shapes. 
Transform, reflect and rotate geometric shapes on a grid.

DATA AND STATISTICS
Collect, organize and display data and make predictions based on the graphs. 
Analyze data using measures of central tendency: mean, median, and mode. 
Use Excel to manipulate data.

TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Students receive formal instruction in computers for one semester in sixth grade. The course objective is to teach the basics skills of keyboarding, and the use of Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Students are expected to apply these skills when developing projects in other core subjects.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:
- Identify the different parts of the computer.
- Manage files effectively and independently in their network folder.
- Retrieve files
- Print files
- Save files to a flash drive
- Know the proper keyboarding technique and be able to type without looking at the keys.
- Be able to setup and edit a Word Document.
- Be familiar with setting up columns and tables and using the drawing toolbar.
- Be able to setup and edit an Excel Spreadsheet
- Be familiar with setting up a simple formula and developing charts and graphs.
- Using Function Formula utility.
- Be able to setup and edit a PowerPoint Show.
- Be familiar with working with pictures, sound and animation.
- Navigate, retrieve and evaluate information from an internet resource using effective search techniques.
- Using effective/efficient search techniques
• Understand how to protect personal information on the Internet.
• Recognize the social, legal and ethical issues relating to computer technology.
• Evaluating web pages, searching the internet.

LIBRARY MEDIA

In the middle school, the library media curriculum is integrated with other content areas. Students work on research projects and come to the library to select books of their choice.

By the end of sixth grade, we expect students to be able to:

Select literature appropriate to their reading level and interest.
Consider themselves part of the community of readers at WJJMS.
Find and acquire information from the library print resources.
Recognize the importance of citing sources.
Use the WJJMS note-taking sheet.
Evaluate information for reliability and accuracy.
Begin to integrate sources into their reports using their own words.