



## Rindge Avenue Upper School *6th Grade Mathematics*



Dear Parents and Families,

Hello! My name is Alex Spencer and I will be your child's 6th grade math teacher at Rindge Avenue Upper School. I am incredibly excited to get started with your children this year and guide them with their transition to middle school! As a teacher, I have the great responsibility of supporting students in getting whatever they need to succeed. The goal of this class is to enable students to become strong, confident, and independent thinkers with skills in reasoning, problem solving, and perseverance towards their work.

This year in math class will be enriching, fun, and academically rigorous. In order to ensure I am best servicing your child, I'd like to call on your support and expertise. As parents and guardians, you are the people that understand your children best. I look forward to collaborating with you so that we can ensure your child has the best year possible. Sixth grade presents a magnificent responsibility to build a collaborative community of learners where students learn to use their voices with confidence and I know that working together, we can get that done!

Over the course of the year, students will be learning about ratios and proportions, fractions, decimals and percents, rational numbers, algebraic expressions, equations and inequalities, geometry, and statistics. The sixth grade curriculum builds the groundwork towards future algebra courses and allows students to dig deeper into some familiar concepts. Students will be engaging with this content through a mix of stations, online interactive tools, group tasks, projects and assessments, whole class and partner discussions, and independent work. It is my goal that every student operates with a growth mindset so that they can confidently say they are indeed a "math person".

The best way to contact me is via email at [alspencer@cpsd.us](mailto:alspencer@cpsd.us). Please feel free to reach out at any time. I would love to meet as many parents and families as possible and I am eager to call on you for your support to help make this the best year possible for your child. If you have any other questions or concerns in the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out!

Sincerely,

Alex Spencer

[alspencer@cpsd.us](mailto:alspencer@cpsd.us)

617-349-4060 ext: 211

# **Grade 6 Science Overview: Explaining Phenomena**

## *Asking Questions, Using Models and Constructing Explanations*

In grade 6, students are introduced to the idea of beginning a scientific investigations by generating and honing productive questions.

### **Can I Believe My Eyes?**

Sept-Dec

Students complete several investigations, each time cycling back to the anchoring activity, constructing a consensus model of how we see. Each cycle helps them delve into the science content to gain a deeper understanding of how light moves through space, what happens when it meets objects and materials, how our eyes detect light, how colors of light can be perceived to be different than what they really are, and finally, nonvisible light. Throughout the unit, a model of light and sight is developed, applied to explain new phenomena, critiqued, modified, and reapplied.

### **How Can I Smell Things from a Distance?**

Dec-Feb

This unit focuses on one of the core ideas in physical science—the particle nature of matter. Students experience, model, and explain a variety of laboratory and everyday phenomena related to core ideas about matter and its interactions and, more specifically, the structure and properties of matter. The unit uses the widely experienced phenomenon of humans’ ability to smell odors to contextualize the science ideas.

### **Where Have All the Creatures Gone?**

Feb-May

This ecosystem unit focuses on organisms’ needs for survival and what happens when those needs are not met. Over the course of the unit investigation, students discover why food is important, how different structures are needed by organisms to eat and reproduce, what the relationships are between organisms (e.g. predator/prey, producer/ consumer, parasite/host, and competition), and what abiotic factors affect ecosystems. Originally designed using the context of an invasive species in the Great Lakes, we have modified this unit to use the ECOMUVE context of two forest island ecosystems. ECOMUVE is a virtual ecosystem in which students collect data about the interactions among organisms and populations over time. Students construct explanations that link their understandings of relationships with the population data to explain why the diversity on the islands differs.

### **How Does Water Move?**

May-June

Originally titled “How Does Water Shape Our World,” this unit has been reduced to focus on the water cycle. Students learn about how water moves in Earth systems and use that understanding to construct a model of the water cycle in a National Park.

**Contact Info: Philip Nerboso**  
**pnerboso@cpsd.us**

# Grade 6 English

2018

Dear parents and guardians,

Hello! My name is Dan Tobin and I'm your child's sixth grade English Language Arts teacher this year. I've taught sixth grade ELA at Rindge Ave since it opened six years ago, and I was at the Peabody School before that. Prior to teaching, I worked as a journalist, television sitcom writer (!), and graduate school academic advisor. I went to Walpole public schools, got a degree in English from Tufts, and received my masters of education from Lesley. I'm excited for another great year.



The Cambridge district ELA curriculum is aligned with Common Core State Standards and focuses on four key areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will be expected to do all four most days. Our curriculum this year will include:

- Establishing routines/Launching the reading workshop
- Elements of Fiction: Seedfolks and Book Clubs
- Writing a Literary Analysis Essay
- Culminating Project: My Hero's Journey Narrative
- Narrator's Point of View and Author's Perspective: The Giver
- Comparing Varying Points of View on the Same Topic
- Researching and Interpreting Information
- This I Believe: Writing a Personal Essay

Additionally, middle school students in Cambridge are expected to read 15-25 books this year. The ELA homework most nights will be to read a book of his or her own choosing for at least 30 minutes a night, although at times the homework will feature required readings. I have a robust classroom library (that always loves donations!) and I will work to ensure students have books geared to their reading and interest levels as much as I can. But keeping a book in your child's hands will make a huge difference. Studies show that reading benefits students across the curriculum, so make sure they find time to get lost in a book!

I'm best reached by email, and my phone number is also below. Please contact me with any questions or concerns, and I encourage you to stay involved and in communication. Parents are our greatest allies and helpers, and together we can do great things for students. I look forward to engaging with you throughout the year. I'm excited for another great year in the sixth grade.

Sincerely,

Dan Tobin  
(617) 349-4060, ext. 2131  
dtobin@cpsd.us

## 6th grade Social Studies

Rindge Avenue Upper School

2017-2018

### Instructor

Gisel Saillant

Room A212

[gsaillant@cpd.us](mailto:gsaillant@cpd.us)

### Course Description

Welcome to **6th grade Social Studies!** My goal this year is to guide students towards becoming knowledgeable, culturally aware, and environmentally responsible citizens who will actively participate in their local communities. This year, the Social Studies curriculum begins with an overview of geographical terms and a brief focus on the application of a geographer and archaeologist's job and skill set. Over the progression of the year, we will also cover the rise and life of early humans, the rise of agriculture and the geography, culture, and economy of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece. During the year, we will explore and study these places and topics by means of group activity, whole class discussion, projects, station work and assessments. While focusing on these topics, students will read and engage with a variety of text and media, develop critical thinking and analytical skills, and learn how to discuss complex ideas with peers. I encourage all of my students to ask questions at any time and seek help as the material we cover becomes more and more challenging. I look forward to our year together!

### Essential Questions and Units

- **Unit 0:** How do we create a learning community? How do I become an independent learner?
- **Unit 1:** Why does where matter? How does geography help me understand historical themes, trends, events, and consequences?
- **Unit 2:** What is civilization?
- **Unit 3:** What is progress?
- **Unit 4:** Is civilization progress?
- **Unit 5:** How are ancient cultures similar to and different from cultures today?

## SUPPLY LIST

### Math:

- 3-ring binder (1-inch)
- loose-leaf tabs (4)
- **Large** box of pencils
- Expo dry-erase markers (thin is best)

### Science:

- One pocket folder
- Large box of pencils
- Box of tissues

### English Language Arts:

- Spiral notebook
- Large box of pencils
- Folder or binder for papers
- Box of tissues

### Social Studies:

- Folder
- Expo dry erase markers
- box of pencils
- box of Kleenex