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 geometry, ratios and rates, fractions, decimals and percents, algebraic expressions and equations, and data 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. 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
617-349-4060 ext: 211

Grade 6 Science Overview: Explaining Phenomena

Asking Questions, Using Models and Constructing Explanations

Cells and Body Systems: Sept-Dec

In this unit, students explore the fascinating human machine--their own bodies and how they work. The investigation starts at the smallest scale, by uncovering the idea that all living things are made of cells via microscope observations. They look at the cell system--what do cells need and what are the parts of the cells that do the jobs needed to keep us alive. Then students explore how individual body systems work together to meet the body's needs. They follow a red blood cell on its journey through the circulatory system and discover how it interacts with the digestive and respiratory systems to supply the body with nutrients and oxygen. Students then delve into the excretory, muscular/skeletal, and nervous systems--continuously making connections between the systems.

Earth's Story: Dec-March

In this unit, students are presented with an anchor phenomenon (video of an erupting volcano). Their observations and questions gathered from watching the video are used to create a driving question board, from which questions that drive the learning in the entire unit are pulled. Students create initial models of what they think is happening/causing the erupting volcano, then begin the process of gradually putting together the pieces of the puzzle of plate tectonics. They make sense of evidence gathered by Wegener in the early 1900's, and later scientists, attempting to explain why these phenomena occur (continuously revising their models and ideas). This unit is designed so that students are not told about tectonic plates--they discover them on their own using authentic evidence. Only at the end of the unit is the theory of plate tectonics revealed. The stories of the scientists involved in these discoveries are also highlighted to encourage personal connections between students and professional scientists, and to feature how scientific ideas change over time based on new evidence.

River to Sea: March-June

In this place-based unit that builds upon the 3rd Grade Charles River Exploration unit, 6th graders dig deeper into the more sophisticated issues facing the Charles River and the Gulf of Maine. Initially, they review the concept of watersheds and the water cycle as it applies to our river, and travel back in time to learn the intriguing history of the Charles River. How does what has happened to the river in the past and the water quality affect the organisms that live there? What are the Charles River ecosystems and how do organisms depend on one another. Students grapple with the question: how do we know that water in the Charles River is safe? Some organizations are working to make the river safe for people to swim in it. What does "safe" mean? What parameters are measured to determine this? Students build their knowledge on their own and then have a chance to apply what they learn on water sampling field trips to the river. Building on this, they work to figure out how we can tell if the river's ecosystems are healthy by looking at things other than water sampling data. Students then get the chance to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts by brainstorming and proposing novel, innovative ways to solve the river's remaining problems (like stormwater runoff and cyanobacteria blooms).

Contact Info: Philip Nerboso
pnerboso@cpsd.us

Dear parents and guardians:

Hello! My name is Dan Tobin and I'm your student's sixth grade English Language Arts teacher. I've taught sixth grade at Rindge Ave since it opened seven years ago, plus I taught a year 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 University. 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 each day. Our curriculum this year will include:

- Launching the reading workshop
- Elements of fiction
- Writing a literary analysis essay
- Writing fiction
- Oppressive societies in fiction
- Oppressive societies in nonfiction

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 choosing for at least 30 minutes, although sometimes there will be 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,

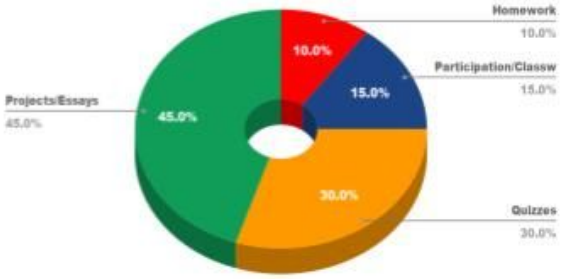
Dan Tobin
(617) 349-4060, x2131
dtobin@cpsd.us

WELCOME TO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

Social Studies

Ms. Saillant
6th grade Social Studies

How is my grade calculated?



Communication

gsaillant@cpsd.us

Social Studies Units:

World Geography
Human Origins
Ancient Mesopotamia
Ancient Egypt
Ancient Israel

Indus River Valley

Weekly current events

Debates

Year-long Essential Questions

- Why does where matter?
- How should I live?
- How should we live together?

In Social Studies class

Student work on digital notes located in the google drive. All work saved in drive is automatically saves and shared with Ms. Saillant.

SUPPLY LIST

Math:

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

Science:

- One pocket folder
- **Large** box of pencils
- Box of tissues
- 5 glue sticks

English Language Arts:

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

Social Studies:

- **Large** box of pencils
- Box of tissues