

Course Offerings Booklet

2009 - 2010

Welcome to Sixth Grade

Roberto Clemente Middle School

Administration

Mrs. Khadija Barkley, Acting Principal
Ms. Carrie Reed, Principal Intern
Mr. James Richard, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Helen Nixon, Coordinator, Upcounty Middle School Center for the Highly Gifted
Ms. Anne-Marie Smith, Assistant School Administrator

Roberto Clemente Middle School students receive a comprehensive academic program at every grade level. There are seven class periods daily. All students take courses in Math, World Studies, Science, English and Physical Education. Sixth graders will also take a Reading class or a Foreign Language, and one elective.

Each grade level is divided into academic teams. This configuration allows staff to get to know the children well, conference together with parents, develop plans to meet individual needs and develop cross-curricular units of study. Electives teachers and Physical Education teachers work as teams as well.

All students participate daily in a physical education program every year. Conflict resolution, health, and family life units are included in the physical education curriculum.

Our students have the opportunity to sample a variety of subjects throughout their three years in our Electives program. Art Investigations 6 and Astronomy are offered in the Electives Semester Rotation. Information and Communication Technology will be offered as a full year course as well as Perspectives in the Arts 6. Chorus, Beginning Band, Concert Band, General Orchestra and Concert Orchestra are also available as full year electives.

Roberto Clemente Middle School is a global access school. Teachers and students have accounts on the Internet and access to high technology research and publishing possibilities. Teachers also engage in the use of Edline, a web-based program that allows for communication between school, students and parents.

The Clemente staff is concerned with the whole child and helps to ensure healthy development through an extra-curricular program. The many after-school activities include academic supports, intramural sports, athletic teams, yearbook staff, and science, chess, drama and newspaper clubs. The Student Government Association (SGA) presents an excellent opportunity for children to become involved in their school. Many teachers stay after school to provide individual academic support. Activity buses are available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for students who stay for an organized activity or who work with a teacher.

The Counseling Department works with the teams to implement a successful educational program for each child. Counselors for every grade level meet with individual students, run counseling groups and visit classrooms to address school wide issues. They are available to speak to parents and facilitate team/parent conferences.

Ms. Linda Ramos, 6th grade Counselor

Ms. Ellen Berman, 7th grade Counselor

Ms. Stacy Dobres, 8th grade Counselor

Ms. Susie Ikpemgbe-Kaigler, 6th, 7th, 8th Math, Science, Computer Science Center; 6th, 7th grade Humanities Center; and Alt. 1

Mrs. Karen M. Joseph, Resource Counselor, Alt. 1 and 8th grade Humanities Center

Registration

Building upon the knowledge and skills acquired in previous years, students will be encouraged to pursue a rigorous program of studies based on their individual interests and abilities. The 2009-2010 Course Offerings Booklet contains information on the instructional program that will be offered. It is designed to be a guide for parents and students as they make program decisions and register for the next school year.

The Course Offerings Booklet contains a complete listing of the regular courses available, information on academic grouping and student placement criteria, descriptions for the regular and elective courses offered, and any specific course requirements, such as performance obligations. Some classes may require nominal laboratory, project, or materials fees. Please note: the classes offered next fall for ELECTIVE COURSE OFFERINGS are determined during the summer and are based on student enrollments, and staffing availability.

Parents and students should give special attention to the selection of courses during registration. **The master schedule of classes and the allocation of staff is based on your initial registration. After the registration period, schedule changes will be made in exceptional cases only.** Requests for changes by a student or parent must be for educationally sound reasons and submitted in writing. A parent/ counselor/ team meeting will then be scheduled to discuss the request. **Course selections must be done with great care and preplanning.**

Course Descriptions

~English~

Students learn that the basic language arts of reading, writing, speaking, and listening are related processes that convey meaning and enable learning.

The English curriculum focuses on the study of novels, short narratives, and poetry. Students acquire reading strategies that help improve comprehension. Instruction includes narrative elements such as setting, character, conflict, plot, and theme. Students also receive instruction and practice in reading and interpreting informational materials such as reference works and newspapers. Extensive reading for personal enjoyment is also expected.

Instruction in writing and speaking emphasizes the four intents: expressing thoughts and feelings, writing and telling stories and poems, informing an audience, and persuading an audience. Students use the writing/speaking process in two writings and a prepared talk for each intent. Students learn to use prewriting techniques to generate and organize ideas, write a first draft, and then revise their work. In peer groups, students help one another to further revise before editing and conferring with the teacher. At this stage, students focus on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and usage. Students then write a final copy for publication. Frequent journal writing is used to increase students' fluency in written expression. Grammar and vocabulary development are also integral parts of the curriculum.

ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages - Grades 6, 7, or 8

ESOL is a course designed to teach the four basic skill areas of English (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to students whose native language is not English. There are several levels of ESOL offered, from beginning to advanced, depending upon the English proficiency level of the student. ESOL levels are determined by an examination given to all incoming students who enroll through the International Student Admission Office. Emphasis is placed upon practical English usage as well as grammar, spelling, and vocabulary development. More advanced ESOL students may take a regular English class concurrently with ESOL to facilitate their exit from the program and entry into regular English, which occurs as students demonstrate sufficient English fluency to function without ESOL support.

~ Math ~

Middle School Math 6 extends students' understanding of numbers and computation to include fractions, decimals, and percents. All concepts and skills are presented in the context of problem solving that requires the use of reasoning and communication. Areas of focus include data representation and analysis using frequency table and circle graphs, customary and metric measurement, geometric relationships and transformations, algebraic patterns and relationships, and probability. Students in Middle School Mathematics 6 will go on to either Middle School Mathematics 7 or Investigations into Mathematics the following year.

Middle School Mathematics 7 extends students' understanding of numbers and computation to include integers and proportional reasoning. All concepts and skills are presented in the context of problem solving that requires the use of reasoning and communication. Areas of focus include functional relationships, arithmetic and geometric sequences, geometric precision, and data analysis and representation using box and whisker plots, histograms, and scatter plots.

This course is for students who have completed the Kindergarten to Grade 5 mathematics curriculum as well as the indicators in Middle School Mathematics 6. Students in Middle School Mathematics 7 will go on to Investigations in to Mathematics the following year.

Investigations into Mathematics is an enriched course for mathematically accelerated students who have successfully completed the Kindergarten to Grade 5 mathematics curriculum, as well as the indicators for Middle School Math 6 and the majority of the indicators of Middle School Math 7 by the end of either grade 5 or Grade 6. Students successful in this course will take Algebra I the following year.

This course is designed for students with exceptional talent in mathematics. The units of study include Patterns and Set Theory, Relations and Finite Operations, Algebra Foundations, Real

Number System, Data Analysis, Language of Algebra, Functions and Graphs, and Investigations of Three-Dimensional Geometry.

Algebra 1 examines the basic structure of real numbers, algebraic expressions, and functions. The topics studied are linear equations, inequalities, functions and systems, quadratic equations and functions, polynomial expressions, data analysis, probability, and properties of functions. Mathematical modeling of real-life problems and problem solving are major themes of the course.

Students in this course take the state High School Assessment Test 1 for Mathematics, which includes both algebraic and statistical concepts. This course satisfies the high school Algebra 1 requirement. Students must pass the course and the end of year final exam to receive high school credit for this course.

~ Science ~

Investigation in Science 6 (full year) (replaces GT Science 6)

The MCPS middle school science program allows students to investigate both the concepts and process skills of science. Topics in earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics are interconnected to show students the relationships that exist between science concepts. Inquiry and laboratory investigations are an integral part of the program. Problem solving and online investigations are used continually to allow students to investigate authentic problems and reinforce science concepts. Units studied in Advanced Science 6 are ecosystems, diversity and adaptations of organisms, forces and motion, energy, and light and sound.

~ Social Studies ~

The social studies program in middle school builds chronological and thematic understanding of world and United States history, while also developing the social studies strands of geography, economics, political systems, and culture. Each social studies unit is organized around a historical era and a social studies strand. A mix of modern content and the lessons of history provides the background knowledge and thinking skills to prepare students for high school instruction and the duties of a citizen.

In Grade 6 and Grade 7, the focus of study is on ancient world history and culture from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. At all grade levels, students build understanding of the modern world by applying concepts of geography, economics, political systems, and culture to present-day scenarios.

6th Grade Social Studies – Four Units:

Unit 1: Patterns of Settlement in the Ancient and Modern Worlds

- world geography
- patterns of settlement and trade
- ancient patterns of settlement
- Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus River Valley, northern China, and Nubia/Kush

Unit 2: Citizenship and Governance in Classical and Modern Times

- citizenship today
- processes of government
- ancient concepts of citizenship and government
- ancient Greece and Rome

**Unit 3: The Impact of Economics:
Change and Continuity in China**

- fundamentals of economics
- the economics-political system connection
- ancient China through the Han Dynasty

Unit 4: Cultural Systems: Past and Present

- Culture's impact on political and economic systems
- Defining culture
- Case studies of world cultures around the first millennium: Ghana, Maya, Carolingian, Heian Japan, Kievan Russia, Abbasid Empire

~ Physical Education \ Health ~

Students in Grade 6 in middle school are expected to participate in a sequential physical and health education program (three quarters PE and one quarter health) so they can become familiar with and develop skills in a balanced program of team, dual and individual sports. Students also are provided with activities that enable them to practice and develop their physical, social and interpersonal skills and experience activities that they may enjoy throughout life. The health program is a nine week program which explores the following topics: mental health, tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, personal and consumer health, nutrition, safety and injury prevention, family life and human sexuality and disease prevention and control.

~Language Arts Electives ~**Reading - 6**

Reading 6 focuses on how the reading process is applied to exposition and narration. Students learn the skills and strategies necessary for growth in vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. Students learn to use text features, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing strategies to improve reading comprehension. They develop effective and efficient mental processing systems for monitoring and problem-solving difficulties with text before, during, and after reading. While students read some narrative texts, shared and guided experiences in the classroom focus on reading and responding to exposition. Outside of class, students work with independently chosen texts. Shared and guided experiences provide support as students become more confident readers.

Students should take 6th grade reading if they have MAP-R scores at the 74th percentile or below and they were basic or proficient on the MSA, or the teacher recommends it.

Read 180

Read 180 is a program for students seeking to reach grade level reading proficiency. Students should take Read 180 if they have a MAP-R score below the 25th percentile and they have a MSA score of Basic in 4th grade.

Foreign Languages*

The goal of the Montgomery County Public Schools' foreign language program is to educate students in a language and culture in order to make them knowledgeable and active members of a global society. Students will learn to use foreign languages for meaningful communication in both spoken and written form. The foreign language program emphasizes language as it is used in real-life situations that students are most likely to encounter. Through foreign language study,

students develop sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic heritage of other groups, understand their influence on American culture, and become prepared to participate in a society characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity.

All foreign language courses are designated high school level courses. Students are required to take the county high school level exam at the end of each level A and B semester. Foreign language grades earned at Roberto Clemente Middle School will appear on the high school transcripts.

Spanish Level 1A/1B – GT* or French Level 1A/1B – GT*
***Must meet GT criteria to be recommended for a foreign language in 6th grade. Students may qualify to begin a foreign language in 6th or 7th grade.**

Students begin to learn to communicate orally and in written form about daily life. Emphasis is on vocabulary development, simple grammatical structures, and the basic culture of the people. Students are encouraged to use the language beyond the school setting and keep informed of current events in countries where the target language is spoken.

~ Arts Electives ~

The following elective courses may be offered, pending student interest and staffing.

Students entering 6th grade will sign up for one full year elective or for two semester electives. Courses are rotated each semester and include fine arts and technology courses. A one time \$10.00 fee is requested of students which covers a variety of projects. Alternative payment arrangements, including waiver of fee, may be requested based on the inability to pay required fees.

Information and Communication Technology Grade 6 (Full Year)

In this course, students use technology in a rigorous, inquiry- and project-based learning environment that promotes relevance and engagement. Students acquire knowledge and skill sets connected to Grade 6 content areas involving the use of application, web-based, and multimedia tools. Programming concepts will be applied to the development of games, educational simulations, and robotic products. The application of computer aided drafting and design and graphics software will be used to communicate 2-D and 3-D designs. Students will acquire website development skills and digital art concepts to create a portfolio. **The completion of this course prepares students to follow middle school pathways that lead to high school credit courses in Grade 8. Course outcomes are based on the Maryland Technology Literacy Standards for Grades PreK-8 and the Maryland State Department of Education Voluntary State Curriculum for technology education.**

Perspectives in the Fine Arts 6 (Full Year)

This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of fine arts (visual art, music, theatre, and dance). Using the Maryland State outcomes for fine arts education, students learn the elements of each art form and how artists manipulate those elements for communication and expression. In addition, students examine the role visual art, dance, music, and theatre have played in different cultures, providing room for interdisciplinary connections to the MCPS English and social studies curriculum. A blend of hands-on experiences as well as fine arts appreciation, criticism, and history will be used to help students understand what it means to be an artist.

Chorus - Grade 6 (Full Year Elective) a high level performing ensemble-

The Chorus will perform songs in a variety of different styles, at school and in choral festivals. Students will develop vocal skills, music reading skills, and the ability to sing in rounds and two-part harmony. In addition to developing the singing voice, students will develop awareness of musical styles and music history. Responsibility to the entire group is encouraged since the chorus is a closely knit team. Students' voices are tested at the beginning of the school year, and after-school remedial work may sometimes be necessary.

Beginning Band - Grade 6 (Full Year Elective)

This course is open to students who have played an instrument in elementary school or who wish to begin a serious study of a band instrument. Seventh and eighth grade students wishing to begin a new instrument should obtain permission from the instructor. The main focus of this group is learning to play together as an ensemble, so mastery of basic technical skills is essential for participation. Areas of study include the elements of balance and blend, tone production, musical notation, musical symbols, musical structure, and instrument care and maintenance. Home practice is required for participation. Students perform at three concerts including the annual Old School shows.

Concert Band – (Full Year Elective) *Minimum 3 years experience*

Concert Band is the competitive group that participates in MCPS County Festival and Music in the Parks Competition. In addition, students perform at three school concerts and at the annual Old School shows. The band is primarily for seventh and eighth grade students who have been playing an instrument since elementary school and have participated in middle school band. Sixth grade students wishing to participate in this advanced group can contact the instructor to set up an audition. Concert band students continue mastery of their instrument pertaining to range, tone, rhythm as well as begin to develop advanced musical concepts of ensemble playing and exposure to a wider variety of repertoire. Playing in Concert Band requires instructor approval. Students begin to assume leadership roles within the large performance ensemble. Home practice is required for participation.

General Orchestra - Grade 6 (Full Year Elective)

This course is open to students who have played an instrument in elementary school or who wish to begin a serious study of a string instrument. Students wishing to participate in this advanced group can contact the instructor to set up an audition. The main focus of this group is learning to play together as an ensemble, so mastery of basic technical skills is essential for participation. Areas of study include the elements of balance and blend, tone production, musical notation, musical symbols, musical structure, and instrument care and maintenance. Home practice is required for participation. Students perform at three concerts including the annual Old School shows.

Concert Orchestra- (Full Year Elective) *Minimum 3 years experience*

The concert orchestra is primarily for seventh and eighth grade students who have been playing an instrument since elementary school and have participated in the middle school strings program. Sixth grade students wishing to participate in this advanced group can contact the instructor to set up an audition. Students in the advanced and competitive Concert Orchestra have further opportunities to develop technical proficiency and to improve rehearsal techniques. There

is a focus on a wider range of dynamics, style, bowing vibrator, and musical knowledge, as well as the study of harmony and ear training. Students learn the characteristics of advanced musical styles and begin to acquire a repertoire of string orchestra literature. Students begin to assume leadership roles within the large performance ensemble. Home practice is required. The concert orchestra competes at the MCPS Orchestra Festival competition and Music in the Parks. Students perform at three concerts including the annual Old School shows.

~ Special Education ~

Placement is determined by the Individualized Education Program team in consultation with the special education supervisor.

Resource Program

Students in the Resource Program learn a variety of instructional strategies which are used to meet the students' individual needs. The resource program provides consultation with school staff to provide early intervention strategies, staff training and demonstration of effective instructional practices. The resource teacher participates in school Individualized Education Program team meetings and administers educational assessments.

Learning and Academic Disabilities Program

Students accessing the Learning and Academic Disabilities model require special education services as a result of a learning disability that significantly impacts academic achievement in the areas of mathematics, reading and/or written language. Students are instructed in the general education curriculum with differentiated instruction to accommodate the unique learning needs of each student.

Learning for Independence Program School/Community-based Program

The students placed in the LFI and SCBP classes utilize the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Studies, which emphasizes basic skills, personal management, vocational and leisure skills. Learning focuses on functional academics related to real-life applications. Community instruction focuses on vocational skill, as determined by individual student needs.

~ Gifted and Talented Program ~

Student Placement

The Roberto Clemente Middle School Gifted and Talented Program provides for flexible grouping and scheduling arrangements to meet the broad spectrum of abilities and talents of all gifted and talented students. Students may receive gifted and talented instruction within a gifted and talented class, in a cluster group within a class, or through differentiated instruction.

Gifted and Talented Instruction

Accelerated Instruction: Curriculum that is at a higher level than the regular curriculum: the information is more complex or more information is covered; the material is presented more rapidly than in typical instruction; and students are confronted by a greater challenge than is customary with on-grade level material.

Enriched Instruction: Students are given the opportunity to learn in greater depth and breadth. This may include, but is not limited to, more complex content, emphasis on thinking which requires comparisons and analogies of knowledge, and/or creative and original products.

Differentiated Instruction: Instruction is planned by the teacher in order to meet the diverse needs of students based on their learning characteristics. This may include, but is not limited to, creative grouping practices, independent research, interdisciplinary units, and performance-based learning experiences.

Identification of Students

At Roberto Clemente Middle School, every effort is made to appropriately place students. Placement in a gifted and talented class is determined by specific criteria at each grade level by each subject. Students must maintain a "B" average to remain in the gifted and talented level. If a "B" is not maintained after two consecutive marking periods, your child's placement in the gifted and talented class(es) will be reviewed. Students who are currently in gifted and talented classes are evaluated annually. In addition, these students do not need to fill out a new nomination form.

If a **parent of a 5th grade student** would like his/her child considered for gifted and talented classes at **Roberto Clemente Middle School** the parent should complete the **Parent Nomination Form**. Students should also nominate themselves by completing the **Self Nomination Form**.

Grade 6 Gifted and Talented Classes

Grade 6 students may receive gifted and talented instruction in English, math, and foreign language classes. Differentiated instruction is provided in all other subject areas.

English Criteria

To enter the 6th grade GT English class, a student should meet the following criteria:

1. Has scored proficient or above on the MSA Reading portion for 4th grade
2. Earned an A/B average in Reading/language arts for grade 5
3. Recommended by current teacher

Math Criteria

To enter the 6th grade GT Math class, a student should meet two of the three following criteria:

1. Performed on or above grade level on 80% of all grade 5 math objectives.
2. Earned an "A" average in grade 5 math or earned an "A" or "B" average if grouped in a top ability group
3. Recommended by current teacher.

Foreign Language Criteria

Students should take a foreign language instead of reading if:

1. They have MAP-R scores at the 75th percentile or above
2. They earned a B or better in 5th grade Language Arts (all quarters)
3. They were advanced (or at least proficient) on the MSA
4. The teacher recommends it

PARENT Nomination Form for Gifted and Talented (GT) Courses – Grade 6

This form should be completed by parents of current 5th grade students who have not been identified in elementary school as GT but would like their child considered for gifted and talented classes in middle school.

Student Name: _____

Elementary School: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Home Phone: _____ Work Phone _____

Parent Cell Phone: _____

Check below the classes for which you nominate your child:

___ GT English

___ GT Math

Please share those abilities and talents your child possesses which make him/her a candidate for Gifted and Talented Classes. (You may attach an additional paper)

If nominating your child for GT classes please return this form with your registration information to your child's 5th grade teacher.

STUDENT Self -Nomination form for Gifted and Talented Classes (GT) - Grade 6

Student Name: _____

Elementary School: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

The following writing assignment must be completed by any student who would like to be considered for Gifted and Talented classes:

An important part of nominating yourself for gifted and talented classes is the writing of a multi-paragraph essay for the Gifted and Talented Committee.

Think about the academic strengths you possess which will make you successful in gifted and talented classes. Think about the special talents you have. Think about the qualities you possess which will help you be successful in an advanced class. Think about how you will benefit from this higher level of study.

Now, on a separate sheet of paper, write a multi-paragraph essay explaining why you should be considered for a Gifted and Talented class.

If nominating yourself for GT classes please return this form and your essay to your 5th grade teacher with your registration information.