



cms
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

School Choice Programs

Current and
Future States

March 2026

A photograph of two young girls, one in a blue patterned shirt and one in a white polo shirt, sitting at a desk and looking at a laptop. They are both smiling. A large, stylized blue and yellow wave graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Endless Possibilities

START WITH CMS!

Endless possibilities start with



OUR MISSION

To create an innovative, inclusive, student-centered environment that supports the development of independent learners.

OUR VISION

To lead the community in educational excellence, inspiring intellectual curiosity, creativity, and achievement so that all students reach their full potential.

2024 – 2029 DISTRICT GOALS

-  Improve Early Literacy in Grades K – 2
-  Improve Literacy Skills in Grades 3 – 8
-  Strengthen Math Performance in Math 1
-  Post-Grad Readiness

CORE BELIEFS

Public education is essential to democracy and necessary for economic opportunity, mobility and the broader public good.

We are responsible for building and maintaining a high performing school district.

Each student is uniquely capable and deserves an engaging, relevant, and challenging educational experience.

Our principals and teachers make the critical difference in student achievement and building a positive school community.

The school system, families, and communities are necessary partners in ensuring the academic, social, emotional and behavioral success of students.

GUARDRAILS



Equity over Equality:
Reducing Achievement Gaps



Safety & Security



Attending to the Whole Child:
Wellbeing & Engagement



Staffing:
High Quality Teachers

FOUR PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE



Academic
Excellence



People
Excellence



Operational
Excellence



Engagement
Excellence

OUR COMMITMENT TO DELIVER **EXCELLENCE** WITHOUT EXCEPTION



School Choice Programs

Current and Future States



Montessori



International Baccalaureate (IB)
and Learning Immersion/Talent
Development (LI/TD)



Early College / Middle College



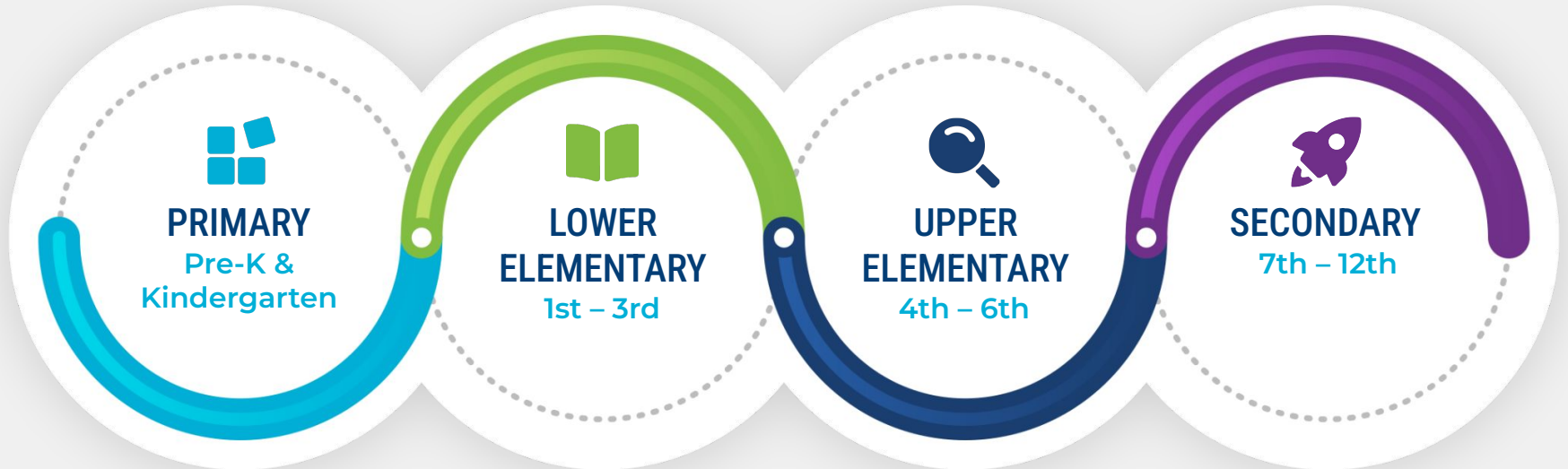
Montessori





Grades Pre-K – 12

Students Learn in a Multi-Age Environment





Montessori

Current State

Children thrive in a Montessori approach that fosters independence, choice within limits, and respect for their natural development.



Students move freely, **choosing** work that interests them and progressing at their own pace to build focus, confidence, and a love of learning.

Purposeful materials and child-sized spaces promote independence, curiosity, and hands-on learning.

Specially trained **Montessori teachers** observe, guide, and provide personalized support for each child's growth.



Montessori

Special Features

Freedom of Choice



Child-centered learning environment focused on individual student needs

The Prepared Environment



Classrooms feature specialized Montessori materials designed to support differentiated learning, sensory engagement, and motor development.

Practical Life & Sensorial



Students build independence, responsibility, and coordination through real-life tasks that foster care for themselves and their environment.

Specialized Training



All Montessori teachers must receive specialized training and become certified in Montessori pedagogy.



Montessori

Future State



The graphic features a central dark blue circle with the text 'Looking Ahead' in white. This circle is surrounded by a white ring, which is further enclosed by a larger light blue ring. A green line starts from the top of the white ring and extends to the right, connecting to the first text box. A blue line starts from the bottom of the white ring and extends to the right, connecting to the third text box.

Looking Ahead



Montessori will remain **as is** with all three transportation zones feeding to JT Williams for grades 7-12. We will develop strategies to increase enrollment.



We will continue to emphasize **parent education**.



Continuum stays consistent with **personalized learning** that nurtures independence, academic excellence, and student wellness growth across all developmental stages



International Baccalaureate (IB)





International Baccalaureate (IB)

Grades K-12

Program Overview



Comprehensive program emphasizing **critical thinking** and **global-mindedness**.



Develops the **whole child** – intellectually, personally, socially, and emotionally – through cultural understanding, language learning, and service.



Builds a **positive attitude** and teaches students to ask challenging questions, think critically, conduct research, and engage actively in learning.



International Baccalaureate (IB)

Special Features

Global Learning



Students begin world language study in elementary school while developing advanced study skills and the IB Learner Profile across all academic areas.

Service & Inquiry



Beginning in grade 6, students complete community service and develop Personal Projects that address community challenges and present solutions.

IB Teaching Practices



IB-trained teachers consistently use concept-based, transdisciplinary instructional practices aligned with the IB framework.



Primary Years Programme (PYP)

K–5 International Baccalaureate (IB)

Inquiry Foundations

Introduces inquiry-based learning, Approaches to Learning, and the IB Learner Profile.

World Languages

Students learn Spanish in elementary school with support from a dedicated language teacher.

PYP Exhibition

Fifth graders collaborate on an inquiry project exploring real-world issues and presenting solutions.

Program Coordination

A teacher serves as PYP Coordinator and receives a stipend through Advanced Studies.





Middle Years Programme (MYP)

6th-10th Grade International Baccalaureate (IB)

Concept-Based Learning

For grades 6–10, students engage in rigorous core subjects through concept-based learning connected to global contexts.

Personal Project

In grades 8 and 10, students research a topic of interest, create a product, and reflect on their learning.

Program Coordination

All middle school IB schools currently receive a full-time IB Coordinator.





Diploma Programme (DP)

11th-12th Grade International Baccalaureate (IB)

Global Scholarship

The DP promotes intellectual curiosity, international understanding, and responsible citizenship while preparing students to earn the globally recognized IB Diploma.

Balanced Curriculum

Students take a balanced set of courses across **six subject areas** and complete **three core components**:

- Theory of Knowledge (**TOK**)
- Extended Essay (**EE**)
- Creativity, Activity, Service (**CAS**)

Program Coordination

All IB high schools receive a dedicated IB coordinator.





Career-Related Programme (CP)

11th-12th Grade International Baccalaureate (IB)

Future-Ready

The key aim of the CP is to provide a choice of different pathways to enable students to become self-confident, skilled and career-ready learners.

Balanced Curriculum

Students complete:

- A career pathway (i.e. CTE, internships, or certifications)
- Two or more IB courses connected to that pathway
- A small core that includes Personal and Professional Skills, Service Learning, and Language development





Learning Immersion / Talent Development (LI/TD)





Gifted Identification at CMS

Criteria Overview



Points-Based Evaluation

A districtwide, points-based rubric ensures fair and consistent evaluation.



77th Percentile

Students begin earning rubric points at the 77th percentile.



Stanine Performance

Points increase for scores in the 7th, 8th, and 9th stanines.

There are over 15 different pathways to identify as gifted in *5 different capacities:*

AI

Academically Intellectually Gifted

AG

Academically Gifted

IG

Intellectually Gifted

AR

Academically Gifted-Reading

AM

Academically Gifted-Math



Identification Process

01

Universal Screening



All CMS students are screened for gifted identification in **2nd grade**.

02

Eligibility Review



Multiple criteria are used to **evaluate** student eligibility for the gifted identification.

03

Additional Screening



There are other opportunities for **rescreening** outside of 2nd grade.

04

Rescreening Guidelines



Rescreening may occur after **24 months** and is determined by a school's AIG Site-Based Committee.

05

Program Placement



Eligible students may **attend** an LI/TD school or receive services at their home school through the NEAT framework.



Learning Immersion/Talent Development

Current State

LI/TD provides gifted and advanced learners with an appropriately challenging learning environment focused on best practices for gifted education.

Designed for students in grades K–5, the Learning Immersion (LI) program develops talent and academic potential — with rigorous instruction at its core for all students in Grades K-5.



Talent Development (TD) serves gifted students in grades 3–5 with rigorous instruction. Teachers are AIG licensed and/or receive professional development focused on best practices in gifted education.

Each LI/TD school is staffed with a full time LI/TD Magnet Coordinator and 0.6 AIG Teacher to lead and support program implementation and build capacity with teachers.



Learning Immersion/Talent Development

Special Features



The use of **Thinking Maps** serves as a common visual language for learning and inspires critical and creative thinking across all content areas.



All students participate in **Enrichment Electives** to explore their gifts and talents.



The consistent use of **gifted strategies** and **shared inquiry** strengthens students' depth of understanding.



Teachers receive specialized **professional development** on best practices in gifted education and are **well supported** by both an LI/TD Magnet Coordinator and an AIG Teacher.



Higher-level, **rigorous instruction** is provided to all students.



Instruction is intentionally planned and delivered to meet the **full rigor** of state standards, ensuring students engage in grade-level complex tasks, reasoning, and application.



NEAT Framework vs. LI/TD

NEAT Framework

Implemented in every CMS elementary school to support AIG students and advanced learners.

Supported by an AIG Teacher.

Provides access to gifted instructional resources.

Combines the right amount of nurturing, enrichment, and acceleration for students

Learning experiences combine nurturing, enrichment, and acceleration.



LI/TD Choice Schools

Implemented at select CMS elementary school to support AIG students and advanced learners.

Supported by an AIG Teacher and a full-time LI/TD Coordinator.

Expanded gifted resources are available, such as Junior Great Books.

Combines the right amount of nurturing, enrichment, and acceleration for students

AIG-licensed or endorsed teachers provide full-time gifted instruction, with enrichment electives integrated into learning.



IB + LI/TD

Combining IB & LI/TD into an Enhanced Program

IB

Provides the Structure



A shared language for concepts, inquiry, and learner profile



Vertical alignment across grade levels



Specific Approaches to Teaching (ATT) and Approaches to Learning (ATL)



Credibility and clarity for families and external stakeholders.



Transdisciplinary themes and key concepts guide unit design

IB/TD

Combined Program Benefits



Inquiry is elevated through **deeper conceptual exploration**

Learner Profile attributes are applied through **analysis, critique, and reflection**



Transdisciplinary themes support **advanced and interdisciplinary thinking**



Students develop as **global thinkers and problem solvers**



Learning encourages students to **make a positive impact in the world**

LI/TD

Provides the Differentiation

Integration of gifted best practices within Units of Inquiry



Tools and resources that increase depth, complexity, and abstract thinking



Flexible strategies for pacing, grouping, and acceleration when appropriate



Emphasis on advanced cognitive development, not just engagement





IB LI/TD

Future State

Elementary Personnel & Training



All IB LI/TD schools will receive an allotment for a language teacher so students can benefit from learning a **second language**.



All IB LI/TD schools will continue to receive a designated IB LI/TD Coordinator and AIG Teacher allotment to **support** program implementation.



All teachers will be required to obtain AIG licensure or a CMS local gifted endorsement through **CMS giftED** Professional Learning Series.



IB LI/TD

Future State

Elementary Personnel & Training



Classroom teachers will also receive ongoing job-embedded **professional learning** through collaborative planning, co-teaching, and school-based sessions.



Principals will attend professional development (Confratute, State or National Gifted Conference) to learn how to **implement research-based enrichment and differentiation strategies**.



In addition to receiving specialized professional learning on best practices in gifted education, IB also has **stringent training requirements**. All teachers in a PYP school are required to be IB-trained to meet and maintain authorization requirements.



All staff members will participate in a **Standards Institute** every summer with collaboration from Academics and Advanced Studies.



IB LI/TD

Future State

Elementary Experience



All students are taught by gifted licensed/endorsed and experienced **teachers** at rigorous levels.



Gifted-infused units of inquiry provide all students with consistent nurturing opportunities for talent development. Differentiation for gifted and advanced learners will also occur through a combination of enrichment and acceleration.



All students engage in meaningful **writing experiences** that nurture voice, develop complex thinking, and build the skills to communicate with clarity and purpose.



IB LI/TD

Future State

Elementary Experience



The theme will engage students in **service learning projects**. Each grade level will select a community organization and develop a service learning project.



Action projects go **beyond awareness** and into design, advocacy, or problem-solving. Students apply advanced research skills, systems thinking, and creativity to authentic problems connected to the local community.



IB LI/TD

Future State

Middle School Personnel & Training



All IB LI/TD schools will continue to receive a designated IB LI/TD **Coordinator**.



IB teachers will be required to complete the **CMS DREAM** local AIG endorsement.



Principals will attend professional development (Confratute, State or National Gifted Conference) to learn how to **implement research-based enrichment and differentiation strategies**.

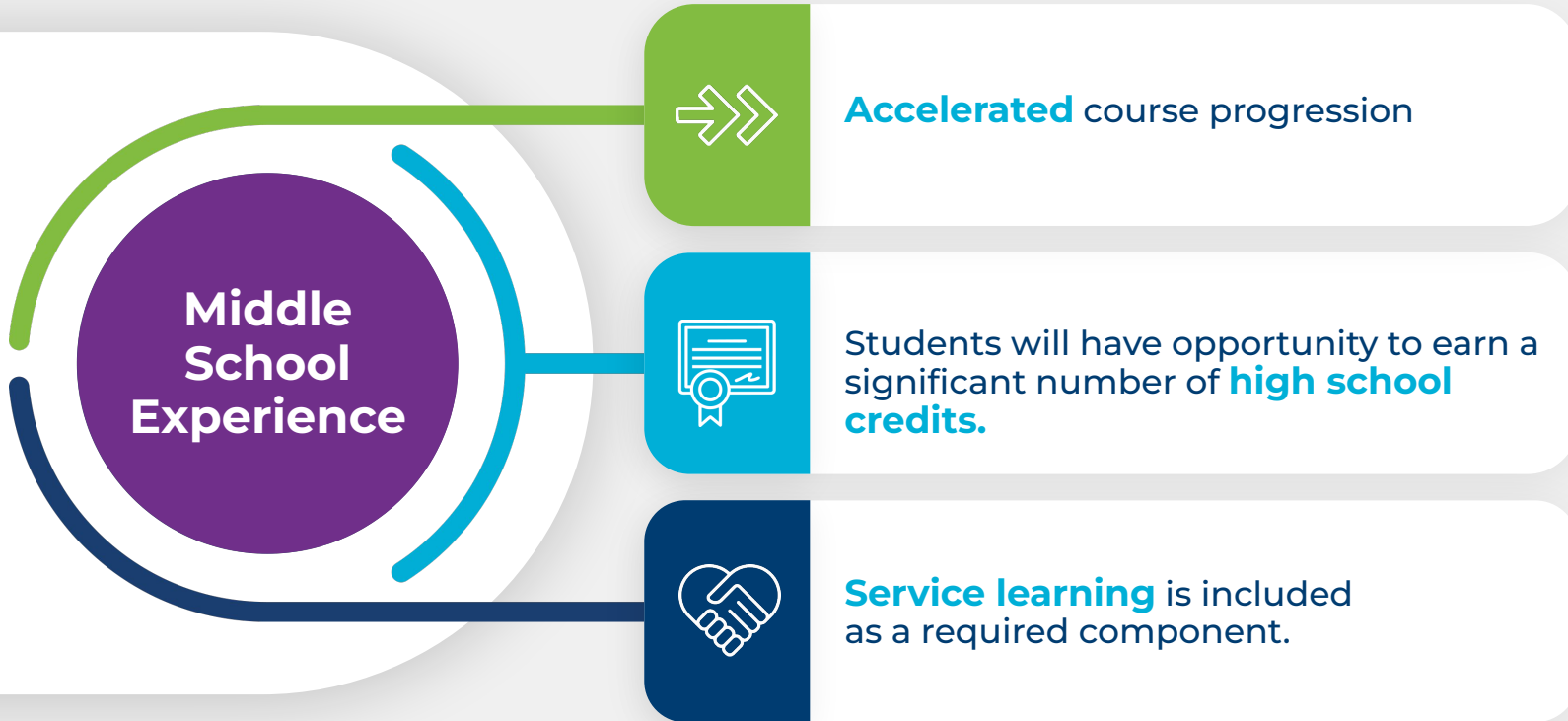


IB training for the Middle Years Programme (MYP) requires teachers to attend subject-specific, IB-authorized **workshops** (Category 1, 2, or 3) to understand curriculum implementation.



IB LI/TD

Future State





Early College / Middle College





Middle College

Current State

Students complete their first 2 years of High School at their home school. They transfer to the Middle College for their 11th and 12th grades with an opportunity to remain Year 13.

Students may earn a high school diploma, an associate degree, transferable college credit, and possibly industry-recognized certifications. A 13th year is available to complete requirements.



2025-2026 Enrollment is **654** Students Across **Four** Middle Colleges: Cato, Harper, Levine, and Merancas. Transportation is not provided for Middle College students.

While our Early Colleges have established waiting lists due to high demand, our Middle Colleges have not yet reached **full enrollment**.



Middle College Highlights



2024-2025 Rating

Received by all Central Piedmont Middle Colleges from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

A



Total Students on the **Waitlist** for Middle Colleges in **2026-27**

0



2024-2025 Overall graduation rate for Middle Colleges

>95%



Potential Total College Credit Hours

Earned for Enrolled Students During the 2025-26 School Year

39,240



Total Students on the **Waitlist** for Middle Colleges in **2025-26**

0



Potential Dollars Saved

in College Credit Hours for the 2025-26 School Year

\$11,477,000

\$292.46 per College Credit was used for calculations.



Early College

Current State

Early Colleges are open to CMS students beginning in grades 9 and 10.

Students may earn up to **60** credit hours of transferable college credit, an associate degree, and possible industry certifications.

Students complete all high school coursework at the Early College while working toward both a high school diploma and an associate degree.

CMS operates and provides transportation for our Four Early Colleges: Central Piedmont Early College (CPCC), Charlotte Engineering Early College (UNCC), Charlotte Teachers Early College (UNCC), and Hawthorne Academy serving 1,209 students for the 25-26 school year.





Early College Highlights



2024-2025 Rating
Received by all Central Piedmont Early Colleges from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

All have A or B Ratings



Total Students on the **Waitlist** for Early Colleges in **2026-27**

1,377



2024-2025 Overall graduation rate for Early Colleges

>95%



Potential Total College Credit Hours Earned for Enrolled Students During the 2025-26 School Year

72,540



Total Students on the **Waitlist** for Early Colleges in **2025-26**

326



Potential Dollars Saved in College Credit Hours for the 2025-26 School Year

\$21,215,000

\$292.46 per College Credit was used for calculations.



Early College Benefits

Transportation Provided



In Early College, transportation is provided by CMS. Parents benefit, and students are not limited geographically, allowing access for everyone.

Earlier Exposure



Students begin college coursework as early as ages 14–15, gaining early experience with college expectations, scheduling, and advising.

Increased Cost-Savings



Many high school requirements are completed by 10th grade, allowing students to focus on college coursework. Books, tuition, and fees are covered.

Athletics Participation



Students may still participate in athletics at their home high school.



Early College

Future State: 27-28



Total Number of Students Who Can Participate in the 8 Early Colleges

3,200



Total Number of Students with the **Potential to Earn an Associate's Degree in 3 Years**

3,200



With a total of 3,200 seats, enrollment would fully absorb the current waitlist, leaving 0 students on the **waitlist**.

0



Potential College Credit Hours to be Earned by All Students in Early Colleges

192,000



Potential College Credit Hours for **transferable college credits**, an Associate Degree, or possible industry-recognized certifications.

60



Projected Cost Savings for All Students

Who Complete an Associate's Degree

\$56,152,320

\$292.46 per College Credit was used for calculations.



Transition from Middle Colleges to Early Colleges

Middle Colleges

Early Colleges

Impact



Enrollment Potential

800 Students

100 Per Grade Level for Grades 11 and 12 at 4 Schools

3,200 Students

100 Per Grade Level for Grades 9 – 12 at 8 Schools

Transitioning all Middle Colleges to Early Colleges **adds 800 seats** for student enrollment.



Credit Earning Potential

48,000 Credit Hours

800 students each have potential to earn 60 college credit hours

192,000 Credit Hours

3,200 students each have potential to earn 60 college credit hours

More students have an opportunity to earn **college credit hours** toward a high school diploma, Associate's Degree, transferable college credit, and possible industry-recognized certifications. A 13th year is also available to complete requirements.



Cost Savings Potential

\$14,038,080

estimated total cost savings if all 800 students each earned 60 college credit hours

\$56,152,320

estimated total cost savings if all 3,200 students each earned 60 college credit hours

More college credits earned in high school translate to **lower college tuition costs** for families.

\$292.46 per College Credit was used for calculations.



Student Experience

Early College vs Middle College Pathway



Meet Jane

Early College Pathway

- Attends 8th grade at a CMS Middle School
- Loves STEM
- First-generation college bound student
- Interested in Medical School



Meet Mark

Middle College Pathway

- Attended a CMS Middle School
- Currently attends a CMS High School for both 9th and 10th grade
- Loves STEM
- First-generation college bound student
- Interested in Becoming a Teacher



Student Experience

Jane: Early College Pathway

9th Grade

9

Her schedule includes Honors high school courses (Math 2, Earth Science, World History, English I, Civic Literacy, Biology) and initial college credits (PED 110, HEA 110, ACA 122).

10th Grade

10

Rigor increases with more college courses (Public Speaking, General Psychology, Art Appreciation) alongside Honors Chemistry 1, Math 3, Economics & Personal Finance, English II, and American History I.

11th Grade

11

Fully transitions to college-level courses. Her schedule includes Writing and Inquiry, Writing and Research, General Biology I & II, Precalculus Algebra, Precalculus Trig, American History II, and American Literature.

12th Grade

12

Immersed in college life. She takes advanced college courses including General Chemistry I & II, British English, Elementary Spanish I & II, Calculus I & II, and Anatomy and Physiology I.



Student Experience

Mark: Middle College Pathway

9th Grade

9

Attends a traditional CMS High School. He focuses on core requirements like Math I, English I, and World History to maintain eligibility for future transfer.

10th Grade

10

Continues at traditional CMS High School. He completes prerequisites including Math II, Math 3, English II, Biology, and Health/PE. He applies and is accepted to Middle College for the following year.

11th Grade

11

Begins first year at Middle College. His schedule is a mix of Honors high school classes (Economics & Personal Finance, Math 3, Chemistry) and college credits (Writing and Inquiry, Writing and Research, ACA 122, and American Literature).

12th Grade

12

Increased rigor at Middle College. His courses are primarily college-level, including Sociology, British Literature, Precalculus Algebra, General Biology I & II, Art Appreciation, Myth in Human Culture, Precalculus Trig, and General Psychology.



Student Experience

Outcomes



Entry Point

Jane begins her specialized path in the 9th grade immediately following middle school, while Mark remains in a traditional high school setting for 9th and 10th grade, transferring to Middle College for the 11th grade.



Course Acceleration

Jane begins earning college credit in the 9th grade; whereas, Mark begins earning college credit in the 11th grade.



Prerequisites

Mark had to meet specific GPA requirements (2.8) and complete a set list of high school courses (Math I/II, Biology, English I/II, etc.) before he could enter the Middle College program. Jane entered her program directly from 8th grade.



Outcomes

By the end of senior year, Jane feels fully like a college student, leading discussions and managing a heavy load of advanced STEM and language courses. Mark successfully transitions into the higher rigor of the Middle College during his 11th and 12th grade years to prepare for his 13th year.



Student Experience

Career and College Promise (CCP)



Career and College Promise Pathway

Meet Chris

- Attends his home school all four years
- Varsity Athlete
- First-generation college bound student
- Interested in Business



Student Experience

Chris: Career and College Promise (CCP)

9th Grade

9

Chris' schedule is full of Honors-level courses with the goal to earn as many of his courses for graduation as possible.

10th Grade

10

He continues to take courses as his home school, a comprehensive high school to earn credits towards graduation.

11th Grade

11

Because he has a 2.8 GPA, he enrolls in CPCC to take CCP classes that will go towards his chosen business pathway. He takes a combination of virtual CCP courses (Intro to Business, Intro to Computers, and Business Law), along with in-person CMS classes for graduation.

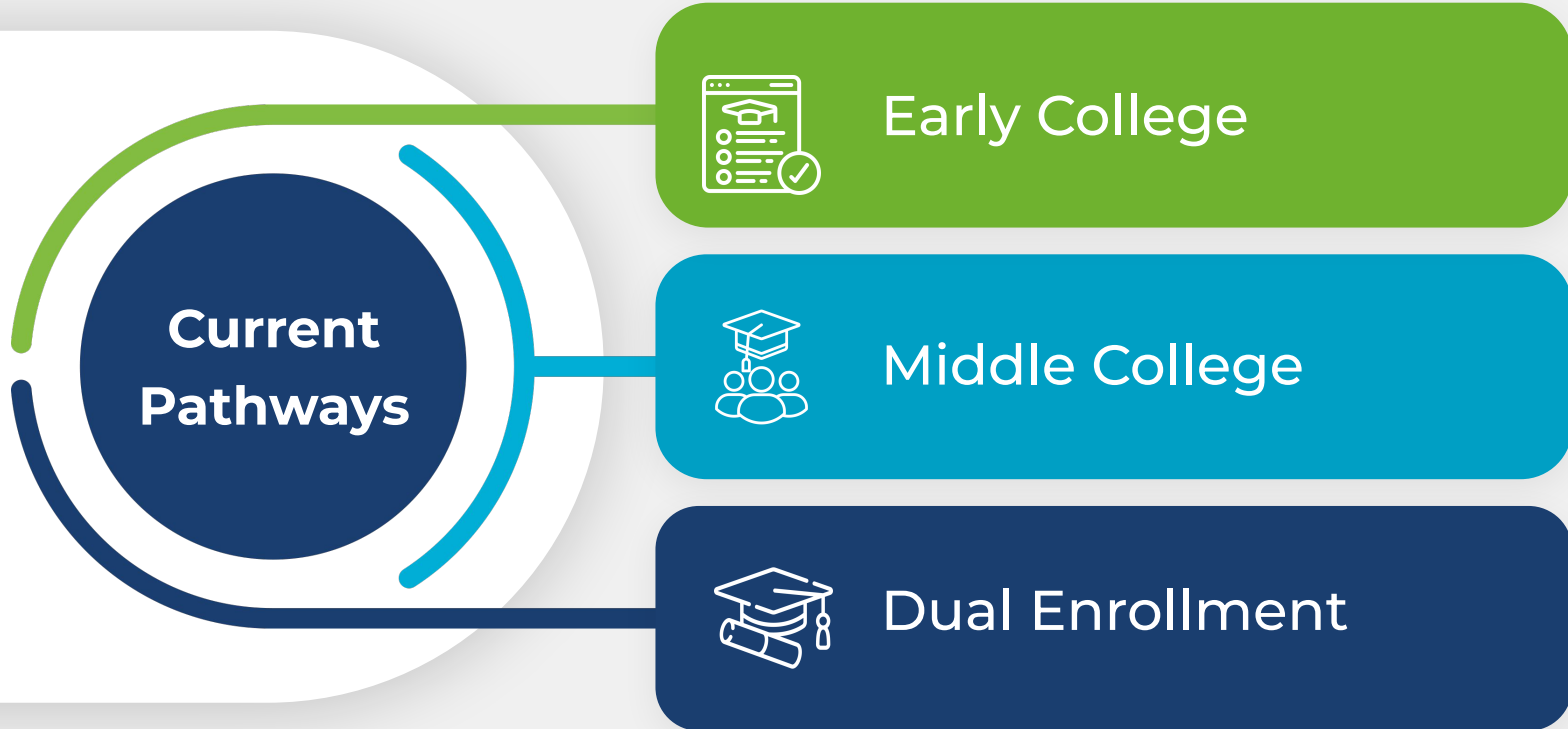
12th Grade

12

Chris takes a class at his home school and then leaves after first block to attend CCP classes on a CPCC campus, where he enrolls in Principles of Management, Principles of Marketing, and Personal Finance.

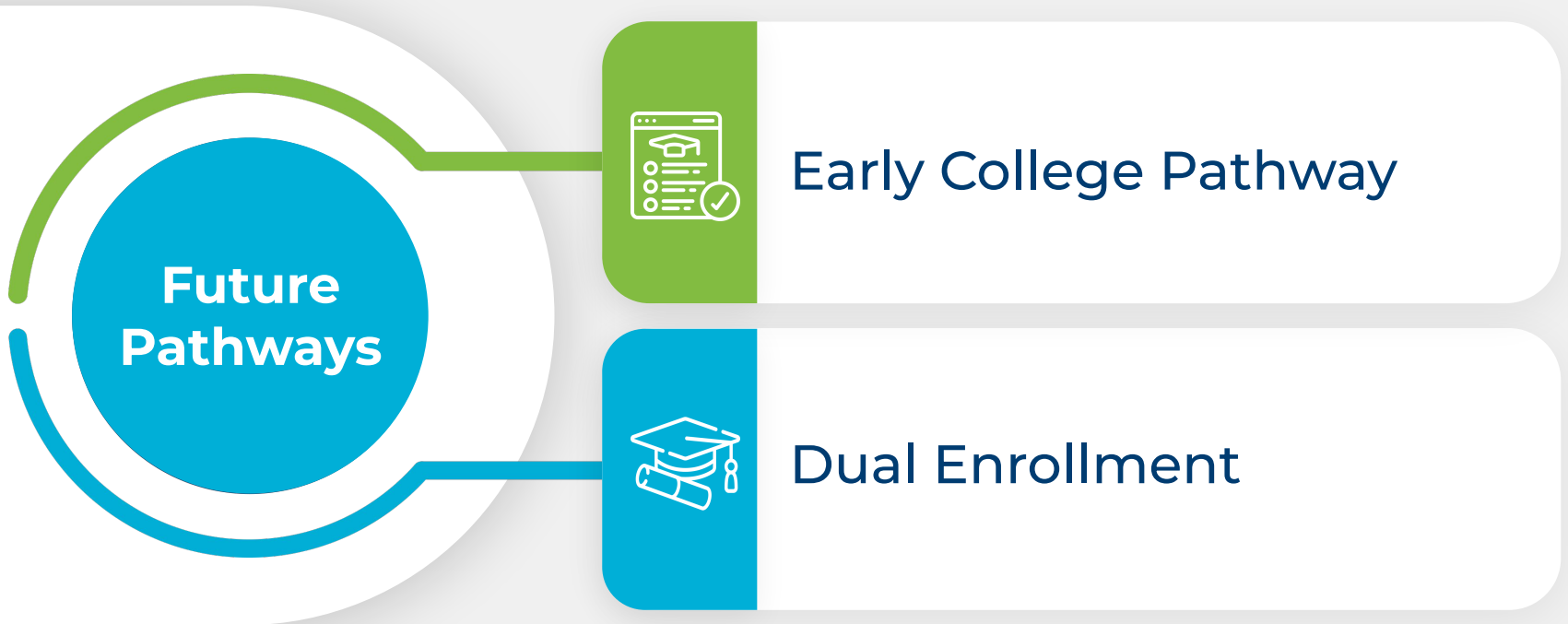


Current Pathways





Recommended Future Pathways





Endless Possibilities

START WITH CMS!