Fifth and Sixth Grade Curriculum at Breakwater
Grades 5 - 6

Intrapersonal & Interpersonal Skills

Intrapersonal Skills (Habits of Mind/Executive Functioning) at Breakwater

By the end of fifth grade, most children will:
• Start taking some responsibility for dealing with own learning strengths and challenges.
• Start to develop an understanding of their own learning process.
• Continue to develop the ability to consider and reflect upon one’s own thinking and learning process.
• Continue to develop effective organization, planning, and time management skills, including getting started on tasks in a timely manner.
• Become more conscious of strategies for work habits such as focus, attention, and memory.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:
• Develop understanding of own responsibilities as part of a classroom and a school community, and the effects of one’s choices and behavior on these communities.
• Develop understanding of how to build and sustain strong interpersonal relationships/friendships.
• Take responsibility for own behavior and choices.
• Work to resolve interpersonal conflicts fairly, with attention to perspectives other than one’s own.
• Continue to develop ability to manage own emotions.

Interpersonal Skills (Social Skills) at Breakwater

By the end of fifth grade, most children will:
• Develop understanding of own responsibilities as part of a classroom and a school community, and the effects of one’s choices and behavior on these communities.
• Develop understanding of how to build and sustain strong interpersonal relationships/friendships.
• Take responsibility for own behavior and choices.
• Work to resolve interpersonal conflicts fairly, with attention to perspectives other than one’s own.
• Continue to develop ability to manage own emotions.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:
• Develop understanding of own responsibilities as part of a classroom and a school community, and the effects of one’s choices and behavior on these communities, especially one’s responsibilities as a role model for younger students in the school community.
• Develop understanding of how to build and sustain strong interpersonal relationships/friendships.
• Take responsibility for own behavior and choices.
• Work to resolve interpersonal conflicts fairly, with attention to perspectives other than one’s own.
• Continue to develop ability to manage own emotions, recognizing situations that may require extra effort and attention.
By the end of fifth grade, most children will:
• Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; compare treatment of similar themes in different works.
• Continually and purposefully expand vocabulary.
• Summarize text effectively.
• Continually and purposefully expand vocabulary, including figurative language.
• Read and comprehend literature over a wide variety of literary genre, at appropriate grade level, independently and proficiently.
• Read independently for personal enjoyment

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:
• Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.
• Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone; continually and purposefully expand vocabulary.
• Read and comprehend literature over a wide variety of literary genre, at appropriate grade level, independently and proficiently; read for pleasure.
• Demonstrate comprehension by summarizing and making generalizations of whole texts, parts of texts, and across texts and by citing textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
• Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
• Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

The following elements comprise the core of our fifth and sixth grade literacy program:

Reading and Responding:
Students read silently and respond to a variety of texts of their own choosing, expanding the depth and breadth of their reading with continuous teacher support and guidance. Students read their Reading and Responding book on a daily basis at home, as part of homework. Parents participate, too, by encouraging their children to read and by helping their child set aside a special time for reading each day.

Read Aloud:
Teachers regularly share quality literature aloud in the classroom.

Novel Study:
Students participate in small groups to read and share thoughts about the selected book. The groups examine their chosen works together, focus on relevant themes, create questions, and ultimately present their findings to the rest of the class.

Theme-related Reading:
Students read poetry, novels, and nonfiction literature that reflects and reinforces an overarching interdisciplinary theme or integrated study.
By the end of fifth grade, most children will:
- Refine their ability to write effective paragraphs.
- Demonstrate the ability to independently write a clear, focused, three-paragraph essay.
- Practice writing longer pieces in various genres.
- Establish narrative structure—plot, setting, conflict, and resolution.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Begin to evaluate own work based on established criteria for effective writing with guidance and support from peers and adults.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- Continuously and purposefully increase descriptive vocabulary.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:
- Write well-developed paragraphs and three paragraph essays.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Learn techniques of persuasive writing.
- Evaluate own work based on established criteria for effective writing with some guidance and support from peers and adults.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- Establish narrative structure—plot, setting, conflict, resolution, and theme.
- Use a range of narrative strategies for effect including dialogue and suspense.
- Write essays that support an idea and build a logical argument.
- Employ a variety of persuasive techniques, including presenting alternate views objectively.
- Locate and access relevant information.
- Learn basic note-taking strategies.
- Use forms of nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives correctly.
- Correctly spell frequently misspelled words and common homophones.
- Use correct capitalization and basic punctuation.

Students write for various purposes and audiences in formats that include:
- Personal narratives
- Fictional stories and poems
- Descriptive and analytical essays
- Research papers
- Speeches and letters
- Exploratory/open-ended papers
- Journaling
- Book, restaurant, & movie reviews
- Biographies
In Mathematics, fifth graders often move back and forth from concrete to representational to abstract thought. So, typically, we introduce each concept at a concrete level through use of manipulatives. Once the student understands a concept in a “hands-on” fashion, we introduce the pencil-and-paper, or representational, algorithm. Students practice solving problems that involve the concept both individually and in small groups.

Because understanding the underlying concept is even more important than coming up with the correct answer to a mathematical problem, we ask students to explain the (abstract) reasoning behind their solutions. We routinely pose open-ended questions, and ask students to solve real world problems and to reflect on their work in their math journals. By the end of the year, our aim is for each student to gain fluency in mathematics and make strides toward understanding the ways in which mathematical concepts are interconnected.

The standards of the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the Common Core math standards serve as a guide for the mathematics curriculum at Breakwater. The math program’s overarching goal is to help students become problem solvers who can articulate their thinking and reasoning, solve spatial tasks, and demonstrate the ability to apply the following mathematical concepts:

- Arithmetic fluency
- Numeration
- Mathematical Communication
- Fractions and decimals
- Approximating and Measuring
- Plane and 3D geometry

By the end of fifth grade math course, most children will:

- Develop fluency with addition and subtraction of fractions, and develop understanding of the multiplication of fractions and division of fractions in limited cases (unit fractions divided by whole numbers and whole numbers divided by unit fractions).
- Extend division to 2-digit divisors, integrate decimal fractions into the place value system and develop understanding of operations with decimals to hundredths.
- Develop fluency with whole number and decimal operations.
- Understand and use measures of elapsed time, temperature, capacity, mass and use measures of mass and weight.
- Develop understanding of volume, plane, and three dimensional geometric terms and shapes.

By the end of sixth grade math course, most children will:

- Connect ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and use concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems, including using ratio to represent simple probability problems.
- Complete their understanding of division of fractions and extend the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers.
- Write, interpret, and use mathematical expressions and equations.
- Develop understanding of statistical thinking; produce line and other simple graphs to represent understanding.
- Develop understanding of geometric terms and shapes.
By the end of fifth grade, most children will:

- Select, plan, and participate in a civic action or service-learning project based on a classroom, school or local community asset or need, and describe evidence of the project’s effectiveness and civic contribution.
- Demonstrate a developing ability to understand the basic ideals, purposes, principles, structures, and processes of democratic government and understand the basic rights, duties, responsibilities, and roles of citizens in a democracy in Maine and the United States.
- Continue to develop an understanding of personal economics as well as the basis of the economies of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.
- Demonstrate a developing ability to think critically about a subject – compare and contrast, form and articulate own opinions, critically analyze topic under study.
- Show an increasing ability to synthesize and expand upon information from a range of texts in oral and written presentations.
- Be able to explain how history can help one better understand and make informed decisions about the present and future.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:

- Demonstrate a developing ability to research, develop, present, and defend positions on current social studies issues by developing and modifying research questions, and locating, selecting, evaluating information from multiple sources.
- Demonstrate a developing geographic knowledge, which helps one have a visual context in which to place new information, understand the geography of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.
- Be aware of major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.
- Demonstrate a developing ability to understand that we are citizens of a world with many cultures, to value learning what other cultures can teach about the human condition, and to imagine oneself within a different cultural context and perspective.
- Continue to develop understanding of the basic ideals, purposes, principles, structures, and processes of democratic government and understanding of the basic rights, duties, responsibilities, and roles of citizens in a democracy in Maine and the United States.
- Continue to develop understanding of personal economics as well as the basis of the economies of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.
By the end of fifth grade, most children will:

- Use a dichotomous key to identify living organisms.
- Understand community design and the function of all its component parts.
- Develop understanding of systems of the human body including the respiratory, circulatory, muscular, skeletal, and endocrine and reproductive systems.
- Build models to show understanding.
- Investigate and explore different sources of energy and their impact on the environment from various points of view.
- Observe, collect data, and form ideas about how the world works and how they can participate in making it a better place.
- Understand that scientific investigations may take many different forms, including observation, use of the five senses, collecting specimens for analysis, creating and testing hypotheses, conducting experiments, and that investigations can focus on physical, biological, environmental, and social questions.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:

- Organize a field research notebook, create and use a nature journal, and synthesize information they collect in the field.
- Prepare experiments, create interviews, map areas where research will be conducted, and use research tools via the internet to prepare for their work in the content area being studied.
- Observe, collect data, and form ideas about how the world works and how they can participate in making it a better place.
- Understand that scientific investigations may take many different forms, including observation, use of the five senses, collecting specimens for analysis, creating and testing hypotheses, conducting experiments, and that investigations can focus on physical, biological, environmental, and social questions.
- Understand that scientific experimentation and observation require precise record keeping and careful data collection and analysis, and that scientific investigation often raises as many questions as it answers.

Although subjects of study often arise from student interests and reinforce thematic content in other disciplines, we generally cover the following topics in our fifth and sixth grade science curriculum:

- **General science**: scientific method, Linnaeus system of classification
- **Earth Science**: ecology, service learning project, winter ecology, cosmology, astronomy
- **Life science**: cells, tissues, organs, organ systems (respiratory, circulatory, muscular, skeletal, and endocrine); puberty and accompanying body changes
- **Physical science**: chemistry, energy and energy sources, electricity, atoms, periodic table
Key concepts in our World Languages program are:

• to develop an appreciation of culture and history of Spanish-speaking countries,
• to understand how to study a language, and
• to gain basic literacy skills in Spanish.

By the end of fifth grade, most children will:

• Develop understanding of and proficiency with common Spanish greetings.
• Apply this knowledge by regularly greeting teacher and classmates, and begin to have basic conversations in Spanish.
• Demonstrate understanding of Spanish sentence structure by writing multiple sentences, and using reference tools to self-edit their writing.
• Increase vocabulary, especially action verbs, adjectives, and words that describe people physically and the role they play in their family and workplace.
• Know the days of the week, months of the year, and the numbers 1-100.
• Explore the culture, geography, and history of one or more Spanish speaking countries.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:

• Develop understanding of basic conversational Spanish. They will apply this knowledge by regularly greeting teachers and classmates, and practicing Spanish outside of the classroom.
• Research and create written projects to be presented orally.
• Begin to develop reading comprehension and written expression in Spanish. They will also learn to read and write basic sentences in Spanish.
• Continue to develop vocabulary, begin to use irregular verb forms, and to refine the use of descriptive language.
• Develop understanding of grammar including verb conjugation and the use of prepositions and adjectives.
• Explore the culture, geography, and history of one or more Spanish speaking countries.

Middle school students study and practice the following Spanish topics:

• Common Spanish greetings
• Physical descriptions
• Roles people play in the family and workplace
• Days of the week, months, seasons
• Numbers one to one hundred
• Telling time
• Articles of clothing
• Action verbs
• Adjectives of size, color, and temperature
By the end of fifth grade, most children will:
• Continue to develop confidence in articulating their developing sense of personal aesthetics.
• Develop visual literacy in a meaningful context for exploration and appreciation, including critique and reflection and analysis.
• Develop knowledge of art history, cultural aspects of art-making, and contemporary artists.
• Develop drawing, painting, and art-making skills including depicting proper facial proportions, using diminishing size, shadows and shading, mixing intermediate colors, sculpting, painting, and using pen and ink.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:
• Through repeated exposure to a variety of art experiences and artists, demonstrate confidence in articulating a personal sense of aesthetics.
• Continue to develop visual literacy in a meaningful context for exploration and appreciation, including critique and reflection and analysis.
• Continue to develop knowledge of art history, cultural aspects of art-making, and contemporary artists.
• Develop drawing, painting, and art-making skills including techniques to indicate space, distance and volume, shading, crosshatch and contour drawing, using advanced media to create prints, mixing intermediate colors, sculpting, painting, and using pen and ink.
• Visit museums and galleries to interact with work artists and their art and learn how to write an artist’s statement about their work.

Fifth and sixth grade students in our visual arts program will:
• Depict proper facial proportions.
• Use diminishing size to indicate space and distance in 2-D art.
• Use shadows and shading.
• Use pen and ink.
• Paint emotively using line, color, and texture.
• Create sculpture that is balanced and free standing.
• Use sharp tools safely to create relief prints.
• Mix intermediate colors.
• Visit museums and galleries.
• Build experience in drawing.
• Use techniques to indicate space, distance, and volume.
• Use techniques such as shading, crosshatching, and contour drawing.
• Create sculpture that is balanced and free standing.
• Use advanced media to create prints.
• Paint emotively using line and color.
• Mix intermediate colors to paint from nature.
Music/Performing Arts at Breakwater

By the end of fifth grade, most children will:

• Understand music and performing arts are a universal means of communication and expression; including comparing and contrasting characteristics and purposes of the arts in various cultures.
• Develop individual performance style and musical style and through varied performance opportunities and exposure to wide array of music from around the country and the world.
• Work individually and in small groups to compose original music and arrangements.
• Develop skill in playing an instrument and/or singing and reading music.
• Critique own work and the work of others using an aesthetic criterion.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:

• Begin to understand how the arts originate from human experience, are a communal experience, and encourage kinship with others.
• Perform a variety of styles and types of music, dance, theatre, and rock band to help develop individual performance style and musical style.
• Continue to develop skill in playing an instrument and/or singing and reading music.
• Compare and contrast the characteristics and purposes of the arts from various cultures, historical periods, and social groups.
• Critique their own work and the work of others based upon an aesthetic criterion developed by professionals in performing arts.
By the end of fifth grade, most children will:

- Participate in, and learn the skills of a greater number of games and activities they can experience throughout their life.
- Exhibit greater levels of independence and determination during a trip that is physically demanding but achievable for everyone, such as an overnight trip to Cardigan Lodge and a hike up Mt. Cardigan.
- Communicate and interact with teammates for the good of the team. They will start to participate in a greater number of competitive sports and demonstrate positive behavior when winning or losing.
- Organize games in a way that minimizes conflict, be able to solve most problems as they arise, and modify their games in response to past conflicts or problems.

By the end of sixth grade, most children will:

- Continue to improve teamwork skills and the ability to be calm and positive during competitive games.
- Continue to step outside their comfort zone by participating in a Survival Overnight experience.
- Start to value physical activity not only for enjoyment, but also as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- Not only be able to independently organize and arbitrate their own games, but start to help younger children resolve difficulties.