CMMS Course Descriptions
2026-2027 School Year

Grade 8	
Course Name	**Description**
Literary Lounge: A class for students who love to read!	Dive into a world of stories! In this relaxed and engaging class, you'll explore a variety of genres, discover new authors, and share your love of reading with classmates. Expect lively discussions, creative projects, and the freedom to choose books that truly ignite your imagination.
Beginner Stitching: Middle School Sewing Workshop	In this beginner-friendly class, middle school students will learn the fundamentals of sewing through fun and easy-to-follow projects. From threading a needle to mastering basic hand stitches and machine sewing techniques, students will gain the skills needed to create simple, personalized items. Whether you're picking up a needle for the first time or just want to refine your skills, this class is the perfect introduction to sewing.
Introduction to Creative Performance Studies	This course is designed to introduce students to performing arts and provide the opportunity for students to explore, discover, improve, and showcase their skills, talents, and interests. Student choice and areas of interest will help to determine the focus of some lessons. Performing arts we will touch upon may include: dance, theater, music, poetry, stand-up, illusion, improv, etc. Students will develop the vocabulary, skills, and attitudes necessary for a high level of accomplishment and a deep level of understanding and appreciation of performance arts through live performances. Yes, there will be performances! You may perform for your class, another class, a grade level, or adults in the building.
Advanced PE	Advanced Physical Education (PE) is a specialized program that focuses on enhancing students' physical fitness, motor skills, and understanding of physical health. This program typically includes advanced training techniques, sports science, and the study of nutrition, providing students with a comprehensive approach to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Participants often engage in various physical activities and sports, aiming to improve their performance and overall well-being. *Note: This elective is in addition to your regular PE requirement.*
Yoga and Mindfulness *(new)*	Yoga and Mindfulness will focus on building self-awareness, emotional regulation, and focus through accessible yoga poses, breathwork, and present-moment awareness, helping students manage stress, boost confidence, improve attention for academics, and develop resilience for life's challenges. Classes typically blend movement (like seated/standing poses, games) with mindfulness techniques (breathing, calming meditations) to create a positive, supportive environment, often using themes and interactive activities

Weightlifting and Fitness ***(new)***	The Weight Lifting & Fitness class is designed to introduce middle school students to safe, age-appropriate strength training and overall physical fitness. Students will learn proper exercise techniques using bodyweight, resistance bands, light free weights, and fitness equipment while emphasizing safety, correct form, and injury prevention. Throughout the course, students will develop muscular strength, muscular endurance, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, and core stability. Lessons focus on building healthy habits, understanding how the body responds to exercise, and setting personal fitness goals.
History of World War II	The World War II course will not only look into the causes of World War II, but it will discuss the people, battles, and the significance of the war. The course is designed to give an overview of this historical event, but will also dive a little deeper into the stories that make WWII one of the intriguing time periods in history.
Leadership Workshop 1	This course converges the study of leadership principles with the action of building a healthy schoolwide culture and climate. Leadership theories, concepts, and skills are analyzed through class instruction and interactive activities. This traditional approach to learning is extended into application of each lesson topic through service learning experiences specifically designed to positively affect the school's culture and climate, physical campus experience, as well as stakeholder trust and morale. The greater purpose of this course is to create students who effectively embody leadership in action, not just in title. Leadership 1 focuses on the first two units: • School Culture and Climate • Individuality and Self-Branding www.jostensrenaissance.com
Leadership Workshop 2 *Prerequisite: Leadership Workshop 1*	This course converges the study of leadership principles with the action of building a healthy schoolwide culture and climate. Leadership theories, concepts, and skills are analyzed through class instruction and interactive activities. This traditional approach to learning is extended into application of each lesson topic through service learning experiences specifically designed to positively affect the school's culture and climate, physical campus experience, as well as stakeholder trust and morale. The greater purpose of this course is to create students who effectively embody leadership in action, not just in title. Leadership 2 focuses on the second two units: • Teamwork • Leadership Mindset www.jostensrenaissance.com
STEM 8	In STEM 8, students will develop critical thinking, collaboration and creativity skills, while conducting experience, coding projects, and designing prototypes.

	By the end of the course, students will have gained a well-rounded understanding of STEM concepts, preparing them for future careers in this dynamic and ever-evolving field.
Tech Ed I	Tech. Ed. 1 is an introductory course that 7th or 8th grade students can take to explore technology concepts. Here is an overview of the Unit topics: 1. Engineering (Bridge Design) Unit ~ 8 days 2. 3D Modeling / Printing Unit ~ 13 days 3. Wood Shop Unit ~ 10 days 4. Web Page Design (HTML/CSS) Unit ~ 14 days
Tech Ed 2 *Prerequisite: Tech Ed 1*	Tech. Ed. 2 is a more advanced course that 7th or 8th grade students can take if they have previously passed the Tech. Ed. 1 course. Here is an overview of the Unit topics: 1. Introduction Unit ~ 4 days 2. Wood Shop Unit ~ 17 days 3. Electronics Unit ~ 8 days 4. Computer Programming (Python) Unit ~ 9 days 5. 3D Modeling / Animation Unit ~ 7 days
Exploratory Spanish	The goal of this course is to *acquire* the Spanish language. When you learned your first language, you actually *acquired* it by hearing it around you. Therefore, almost all of our class time will be spent listening and reading in Spanish to talk about interesting things in the world and our lives. We will use songs, stories and videos to help our language acquisition. Some topics we will learn about are: *describing ourselves and others *unique cultural events/places *verbs in the 3rd person tense *colors *musical genres This course is a prerequisite for Spanish 1 in 8th grade
Spanish I *Prerequisite: Exploratory Spanish*	*Students *must* have successfully completed Exploratory Spanish to be eligible for Spanish 1 in 8th grade. In this continuation course, students will extend beyond what they learned in Exploratory Spanish to read and write about a variety of topics that are relevant to both ourselves and the Spanish-speaking world. Some topics learned will be: *speaking about future plans *following directions *cultural events *verbs in 1st and 2nd person tense *Latino food and its influence on American cuisine
Band 8	8th Grade Band is a large music ensemble that is available to students who have already taken at least a year of instrument lessons on:

	Flute Clarinet Saxophone Trumpet French Horn Trombone Baritone Tuba Percussion (Drums and/or Bells) In this class, students continue to build their skills in: ● reading music notation ● understanding the fundamentals of music ● playing a musical instrument ● balancing and blending with an ensemble ● developing self-discipline ● practicing efficiently This class typically includes two evening performances (December and May) to share the product of our work with family and friends.
Chorus 8	<u>8th grade chorus will focus on:</u> ● Singing with proper vocal technique. ● Understanding how to read music notation and fundamentals of music. ● Singing music literature from various styles and historical periods. ● Developing self-discipline as an ensemble member.
Orchestra 8	8th Grade Orchestra is a large music ensemble that is available to students who have already taken at least a year of instrument lessons on: Violin Viola Cello String Bass In this class, students continue to build their skills in: ● reading music notation ● understanding the fundamentals of music ● playing a musical instrument ● balancing and blending with an ensemble ● developing self-discipline ● practicing efficiently This class typically includes two evening performances (December and May) to share the product of our work with family and friends.
Guitar 1	Guitar 1. In this course, students will learn music through experiences with guitar. The focus will be on the performance of the guitar, including melody and chord playing, improvising, and songwriting; playing by themselves and in small groups. Students will learn about the history of the guitar, guitar construction, and become acquainted with expert guitarists.
Guitar 2 *Prerequisite: Guitar 1*	Guitar 2. In this course, students will learn music through experiences with guitar. This course will build on skills learned in Guitar 1. The focus will be on the performance of the guitar, including melody and chord playing,

	improvising, and songwriting; playing by themselves and in small groups. Students will learn about the history of the guitar, guitar construction, and become acquainted with expert guitarists.
Piano Keyboarding I	Piano Keyboarding 1. In this course, students will learn music through experiences with piano. The focus will be on the performance of the piano, including melody and chord playing, improvising, and songwriting; playing by themselves and in small groups. Students will learn about the history of the piano, piano construction, and become acquainted with expert pianists.
Piano Keyboarding 2 *Prerequisite: Piano Keyboarding 1*	Piano Keyboarding 2. In this course, students will learn music through experiences with piano. This course will build on skills learned in Piano 1. The focus will be on the performance of the piano, including melody and chord playing, improvising, and songwriting; playing by themselves and in small groups. Students will learn about the history of the piano, piano construction, and become acquainted with expert pianists. Prerequisite: You must have completed Piano 1 course.
Intro to Media 8	This semester course, held for one full block on alternating days, is designed to provide students with knowledge of media literacy concepts and skills. As defined by The Core Principles of Media Literacy Education, "the purpose of media literacy education is to help individuals of all ages develop the habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens in today's world." (National Association of Media Literacy) Students will be completing assignments and projects in the following areas: media literacy, video production in WeVideo, podcasting, interviewing skills, journalism ethics and skills, copyrights and fair use, and documenting school events through photos and videos.
Songwriting 8 *Prerequisites: At least one of the following courses:* ● *Guitar 1* ● *Piano Keyboarding 1* ● *Chorus* ● *Band/Orchestra*	Unleash your inner songwriter! This course will guide 8th graders through the creative process of writing original songs. Explore different songwriting styles, learn about melody, rhythm, and lyrics, and collaborate with classmates to bring your musical ideas to life."