CEDAR SPRINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Cedar Springs Middle School
Curriculum Guide
2026-2027

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Sixth Grade Curriculum

Required Core Courses

1. ELA OR Intermediate ELA
2. Math 6 OR Intermediate Math 6 OR Accelerated Math
3. Science
4. Geography

Encores (Half-Year)

- Art
- Coding with Robotics
- Intro to Guitar
- Photo Imaging
- Physical Education

Encores (Year-Long)

- Band
- Choir
- Student Focus*

Sixth Grade Course Description

Required Core Courses

6th Grade English Language Arts
This course uses Amplify ELA to develop students' reading, writing, speaking, and critical-thinking skills. Students engage with literature and informational texts while practicing close reading, vocabulary development, and text-based discussion. Instruction emphasizes analytical and evidence-based writing, including argumentative, informational, and narrative pieces. The course aligns with standards from the Michigan Department of Education and the Science of Reading.

6th Intermediate English Language Arts
This course covers the regular 6th-grade ELA curriculum at a slower pace, with additional guidance. This is an ideal opportunity for students who have identified ELA as a struggle area, as it provides additional support through small-group instruction. This course dives into the key aspects of ELA required for success in high school.

6th Grade Math
Illustrative Mathematics is a problem-based curriculum in which students discover solutions collaboratively with their peers. Students will engage in visual learning and demonstrate their solutions on whiteboards to share with others. Topics covered in sixth grade include: Area of polygons, Ratios,

Working with Fractions, Working with Decimals, Writing and solving equations, Rational Numbers, Data Sets, and Distributions.

6th Intermediate Math
This course covers the regular 6th-grade math curriculum at a slower pace, with additional guidance. The goal is to tackle math through a project-based plan. This is an ideal opportunity for students who have identified math as a struggle area, as it provides additional support through small-group instruction. This course dives into the key math concepts required for success in high school.

6th Grade Accelerated Math
This course is by invitation to students who have met the following: Advanced iReady scores, Advanced Universal Screener for Number Sense (USNS) scores, and advanced fifth-grade performance. This course has the same features as 6th Grade Math, but at a faster pace. In addition to the 6th Grade Content, Students in Accelerated-Paced 6th Grade Math will cover a semester's worth of 7th Grade Math. The additional topics include Proportional Relationships, Measuring Circles, Percentages, and Rational Number Arithmetic.

6th Grade Geography
In World Geography, students will investigate the diverse physical and human geography of various global regions. Over the year, they will cultivate an understanding of the 5 themes of geography and apply them to each world region. Students will develop skills such as analyzing maps, data analysis, and critical thinking. Additionally, students will develop proficiency in articulating their acquired knowledge through both verbal and written communication.

6th Grade Science
A year-long course designed to introduce young scientists to critical thinking, analyzing & interpreting data, and experimentation. Throughout this course, students will explore four areas of science: physical, earth, life, and chemistry. The topics that students will investigate include how the water cycle shapes the land around us, how animal interactions can impact an ecosystem, how light reaches our eyes and how we perceive color, and how atoms and molecules behave during physical changes.

Encores (Half-Year)

Art (Half-Year)
This introductory course builds a basic understanding of the elements and principles of art and design. Students will use various media, such as paint, clay, and drawing, to create artwork that demonstrates an understanding of the elements and principles of art. Students begin practicing the analysis of their own artwork and their peers'. Students begin to describe their decision-making and problem-solving experiences as they create artwork.

Physical Education (Half-Year)
The focus of this course will be to instill an interest in fitness, exercise, and physical activity. Students will participate in various team and individual activities, including, but not limited to, basketball, volleyball, nitroball, soccer, badminton, pickleball, floor hockey, disc golf, tennis, ultimate frisbee, and flag football. In addition, basic conditioning through jogging, bodyweight exercises such as push-ups and sit-ups, and weight training will be a regular part of this class. PE shoes will be required daily.

Coding with Robotics (Half-Year)
In this class, students will be introduced to coding using Scratch. Scratch is a programming language widely used by beginner programmers to create video games. After Intro to Coding, students will start using Edison Robotic Kits. These kits use Scratch as their programming language, and students will write code to have the robots perform tasks such as finding walls and navigating a maze.

Intro to Guitar (Half-Year)
Students will learn to play guitar in a fun, supportive, and collaborative environment. They will also learn and build skills in reading music, counting rhythms, strumming patterns, learning basic chord shapes, and performing at various points throughout the semester. Emphasis will be placed on steady rhythm, teamwork, listening skills, and building confidence through performance.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate correct playing technique and posture
- Read basic music notation and chords
- Play simple melodies and chord progressions
- Perform as part of an ensemble
- Practice effectively and independently

No prior musical experience is required—just a positive attitude and a willingness to learn!

History of Sports (Half-Year)
This class will examine the development of sports throughout History. Our historical study will focus on helping students gain a better understanding of the inner relationship between sport and the social, economic, cultural, and political forces at work around the world. We will examine the historical context and the significance of teamwork, planning, determination, and accountability.

Students Will:

a. Gain historical knowledge about the origins and development of various sports, including major concepts, through the chronological history of sports.
b. Understand why and how sports have become a popular cultural phenomenon.
c. Learn a greater appreciation for the issues that have affected sports.
d. Begin to recognize the influence that commercialization has within the sports world.

Photo Imaging (Half-Year)
In this introductory photography class, students will learn the fundamentals of taking great pictures using cameras, tablets, or phones. They will explore key concepts such as composition, lighting, perspective, and subject focus. Through hands-on activities and creative projects, students will practice capturing images of people, nature, and everyday objects. They will experiment with different angles, framing techniques, and camera settings to enhance their photos. By the end of the course, students will have a strong understanding of the basics of photography and a portfolio of their own work, which will help them develop confidence and creativity in visual storytelling.

Encores (Year-Long)

6th Grade Band (Year-Long)
The beginning band program and a year-long course. Students will learn the basics of playing and performing music on an instrument. Participation in the 6th Grade Band will include mandatory performances, including Fall, Holiday and Spring concerts, and the annual Music Recruitment Concert.

6th Grade Choir (Year-Long)
In this year-long course, students will focus on developing mature singing voices as a group. Solo opportunities are offered as well. The songs will contain 2-part harmonies and are taught through reading music notation, as opposed to rote memorization ("Repeat-after-me"). Participation in the 6th Grade Choir will include mandatory performances, including Fall, Holiday, and Spring concerts.

Student Focus* (Year-Long)
This year-long class will support the 6th-grade transition to Middle School. Throughout the course, students will focus on developing good study skills, accessing PowerSchool, managing time, secondary grades, student organization, building culture and expectations, and practicing effective digital citizenship. Especially in the second half of the year, a greater focus will be on digital citizenship, future career pathways, and how they connect to their current and future experiences at CSPS. In addition, students will engage with leadership lessons, including taking personal responsibility, expressing themselves effectively, and making sound decisions when problems arise. *Placement in this course is based on teacher recommendation; students cannot sign themselves up for this course.

Seventh Grade Curriculum

Required Core Courses

1. ELA OR Intermediate ELA
2. Math 7 OR Intermediate Math 7 OR Accelerated Math
3. Science
4. World Math

Encores (Half-Year)

- Art
- Coding with Robotics
- Future Focus (Required)
- History of Sports
- Intro to Guitar
- Medieval Folklore
- Arthurian Literature
- Photo Imaging
- Physical Education
- STEM

Encores (Year-Long)

- Band
- Choir

Seventh Grade Course Descriptions

Required Core Courses

7th English Language Arts
This course uses Amplify ELA to develop students' reading, writing, speaking, and critical-thinking skills. Students engage with literature and informational texts while practicing close reading, vocabulary development, and text-based discussion. Instruction emphasizes analytical and evidence-based writing, including argumentative, informational, and narrative pieces. The course aligns with standards from the Michigan Department of Education and the Science of Reading.

7th Intermediate English Language Arts
This course covers the regular 7th-grade ELA curriculum at a slower pace, with additional guidance. This is an ideal opportunity for students who have identified ELA as an area of struggle, as it provides a second teacher in the room to support small-group instruction. This course dives into the key aspects of ELA required for success in high school.

7th Math
The Illustrative Mathematics program is a problem-based core curriculum. Students will be asked to solve real-world problems and construct arguments using precise language. Topics Include: Making and interpreting scaled drawings, using proportional relationships and percentages; Finding properties of circles; Using rational number arithmetic; Solving expressions, equations, and inequalities; and Solving angles, triangles, and prisms.

7th Intermediate Math
This course covers the regular 7th-grade math curriculum at a slower pace, with additional guidance. The goal is to tackle math through a project-based plan. This is an ideal opportunity for students who have identified math as a struggle area, as it provides additional support through small-group instruction. This course dives into the key math concepts required for success in high school.

7th Accelerated Math
The Illustrative Mathematics program is a problem-based core curriculum. Students will be asked to solve real-world problems and construct arguments using precise language. Topics include: Using rigid transformations and congruences; Solving dilations, similarity, and slope; Defining linear relationships; Solving linear equations and systems; Using exponents and scientific notation in calculations; Solving the Pythagorean theorem; and using irrational numbers.

7th World History
This year-long required course covers ancient world history, from the first people through the Middle Ages. Students will learn about Paleolithic foragers, the Agricultural Revolution, the development of the first civilizations, the formation of new forms of government, world religions, and the lasting impacts of increasing human interaction over time. In addition to reading and writing skills, students will practice analyzing a variety of documents, identifying evidence to support conclusions, and communicating their thinking.

7th Science
This is a year-long course that covers all 4 branches: physical, Earth, chemistry, and life sciences. Each unit centers around a driving question, which is answered by the end of the unit through investigation, readings, and class discussions. Students spend time each week investigating various aspects of the driving question, with an emphasis on following procedures accurately, using data collection techniques, and applying critical thinking. The curriculum used is IQWST, and the questions for 7th-grade science are as follows:

- Why do some things stop while others keep going? (Physics)
- Why does the weather change? (Earth)
- How can I make new stuff from old stuff? (Chemistry)
- What's going on inside me? (Life)

Required Encores

Future Focus (Half-Year)
Digital citizenship, study skills and success strategies, and teen leadership will remain important components of the course, while also adding a more in-depth look at future planning, interest

inventories, career pathways, and the development of their state-required Educational Development Plan (EDP).

Optional Encores (Half-Year)

Physical Education (Half-Year)
The focus of this course will be to build and improve what was learned in 6th-grade PE. Exercise, conditioning, and weight training will occur daily. Students will participate in various team and individual activities, including, but not limited to, basketball, volleyball, nitroball soccer, badminton, pickleball, floor hockey, disc golf, tennis, ultimate frisbee, and flag football. In addition, measurable fitness areas such as sit-ups, push-ups, speed, endurance, and jumping will be tested regularly throughout the course. PE shoes will be required daily.

Art (Half-Year)
This intermediate course extends beyond a basic understanding of the elements and principles of art and design, emphasizing meaning-making in art. Students will use various media, such as paint, clay, drawing, printmaking, and digital tools, to create artwork that demonstrates a deep understanding of the elements and principles and builds connections to their lives and the world around them. Students strengthen their analytical skills by analyzing their own work, their peers' work, and the work of contemporary and historical working artists worldwide. Students thoroughly explain their decision-making and problem-solving experiences when creating artwork.

Intro to Guitar (Half-Year)
Students will learn to play guitar in a fun, supportive, and collaborative environment. They will also learn and build skills in reading music, counting rhythms, strumming patterns, learning basic chord shapes, and performing at various points throughout the semester. Emphasis will be placed on steady rhythm, teamwork, listening skills, and building confidence through performance.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate correct playing technique and posture
- Read basic music notation and chords
- Play simple melodies and chord progressions
- Perform as part of an ensemble
- Practice effectively and independently

No prior musical experience is required—just a positive attitude and a willingness to learn!

History of Sports (Half-Year)
This class will examine the development of sports throughout History. Our historical study will focus on helping students gain a better understanding of the inner relationship between sport and the social, economic, cultural, and political forces at work around the world. We will examine the historical context and the significance of teamwork, planning, determination, and accountability.

Students Will:

a. Gain historical knowledge about the origins and development of various sports, including major concepts, through the chronological history of sports.
b. Understand why and how sports have become a popular cultural phenomenon.

c. Learn a greater appreciation for the issues that have affected sports.
d. Begin to recognize the influence that commercialization has within the sports world.

Coding with Robotics (Half-Year)
In this class, students will be introduced to coding using Scratch. Scratch is a programming language widely used by beginner programmers to create video games. After Intro to Coding, students will start using Edison Robotic Kits. These kits use Scratch as their programming language, and students will write code for the robots to perform tasks such as finding walls and navigating a maze.

Medieval Folklore (S1) (Half-Year)
This course will explore famous tales from the Middle Ages (500–1500 AD). From King Arthur to Beowulf to the Canterbury Tales to classic fairy tales, medieval stories often feature heroic figures and horrific lessons. Some are meant to entertain and inspire, while others are meant to frighten their readers and leave them with a warning. Legends and myths often have connections to actual historical events. In this course, students will learn to read and understand some of the earliest written records in human history. By the end of the semester, students will be able to identify what folklore and medieval legends are, how and why they function, and the varied ways they are a part of our everyday lives.

Arthurian Literature (S2) (Half-Year)
In this course, we will journey back to the Middle Ages to explore the enduring legend of King Arthur. Beyond reading stories of knights and monsters, students will become literary detectives, investigating how a minor war leader rose to mythical kingship. We will explore and discover why authors today—from novelists to filmmakers—keep returning to the magic of Camelot.

Photo Imaging (Half-Year)
In this introductory photography class, students will learn the fundamentals of taking great pictures using cameras, tablets, or phones. They will explore key concepts such as composition, lighting, perspective, and subject focus. Through hands-on activities and creative projects, students will practice capturing images of people, nature, and everyday objects. They will experiment with different angles, framing techniques, and camera settings to enhance their photos. By the end of the course, students will have a strong understanding of the basics of photography and a portfolio of their own work, which will help them develop confidence and creativity in visual storytelling.

STEM (Half-Year)
Are you interested in hands-on experiences and problem-solving opportunities? Want to develop and put your thinking, reasoning, teamwork, investigative, and creative skills to the test? If so, then this is the class for you! Students will engage in frequent hands-on activities to integrate the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and math). Creativity and collaboration will be encouraged as students solve real-world problems.

Optional Encores (Year-Long)

Band (Year-Long)
An intermediate ensemble and a full-year class. The band, composed of woodwinds, brass, and percussion, performs a wide variety of music and styles. Participation in the Band will require mandatory performances at Fall, Holiday, Winter, and Spring concerts, as well as at the District 7 MSBOA Band Festival.

Choir (Year-Long)

Students will continue developing mature singing voices as a group. Solo opportunities are offered as well. The songs will feature challenging 2-part harmonies and will be taught through reading music notation rather than rote memorization ("Repeat-after-me"). Participation in the Choir will require mandatory performances at Fall, Holiday, and Spring concerts. In addition, our Choir attends Choir Festival, which includes a performance for other school choirs and an evaluative rating from a panel of judges.

Eighth Grade Curriculum

Required Core Courses

1. ELA OR Intermediate ELA
2. Math 8 OR Intermediate Math 8 OR Algebra 1 (HS Credit)
3. Science
4. American Studies

Encores (Half-Year)

- Art
- Athletic Performance
- Coding with Robotics
- Physical Education
- Medieval Folklore
- Arthurian Literature
- STEM

Encores (Year-Long)

- Band
- Choir
- Spanish 1 (HS Credit)
- French 1 (HS Credit)

Eighth Grade Course Description

Required Core Courses

Math 8
Students will navigate pre-algebra principles with the goal of entering Algebra in 9th grade. Illustrative Mathematics supports exploratory learning and emphasizes collaborative work.

Intermediate Math 8
This course covers the regular 8th-grade math curriculum at a slower pace, with additional guidance. The goal is to tackle math through a project-based plan. This is an ideal opportunity for students who have identified math as a struggle area, as it provides additional support through small-group instruction. This course dives into the key aspects of math required for success in high school.

Algebra 1 (students who earn a passing grade in this course earn 1 HS Credit)
The Algebra I course explores the language of Algebra in verbal, tabular, graphical, and symbolic forms. Problem-solving activities and applications encourage students to model patterns and relationships with variables and functions. This class will prepare students for education beyond the high school level.

8th English Language Arts
This course uses Amplify ELA to develop students' reading, writing, speaking, and critical-thinking skills. Students engage with literature and informational texts while practicing close reading, vocabulary development, and text-based discussion.

Instruction emphasizes analytical and evidence-based writing, including argumentative, informational, and narrative pieces. The course aligns with standards from the Michigan Department of Education and the Science of Reading.

8th Intermediate English Language Arts
This course covers the regular 8th-grade ELA curriculum at a slower pace, with additional guidance. This is an ideal opportunity for students who have identified ELA as a struggle area, as it provides a second teacher in the room to support small-group instruction. This course dives into the key aspects of ELA required for success in high school.

8th American Studies
8th-grade American Studies typically covers U.S. history from the early Colonial period through Reconstruction (c. 1600–1877), focusing on the American Revolution, the Constitution, westward expansion, and the Civil War. Students analyze the development of American democracy, social reform movements, and sectionalism, focusing on key figures, events, and geographic, political, and economic impacts.

8th Science
The 8th-grade science curriculum typically focuses on an integrated approach that covers the physical, earth, and life sciences through inquiry-based learning. Key topics include forces and motion (Newton's laws), energy transformations, chemistry (atoms/reactions), and Earth's place in the universe, emphasizing modeling and evidence-based arguments

Encores (Half-Year)

Art
This intermediate course extends beyond a basic understanding of the elements and principles of art and design, emphasizing meaning-making in art. Students will use various media, such as paint, clay, drawing, printmaking, and digital tools, to create artwork that demonstrates a deep understanding of the elements and principles and builds connections to their lives and the world around them. Students strengthen their analytical skills by analyzing their own work, their peers' work, and the work of contemporary and historical working artists worldwide. Students thoroughly explain their decision-making and problem-solving experiences when creating artwork.

Athletic Performance
The focus of this course will be to improve performance areas of speed, agility, and jumping through intense daily cardiovascular exercise, skill work, speed work, and weight training. Students will participate in scheduled testing of speed, agility, jumping, and strength, with a focus on improvement throughout the course. Workouts include jogging, sprinting, weight lifting, and agility drills. Occasional lifetime recreation activities and team sports competitions will be included in this course. An expectation of sportsmanship, teamwork, a positive attitude, and hard work will be required of AP fitness students daily. PE clothing and shoes are required daily. (Athletic Performance and Lifetime Recreation cannot be taken during the same semester)

Physical Education
The focus of this course is to instill an interest in lifelong recreation and physical activity. Students will participate in various team and individual activities, including, but not limited to, basketball, soccer, badminton, pickleball, floor hockey, disc golf, tennis, ultimate frisbee, flag football, and conditioning. PE shoes will be required daily. (Athletic Performance and Lifetime Recreation cannot be taken during the same semester)

Medieval Folklore (S1)
This course will explore famous tales from the Middle Ages (500–1500 AD). From King Arthur to Beowulf to the Canterbury Tales to classic fairy tales, medieval stories often feature heroic figures and horrific lessons. Some are meant to entertain and inspire, while others are meant to frighten their readers and leave them with a warning. Legends and myths often have connections to actual historical events. In this course, students will learn to read and understand some of the earliest written records in human history. By the end of the semester, students will be able to identify what folklore and medieval legends are, how and why they function, and the varied ways they are a part of our everyday lives.

Arthurian Literature (S2)
In this course, we will journey back to the Middle Ages to explore the enduring legend of King Arthur. Beyond reading stories of knights and monsters, students will become literary detectives, investigating how a minor war leader rose to mythical kingship. We will explore and discover why authors today—from novelists to filmmakers—keep returning to the magic of Camelot.

STEM
Are you interested in hands-on experiences and problem-solving opportunities? Want to develop and put your thinking, reasoning, teamwork, investigative, and creative skills to the test? If so, then this is the class for you! Students will engage in frequent hands-on activities to integrate the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and math). Creativity and collaboration will be encouraged as students solve real-world problems.

Encores (Year-Long)

Band
An advanced ensemble and a full-year class. The band, composed of woodwinds, brass, and percussion, performs a variety of musical styles. Participation in the Band will require mandatory performances at Holiday, Winter, and Spring concerts, as well as participation in the District 7 MSBOA Band Festival.

Choir
In the Choir, students continue to develop skills in music reading, tone production, and performance techniques through challenging three-part music. Foreign languages, history, and cultures are taught through music from all over the world. Participation in the 8th Grade Choir will require mandatory performances at Fall, Holiday, and Spring concerts. 8th Grade Choir also attends the Choir Festival, which includes a performance for other school choirs and an evaluation by a panel of judges.

HS Spanish 1 (students who earn a passing grade in this course earn 1 HS Credit)
The first year of Spanish is designed to help students learn to read, write, speak, and listen in Spanish at the introductory level. Students will begin communicating about familiar topics such as self, home, friends, family, and school. Students will also learn about the cultures of countries where Spanish is the primary language.

HS French 1 (students who earn a passing grade in this course earn 1 HS Credit)
The first-year French class is designed to help students develop the ability to read, write, speak, and listen in French at an introductory level. Students will learn to communicate about familiar topics. By the end of French 1, students are expected to communicate at a survival level. Students will also explore the cultural aspects of France and some of the 29 other countries where French is an official language, and experience music, movies, food, and other cultural products.