



PANTHER PATHWAYS

Rachel Carson Middle School

2025 Edition

13618 McLearen Rd, Herndon, VA 20171

An Insider’s Guide to Carson’s Electives

Rachel Carson Middle School offers over forty elective classes to its middle school students! Many students find the process of selecting elective courses overwhelming. *Panther Pathways* offers course descriptions and tips from Carson staff and students to help you determine the best classes for your middle school experience.

While most electives offered are for one semester (quarters 1 & 2 or 3 & 4), some are year long. For instance, music, art, theater classes, and World Languages offer courses for the full year. Your school year will be comprised of one of the following combinations:

- 🐾 Two full-year electives
- 🐾 One full-year elective and two semester electives
- 🐾 Four semester electives

TIPS:

Select elective courses require a recommendation, application and/or an audition, such as Advanced Orchestra/ Band and Yearbook Production. Although a few electives require lots of effort and prior knowledge, there are many more electives that are available for beginners to take.

When choosing electives, keep your interests and hobbies in mind. For example, if you enjoy acting you could enroll in Theater Arts (aka Drama). If you’re interested in music you could sign up for Band, Orchestra, Chorus, or Music Lab.

Trying something new could be fun as well, and a great way to explore potential career fields. For example, if you are considering a career in reporting or writing, opt for Creative Writing, Yearbook Production, and/or Journalism courses. If you would like to explore fields involving technology, check out the Computers in Art, Computer Solutions, and Coding & Innovative Technology courses.

After you have chosen your electives, you will have an opportunity to talk with your Counselor about your course selection.

Read on to see what Carson has to offer YOU!



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CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

Business Computer Solutions

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: None

Description: Computer Solutions provides students with the necessary skills to use the computer as a problem-solving tool. The course provides basic touch keyboarding instruction as well as an introduction to word processing, spreadsheet and presentation applications. Students will complete a variety of projects.

Highlights: In Computer Solutions, students will quickly see an improvement in their ability to use computers to enhance school projects and clearly communicate their ideas through reports, charts, and visual presentations.

From the Teacher: Students use the skills they learned here every day, in their personal lives as well as for creating projects, reports, and various documents for their classes. No student should leave middle school without taking Computer Solutions. I am repeatedly told by core teachers that they can always tell if a student has taken Computer Solutions and they wish the course were a requirement for all students.

Homework: None

Additional Info: Did you know that 95% of all jobs in the future will require computer skills? Prepare yourself by taking this elective!



Coding and Innovative Technologies 1 (aka Coding 1)

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: Computer Solutions

Description: Coding and Innovative Technologies introduces students to coding and careers in technology through hands-on projects. Projects can be completed in small groups or individually. Students learn introductory coding concepts using

Code.org's *Computer Science Discoveries Interactive Animations and Game Unit* in JavaScript. Students become confident in their ability to use their creative and critical thinking skills to create computer programs.

Highlights: Students learn the basics of computer programming by creating programs using JavaScript and creating multipage personal websites using HTML and CSS.

Homework: None

Who should take this course: Students who enjoy working with computers and enjoy hands-on projects in a collaborative, social and creative atmosphere.



Coding and Innovative Technologies 2 (aka Coding 2) ★

Grades: 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: Coding and Innovative Technologies 1

Description: Building on the foundational knowledge gained in Coding & Innovative Technologies 1, Coding and Innovative Technologies 2 allows students to further develop their coding skills through hands-on projects using Carnegie Mellon

University's **Python** curriculum. Students will refine their programming skills through multiple animated and user interactive programs which can be created in small groups or individually. Students will also have the chance to explore technology related careers.

Highlights: Students refine and practice their computer programming skills by creating programs in a collaborative, social and creative atmosphere.

Homework: None

Who should take this course: Students who wish to pursue advanced studies in computer programming and enjoy hands-on projects in a collaborative, social and creative atmosphere. Students who have a strong interest in taking computer programming in high school should take CIT2.

"Choosing electives can be a hard thing to do. I think what a lot of people don't realize is that electives are entirely up to you. You can choose whatever elective you find most interesting or the one that fits what hobbies you enjoy doing. Electives are a great way to try new things as well as have fun. I also like how you are allowed to choose how many electives you want to take in a year, whether it's 2, 3, or 4 different ones."

~ student



Engineering 1 - Design & Modeling

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: None

Description: Engineering 1 - Design & Modeling is an educational, challenging, and fun elective using hands-on activities to learn about technology and engineering.

Highlights:

- Students learn engineering basics by studying the Engineering Design Cycle.
- Students learn multi-view drawing to create engineering drawings on paper and use Autodesk Inventor Professional, a three-dimensional Computer Aided Drawing (CAD) program, to design projects.
- Students learn proper use of lab tools and machinery as well as 3D printing and laser engraving by designing and constructing a Custom Clock.
- Students learn about automotive aerodynamics and physics by designing and building a CO₂ powered dragster which is raced on a 50' long track at average velocities approaching 45 mph. Students test their cars in a wind tunnel to measure aerodynamic drag along with lift and down forces on the axles.



CO₂ Dragster Race

Benefits: Projects correlate with SOL topics covered in math and science classes and shows students how their science, math, history, and language apply to real-world activities. The class prepares students to transition into Level 2 and higher elective classes in engineering and technology.

Homework: None. Class time is given for all activities.

Engineering 2 - Simulation & Fabrication

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisites: Engineering 1: Design & Modeling

Description: Engineering 2 - Simulation & Fabrication is an educational, challenging, and fun elective using hands-on activities to learn about technology and engineering.

Highlights:

- 🐾 Students learn engineering basics by implementing the Engineering Design Cycle.
- 🐾 Students learn multi-view drawing to create engineering drawings on paper and use Autodesk Inventor Professional, a three-dimensional Computer Aided Drawing (CAD) program, to design projects.
- 🐾 Students use and explore cutting edge technologies such as laser cutting and 3D printing.
- 🐾 Students will design (simulation software), construct, and launch a solid fuel **Pringle Chip Rocket** which must carry the payload of a Pringle chip to a target apogee. Students develop an understanding of the physics and mathematics of rocketry.
- 🐾 Students will learn the basics of electronics by designing and constructing a **LED Light Stand**. Students will construct this project with various machines and hand tools in order to display a laser engraved design supported by 3D printed parts.

Benefits: Projects correlate with SOL topics covered in math and science classes and shows students how their science, math, history, and language apply to real-world activities. The class prepares students to transition into Level 3 and high school elective classes in engineering and technology.

Homework: None. Class time is given for all activities.



3D Printing



Family and Consumer Science (FACS)

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: None

Description: FACS at the middle school level prepares students in their journey towards becoming independent and productive global citizens. The curriculum includes standards essential for ALL students. FACS students increase their ability to make responsible choices, find solutions to everyday problems, use technology and equipment safely and effectively, maintain healthy lifestyles, and strengthen their relationships in personal and family settings. Communication skills, workplace readiness, and volunteerism are also covered.



Highlights:

- 🐾 Management of Self and Space
- 🐾 Safety and Sanitation
- 🐾 Equipment, Recipes and Food Preparation
- 🐾 Nutrition and Wellness
- 🐾 Budget and Finance Basics
- 🐾 Work-Place Readiness
- 🐾 Sewing and Textiles

Benefits: FACS prepares students to acquire personal skills now and plan ways to transfer those skills to the workplace, assume appropriate individual and family roles, learn how to balance work and family life and acquire skills and attitudes that contribute to the good of community and society.

Homework: The homework requirement is minimal. Two home projects may be assigned to emphasize and reinforce classroom learning. The home projects will also provide an opportunity for your family to observe what you have learned as they enjoy your deliciously-prepared meal and other projects!

Who should take this course: Everyone who wants to learn life skills helpful for the future should consider FACS. Take FACS if you would like to:

- 🐾 cook for yourself
- 🐾 become familiar with kitchen safety and sanitation practices
- 🐾 make wise choices when choosing food and clothing
- 🐾 learn to make or mend clothes
- 🐾 understand how to care for yourself and others

From the Teacher: The focus of the class is to have a good time while learning life skills. Students are oftentimes up and moving around while working on projects. We are serious when we need to be, but we have fun. This is one of the most important classes a student can take as it will help students learn to be healthy, improve their personal relationships, and prepare them for independent living in the future.





COMMUNICATIONS

Creative Writing

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: One semester

Prerequisite: None / Students may not repeat this course.

Description: This course is designed for students who enjoy writing or want to strengthen their writing skills. Students will create an original short story.

Highlights:

Students will:

- 🐾 Learn many different effective writing strategies.
- 🐾 Learn how to describe the elements of narrative structure including setting, character, plot structure, conflict, and theme.
- 🐾 Learn to describe the impact of word choice, imagery, and literary devices including figurative language.
- 🐾 Either learn to design and create an electronic picture book for younger students or incorporate other fun projects.
- 🐾 Learn to utilize a writer's notebook and be able to experiment with various techniques including snapshot and thought shot.



Homework: Assignments that are not completed in class will be taken home for students to finish.

Who should take this course: This class is perfect for students who love to write and for students who wish to improve their writing skills in a safe learning environment. Students with a good imagination will thrive in this class.

From the Teachers: Our relaxed, open environment helps create the perfect writing atmosphere for students.

Media Communication

Grades: 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: None

Description: This semester-long elective course is designed to provide training and development in communicating through media broadcasting. Members will develop scripts, visual and audio support for the daily Rachel Carson Middle School TV show ("RCTV").

Highlights:

- 🐾 Learn and operate TV broadcast equipment as a member of the RCTV crew.
- 🐾 Be an anchor for the RCTV news broadcast.
- 🐾 Serve the RCMS middle school community with news updates.
- 🐾 Be involved in the events and activities of the Carson community.

Benefits for Students:

- 🐾 Improved communication skills through speaking and writing.
- 🐾 Enhanced time management and organizational skills.
- 🐾 Expanded knowledge and application of technology.

Homework: No homework will be assigned. Students may need to work outside of class to complete work not finished within the allotted class time.

Who should take this course:

Students with an interest in broadcasting and using audio - visual technology to communicate ideas. Self-motivated students who enjoy collaborating and functioning within a team. Self-starters comfortable solving problems and finding answers on their own. Creative individuals willing to share ideas.

From the Teacher: Media Communications is great for anyone open to possibilities.

Journalism

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: None

Description: Students in this elective are the newspaper staff for the Rachel Carson's online newspaper, *The Carson Chronicle*. Work is published on the school's news site, CarsonChronicle.com.

Highlights:

- 🐾 You will interview students, teachers, and faculty members.
- 🐾 Write articles about topics that interest you, like school news, features, events, sports, technology, etc.
- 🐾 Stay up to date with current events and discussing what is happening in the world.

This class provides a perfect opportunity for students to sharpen writing, research, and editing skills in a fun and stimulating environment.

Who should take this course: Students who would like to be a part of a fun, enthusiastic, and busy newspaper team.

From the Teacher: Coming from a newspaper background, I love to make this class as much like a real newsroom as possible—because it is! After learning the skills, they need to become student journalists, my students come up with their own ideas and bring them to light. Students leave this class with skills they can use forever to share their thoughts and ideas with the world. Best of all is when they come up with new ideas that I never even planned to do, like start an Instagram account for the paper. Together, we make it happen!



PERFORMING ARTS

BAND

We offer several different bands divided into 3 levels (Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced).
There is a place in band for EVERYONE!

- Beginning Band** - Beginning level band classes develop skills on woodwind or brass instruments. Guidance will be given by the instructor in the selection of an instrument during the first few weeks of school. The Beginning Band will ultimately become part of Intermediate Band.
- Intermediate Band** - Intermediate level band students will continue to develop skills on woodwind and brass instruments. A variety of musical styles will be studied through the playing of band literature.
- Percussion Ensemble** - This course is designed to meet specific needs of intermediate percussionists. Content includes study of appropriate ensemble literature, and rehearsal and performance techniques from the various areas of musical composition. Percussion Ensemble performs as the percussion section for Intermediate Band.
- Advanced Band** - Advanced level band offers instruction to the advanced player in a full-band setting. In-depth study of musical styles will be realized through challenging band literature.



The 2018-19 RCMS Symphonic Band was featured at the Virginia Music Educators Conference.

BAND Q&A

1. **Which band should my child sign up for?**
ALL students interested in band should simply select "BAND" as a course selection – no need to worry about which level right now. Students will be enrolled in Intermediate Band (923310) as a placeholder until students are auditioned and placed into their exact band class by the RCMS directors with input from their elementary band directors.
2. **How and when can my child audition for band?**
Auditions are only "class placements." Everyone will be accepted into the band program and there are no "bad" placements – only best starting places to best meet each student's individual needs! The RCMS Band Directors will visit each feeder school to meet with and listen to students or will schedule times to hear them on-line or in-person at RCMS. Students will be asked to play a scale or two that they have been working on along with a short piece of music (about 8-12 measures) of their choice. This is usually from music they are working on in band class or private lessons. They can also utilize suggested materials that will be shared by the RCMS directors through the elementary band directors.
3. **My child has never been in band before. Can they start band in middle school?**
YES! We offer a beginning band here at Rachel Carson. Students will try out different instruments during the first few weeks of school to find the best fit. We start all wind instruments, but do not offer beginning percussion.
4. **Where will my child store his/her instrument during the day?**
We have an instrument storage room located in the band room for this very purpose. Students can stop by the band room every morning before reporting to their first class. Students then stop by the band room at the end of the day on their way out to the bus to pick up their instruments. There is plenty of time for both drop off and pick up.
5. **How can my child better prepare for middle school band?**
Consider taking private lessons! We have many highly qualified professional musicians in our area. Please ask an RCMS Band Director or your child's current band director for a list of recommended teachers. Attend a summer band camp! There are many day camps in our area and many overnight camps in the region. Please contact an RCMS Band Director for more information and advice on determining the camp that might be the best fit for your child!



For more information or questions, please contact:

Steven Dailey
Director of Bands
SDailey@fcps.edu



CHORUS

- Treble Chorus** - This is an introductory ensemble for treble (female) voices. It is a year-long course concentrating on the FCPS POS. Students do not need previous choral experience to participate in this course.
- Basso Chorus** - This is an introductory ensemble for changing and changed (male) voices. It is a year-long course concentrating on the FCPS POS. Students do not need previous choral experience to participate in this course.
- Voci d'oro** - This is an intermediate level ensemble for treble (female) voices. Members of this class need to be placed in the class by completing a teacher voice placement and show a mastery of basic singing, music reading and ear training. Previous choral experience, particularly all-county choir, is helpful.
- Bella Voce** - This is an advanced level ensemble for eighth grade treble voices. Members of this class have been placed in this class by showing mastery of intermediate singing, music reading and ear training. They have also shown a commitment to excellence in choral music or in other classes in the school. This is a rigorous course designed to challenge the singers.
- Ragazzi** - This is an advanced level ensemble for changing and changed tenor/bass voices. Members of this class have been placed in this class by showing mastery of intermediate singing, music reading and ear training. They have also shown a commitment to excellence in choral music at RCMS or by recommendation from their elementary school music teacher. This is a rigorous course designed to challenge the singers.

CHORUS Q&A

- 1. When do students do a voice placement?**
 Students will sing individually for the chorus teacher in the spring for the following school year. Students do not need to prepare anything for the voice placement. This will check on the vocal and aural skills of the student to best place them in the class where their abilities lie.
- 2. Can a student be placed in an intermediate or advanced class without having been in a choir before?**
 Yes, it is possible, especially for students who have studied a musical instrument of some kind.
- 3. Does being in choir in 7th grade automatically mean a student should be placed in the advanced choirs?**
 No, all students who sing in 7th grade will need to do a voice placement for their 8th grade year.

For more information or questions, please contact

Christen Reddig,
 Chorus Director,
CEReddig@fcps.edu



Guitar

This is a **semester-long elective course for 8th grade students only,**

Guitar offers beginning instruction on classical guitar.

Guitar instruction emphasizes basic technique, note reading, progressions, and music theory.

There are no performances associated with this course - students will play guitar only during class.

Students will learn to:

- Play notes on all 6 strings in 1st position.
- Play principal chords in simplified position.
- Play melodies and harmonies by ear.
- Use various fingerpicking patterns and techniques.
- Play major and minor scales.
- Develop a repertoire of songs in various genres.

For more information or questions, please contact

Christen Reddig,
 Chorus Director,
CEReddig@fcps.edu



ORCHESTRA

Beginning Orchestra

Grade: 7, 8 **Length of Course:** Year

Prerequisite: **None!** Students who have *no prior experience* are invited to take this class!

String Ensemble

Grades: 7, 8 **Length of Course:** Year

Prerequisites: Successful audition, at least one year playing experience.

Intermediate Orchestra called *Concert Orchestra*

Grades: 7, 8 **Length of Course:** Year

Prerequisites: Successful audition, at least one year playing experience.

Intermediate Orchestra called *Philharmonic Orchestra*

Grades: 7, 8 **Length of Course:** Year

Prerequisites: Successful audition, at least one year playing experience.

Advanced Orchestra called *Chamber Orchestra*

Grades: 7, 8 **Length of Course:** Year

Prerequisites: Successful audition, at least two years playing experience.

Advanced Orchestra called *Symphonic Orchestra*

Grades: 7, 8 **Length of Course:** Year

Prerequisites: Successful audition, at least two years playing experience.

ORCHESTRA Q&A

1. If I play cello or bass, do I have to bring my instrument to school every day?

No! You will rent an instrument from the school (a one-time \$55-dollar rental fee) and it will stay in the classroom, ready for use every day. You'll leave your personal cello or bass at home to practice.

2. If I play violin or viola, do I have to bring my instrument to school every day?

Yes! Violins and violas will need to bring their instruments to and from school each day they have orchestra (block schedule). They will drop them off in the morning and pick them up at the end of the day. If you own two instruments of the same size, you're welcome to leave one at home and one at school.

3. Do you have extra violins or violas to rent?

We have a very limited inventory of violins and violas to assist students with financial concerns.

4. Is my child required to take private lessons?

No, but of course, we love when they do! A private teacher list can be provided upon request.

5. How much do I need to practice?

There are practice logs distributed throughout the year that require at least 120 minutes per week. That translates to about 20 minutes a day, 6 days a week, although it may be split up however you'd like.

6. When are auditions for 6th graders? Audition information will be sent to your elementary school teacher sometime in the spring and auditions will be shortly after. Ms. Wilcox will visit your strings class and you will be asked to perform an audition either during your class time or via video recording submission. Every child is required to audition for an orchestra placement! Only true beginners will be exempted from an audition.

For more information or questions, please contact

Christopher Fyhr, Orchestra Director, CHFyhr@fcps.edu

Music Lab

This is an elective semester course offering beginning instruction in basic music skills and guitar. Elements of music literacy, music history, world music and culture, and music appreciation are included in the curriculum. No previous music experience is necessary.

Guitar Technique - While Music Lab is NOT a performance-based music class, guitar playing is utilized to apply the music knowledge learned.

Students will develop:

- An understanding of music fundamentals and theory
- The ability to analyze
- Describe and listen to music
- An understanding of music in relation to history and culture

Students will learn to:

- Perform, write and create music

For more information, please contact

Christen Reddig, CEReddig@fcps.edu

- Read music notation, chord frames and tablature
- Navigate and compose with standard music notation software

Activity and Assignment Topics:

- Musicians and composers of various genres
- Why music is important to different cultures
- How music is used around the world
- How music is created



THEATER ARTS

How can Drama electives help you?

Some valuable skills performing arts students cultivate are essential, 21st-Century skills including: creativity, focus, team building, confidence, poise, professionalism, preparation, time management, self-control, discipline, self-expression, positive attitude, and acceptance.

Colleges around the country look for that well-rounded, self-confident, and creative student, and some schools have even begun listing the performing arts as a required subject for admission.

The benefits of an arts education are invaluable and lifelong!

Speech & Theatre Arts







Grade: 7&8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: Can only be taken once, in 7th OR 8th

Description: This course is designed for students with little or no theatre experience and promotes enjoyment and appreciation for all aspects of theatre. Students learn how to speak loudly and clearly, improvise and think quickly on their feet, and use their bodies to tell a story. Students can build 21st-Century life-skills, including public speaking skills, creative thinking, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration skills. Students who already have acting experience will refine their acting through this class. The students will also learn basic script writing, parts of the stage, and memorization techniques.

Highlights:

-  Improvisation
-  Scripted scenes
-  Pantomime
-  Choreography
-  Storytelling
-  Audition skills



Homework: Memorization of lines

Who should take this course: Anyone that is interested in acting and has little or no prior theater experience. This class is great class for both shy and outgoing students alike!

From the Teacher: Speech & Theatre Arts Appreciation is a taste of many aspects of performance. We work on individual performance skills and facilitate the student's ability to work well with their peers. This class is engaging, active, and fun!

Additional Info: There are field trip opportunities available. Typically, each semester there is a FCPS field trip for all beginning Theatre Arts students to a local performance venue such as The Kennedy Center. In addition, there is a one-day NYC trip for a limited number of Theatre Arts students.



Technical Theatre

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: Can only be taken once, in 7th OR 8th

Description: Students develop an appreciation of technical theatre, including lighting, sound, costumes, prop and set design, makeup design, and stage management. Students will develop skills in listening, presenting, collaborating, and discussing in group situations. Students will explore and design technical theatre elements as they take on the role of an Artistic Director.

Highlights: Students create light plots, learn how to run a lightboard, design costumes, design and apply stage makeup (basic, character, old-age, and cuts/bruises), design scenery/create props, and explore the job of a stage manager.

Homework: Most work will be done in class. However, if required work is not completed in the allotted class time, it must be finished at home.

Who should take this course: Technical Theatre is for students who are interested in Theatre Arts but don't necessarily want to perform on the stage. Techies keep the show running with their hard work and dedication. If it sounds like fun to learn how work stage lights, make model sets, create costume designs, or apply stage makeup, then Technical Theatre is the class for you!

From the Teacher: Technical Theatre Class simulates the real-world of the professional theatre designer. All work is hands-on, creative, and catered to the interests of the students.

Additional Info: Typically, each semester there is a FCPS field trip for all beginning Theatre Arts students to a local performance venue such as The Kennedy Center. In addition, there is a one-day NYC trip for a limited number of Theatre Arts students.



Spring Musical ~
Pirates of Penzance JR



Advanced Theatre Arts

Grade: 8

Length of Course: Can choose Semester or Full Year

Prerequisites: Speech and Theatre Arts, and Audition

Description: Advanced Theatre Arts is for the student who loves acting and wishes to take their performance abilities to another level. Students prepare varied texts to go "from page to stage" and participate in a variety of dramatic activities and perform for varied audiences. This course offers students who are highly motivated and talented in Theatre Arts with an appropriate outlet for their creative expression. Students who take this class must be serious and hard working. They must also take 7th Grade Speech and Theatre Arts Participation to audition for full-year Drama. Students in this course perform, produce, and direct plays including the RCMS fall show. Advanced Drama students participate in theatre events and performance opportunities such as the Folger Library's Shakespeare Festival.

Highlights: Advanced Theatre Arts provides authentic, real-world performance opportunities and for students to learn from theatre professionals.

Homework: Production work such as memorizing lines, gathering audition information, and directing work will be required as homework.

Who should take this course: ATA is for the student who loves acting and longs to take their performance abilities to another level.

From the Teacher: Through the year-long, intensive theatre class we work together as a family and the students are truly there because they want to do the hard work necessary to succeed. Students will form a mock theatre company and participate in multiple types of performances throughout the school year. This is a place where students participate, learn, grow, and SHINE. Advanced Drama is a memorable, full-year opportunity for the dedicated theatre student.

Additional Info: Students perform at the Folger Library Shakespeare Festival. In addition, there is a one-day NYC trip for a limited number of Theatre Arts students.



VISUAL ARTS

Art Foundations

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: None

Description: Students in Art Foundations explore techniques and art processes such as drawing, painting, sculpture, and printmaking. Using their Communication, Critical & Creative Thinking, Goal Oriented and Resiliency skills to express ideas and viewpoints. Cross curriculum learning is achieved with hands on experiences.

- 🐾 Work three-dimensionally and two-dimensionally
- 🐾 How to work with a wide variety of media/techniques
- 🐾 Have fun in a studio setting!
- 🐾 Produce paintings, prints, drawings, hand building with clay, sculpture and mix media.

Highlights: Projects from painting, drawing, and creating sculptures.

Homework: None

Who should take this course: Anyone! This course is designed for students with little or advanced visual art experience and promotes enjoyment and appreciation for all aspects of the visual arts. This is a hands-on, problem-solving focused class.

From the Teacher: Art Foundations is a fun, social and creative environment for students to explore different art materials and techniques. Create something you never thought you could while having fun doing it!

Additional Info: Artwork is displayed throughout the school during the year.

"Creating art gives children an opportunity for self-expression. In a group setting there is also the opportunity to share their work with others, practicing socialization skills and developing relationships with adults and with peers."

~ Harvard's Project Zero, on the importance of Art Education

Art Extensions

Grade: 8

Length of Course: Year

Prerequisite: Art Foundations, portfolio review and/or Teacher Recommendation.

Students are required to have completed an Art Foundation class and consistently excels in creative and critical thinking, independent problem solving, and quality craftsmanship. Space is limited.

Description: Students will study art techniques and processes. They will be able to experiment with materials and ideas to develop, inform and critique personal artmaking. They will be able to create 3D and 2D artwork.

Highlights: Students will use new materials and techniques, refine artmaking skills, and interpret and express ideas related to a wide variety of themes. Students produce innovative and meaningful artworks while developing a personal voice and a high level of quality and craftsmanship in drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and ceramics.

Homework: none

Who should take this course: This course is for students who are serious about mastering their artistic skills, and who are willing to put in effort to work hard in the class. Students should be able to consistently excel in creative ideas and quality craftsmanship while showing independent creative problem-solving skills.

From the Teacher: Art Extensions is a good course for focused students who are *seriously committed* to learning many art skills and techniques in a fun way.

Additional Info: Artwork is displayed throughout the school all year!

3-D Art Exploration

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisite: 7th Graders - Art Foundations / 8th Graders- No Prerequisite Required

Description 3D Exploration Art students work in clay, sculpture, and architecture. Students will learn sculptural vocabulary and concepts, construction methods, sculptural and ceramic techniques and more!

Highlights: This is a hands-on, fun class making everything clay buildings to personal memoirs. A highlight of the class is the opportunity to use a potter's wheel!

Homework: None

Who should take this course: There is no experience needed for this class. Students who took Art Foundations will build upon sculptural concepts and practices in a variety of media. This is a great choice for students who like to work with their hands while building and creating! Be prepared to get messy sometimes! This is a problem-solving environment focused on critical and creative thinking skills.

From the Teacher: Students in 3-D Art will have many opportunities to explore new materials and processes, as well as work collaboratively with classmates. It's never boring! Come make stuff with us!



3-D Art Exploration



Computers in Art - Semester

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Semester

Prerequisites: 7th Grade- Art Foundations

8th Grade- No Prerequisite Required

Description: In Computers in Art, students use computers as a tool for creating artwork and animations. Students work with a wide variety of software, including Photoshop, Illustrator, Animate, and open-source online programs.

Highlights: Students in CIA learn how computers are used by professionals for artmaking in the 21st century.

Homework: None

Who should take this course: Anyone who likes computers and wants to learn about graphic design, animation, and digital artmaking. Basic computer skills like opening and saving files are helpful, but not required.

From the Teacher: See how computers are changing the world of art! Come get digital with us!

Additional Info: This is a fast-paced class that introduces students to computer programs that are used in FCPS high school level computer graphics courses.



Computers in Art

Computers in Art – Full Year

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Full Year

Prerequisites: 7th Grade- Art Foundations simultaneously

8th Grade- No Prerequisite Required

Description: The full year option of Computers in Art provides a deeper investigation of how computers can be utilized as a tool for creating artwork and animations for students who have a passion for this field of work. Students work with Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Game Maker 8, and more! Students are provided with the opportunity to try digital cameras, graphic tablets, and iPads.

Highlights: Students have an opportunity to develop and complete a personal project in addition to teacher-directed projects.

Homework: None

Who should take this course: Students who are interested and eager to learn about graphic design, digital painting, photo collage and manipulation, animation, and digital game design. Basic computer skills like opening and saving files are helpful, but not required.

From the Teacher: See how computers are changing the world of art! Come get digital with us!

Additional Info: This is an in-depth, fast-paced class that explores a variety of functions within computer programs used in FCPS high school level computer graphics courses.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Length of Course: Semester/Can be taken multiple semesters/years as appropriate.

Grades: 7, 8

Prerequisite: none

Description: This elective course is designed to provide support to students in core curricular areas and to provide direct instruction in specific learning strategies, study skills, time management, organization, and self-advocacy skills. While students may receive assistance on core curricular assignments, the course is not designed to serve as a study hall and is meant to support the development of academic habits necessary for academic success.

Highlights: Improve skills in communication, goal setting, problem solving, organization, time management, studying, test-taking, research, reading, writing, and vocabulary to help students succeed in core classes.

Homework: Very little – most assignments are done in class but may be taken home if timelines are not met.

Who should take this course: Anyone who needs some help in test taking, communication, research, organization, reading, writing, and the skills that are the foundation for all classes.

From the Teacher: Strategies for Success is a dynamic course, designed to offer practical and fun ways of developing skills, habits and attitudes to facilitate greater success in school. There are a variety of structured activities planned for each class meeting which address the highlights listed above. Some activities feature current events, public speaking and appropriate video extensions as well. Students may be recommended for this class by parents, teachers, counselors and/or students may opt-in themselves.

Additional Info: Students may enroll in this course multiple semesters/years as appropriate.



WORLD LANGUAGES

Japanese Level 1, Part A

Grade: 7

Length of Course: year

Prerequisite: None

Description: In this year-long course, students begin to develop the ability to communicate about themselves and their immediate environment using simple sentences containing basic language structures. These language structures include subject pronouns; the verbs to be, to have and basic regular verbs; subject-verb agreement; and expressions of likes and dislikes. Students begin to study the POS themes and topics of level 1.

Highlights: Students also explore traditions, customs, beliefs, and cultural contributions and how these elements relate to language.



Japanese Immersion 1

Grades: 7

Length of Course: Full Year

Prerequisite: Participation in the Immersion Program in grades 1-6

Description: This communication is evidenced in all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with an emphasis on the ability to communicate orally and in writing. They read material on familiar topics and produce short writing samples while studying the themes and topics of Home Life, Student Life, Leisure Time, and Vacation and Travel.

Highlights: Students expand their knowledge of the language to include communicating about themselves and their immediate environment.

Additional Info: Credit becomes a part of the high school transcript, is included in the determination of the high school grade point average (GPA) and counts towards fulfilling the world languages requirements of the high school Advanced Studies diploma. The content of this course is aligned with the Level 1 POS.

Japanese Level 1, Part B

Grade: 8

Length of Course: year

Prerequisites: Level I, Part A of chosen language or permission of instructor.

Description: Students continue to develop the ability to communicate about themselves and their immediate environment using simple sentences containing basic language structures. This communication is evidenced in all four language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing - with emphasis on the ability to communicate orally and in writing.

Highlights: Students continue to explore and study the themes of: About Me, Family, School, Food, and Clothing.

Additional Info: Credit becomes a part of the high school transcript, is included in the determination of the high school grade point average (GPA) and counts towards fulfilling the world languages requirement of the high school Advanced Studies diploma. It also counts towards the number of credits required for high school graduation.

Japanese Immersion 2

Grade: 8

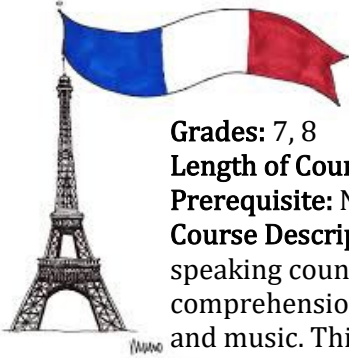
Length of Course: Full Year

Prerequisite: Japanese Immersion I

Description: This course is designed to meet the needs of the immersion students regarding their second language development. Students continue their development of language proficiency in all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The content of this course is aligned with the Level 2 POS. Credit becomes part of the high school transcript, is included in the determination of the high school grade point average (GPA) and counts towards fulfilling the world languages requirements of the Advanced Studies diploma.

Highlights: Students read material on familiar topics and produce short writing samples while studying the themes and topics of Home Life, Student Life, Leisure Time, and Vacation and Travel. In addition, students earn one high school credit.





French 1

Grades: 7, 8

Length of Course: Year

Prerequisite: None

Course Description: Bienvenue! French 1 introduces students to the cultures of a variety of French-speaking countries in Europe, the Americas, and Africa. Students work on reading, writing, comprehension, and speaking skills. This class includes hands-on activities such as games, projects, and music. This is an academic elective course that requires work and dedication, and the student will earn one high school credit after the successful completion of the Level 1 course.

Highlights: Did you know that French is an official language of 29 countries and spoken in many more? Do you want to travel or study in Europe, Africa, or Québec? French can help you communicate in all these places. Do you want to order delicious French food? You'll learn how in French 1. French is one of the world's most beautiful languages, and it is spoken on five continents, so it's a useful language. Knowledge of French culture is important to anyone's understanding of world culture. Also, students get to learn about and taste delicious French delicacies!

Homework: Expect about 15-30 minutes of homework per class, not including projects and studying for tests. The workload is consistent, and students know in advance when assignments are due. It is expected that students spend time outside of class reviewing material for this high school level course.

From the Teacher: Much of our English vocabulary comes directly from the French language, so there are many words that are familiar to English speakers. The pronunciation differs from English, but the result is beautiful!



French 2

Grade: 8

Length of Course: Year

Prerequisite: French 1 or permission of instructor.

Course Description: French 2 students continue to develop proficiency in all four language skills - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - with emphasis on the ability to communicate orally and in writing. They learn to function in real-life situations using more complex sentences and language structures. They read material on familiar topics and produce short writing samples. Students continue to explore as they study the POS themes of My Activities, My Home Life, Around Town/Travel, Health & Fitness, and Stories.

Additional Info: Credit becomes a part of the high school transcript, is included in the determination of the high school grade point average (GPA) and counts towards fulfilling the world languages requirement of the high school Advanced Studies diploma. It also counts towards the number of credits required for high school graduation. Students who successfully complete this course are able to enroll in French 3 in 9th grade.




Extras

After School Program

RCMS runs a very active after school program attended by a majority of our students. Students may participate in a blend of academic support and enrichment, leadership, social skill, youth development, fine and performing arts, and health and fitness activities. Activities are led by teachers, support staff, and parent volunteers. Students sign up for activities during lunch each day. Late bus service is provided Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Activities offered will change from year-to-year, however, some which have been offered in the past include:

-  Advertisement Club
-  Basketball
-  Battle of the Books
-  Best Buddies
-  Board Game Club
-  Boy's Group
-  Chess Club
-  Coding Club
-  Cooking Club
-  Debate
-  Fencing
-  Flag Football
-  Futsal
-  Going Green
-  Heart & Sole
-  History Club
-  Jazz Band
-  Knitting Club
-  Math Lab
-  Model UN
-  Theater Musical
-  Origami
-  Rocketry Club
-  SCA
-  Soccer
-  Special Olympics
-  Spelling Bee
-  Step Team
-  Study Hall
-  Touching Heart
-  Technology Club
-  United Sound
-  Yearbook



All information about the RCMS After School Program can be found at: <https://carsonms.fcps.edu/activities/after-school-program>.

Panther Athletics

We are very excited to offer inter-scholastic Fall Cross Country and Spring Track & Field competition for our middle-school students. To officially compete against other schools in the county, students and parents need to complete a registration process with the county and provide a certified medical exam, among other registration steps. Please see our page on the after-school website for details and deadlines.



School Academic Teams

Each grade level is organized by teams, so students have a core set of teachers and a counselor who all know you and work together to support you! Students on each team often have multiple classes together.

7th Grade Teams

- Champions
- Legacy
- Trailblazers
- Majestics
- Dream Team

8th Grade Teams

- Voyagers
- Dolphins
- Wolves
- Explorers
- Discovery

Lockers:

All middle school students will have two lockers – one in your team pod for school belongings and one in PE. Students taking band and strings will have a locker for their instrument. **Students must provide their own lock for PE lockers.** As a rule, you may only go to your lockers during passing periods. You may not carry your backpack with you during the day. The locker can store your personal belongings.



TIP: Practice with a combination lock over the summer! Then use that lock for your PE locker.