

Navigating Middle School

WORKING TOGETHER
FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION
TO MIDDLE SCHOOL



Meet the Staff

Dr. Kim Scaife, Principal, kim_scaife@hcpss.org

Ms. Kristy Ritchie, Assistant Principal, kristy_ritchie@hcpss.org

Ms. Prince, School Counselor (*6th grade/7th grade L-Z*). julie_prince@hcpss.org

Ms. Hajduk, School Counselor (*8th grade/7th grade A-K*). kat_hajduk@hcpss.org

Ms. Yorks, 6th grade Team Leader, haley_yorks@hcpss.org

Mr. Usmani, School Nurse, ross_usmani@hcpss.org

Ms. Mairs, GT Resource Teacher, cass_mairs@hcpss.org

SYSTEM PRIORITIES



EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Belonging
Instructional Excellence
Opportunity and Access
Engaged and Inspired Learners

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Excellent Staff
Early Childhood
Career Pathways
Customized Instruction
Accountable Operations

FOCUS AREAS

Attendance
Proficient in Math
Reading by Grade 3
College and Career Ready
Effective Discipline Practices

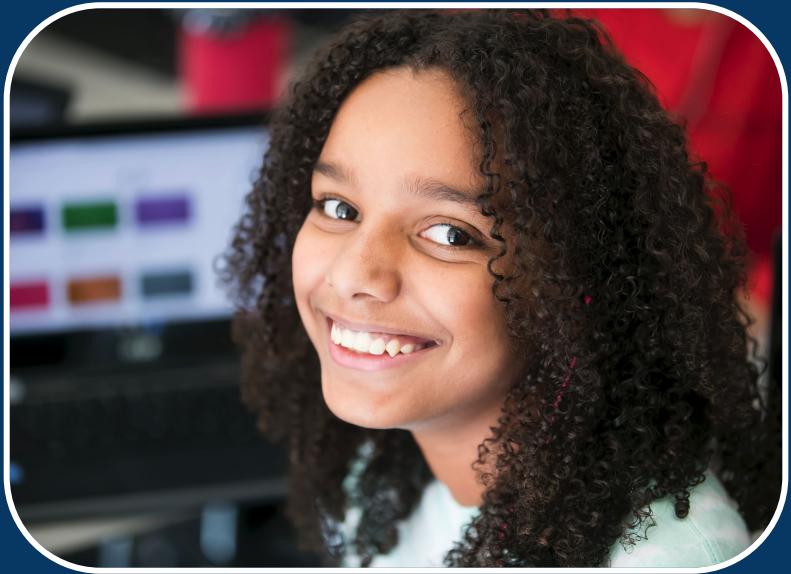
**Middle school is a time
when students discover
their -**

Interests

Strengths

Skills

**- and begin connecting
them to future pathways.**



College & Career Readiness Framework

Self Awareness

Who am I?

Students shall acquire and apply self-knowledge to develop personal learning and career goals.

Career Awareness

What Careers Exist?

Students shall use the Maryland Career Clusters and career pathways including Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs of study to understand their relationship to educational achievement and lifelong learning.

Career Exploration

What Careers Interest Me?

Students shall assess career clusters and related career pathways including Career Technology Education (CTE) programs of study to develop an academic and career path.

College & Career Readiness Framework

Career Preparation

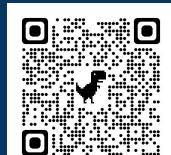
How Does My Pathway Connect to a Career?

Students shall prepare for post-secondary and career success through a sequenced academic and technical program of study and related workplace experiences.

Career Training

How Do I Prepare for a Career?

Students shall demonstrate skills to secure, maintain, and advance in employment



Academics



The Middle School Schedule



All students are enrolled in seven 50-minute classes four days a week. One day a week students have SEL time during one of their four main content areas.



Grade 6 Example Schedule

Course 1	English
Course 2	Mathematics
Course 3	Science
Course 4	Social Studies
Course 5	Physical Education/Health/Tech
Course 6 (Fine Art Choice <u>Elective</u>)	Band, Chorus, Orchestra - Full Year OR Art, Music, Theater + CTE Life and Career Skills (each one quarter)
Course 7 (Additional Courses or -GT Elective/ Intervention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 Quarter <u>each</u> - Digital Citizenship, 21st Century Learning, Boost Your Brain, Reader's and Writer's Cafe• OR 2 Quarters - GT Research (+ 2 quarters of classes above)• OR Year-long - ELD, Special Education/Mathematics/Reading Intervention

In accordance with state requirements, each year middle school students receive instruction in the following areas:

- English Language Arts
- Fine Arts
- Health
- Mathematics
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies



Students are also required to receive instruction in the following during their middle school experience:

- Technology
- Financial Literacy
- Careers



Fine Arts Options

Students in grade 6 will choose from ONE of the following options:

- Band - *(full year)*
- Chorus - *(full year)*
- Orchestra - *(full year)*
- Art/General Music/Theater Arts combination - *(quarterly courses)*



Additional Courses Added to Your Schedule

- CTE Life and Career Skills
- Reader's and Writer's Workshop
- Boost Your Brain
- 21st Century Learning
- G/T Research/Interventions in reading and/or mathematics - *By Recommendation/ Invitation Only*



Additional Activities

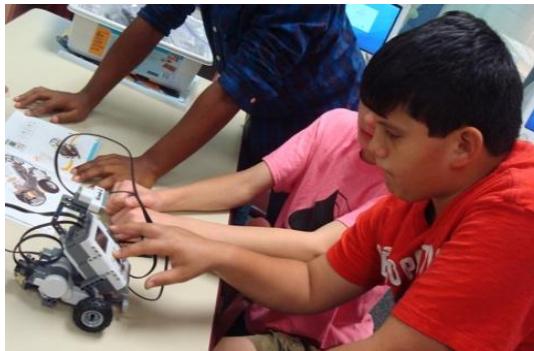
- *GT* Seminars - during the school day
- Intramurals- after school
 - Art Club
 - Math Counts
 - Musical Theatre Production
 - Basketball
 - Science Olympiad
 - Stem & Buds
 - Dungeons and Dragons
 - And More!





GIFTED & TALENTED

EDUCATION PROGRAM



Program Components

- Talent Development Offerings
- G/T Content Area Classes and G/T

Research Class

Talent Development Offerings: Instructional Seminars



Instruction in
Advanced-Level
Skills



Open to All
Interested
Students



Creative
Production or
Inquiry

How Are Instructional Seminars Publicized?

- Through social studies classes at start of school year,
- On **Canvas** and the **CMS website**,
- 2025-26 offerings:
 - Book Club, Writer's Guild, TV Production, Debate, Leadership, Forensic Science, Engineering, Photography.

Middle School G/T Classes



G/T
Math



G/T
English



G/T
Science



G/T
Social
Studies



G/T Mathematics

Provides an accelerated and enriched sequence that follows a curriculum of concepts at least two years above the general education curriculum.

6 - Pre-Algebra G/T

7 – Algebra I G/T

8 - Geometry G/T

Accelerated G/T Math



The Accelerated G/T Mathematics Program is for students who demonstrate a need for further acceleration beyond the G/T mathematics sequence.

- 6 - Algebra 1 G/T
- 7 - Geometry G/T
- 8 - Algebra 2 G/T

Accelerated G/T Math Placement

Students are automatically reviewed for placement in this program by G/T Office staff based upon the following initial criteria:

- **99th percentile** - CogAT Quantitative & Quantitative-Nonverbal composite
- **99th percentile** MAP-Math scores
- 4th grade MCAP performance of **810 or higher**
- outstanding performance in 5th grade G/T Mathematics.

Notifications of placement are sent in late April.





G/T English

Extends the English Language Arts curriculum through

- an accelerated pace,
- more advanced critical reading, writing, and thinking demands; and,
- extensions within each unit.

Differentiated tasks and texts are included at all grade levels.



G/T Science

An enriched and accelerated curriculum where students explore cross-cutting concepts, as well as science and engineering practices.

6 - Earth Science G/T

7 - Life Science G/T

8 - Physical Science G/T



G/T Social Studies

Provides an enriched and accelerated curriculum where students explore civic and cultural principles and engage in inquiries that focus on essential, related questions.

6 – Geography and World Cultures G/T

7 – Geography and World Cultures G/T

8 – United States History G/T

Placement Process for Middle School G/T Classes

5th Grade and Throughout Middle School

- ALL students reviewed for placement
- Multiple criteria examined (CogAT, MAP, MCAP, class performance)
- CogAT administered to all HCPSS 3rd graders; students new to HCPSS in grades 4-8

Who can initiate the placement process in middle school?



- Families
- Teachers
- Students

Family Input in Placement Process

Families may request G/T classes through the Course Request Process in HCPSS Connect if the course differs from the school recommendation.

PARENT ACCESS TO STUDENT INFORMATION & CLASSWORK



HCPSS Connect

HCPSS Connect provides access to a variety of student information and classroom instructional tools offering personalized communication and timely, relevant and easily accessible information relating to your student.

For Math - You may only move up 1 level beyond recommended Math Course

Grade 6 G/T Research Class



- Authentic research on a real-world issue of choice
- For students enrolled in G/T English AND Math 7 or G/T Math and based upon G/T Placement Committee recommendations

Need more info?

- Gifted and Talented program info on HCPSS
 - <https://www.hcpss.org/academics/gifted-and-talented/>
- HCPSS News for G/T Program Information
- Cass Mairs, CMS G/T Resource Teacher
 - cass_mairs@hcpss.org

Finding the Right Balance Between

- Course Placements
- Rigor
- Personal Interests
- Student Success



Course Selection Consideration Steps

Ask teachers their input on best fit.

Balance is critical.

Challenge yourself.

Don't forget to factor in outside activities.

Every student needs to schedule a course load that allows them to get at least 8 hours of sleep.



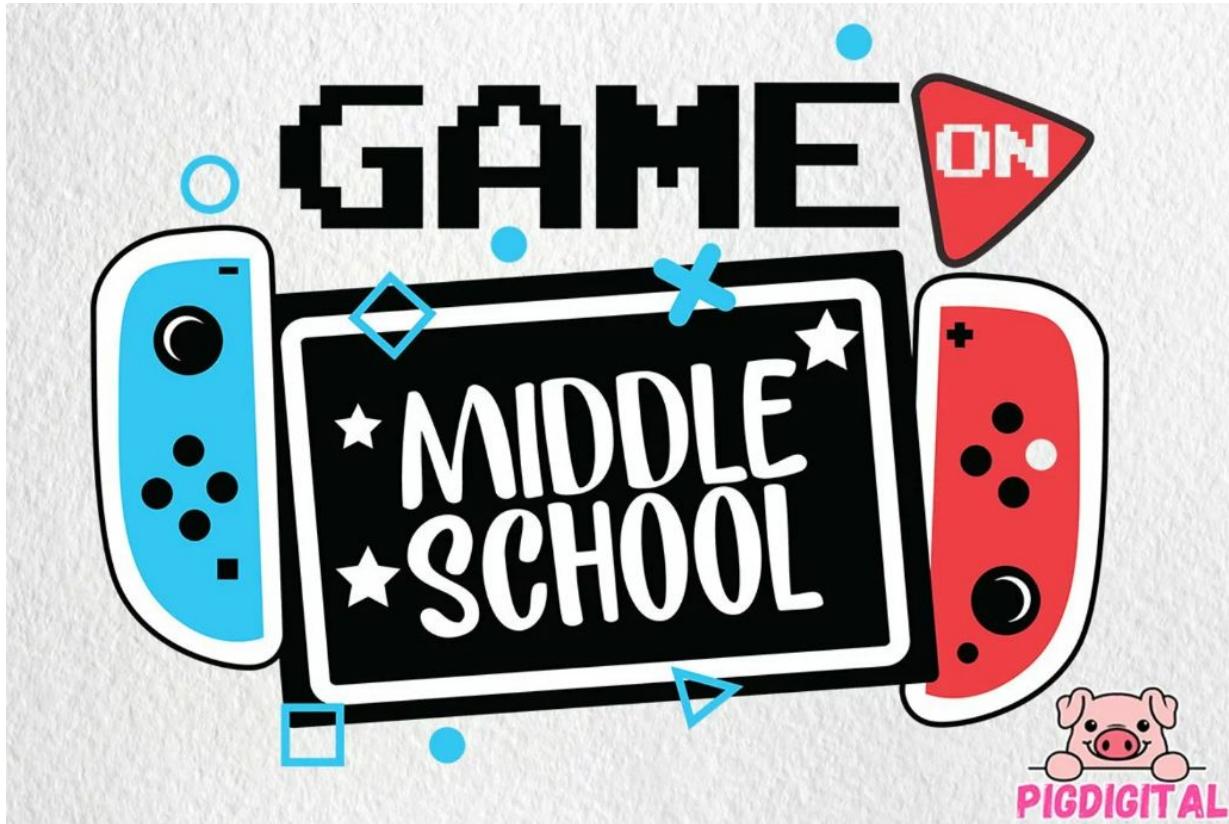
<https://www.hcpss.org/connect/guides/>

At CMS, staff and students:

- Create an environment where students **feel like they belong**
- Have a **growth mindset** and **focus on effort**
- Celebrate **achievement** and **attendance**
- Engage in **positive experiences** each school day
- **Create excitement for the future**



How can I get my student ready for MS?



Establish Routines Early



Consistent Sleep

Start school-night sleep routines 1-2 weeks before school begins



Screen Limits

Set clear boundaries on screen time for better focus and rest



Set Homework Times

Designate regular times for homework to build stable habits

Establish Healthy Tech Habits



Keep Devices Out of Bedrooms

Encourages restful sleep by removing tech distractions.



Set Tech-Free Times

Create boundaries for focused family and personal time.



Talk Openly About Digital Boundaries

Fosters trust and awareness of online well-being.

Partner with the School



Why It Helps

- Builds good school relationships
- Teaches your child to advocate properly
- Prevents online/student drama early



What to Do

- Save key contacts & attend Orientation and Back-to-School night
- Help your child navigate Canvas
- Remember, we are here to work together 😊



Parents as Partners

What Does the PTA Do?

- Staff Appreciation & Hospitality Events
- CMS Book Fair
- Game, Bingo and Movie Nights & Restaurant Nights
- Collaborate with CMS for events like, Winter Fest by providing funds and volunteers
- We have a budget for each teacher to defray supply costs
- Email a bi-weekly Newsletter
- Monthly Meetings - Second Wednesdays in the Media Center at 7 p.m.

PTA

Parents as Partners

How can you become a PTA Member?

- MemberHub – “Clarksville MS PTSA”:
<https://cmsptacomets.givebacks.com/>
- Single Membership Cost – \$10
- Family Membership Cost – \$20
- Request Donations at Bronze, Silver & Gold Levels
- Have to renew each year

Scan to join!



PTA[®]

everychild. one voice.[®]



Parents as Partners

How can you be involved ?

- Join the PTA
- Volunteer for these Open Positions for 2026-2027:
 - President & Secretary
 - Hospitality co-chair: organize breakfast/lunch events for staff
 - Spirit wear chair: liaise with vendor and advertises sales
 - WinterFest Chairs: help set up games, organize DJ, food, tickets
 - Social Media Coordinator: post events and signup genius on social media
 - Year book liaison: coordinate orders and distribution; assist with year book club
 - Year-end picnic Chair: help organize the event: set up games, DJ, approach and finalize food trucks etc.
 - 8th Grade Farewell: coordinate and assist with 8th grade events

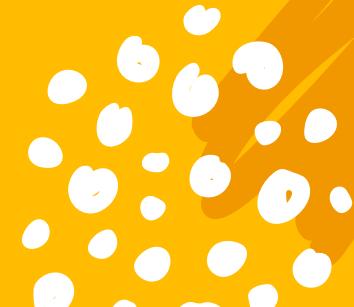


CMS Spirit Wear

Consider purchasing spirit wear - some of the purchase comes back to the CMS PTA



Scan to order!



Important Dates

Date	Activity
2/2/26- 2/16/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Recommendations for rising 6th graders available in Synergy for parents to review.• Families will enter student course requests in Synergy no later than 2/16/26 by 8:00am
8/20/26	New 6th Grade Orientation



thank
you

Any Questions?