

Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School

# Middle School

Where Tradition Meets Innovation



  
**CESJDS**  
CHARLES E SMITH JEWISH DAY SCHOOL

בית מדרש צוריאל



Dear Families,

We are thrilled that you are exploring Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, and are excited to welcome you to the Middle School. At CESJDS, we know that the Middle School years are a time of transition for early adolescents and their families, and having a strong social-emotional foundation is key to each child's success.

Students in the CESJDS Middle School hone their skills of critical thinking, empathy, active listening, resiliency, self-advocacy, and more. Our program emphasizes the core values of our school - *Torah Lishmah*/Love of Learning, *Ahavat Torah*/Love of Torah, *K'dushah*/Holiness, *Ahavat Yisrael*/Love of Israel, *Tikkun Olam*/Repairing the World, Pluralism, *V'Ahava L'Rei'a'kha*/Love Your Neighbor, and *Kehillah*/Community. We believe these values are essential to supporting each of our students as they continue on their path of character development.

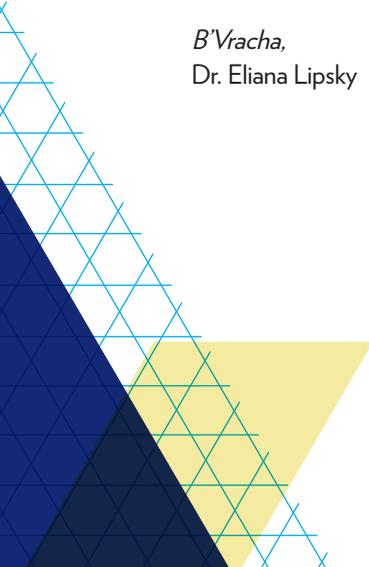


Our curriculum combines academic rigor with social-emotional skill building and integrates across the disciplines. Middle School students study English, Hebrew, math, science, Jewish texts, social studies, science, the arts, STEM, Jewish culture, and more. While in the Middle School, students learn what it means to study a discipline and experience what it means to be a historian, scientist, or other content specific expert. They learn how to integrate their thinking across multiple subject areas. In addition, early adolescents benefit from experiential learning, which is integrated into our curriculum as part of the weekly schedule and as one of the instructional tools our teachers use in their classrooms.

Our counselors, learning specialists, and teachers are here to support you and your child during this time. It is our privilege to assist your child on their journey toward personal growth and understanding of who they are as an individual and as a positive contributing member of various communities.

We look forward to welcoming you into our community and getting to know you, your child, and your family.

*B'Vracha,*  
Dr. Eliana Lipsky



# Why Choose CESJDS Middle School

The Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School Middle School program considers the whole child experience. We care about academics just as much as social-emotional growth of early adolescents. Our teachers don't just teach History or Science or Jewish Studies; they teach Middle School. Here are just a few examples of our distinctive program:

- Positioning students as members of the global community through integrated General, Judaic, and values-based curricula.
- Encouraging strong and collaborative student-teacher relationships with average class sizes of 18 students.
- Offering 31 elective options, and up to 8 electives per student per academic year.
- Supporting passions for athletics, we are proud to offer 11 sports competing at the Middle School level.
- Exploring top tier extracurricular programs, students rise to the top in nationally award winning journalism, robotics, coding, and engineering clubs, and more.
- Inspiring connections between our Jewish and American identities.
- Using Washington, DC as a classroom through field trips and guest speakers to enhance classroom education.
- Offering a dedicated middle school choir and musical production helps students develop as passionate young adults who express themselves through robust fine and performing arts opportunities.
- Exploring civil and human rights through the 8th Grade Capstone Civil Rights Trip to Atlanta, the culmination of their exploration of civil rights in Middle School.



“I want to tell you how much my son loves school. Every Shabbat our family shares a highlight from the week. Typical highlights are special events like a concert, doing well in a game, special visitors, etc. Our son’s highlight was “the first full week of school.” Can you imagine?! Jim and I could not be more appreciative to staff for creating a school environment that a 13 year-old boy can genuinely love. It is a very special thing.

– Nanci Bramson, Mother to Bennett '17, Sabrina (Class of 2020) and Elliot (Class of 2023)

# Sample Schedule and Semester at a Glance

The Middle School schedule is thoughtfully designed to optimize our learning environment.

Our schedule has dedicated time for social-emotional learning, teaching students about mindfulness and other life skills, such as organization and effective communication.

Each day starts with spiritual centering or prayer, and our week ends with an all-school assembly, *Kabbalat Shabbat*. This is the highlight of the week, and celebrates student accomplishments and talents.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Zman Kodesh: Prayer & Personal Connection				
Toshba 7	Toshba 7	English 7	Toshba 7	Toshba 7
History: Geography and Developing World	History: Geography and Developing World	Life Science 7	History: Geography and Developing World	History: Geography and Developing World
Tanakh 7	Humanities Experience	Humanities Experience	Tanakh 7	Tanakh 7
Life Science 7	P.E.	P.E.	Life Science 7	Jewish Journeys
Photography	Theater	Theater	Photography	Lion Time
STEM: Robotics First Lego League	Study Hall	Study Hall	STEM: Robotics First Lego League	Life Science 7
English 7	Lion Time	Lion Time	English 7	English 7
Hebrew Level 3	Tanakh 7	Pre-Algebra	Hebrew Level 3	Hebrew Level 3
Pre-Algebra	Rikuz	Hebrew Level 3	Pre-Algebra	Pre-Algebra



For a full listing of course offerings, visit

[cesjds.org/mscoursecatalog](https://cesjds.org/mscoursecatalog)



# Benefits of the CESJDS Middle School Schedule

**RIKUZ** - Our advisory time is a place where students can build strong bonds with other students in their grade, while reinforcing important study and executive functioning skills. They have the opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussions about topics of interest to them as early adolescents. This time emphasizes strong social-emotional skill building.

**HUMANITIES EXPERIENCE** - Humanities Experience is dedicated to interdisciplinary topics taught in mini-units. These units are grounded in our core values and themes for each grade, and provides students with hands-on, affective exploration of relevant topics that do not neatly fit into one discipline. This block also provides work time for major projects.

**JEWISH JOURNEYS** - Students explore and celebrate some of the many different pathways to Jewish community and Jewish identity. Through topics such as music, art, drama literature, and food, we help deepen our students' appreciation for the many different expressions of Jewish life and culture.

**LION TIME** - Breaks are an important part of the day that allow time for processing and synthesizing information and to stretch our bodies. Lion Time provides students with a break during the day where they can use their time to play sports, read a book, hang out with their friends, meet with teachers, or organize themselves.

Semester 1	Semester 2
Grade 6: Humanities (double period to include English & Social Studies)	
Grades 7 & 8: Social Studies	
Grades 7 & 8: English	
Hebrew Language	
Tanakh (Bible)	
Tosha (Rabbinics)	
Math	
Science	
Elective 1	Elective 5
Elective 2	Elective 6
Elective 3	Elective 7
Elective 4	Elective 8



# Academic Rigor for the Changing Middle School Mind & Body

Middle School rigor is defined as how students extend their thinking beyond basic questions; engage in research; map complex relationships; ask deep questions and engage with those questions.

We are committed to challenging students, stretching them, and helping them develop key academic and interpersonal skills to set them up for lifelong success.

- Our faculty consider the full 360 degrees of a student's academic program and personal interests when thoughtfully crafting curriculum and accompanying assignments.
- The integrated curriculum fosters text analysis, creativity and close reading. For example, in Engineering class, they may be asked to build a Sukkah that meets the rabbinic requirements while also able to withstand high-force winds.

“ I love teaching middle school. It's a huge point of pride to know that I am a part of these formative and tricky years in their preteens and early teens, and they are growing up to be people. I see them doing great things in school and know that they're going to do amazing things outside the school with their education. ”

– Rabbi Derek Rosenbaum, Middle School Jewish Text Teacher

**Middle School faculty** are experts who look at the foundational skills of what a successful middle school student needs. They coach students toward success, using executive function skills, and higher order thinking. Faculty do not just teach their discipline alone.



# Beyond the Core Classroom

Every school teaches academics. What happens when students walk out of their core academic classes?

## Expanded extracurricular opportunities

Middle School students can choose up to 8 elective classes to expand horizons and drill down on their existing interests. Clubs and elective offerings are one of the ways that we help students become well-rounded as they continue through their education.

### Arts:

Middle School Musical  
Choir  
Dance

### Clubs:\*

Black Eyed Susan Book Club  
Board Games Club  
Deep Tracks Music  
Appreciation Club  
Fantasy Football Club  
Football Film Club  
Gender and Sexuality Alliance  
Green Team  
Knisset/Student Government  
Latino Dance Club  
Mah Jong Club  
Makerspace Club  
Rube Goldberg Club  
Shakespeare Play  
Thinkers Club  
Writing Center

*\*Club offerings may vary from year to year.*

### Athletics:

Baseball  
Basketball  
Cross Country  
Dance  
Soccer  
Softball  
Swimming  
Tennis  
Track & Field  
Volleyball  
Wrestling



**School counselors** are dedicated to supporting and guiding Middle School students. From their basic needs of class selection through helping students navigate Middle School, our counselors all have Counseling and Social Work degrees.

# Looking Ahead to High School



“ I remember the first time my Talmud class realized that knowing all of the words in a text did not mean that we understood the meaning of those words once they were put together. Once we explored the string of words and how they impacted each other, we had a deeper understanding of what the full text meant. This specific experience helped prepare me for high school at CESJDS. Sometimes the most important part of the learning process is taking a step back in order to connect all of our experiences in the classroom and in the halls--understanding the progress that we make when we look at the full picture of who we are as learners.

- Rochelle Berman, Class of 2022

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