



Middle School Curriculum Guide

2025 - 2026

THE COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL

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Dear CSS Middle School Families,

Welcome to an exciting new chapter at The Colorado Springs School! It is with great enthusiasm that I introduce our expanded Middle School Curriculum Guide, a testament to our commitment to innovation, growth, and the unique journey that awaits your child here at CSS.

Our Middle School program stands apart, not just in the richness of its academic offerings, but in the spirit of exploration and discovery that infuses every classroom, studio, and outdoor adventure. We believe that the middle school years are pivotal—a time when students are discovering who they are and what they love. That's why our curriculum is designed to push students beyond their comfort zones, encouraging them to try new things, ask big questions, and develop interests of all kinds. **Through experiential education, your child will gain not only knowledge but also resilience, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.**

This guide showcases an ever-growing array of courses and opportunities, each carefully crafted to spark curiosity and nurture the whole child. Whether your student is passionate about science, the arts, leadership, or outdoor education, there is something here to inspire every learner.

We invite you to take the time to explore these offerings with your child and to imagine all the ways they can grow and thrive at CSS. **We are honored to partner with you during these three transformative years, and we encourage you to reach out whenever you have questions, ideas, or simply want to connect.** Your involvement and support are vital to your child's success, and we are here for you every step of the way.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education.
Together, let's make these middle school years truly
one of a kind!

Yours,

Erin K. Cerezo
Director of Lower & Middle School
The Colorado Springs School





ENGLISH

6th Grade English

English introduces students to a wide range of new skills as they expand upon prior knowledge to help each student develop as a writer, reader, and speaker. Students will practice a flipped classroom model where reading at home will be utilized as preparation to participate in interactive discussions. Students will give individual and group presentations to their peers and produce paired varied projects throughout the school year.

By reading and writing on a regular basis, students will learn about and improve grammar skills as they develop their own voices. Students will also read various texts beyond the surface level to predict, analyze, clarify, connect, and evaluate as they focus on understanding characterization, themes, and plot.

Through a foundation of textual context, students will expand their vocabulary, allowing them to use more intentional diction. Students will begin at the sentence level and progress to multi-paragraph essays by the end of the year. Through language and writing practice they will build their knowledge of the parts of speech and their correct usage.

Varying sentence types, sentence structures, phrases, and modifiers are emphasized through oral, written, and creative exercises. Writing and revision will focus on creating a variety of shorter, original pieces ranging from personal narratives to analytical essays to create stories.

6th Grade Honors English

The Honors 6th Grade English course challenges students to deepen their understanding of literature and writing through advanced critical thinking, analytical reading, and elevated communication skills. Building upon foundational knowledge, students will engage with complex texts, explore nuanced themes, and refine their written and spoken voices. The course emphasizes student independence, intellectual curiosity, and academic rigor.

A flipped classroom model will be implemented, requiring students to complete thoughtful reading assignments at home in preparation for in-depth, student-led discussions and Socratic seminars in class. Students will regularly deliver individual and group presentations and collaborate on high-level projects that demand creativity, research, and synthesis of ideas.

Reading and writing will occur on a daily basis, with an emphasis on developing sophisticated grammar and syntax. Students will move beyond basic comprehension to interpret symbolism,



author's craft, and deeper thematic elements. They will critically analyze character development, author's purpose, and structural choices in literature.

Vocabulary instruction will focus on academic and literary terms, encouraging precise and intentional word choice in both speech and writing. Students will progress from advanced sentence construction to polished, multi-paragraph essays with a focus on argument, narrative, and analytical writing. Throughout the course, they will build mastery of the parts of speech and grammatical conventions, applying them purposefully to enhance clarity and style in their writing.

7th Grade English

English uses a rich variety of literary genres—including short stories, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry—as a catalyst for developing thoughtful discussion skills and strong, effective writing. Students will engage in a flipped classroom model, where independent reading at home prepares them to actively participate in meaningful, interactive discussions in class.

Through regular writing, collaborative dialogue, and project-based learning, students will explore the overarching themes of community, identity, and belonging. They will examine how individuals relate to one another in an ever-changing world, learning to appreciate cultural differences and embrace global citizenship. This course encourages students to think critically, express themselves clearly, and connect literature to the broader human experience.

7th Grade Honors English

Honors English challenges students to engage deeply with literature across a range of genres—including short stories, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry—as a springboard for developing advanced discussion and writing skills. The course fosters critical thinking, empathy, and global awareness through the exploration of complex texts and diverse perspectives.

Utilizing a flipped classroom model, students are expected to read independently at home in preparation for dynamic, student-centered discussions, seminars, and projects. Emphasis is placed on speaking with clarity, listening actively, and respectfully engaging with differing viewpoints.

Through frequent analytical and creative writing, as well as project-based learning, students will examine themes of identity, community, cultural diversity, and their roles in a rapidly evolving world. They will explore how literature reflects and shapes societal values, and how they themselves can contribute to meaningful dialogue and change.

Students will refine their writing craft by focusing on structure, voice, and grammar while incorporating textual evidence and rhetorical strategies. By reading and writing with intention and depth, they will cultivate not only academic skills but also a sense of global citizenship and social responsibility.

8th Grade English

Students explore different genres to focus on themes relating to decision-making, identity, and transitioning to adulthood. They begin the year discussing summer reading books before exploring short stories, non-fiction writing, opinion essays, personal memoirs, and mythology. Building upon all that they have learned in Middle School, students engage in forms of academic writing ranging from analytical essays to researched persuasive letters, all with a focus on MLA standards and allowing students to pursue a topic of personal interest.

Building upon the Foundations of Language program, students continue to learn about the influence of Greek and Latin on the English language to increase vocabulary and strengthen diction. On a daily basis, they read, write and discuss various topics to develop opinions (thesis statements) supported by specific examples and commentary. Students culminate the year by extensively revising a selected piece of writing to potentially share with a live audience.

8th Grade Honors English

In Honors English, students take ownership of their learning as they engage with a diverse range of literary genres to explore complex themes such as decision-making, identity formation, and the transition into adulthood. Beginning with student-led discussions and collaborative analyses of summer reading selections, students then choose from a variety of texts—including short stories, non-fiction essays, editorial writing, a novella, classical mythology, drama, poetry, and allegory—to guide their personalized paths of inquiry. Students are encouraged to make interdisciplinary connections and pursue lines of questioning that reflect their individual interests.

Through project-based learning, students independently research, analyze, and present their interpretations in various forms, including analytical essays, comparative literary analysis, creative compositions, and researched persuasive letters, all aligned with MLA standards. Emphasis is placed on original thought, rigorous critical analysis, and cultivating an authentic scholarly voice.

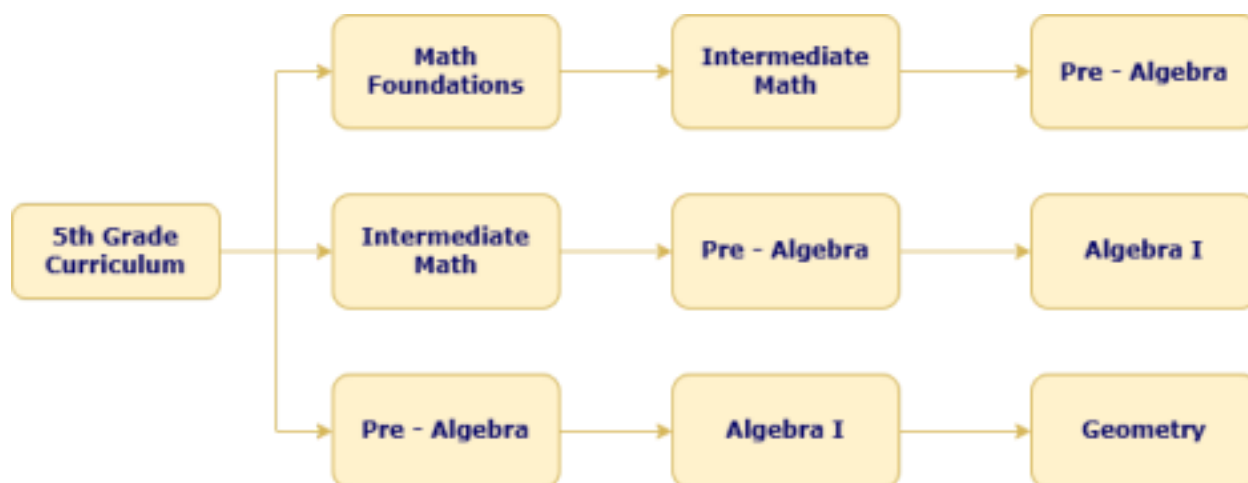
Building upon the Foundations of Language program, students independently apply their growing knowledge of Greek and Latin roots to strengthen vocabulary, diction, and stylistic precision. Frequent opportunities for reflective writing, Socratic seminars, peer workshops, and real-world publication or performance experiences help students refine their ability to craft sophisticated arguments supported by strong textual evidence and thoughtful commentary.



The year culminates in a capstone project in which students select, revise, and present a major piece of writing to a live audience, demonstrating mastery of the writing process, independent thought, and polished communication skills.



MATH



In middle school, a student's math placement is determined by several key factors. These include MAPS diagnostic scores, math grades, teacher input, and the student's effort and overall drive towards mathematical problem solving. These elements collectively help place a student in the most suitable math course.

Math Foundations & Explorations

Foundations and Explorations in Math is designed to ignite curiosity and build a strong mathematical foundation for our middle school learners. Rooted in repetition and mastery of core foundational skills and concepts, this course emphasizes exploration, skill development, and perseverance in problem solving. Students will deepen their understanding of number sense, operations with whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and percents, while also tackling measurement, geometry, and data analysis through engaging, real-world problems. Special focus is placed on ratios and proportional reasoning, preparing students to confidently apply these concepts in algebra, statistics, and beyond. By integrating technology-such as four-function calculators, laptops, and interactive applications-students are empowered to investigate mathematical ideas from multiple perspectives. Throughout the course, learners are encouraged to ask questions, make connections, and persist through challenges, ensuring they build both the skills and the mindset needed for future mathematical success.

Intermediate Math

Intermediate Math builds essential skills in the core four operations, including working with remainders as decimals and fractions. Students will master converting between fractions, decimals, and percentages, simplifying and finding equivalent fractions, and understanding prime factorization. The course covers calculating percentages, ratios, rates, proportionality, and estimation, as well as working with integers, rational numbers, and absolute value. Students are



introduced to numerical and algebraic expressions, basic equations and inequalities, dependent and independent variables, and the coordinate plane, providing a strong foundation for advanced math.

Pre-Algebra

Pre-Algebra lays the groundwork for success in Algebra I by introducing students to key algebraic concepts and skills. Students will develop a strong understanding of variables, particularly the use of x , and learn to plot and interpret coordinate points on the coordinate plane. The course covers linear equations, graphing lines, and explores the basics of reflections and translations. Students will work extensively with fractions-including product and compound fractions-and become comfortable with combining like terms and applying the order of operations (PEMDAS). The curriculum also introduces set theory, including intervals, set-builder notation, number lines, and important sets such as real numbers, integers, and rational numbers. Properties like the distributive and associative laws are emphasized, and students gain exposure to the Pythagorean Theorem. By the end of the course, students will be well-prepared for the demands of Algebra I, equipped with essential problem-solving and reasoning skills.

Algebra I

This middle school Algebra course provides a comprehensive foundation in algebraic concepts and skills, preparing students for higher-level mathematics. Students will master basic algebra skills and fractions, explore variables, and gain proficiency in writing and solving linear equations, as well as graphing them by hand. The curriculum covers polynomials, including operations and factoring, and introduces quadratic equations with an emphasis on completing the square. Students will study exponents-including negative and zero exponents-square roots (both positive and negative), and the rules governing their use. The course also includes solving linear systems using substitution, analyzing the slope of a line, and working with rational and radical expressions. Additionally, students will be introduced to mathematical proofs, learning what a proof is and exploring its historical origins, fostering logical reasoning and critical thinking skills.

Geometry

Geometry reinforces foundational algebra skills through the lens of geometric concepts. Students continue to polish the use of variables in order to solve problems; these problems are based on geometric definitions and relationships. Beginning with a few undefined terms and postulates, numerous theorems are the foundation for setting up algebraic equations. Algebra skills such as writing and solving linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of equations, polynomials, and quadratics are reinforced throughout the course, with the calculations of angle measurements, areas of plane figures and volumes of three-dimensional objects. Properties of polygons and circles are investigated and the concepts of congruency and similarity are established. Peer coaching and frequent discussions in class are an important part of the

proof-writing process. Current technology and hands-on activities allow students to focus on problem-solving skills and strategies. Students reinforce and synthesize concepts through projects that can incorporate art and strengthen public speaking skills.



SCIENCE

Earth and Space Science (6th)

Earth and Space Sciences are the primary topics explored in 6th-grade science. The course begins with a study of the solar system, universe, galaxies, and stars. Students focus on the Earth and its natural systems next, exploring the lithosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere. The year concludes with geology, exploring how the rock and fossil records help us understand the history of Earth. Students repeatedly apply the scientific process to experimentation and learn how to formulate hypotheses, manipulate independent variables, measure dependent variables, create data tables and graphs, and analyze results. They practice oral presentation techniques with the support of computerized slides and shoot and edit a video.

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Life Science (7th)

Exploration of the Earth's living systems is the content focus of the 7th-grade science curriculum. Beginning with ecosystems and biomes, students explore the concept of scale and levels of organization within the biosphere. Experimentation skills developed in 6th grade are applied and further developed in examinations of ecosystems, populations, organic chemistry, cell biology, genetics, comparative biology, and human biology. Students routinely design,

conduct, and analyze data from their experiments, increasingly incorporating the use of spreadsheets for data analysis and graphing over the course of the year.

Teamwork, work efficiency, and quality of lab technique are common threads throughout the year. Experimental results from independent research are frequently presented to classmates.



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In the honors curriculum, students are held to a high standard of excellence when practicing teamwork, work efficiency, and quality of lab technique. Honors students will complete independent research and lead their peers to understand materials presented in class. As well, deeper understanding of topics related to life science will be pursued, including real world applications and exploring different careers in the Life Sciences.

Physical Science (8th)

Physics and chemistry are the content focus areas of the 8th-grade science curriculum. Chemistry topics include a review of atomic structure, which we build on to include electron configurations, atoms versus ions, and trends in the periodic table of elements. Extrinsic versus intrinsic properties and physical versus chemical properties lead to investigations of states of matter, changes of state, specific heat, and density. The unit culminates with basic chemical reactions and balancing chemical equations.

On the heels of chemistry come an exploration of forces, waves, motion, and mechanical energy, where they make many connections with the 8th-grade math curriculum and learn to explain observable physical phenomena with both graphs and equations. This year is filled with experimentation and engineering, both of which entail student-generated scientific questions and the iterative process of engineering.

Physical Science (8th)

In 8th Grade Honors Physical Science, students will receive a more rigorous training in science writing, data analysis, and the scientific method. While the traditional class will work with each of these topics as well, students who opt into this course will gain valuable skills for their independent and collaborative scientific research in the future. Students looking to generate scientific questions and follow their specific curiosities should take this course.



HISTORY

World Geography (6th)

The World Geography curriculum is designed to provide students with an overview of the world, its continents, countries, cultures, and political systems. The curriculum expands upon the student's skills in map-reading, research, understanding of cultural diffusion, and knowledge of world history. Emphasis is placed on the themes of geography: place, location, region, human/environment interaction, and movement. A variety of hands-on activities are incorporated, and students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in long-term assignments, such as map creation and various writing projects. Students also engage in debate and learn the art of collaborative discussion as they are introduced to the Harkness method. Executive functioning training to teach students how to manage their time and materials is also an emphasis. This course helps students master the skills necessary to succeed in future history classes at both the Middle and Upper School levels.

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students will be pushed at a deeper level in their Harkness discussion, public speaking and writing skills. The pace of the class will be faster and more rigorous. This course helps students master the skills necessary to succeed in future history classes at both the Middle and Upper School levels.

American History (7th)

American history explores the major historical events that gave birth to and shaped our nation from the Pre-Columbian Era through World War I. Connections to relevant topics from recent decades are made as often as possible to create personal meaning for the events of the past. Students regularly engage in Harkness discussions to build conversational skills, while historical document and political cartoon analysis develops students' critical-thinking abilities. Students work on long-term projects, which enhance their research and writing skills. Through this course, students become better researchers, decision-makers, planners, designers, and communicators.

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American History Honors (7th)

Honors American History challenges students to critically examine the major events that shaped the United States from the Pre-Columbian Era through World War I, while making intentional connections to contemporary issues to foster deeper personal and civic understanding. Students are expected to lead and sustain sophisticated Harkness-style discussions, applying advanced conversational and questioning techniques to drive inquiry and reflection. Through intensive analysis of primary sources, historical documents, and political cartoons, students develop a more nuanced understanding of historical context, bias, and perspective.

Honors students undertake independent, student-driven projects that emphasize original research, analytical writing, and creative problem-solving. They are encouraged to select areas of personal interest for deeper exploration, culminating in work that reflects critical thinking, historiographical awareness, and a strong command of argumentation. Throughout the course, students refine essential academic and life skills, becoming independent researchers, thoughtful decision-makers, strategic planners, innovative designers, and persuasive communicators.

Ancient Civilizations (8th)

Ancient Civilizations is a survey course in which students will carefully examine the cultures of the ancient world in order to understand and compare the elements that constitute each society. They will learn how and why these civilizations came to exist, develop, and endure. The course will cover the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia, India, and China, as well as the Near

East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. A main component of the course will be the development of historical research methods and writing skills through a thesis project. Students will build critical-thinking and conversational abilities through regular Harkness discussions. Students will have the opportunity to develop their own civilization in an extensive multimodal project, which will require the students to think creatively about the civilizations of the past, while at the same time letting their creativity and imaginations take them places they never dreamed.

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WORLD LANGUAGES

Spanish Offerings

Students will build, reinforce, and/or acquire Spanish as a world language through cultural exploration and real-world applications of vocabulary and grammar. Emphasis will be placed on developing productive skills—speaking and writing—which will, in turn, support the growth of receptive skills—listening and reading. Students will practice constructing full sentences, gaining confidence in expressing themselves in Spanish. Cultural topics such as holidays, traditions, and Spanish-speaking countries will be incorporated into the content units to deepen students' understanding of the language in its cultural context.

Spanish 6

Sixth-grade Spanish is the first formal level of Spanish language study offered at the middle school level. Students will study verbs and learn to conjugate them in the simple present, present progressive, and immediate future tenses, with a focus on using "going to + infinitive". Additionally, students will master the use of subject pronouns to correctly match verb conjugations with the appropriate subjects in sentences. They will also practice using the verbs "ser" and "estar" (both meaning "to be") correctly, understanding when to use each based on context. Vocabulary topics include family, clothing and styles, entertainment, food, and school life.



Spanish 7

Seventh-grade Spanish focuses on deepening students' understanding of verb tenses and expanding their language proficiency. Building on the foundational skills learned in the previous year, students will continue to reinforce their understanding and usage of the simple present, present progressive, and immediate future tenses while introducing the preterite and imperfect tenses to express past actions and events with greater nuance. Students will also study adverbs, formal commands, and comparative structures, as well as learn the proper use of “**por**” and “**para**”. Moreover, students will study the verbs “**saber**” and “**conocer**”, understanding the differences between them—“**saber**” refers to knowing facts or information, while “**conocer**” refers to familiarity with people, places, or things. Vocabulary topics include hobbies, sports, food, school life, and personal interests.

Spanish 8

Eighth-grade Spanish builds upon the skills acquired in earlier grades, focusing on refining students' understanding of verb tenses, expanding vocabulary, and improving fluency in both written and spoken Spanish. This year, students will solidify their mastery of the preterite, imperfect, and future tenses while also exploring the conditional tense, allowing them to express hypothetical situations and desires. They will practice using all these tenses in more complex sentences, further enhancing their ability to communicate about past, present, and future events. They will also learn object pronouns, reflexive verbs, and the subjunctive mood, which is key for expressing wishes, doubts, and emotions. Vocabulary topics include health, travel, the environment, and social issues, helping students engage in more complex conversations

French Offerings

This course fosters fluency in listening and speaking. The curriculum also reinforces basic structural patterns in the language and develops writing and reading skills. In addition, students become familiar with Francophone culture around the world. Students will be expected to use as much French as possible in class discussions and activities. Participation will be maximized through the use of skits, dialogues, presentations, and other meaningful and engaging activities. Students will also foster a desire to learn about and interact with other cultures and develop a basic knowledge of the geography and history of the Francophone world.



French 6

This course is the first level of formal French Language instruction offered at the Middle School level. Students begin to learn the fundamentals of the French language as they explore the history and culture of the French-speaking parts of the world. While speaking is heavily emphasized, students also practice their listening, reading, and writing skills in French. Students practice grammatical/structural patterns and verb conjugations through storytelling, activities, games, music and other media. The class covers four units of content, with themes ranging French greetings, numbers 1-100, French culinary vocabulary, interrogatives, speaking about directions, extensive verb conjugations, and more. By the end of 6th grade French students should be able to conjugate to the present tense and engage in French conversation at the A1 level.

French 7

This course is the second level of formal French Language instruction offered at the Middle School level. Students continue to learn the fundamentals of the French Language, such as grammar, syntax, pronunciation and vocabulary, as they simultaneously explore the history and culture of various French-speaking parts of the world. While speaking is heavily emphasized, students also regularly practice their listening, reading, and writing skills in French. Students practice grammatical/structural patterns and verb conjugations through storytelling, activities, games, music and other media. Cross curricular projects are also regularly built into the class, such as science experiments, cooking workshops, plant propagation, and more.

French 8

8th grade French is the third and final level of French language instruction offered in middle school. Students are expected to finish the program with an A2-B1 level of fluency after having completed all three courses. In class, the students learn about the use of the past preterite, the near future, and continue to hone their skills of conjugating verbs to the present tense. As with all of our French classes, a heavy emphasis is put on the cultural component of the French language and the exploration of different French speaking peoples around the world. Cross curricular projects are also regularly built into the class, such as science experiments, cooking workshops, plant propagation, and more.



ARTS

6th Grade Arts Foundations

This exciting year-long course is tailored to rising 6th-grade students, exposing them to the three disciplines of Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts in a way that will allow them to establish a firm foothold as they enter the Middle School Arts program. Students build off of the already familiar arts curriculum established in the Lower School while broadening their knowledge and taking new risks as they explore at a developmentally appropriate pace.

Arts Foundations Semester I: 6th Music & 6th Theatre

Arts Foundations Semester II: 6th Music 6th Visual Art

6th Music:

The section of 6th Grade Arts Foundations dedicated to music is an approach that gives our students an edge in advancing their knowledge and understanding of both instrumental and vocal music. To achieve this, all 6th-grade students will continue to participate in our Band and Choir music programs. Both instrumental and vocal development help to bolster confidence, foster creativity, and work together to complement the skills learned in each of these disciplines. The practice of music engages nearly every area of the brain simultaneously.

Playing an instrument works fine motor skills, helps to refine listening skills, and enhances one's memory. The voice is everybody's first instrument. Using their voice to build confidence in sight singing, learning to blend their individual voice with other voices, and focusing on articulation and diction to tell the story of the piece and to engage the listener. Instrumental and Vocal music teaches students how to create something bigger than they can accomplish on their own.

Middle School Band and Choir are not considered a "beginning" experience; however, students who are new to the school, or new to an instrument, can successfully integrate themselves into the program. Students who find themselves in this situation will receive support from the band and choir directors, their MS peers, and US Band/Choir mentors. Sixth-grade students will participate in both the Winter and Spring Concerts and may participate in the school's Commencement Ceremony. If you have questions or concerns, please consult with Mr. Moorhead or Mrs. Michielutti.

Important Concert Dates:

- **MS/US Winter Band Concert:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025 | 6 p.m. | Field House
- **MS/US Choral Participation in The Revue:** Friday, February 6, 2026 | 6 p.m. | LPAC
- **MS/US Spring Band Concert:** Tuesday, April 14, 2026 | 6 p.m. | Field House
- **MS/US Choral Arts Spring Concert:** Tuesday, April 28, 2026 | 6:30 p.m. | LPAC
- **Band/Choir Graduation Practice:** Wednesday, May 20, 2026 | 8-9:00 a.m. | Field House
- **Class of 2026 Commencement Exercises:** Thursday, May 21, 2026 | 8:30 a.m. | Trianon Terrace



6th Theatre

In the Theatre Arts foundation class, students continue developing their actor toolbox and working as an ensemble, skills they established in Lower School. Additionally, students further develop their theatrical terminology and vocabulary, dive deeper into characterization and scene study, and explore theatre criticism and the relationship between theatre arts and life. The class will culminate in a final in-class scene performance. This course prepares students for the Theatre Production class, where they participate in a full-length production.

7th & 8th Grade Arts Offerings

7th & 8th Theatre Production

In this class, you will work towards a theatrical production on the mainstage in the Louisa Performing Arts Center on **Friday, December 5th at 6:00pm**. The goal of this class is for you to explore and develop your creative voice within the context of an ensemble, through a production process. We will dive into the relationship between the actor toolbox of the body, voice, face and imagination as you develop a compelling character within the play. You will be able to make strong acting choices, listen and respond spontaneously, identify and apply theatrical vocabulary, and strengthen leadership skills within a group. In addition, you explore one of the different facets of a theatrical production such as costume, set, lighting, and sound design and props and poster design.

7th & 8th Grade Video Production (Semester II)

The goal of this class is for students to explore and develop the craft of video production. Seventh and Eighth graders will focus on how to use basic video equipment (gimbals, mics), storyboarding, shot composition, acting for the camera, screenplay writing, and editing/post production. Students will rotate responsibilities within short projects to find an area of comfort and expertise. Students will be responsible for the entire production process from conceptualizing to presenting their final product. The course will culminate in a presentation of a short film, with a poster, using a given prompt.

Visual Art (Semester II)

In the Visual Arts Foundation class, students explore both two- and three-dimensional projects. A wide variety of media is incorporated as students focus on the elements and principles of art and design. An overview of skills in drawing, composition, color theory, and three-dimensional materials are practiced. Art units are designed to creatively engage students and provide a broad overview, preparing students with skills and techniques necessary for future Visual Arts classes.

7th & 8th Grade Band

Band is a year-long course of study that places emphasis on developing the student's knowledge, skill, and artistic sensitivity when performing instrumental music. The focus of the study is on a wide range of music literature and styles. Students will also gain greater control of technique, articulations, rhythms, dynamics, time signatures, intonation, balance and blend, and expression, develop leadership skills, and learn the importance of teamwork. Students will participate in concerts given throughout the year (including CSS Winter and Spring Concerts, the school's Commencement Exercises, and the possibility of other public performances).

7th & 8th Grade Choir

Middle School Choir is a year-long course of study designed to be a comprehensive music experience for participating students to further develop proper vocal production, choral techniques, knowledge of the terminology pertaining to elements of music, an understanding of notation, the student's ability to read music and create music in collaboration with others. The goal is to provide a quality vocal experience that allows each student to expand their love of choral singing. Students will participate in concerts given throughout the year, including CSS Winter and Spring Concerts, with the possibility of other public performances.

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Computer Science & Engineering

Computer Science & Engineering courses are offered only for 7th & 8th Grade as elective choices. 6th Grade Computer Science and Engineering courses are offered within the Passion Class catalog and after school offerings.

VEX Robotics (Semester I & II)

VEX Robotics offers students an engaging, hands-on introduction to the world of robotics and STEM. Through the design, construction, and programming of remote-controlled robots, students tackle challenges that require their creations to lift, throw, climb, and gather, expanding the boundaries of experimental intelligence. Working collaboratively, students not only develop technical skills in engineering and programming but also strengthen their problem-solving abilities and teamwork. The course provides a dynamic platform for creativity and innovation, inspiring students to apply scientific and mathematical concepts in real-world scenarios while preparing them for future STEM opportunities.

Engineering and Design (Semester I)

Engineering and Design is an immersive, project-based course where students apply the engineering design process to solve real-world problems. Students work in teams to identify a need, research and define the problem, generate and evaluate solutions, and ultimately design, build, and test prototypes. Emphasizing project management, communication, and professional skills, the course guides students through documenting their process, collaborating with experts, and presenting their solutions to stakeholders. By engaging in open-ended challenges, students gain experience in teamwork, creative problem-solving, and critical thinking-skills essential for success in technical careers and higher education.

How AI Works (Semester II)

How AI Works is an introductory course that demystifies the core principles and processes behind artificial intelligence. Students explore how AI systems collect and process data, recognize patterns, and make decisions through machine learning and neural networks. The course covers the AI development lifecycle, including defining problems, organizing data, selecting algorithms, and refining models based on feedback and outcomes. With hands-on projects and real-world examples, students gain foundational knowledge in data handling, algorithmic thinking, and ethical considerations, preparing them to understand and leverage AI technologies in various fields. 20



PASSION CLASS 2025 OFFERINGS

<u>6th Grade Offerings</u>	<u>7th Grade Offerings</u>	<u>8th Grade Offerings</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Miniature Architecture Workshop● Outdoor Skills● Mindfulness (Sem II)● Mountain Biking (Sem I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gaming and Strategy● Global Sports● Mountain Biking (Semester I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Crafting Arts● Outdoor Skills● Weight Training & Nutrition

Outdoor Skills (6th, 8th)

Discover the wonders of the great outdoors in this hands-on, interactive class designed for middle school students! Participants will learn essential outdoor skills such as basic navigation, shelter building, fire safety, knot tying, Leave No Trace principles, wilderness first aid, outdoor cooking, and foundational skills for a variety of outdoor pursuits. Through fun activities and teamwork, students will gain confidence in outdoor environments. Perfect for adventurers of all experience levels, this class equips students with practical skills and a sense of adventure to explore the world around them safely and responsibly!

Miniature Architecture Workshop (6th)

Join this engaging and hands-on course where students will explore the fascinating world of miniature architecture! Participants will learn fundamental design principles, structural integrity, and creative problem-solving skills as they build and design their own miniature structures using everyday materials like popsicle sticks, LEGO bricks, and cardboard. Through interactive projects and collaborative challenges, students will develop spatial reasoning, critical thinking, and artistic expression while gaining a deeper appreciation for the built environment. This workshop encourages students to think creatively about space, sustainability, and community design, preparing them for real-world applications in architecture, engineering, and urban planning. Perfect for students of all skill levels, this course combines fun with learning to inspire future architects and designers!

Crafting Arts (8th)

In this hands-on craft class, middle school students will explore the creative possibilities of yarn, paper, and beads to make unique and personalized projects. From crafting intricate paper decorations, to designing colorful beaded jewelry, to experimenting with yarn and string for crochet or embroidered creations, students will develop fine motor skills and artistic expression.



Along the way, they'll learn basic techniques, such as paper folding, knotting, and pattern-making, while discovering how these materials can be combined for imaginative results. This class encourages creativity, collaboration, and fun as students bring their ideas to life through vibrant crafts!

Weight Training & Sports Nutrition (8th)

In *Fitness and Nutrition*, students will explore the fundamentals of physical fitness and the science of nutrition to enhance athletic performance and overall health. This interactive course combines classroom learning with hands-on activities, helping students understand how proper nutrition and exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

Students will learn about:

- The components of physical fitness, including strength, endurance, flexibility, and coordination.
- The basics of weight training, focusing on safety and functional fitness.
- The basics of sports nutrition, including macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals).
- How to create balanced meal plans to fuel athletic performance and recovery.
- The importance of hydration and how to recognize signs of dehydration.
- Injury prevention, warm-up and cool-down techniques, and the role of rest and recovery in athletic success.

Students will participate in a variety of physical activities to apply their learning in real time. By the end of the course, students will have the knowledge, practice, and tools to make informed choices about their health and fitness, setting a foundation for lifelong wellness.

Gaming & Strategy (7th)

In this engaging and interactive class, students will explore the world of board games and strategy, developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and social skills. Through a diverse selection of classic and modern board games and mind-bending puzzles, participants will analyze game mechanics, learn strategic decision-making, and practice teamwork and communication. From timeless favorites like Chess and Scrabble to newer hits like Settlers of Catan and Ticket to Ride, each game will serve as a platform for exploring different strategic approaches and evaluating outcomes. As students navigate these games, they will also delve into the design principles behind them, fostering creativity and encouraging the development of their own game ideas. By combining fun and learning, this course aims to enhance students'

analytical abilities, build confidence in competitive environments, and cultivate a lifelong appreciation for strategic play.

Global Sports (7th)

Dive into the exciting world of international sports in this dynamic middle school course! Students will learn and play a variety of sports from different cultures, such as cricket, rugby, gaelic football, team handball, bike polo, kabaddi, and sepak takraw (as well as others). The class emphasizes teamwork, skill development, and understanding the cultural significance of each sport. Through active participation and friendly competition, students will broaden their global perspective while building physical fitness and collaboration skills. This course is perfect for students eager to explore new activities and celebrate the diversity of sports around the world!

Mindfulness (6th)

In this engaging and interactive class, students will explore mindfulness techniques to help calm the mind and body, reduce stress, and improve focus. Through activities such as yoga, mindful walking, meditation, grounding exercises, and breathing strategies, students will learn how to manage emotions, stay present, and develop healthy coping skills. Each session will include hands-on practices and discussions that encourage self-awareness, relaxation, and emotional balance. By the end of the course, students will have a toolkit of mindfulness strategies they can use in daily life to feel more centered, confident, and in control of their well-being.



SEMINAR 2025 OFFERINGS

Seminar I

The focus of the first seminar of the year is exploring community. Outdoor education opportunities give students a chance to explore personal connections to nature while better defining their own niche at school, home, and beyond. Preparation requirements, such as menu planning and meal preparation, demand that students work together to solve problems even prior to the trip itself.

Students tackle the challenge of climbing Mt. Sherman, one of Colorado's 14,000 foot peaks. Emphasis is placed on challenging themselves physically and mentally in an attempt to achieve the goals they set for themselves prior to climbing. They are also encouraged to work as a group to help others meet their goals as well. Facing this challenge helps students build confidence in themselves as well as learn skills necessary to work as part of a team. It also creates a memorable shared experience that builds community within the middle school. The performance criteria listed below state the expectations for the evaluation of student participation.

Seminar II Options

Colorado Geology

The American West is one of the richest regions in the world for the study of earth science. This seminar is designed to expose students to the broad, practical side of geology, including the composition of rocks and minerals, the formation of great canyons and mountains, phenomena such as volcanoes and earthquakes, the acquisition of oil and gas, and the origin and meaning of fossils. The overarching goal is to make geology accessible to students so that they can "read the landscape" to understand and appreciate why the earth looks the way it does.

Upcycled Art

Upcycled Art is a seminar like no other, where students re-purpose discarded items to create functional works of art. In this seminar, students will use artistic skills to produce upcycled projects for the sole purpose of resale on sites like ebay and ETSY, as well as local art fairs. This class unifies traditional artistic skills with real world practicality. Students will learn the skills necessary to be a part of an artistic, business team, marrying business sense and bottom line with artistry and aesthetics. Like other art classes, you will utilize a wide range of materials to create 2-D and 3-D works of functional art, and the Principles and Elements of Design will be utilized in unique ways.

Lego Robotics

Robots have always fascinated us, from the very helpful machines in factories to the terrifying, futuristic beings in the films, *I, Robot* and *Terminator*. But what is a robot, really? What is its purpose? Can it have feelings? Are we in control of them, and if so, how? These questions and many more will be explored and answered in this seminar. We will look at the various types of robots that exist today, visit companies that make these robots, and speak to the creators of them. We will learn how this unique branch of technology developed and what interests and education it takes to break into the field of robotics. Students will even get the chance to build and program their own robots.

European Cooking and Culture

Discover the flavors and traditions of Europe in this engaging Middle School seminar! Students will embark on a hands-on culinary adventure, exploring classic dishes from countries such as Italy, France, and Spain while learning about the rich cultural histories behind each recipe. Through interactive cooking sessions and cultural discussions, participants will develop practical kitchen skills, deepen their global awareness, and gain a greater appreciation for the diversity of European food and customs. This seminar blends experiential learning with teamwork and creativity, offering a delicious way to connect classroom knowledge with real-world experiences.

Adventures in the North Wash

Students will spend five days in the San Rafael Swell region of Utah exploring slot canyons, climbing, and rappelling. We will partner with professional guides from Front Range Climbing, an outdoor guiding company that CSS has used for several courses over the years in both the Middle and Upper Schools. Potential highlights may include navigating Ding and Dang, two adventurous slots near Goblin Valley, rappelling into Goblin's Lair, and canyoneering in the famous slot canyons of the North Wash near Hanksville. We will use Goblin Valley State Park as our base of operation.

On this course, students will not only practice climbing, belaying, knot tying, rappelling, and other canyoneering techniques, but they will also develop leadership skills as they work in groups to plan and prepare meals, learn and practice adventure guiding principles, and engage in the many tasks necessary for successful camp life. Students will also have the opportunity to learn new cooking techniques, including how to prepare food over open fires and with Dutch ovens. This course is for students who desire to push themselves mentally and physically, who want to expand their skills in leading others, and who love recreating in the Great Outdoors.

Important Note: This course will leave the weekend before the official start of the seminar and return the following Friday and will include six nights of camping.

Feeling the World in Different Ways

In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus tells Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view." This seminar is designed to foster empathy by exploring the lives of those who are deaf, blind, or paralyzed, and learning from people who thrive with these challenges. We'll engage in hands-on experiences, such as trying adaptive sports, meeting Paralympic athletes, and spending



time with a guide dog team. We will also visit organizations focused on making the world more accessible, from Freedom Service Dogs to the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center. Students will create an original iMovie showing the world from another perspective. Join us for a seminar that will challenge, teach, and inspire.

Seminar III Options:

Fire it Up!- A Hands on Exploration of Fire Behavior

During this seminar, students will explore the science and technology used in the field of fighting fire. We will learn about the nature of fire including how it burns and why. Then we will look into technology used today in construction, fighting fires, and training methods. Some of the field trips may include traveling to a fire truck manufacturing facility, touring planes and helicopters used to fight forest fires, spending time at an active fire station, exploring construction sites where fire prevention is incorporated into building codes, working at a fire dispatch center, and attending training classes for new firefighters. There will be an overnight in this seminar to explore a burn scar in Colorado.

Southwest Photography

Learn the basics of digital photography before heading south for a 5-day excursion in Taos and Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Land of Enchantment offers natural light, architecture, and stunning scenery for creating unlimited photographic opportunities. Students will learn the basic compositional elements of photography including framing, rule of thirds, perspective, lighting, and leading lines. Photographic genres to be explored include landscapes, nature, culture, portraits, architecture, and still life. Time will also be devoted to studying early Southwestern photographers as well as the diverse culture and history of the area. Students will spend time in the lab downloading, editing, and designing their personal portfolio of the Southwestern adventure in the form of a photo book. Day trips *may* include various local sites.

Building the Body

This Seminar takes an in-depth examination of the effects of exercise and nutrition on the body. Through this seminar, students will learn basic anatomy, biomechanics, and physiology, as well as proper principles and techniques for designing an effective exercise program. The study of nutrition and human behavior will also be integrated into the course to enhance the students' comprehension of this multifaceted subject.

Murder Mysteries

Is there more history to the Trianon than meets the eye? Is the staff of the Stanley Hotel just good at selling a story? How do people create the stories we hand down from generation to generation? Answer these questions and more as we explore some more

Colorado tales. Are they fact or fiction? In this seminar, we will travel to Estes Park to get a better understanding of the history lurking about the Stanley Hotel. Next, we will talk to people who know the greater extent of our own Trianon's history—and then we will put our courage to the test and spend the night right inside the nearly 100-year-old building! And finally, we will create, act, film, and host our very own Murder Mystery for our seminar parents. Interested students should like to travel, act, write, and use technology—oh, and should not be afraid of their own shadows!

Walkabout (8th Grade Only)

Walkabout is the culmination of a student's experience in the CSS Middle School. Honored by cultures around the world, the Walkabout, a special and unique journey into the wilderness, marks the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. For ten days the eighth grade journeys through the deserts and canyons of southeastern Utah on a quest for self-discovery, adventure, challenge, and personal and group growth. Participants are responsible for every aspect of their daily lives from setting up camp to cooking their own meals. In addition to learning technical outdoor skills, they are also presented with challenging new interpersonal situations that require them to cooperate, collaborate, and develop creative, inclusive, and mature solutions.