
 (865) 982-6345

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 <https://cgis.maryville-schools.org>

2025 Sevierville Rd. Maryville, TN 37804



February 12, 2026

Dear CGIS Parents of Rising 7th Graders,

It is time to begin our planning for the 2026-27 school year, and we want you and your student to have the information you need to choose your child's elective courses. You will have an opportunity to discuss elective choices with your student using the information below and decide together. On Monday, February 23rd, your student will receive an email with a link that will allow him/her to electronically choose his/her electives (1st and 2nd choices) for next school year.

Each 7th grade student will also have two elective periods. Students will have their main elective class on either Monday/Wednesdays or Tuesday/Thursdays. Students will also have a Friday elective. Also, 7th grade students will have a year-long Physical Education class and a year-long class either Library: Hawk Helpers or Art. Therefore, you have two choices to make. To help with your decision, below are two links to give you more information about your choices.

Informational Video about your Elective choices: [5th, 6th, and 7th Grade Elective Options - Monday to Thursday](#)

Informational Video about your Friday Elective choices: [6th and 7th Grade Elective Options – Friday](#)

Elective Courses (meeting on M/W or T/R)

For the main elective course, students may choose one year-long course. Every student will choose from the following: (Descriptions on following pages.)


<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Band	Available by staff recommendations only: (decisions made in the spring of 2026) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic Success (spring IEP team decision)• Response to Intervention- Reading and Math• Study Hall (Admin Selection)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative Music & Choir	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orchestra	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• STEM	


Friday Courses

For the Friday elective, every student will choose one of the following courses: (Descriptions on following pages.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Band: Pops (Must be enrolled in above band elective)	Available by staff recommendations only: (decisions made in the spring of 2026) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic Success (spring IEP team decision)• Response to Intervention- Reading and Math• Study Hall (Admin Selection)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orchestra: Chamber & Music Leadership (must be enrolled above orchestra elective)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music: Performing Arts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art: Foundation of Clay	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• STEM (same as hour-long course listed above; do not choose both)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PE: Fitness and Wellness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library: Hawk Helpers	

Please discuss these choices with your rising 7th grader, your student will submit his/her choice of electives at school, so please be sure to have come to a decision by then. If you have any questions, please contact the appropriate Encore teacher listed below.

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Elective Course Descriptions

● **Band** (3rd Year): Students who are in their third year of instrumental music may sign up for the 7th grade band class. In this course, we will continue to master skills such as intonation, sight-reading, musical expression, and more. Students will be challenged with new musical skills, as well as more difficult concert/festival literature. This year is used to prepare students for their Jr. High Band experience.

Teacher: Erin Whaley, erin.whaley@maryville-schools.org

● **Orchestra** (3rd year) The early focus will be to get students prepared for more challenging music literature. This involves knowledge of 2-octave scales, music reading skills, and solo preparation. Building upon the previous years, students will continue to refine their intonation, vibrato, and shifting ability. Performance of challenging literature will raise the student's performance level. An additional pops concert collaboration occurs in March with the Jr. High Orchestra when students will learn how to play popular music styles and perform side by side with their 8th/9th grade peers.

Teacher: Melissa Hathorn, melissa.hathorn@maryville-schools.org

● **Creative Music & Choir**: In this exciting, energetic class, students will deepen their ability to read music while learning to play musical devices such as tone chimes, hand drums, and a variety of other percussion instruments. Percussion ensemble becomes a featured component in the curriculum. Choir students will perform traditional vocal music, show choir musical selections, and multicultural songs. Through creative music projects and exploratory composing, students will build skills in rhythm, melody, and teamwork that prepare them for performances such as the school Veteran's Day assembly, community outreach events throughout the City of Maryville, CGIS Art Fest, and Spring Sing in the Smokies. 7th grade choir members will have the opportunity to collaborate with the high school choir ensembles for a combined concert. Whether you already enjoy singing, want to become a stronger vocalist, or think you "can't sing," this class is designed to support individual and collective student growth, boost confidence, and generate fun opportunities for making music with classmates.

Teacher: Naomi Leichman, naomi.leichman@maryville-schools.org

● **STEM**: 7th grade STEM is a yearlong class with a focus on Automation and Robotics; students trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics. Students learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Working in collaborative groups that utilize problem solving, teamwork, and innovation is part of our exploration of robotics. Students will also be introduced to computer programming, as they learn to think systematically when programming the robots, they have created.


Teacher: Barbara Taylor, barbara.taylor@maryville-schools.org


Administrative Placement Courses: (decisions made in the spring of 2026)

● **Academic Success**: Academic Success is a scheduled class aimed at teaching specific academic skill gap weaknesses in reading and math identified by testing. Research based instructional programming is utilized to remediate academic weaknesses. In addition, this class also seeks to teach students prevocational skills such as organization and work completion. Student placement in this class is by IEP team decision only. If you have questions, please ask your child's IEP case manager.

● **Study Hall**: A period set aside during the school day for students to work independently and receive academic help from a teacher or teaching assistant.

● **RTI**: Students receive skill-based instruction in their area of need, either reading or math. Students assigned to this class are made eligible by scoring in the at-risk range on our universal screenings and by a recommendation from the CGIS Response to Intervention team. At time of placement, parents receive notification from the reading or math teacher.

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Friday Elective Course Descriptions

●**Band: Pops:** Students who wish to participate in the Coulter Grove "Pops" Band should elect to take this class. In this ensemble, students will get to experience a more diverse selection of repertoire. Music selections for this group are usually chosen from a more "popular" music genre such as rock, pop, jazz, movie soundtracks, and more! Additionally, this elective class will be used to prepare students who wish to audition for Junior Band Clinic in the fall semester. If you plan to audition, you should elect to take this class.

Teacher: Erin Whaley, erin.whaley@maryville-schools.org

●**Orchestra: Chamber Orchestra and Music Leadership:** Designed for the students who want to master the skills needed for Jr. Clinic, Chamber Orchestra, and solo performance. Introduction of 3-octave scales and a variety of ensemble literature will challenge the students to raise their level of musicianship. We will read a new piece every week to improve your sight-reading abilities to strengthen your performance skills and refine your auditions.

Teacher: Melissa Hathorn, melissa.hathorn@maryville-schools.org

●**Music: Performing Arts:** Do you love to sing? Do you enjoy being on stage? This year-long course is action-packed with singing, drama, and choreography. Students will learn vocal techniques as well as drama skills. This class will help students become more comfortable getting up in front of each other through the use of pantomime and acting games. Students will learn how to think on their feet and grow creatively through the use of improvisation games and other activities. Basic stage terminology and acting skills will be taught. Students will further develop their skills through performance opportunities. Students must be able to stay after school on Thursday afternoons when working on a specific play presentation.

Teacher: Naomi Leichman, naomi.leichman@maryville-schools.org

●**Art: Foundation of Clay:** In this ceramics course, students will be introduced to a wide variety of clay building techniques that could include any of the following: slab building, coiling, hand building, and coiling. Students learn to develop their creativity, fine motor skills, and dexterity. This course is not progressive but is designed for student success no matter their prior experience. Students who choose this class should expect to take home several finished products of functional and decorative ceramic art.

Teacher: Christopher Campbell, christopher.campbell@maryville-schools.org

●**STEM: (same as hour course description above, cannot choose both)**

Teacher: Barbara Taylor, barbara.taylor@maryville-schools.org


●**PE: Fitness and Wellness:** This course will emphasize fitness concepts and lifetime wellness. Instruction will include personal goal setting, individualized workouts, nutrition education, and other physical and mental health topics.


Teachers: Kristi Dunkel and Ryan Tallent, kristi.dunkel@maryville-schools.org and ryan.tallent@maryville-schools.org

●**Library: Hawk Helpers: Love to serve?** This class will allow a small number of students the opportunity to provide service to the school as office helpers, library helpers, and other roles throughout the school on Fridays. Teacher: Katie Voyles, katie.voyles@maryville-schools.org

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