

8TH GRADE PREPARATION PACKET

Center for Gifted Studies at Dunedin Highland Middle School
2024-2025 School Year



Pictures of the CGS Class of 2024 at SPIFFs and Finance Park Field Trips

WELCOME MESSAGE

We welcome you to the 8th-grade Center for Gifted Studies team for the 2024-2025 school year. We have created this packet to help you and your family as you prepare for your final year in the Center for Gifted Studies at Dunedin Highland Middle School. We are excited to get next year moving in the right direction. Inside this packet you will find information about our classes and summer preparation activities, links to communication and curriculum, supply lists, tentative field trips, and much more. All syllabi and supply lists are subject to change.

Welcome to the team, scholars!

MISSION STATEMENT

The middle school Centers for Gifted Studies provide a full-time gifted program experience for students. A challenging and rigorous, interdisciplinary curriculum will be delivered through instructional strategies that promote creative, critical, and complex thinking. Inquiry and investigation will be used as students address relevant, real-world problems. Personal strengths and interests will be developed through differentiated instruction, independent study, service learning, and extracurricular activities. The core subjects of language arts, math, science, and social studies will be taught through an interdisciplinary approach providing a rigorous and challenging learning environment.

COMMUNICATION

If you have questions or need assistance over the summer, please contact the teacher team during the summer break. We will also use REMIND to communicate team-wide information through text messages. If you would like to enroll for whole team communication through REMIND texts, please join the 8th grade CGS Class of 2025 group by texting @2025cgs to #81010. You can also sign up at www.remind.com also using the code @2025cgs.

8TH GRADE TEAM

Dr. Teresa Bergstrom	Pre-AP World History and Geography and Advanced Academics	bergstromt@pcsb.org
Ms. Kathleen Earle	English I Honors and Advanced Academics	earlek@pcsb.org
Ms. Michelle Emry	Physical Science Honors and Advanced Academics	emrym@pcsb.org
Mr. Justin Russell	Algebra I Honors, Geometry I Honors, and Advanced Academics	russellju@pcsb.org

TEACHER TEAM RESUME

EDUCATION

5 Bachelor's Degrees, 3 Master's Degrees, 1 Doctoral Degree

INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCE

80 years overall

FLORIDA CERTIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENT

- Language Arts 6-12
- Math 6-12
- Science 5-9
- Social Studies 6-12
- Middle Grades Integrated
- Gifted Endorsement
- Reading Endorsement
- ESOL Endorsement

AWARDS

- Dunedin Highland Middle School Teacher of the Year 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2023
- Gilder Lehrmann History Teacher of the Year Nominee, 2024
- City of Dunedin Visionary Leadership, 2021
- Pinellas Council for the Social Studies MS Teacher of the Year 2013, 2020
- Top 10 finalist and People's Choice Pinellas County Schools' Teacher of the Year, 2015
- Verizon Thinkfinity Grant for Instructional Technology 2012
- Florida History Day Teacher of Merit Recipient 2012
- Pinellas History Day Teacher of the Year 2011

OTHER FUN FACTS

LANGUAGES

English, Spanish, Dog

COMMON POLICIES

Respect, Positive Attitude, Timeliness, Professionalism
(see team syllabus)

PERSONAL HOBBIES

Traveling, Reading, Gardening, Singing, Birding, Yoga,
Home Improvement, Writing, Running, Cycling, Swimming

WORST JOBS

Party store balloon artist, unofficial law enforcer, telemarketer selling windows,
glorified babysitter, clown costume sales, and holiday gift wrapping.

8th GRADE CGS SUPPLY LIST**GENERAL SUPPLIES FOR ALL CLASSES**

DHMS Locker/Lock (purchases available in mid-August)
 Pencil pouch
 4 packs of college rule notebook paper (one pack per grading period)
 Pencils
 Blue/Black pens
 Highlighters (one set for all classes, please include blue, green, and pink among options)
 Colored pencils (one set for all classes)
 Paper hole reinforcer stickers
 One single package of post its
 Personal hand sanitizer

ADVANCED ACADEMICS ELECTIVE with CGS 8th Grade Teacher Team

3-prong plastic folder with pockets
 1 unopened box of tissues (for an upcoming assignment)
 1 container of Lysol/Clorox wipes

ALGEBRA/GEOMETRY I HONORS with Mr. Russell

3+ Subject Spiral Notebook (with pockets)
 3-prong plastic folder with pockets (if spiral doesn't have pockets)
 Scientific calculator (TI-30XIIs is the one Mr. Russell would recommend)
 Graph paper
 Dry-erase marker
 Ruler, compass, & protractor (Geometry only)

ENGLISH I HONORS with Ms. Earle

1 1/2" Binder (clear cover insert preferred)
 4 dividers for binder (Reading, Communication, Vocabulary, and "Do Now")
 1 composition book

PHYSICAL SCIENCE I HONORS with Ms. Emry

1 150-page college ruled spiral notebook -or- 2 smaller notebooks (one per semester)

PRE-AP WORLD HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY with Dr. Bergstrom

1" Binder (clear cover insert preferred)
 5 subject dividers for binder

Teacher Wish Lists: Links will be sent out during the summer months as we prepare for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Please enroll in the @2025cgs REMIND to get notifications from the team during June and July.

8TH GRADE CGS TEAM SYLLABUS

TEAM CLASSROOM RULES

1. Actively participate in all classroom processes.
2. Learn all required curriculum as per FLDOE Curriculum Standards.
3. Arrive to classes prepared every day for class with required materials.
4. Treat you, others, and our school with respect.

TEAM CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

- Bathroom breaks are restricted during the first and last ten minutes of class. Students are advised to use the bathroom between class periods.
- Complete all assignments within the given time restrictions. Turn in make-up work in a timely manner. Tests and quizzes should be made up before school. It is the student's responsibility to schedule based on teacher availability.
- Sharpen pencils, turn in homework, and begin bell work before the tardy bell.
- The bell does not dismiss class; teachers will dismiss the class.
- Listen during instruction. All academic questions will be answered after instructions are given.
- Personal concerns/questions should be shared privately with your teachers during silent activities or between classes.
- Politely ask permission to move or leave class during instruction. Movement around the classroom should be done quickly, quietly, and safely.
- Just because a rule or procedure might not be included in this list, does not mean that it doesn't exist! Reference the Pinellas County Student Code of Conduct for more details.

CONSEQUENCES (per teacher discretion/degree of infraction)

1. Warning
2. Time Out or
3. Detention with Parent Contact
4. Detention with Parent Contact
5. Administrative Referral

LATE WORK POLICY

Our team's late work policy will be revised in time for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Please see our class syllabi in August for these updates.

EXTRA CREDIT

Attempts at "extra credit" when offered is highly recommended but not mandatory; Extra Credit assignments count as bonus points added to your cumulative grade each marking period.

USE OF PLANNERS

We highly recommend that all students utilize a planner to remain organized and manage deadlines. While planners could be digital or hardbound in nature, hardbound planners should be kept inside the student's backpack.

LOCKERS

We recommend that our 8th graders check out and use their locker daily to help reduce the number of bulky backpacks in our classrooms and the weight on our students' shoulders throughout the school day. Locks will be sold during the first weeks of school and students may use a previously bought DHMS lock on our campus.

ASSIGNMENT HEADING

Head all notebook paper-based and digitally submitted assignments with the following information: Full student name, teacher name, period, and date. All assignments without a proper heading could receive incomplete credit; resulting in a zero if the issue continues regularly. Notebooks and binders should have the students first and last name clearly written so that it will not wear off. Names often rub or wear off plastic covers. The name should then be written on the back of the notebook/binder, if possible.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

We strictly adhere to the PCS Code of Conduct as it concerns academic honesty and all cases of plagiarism and cheating. While these incidents can stem from external or internal pressures, we would rather have students communicate requests for extension, rather than make irrational decisions that lead to consequences due to cheating or plagiarism. The consequences of engaging in academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will vary on a case-by-case basis, but administrative referrals could be issued and reflect on a student's permanent record. We expect all student work to be authentic. Work should not be shared between students, unless approved by the teacher.

SCHOLARLY DISPOSITION

As Gifted Center students, professionalism is always expected while students are on campus or representing the Gifted Center off campus. Work should be neat, accurate, and thoughtful in effort and completion. Actively play the role of the exemplary DHMS Gifted Center student to ensure that the culture of our center maintains its stellar reputation for academic and behavioral excellence. Take the initiative to keep team classrooms clean and organized. You are the leading example for those who follow.

FIELD TRIPS

While the following trips are tentative, we are currently making plans to attend the following functions as a CGS 8th Grade Team:

- St. Petersburg International Folk Festival (Friday, October 18th)
- Finance Park at the Stavros Center (to be determined)
- Gradventure at Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure (optional; May 9th)
- And more...

SUMMER MESSAGES AND ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

ADVANCED ACADEMICS ELECTIVE with Dr. Bergstrom, Ms. Earle, Ms. Emry, and Mr. Russell

As a team, we will facilitate the 8th grade Advanced Academics CGS class elective for gifted students. With a unified vision, the team members will facilitate instruction that will support the needs of the whole gifted child. Many of our units will serve the social-emotional needs, as well as the academic needs of students with the goal of successfully preparing them for their transition to high school.

In the Advanced Academics class, students will complete units related to the following topics or concepts of study:

- Develop creative and critical thinking skills
- Brainstorm and solve teen-related issues and real-world issues
- Address relevant topics related to current events
- Discuss topics of social-emotional growth with gifted students
- Research High School programming and University/College interests
- Complete Finance Park and Career Planning unit with accompanying field trip to the Stavros Center
- Interdisciplinary study and student-interest projects
- Conceptual integration of "Conflict" within AA curriculum and core subject-area interdisciplinary study.

Along with the AA curriculum, students will also have opportunities to nurture and sustain healthy habits for academic success through practices related to organization, time management, and support for healthy balances between academic and personal growth. It is imperative that students are willing to work for their highest academic potential, while discovering and determining the healthiest path toward their high school experience.

ALGEBRA I HONORS -or- GEOMETRY I HONORS with Mr. Russell

Welcome to the start of a new school year! This year, students will be studying Geometry and Algebra I from the Pearson envision Geometry and McGraw-Hill Algebra series. The curriculum is problem-centered which means that students will investigate mathematical ideas within the context of a realistic problem, as opposed to looking only at numbers. Some problems involve real-world applications or unusual situations, while others are purely mathematical. I am looking forward to a successful year for all of our students. Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions. My email address russellju@pcsb.org

REQUIRED BACKGROUND

To successfully complete this course, you must pass the Florida Department of Education End of Course Assessment and demonstrate an understanding of various algebraic and geometric concepts through tests, quizzes and homework throughout the 2022-2023 school years.

GENERAL RULES: Materials + Willingness to Learn = SUCCESS

1. Students must come to class prepared, which means having all the materials they will need to be successful along with a willingness to learn.
2. Be on time for class.
3. No talking when the teacher is talking.
4. Be respectful of those around you and their learning environment.

GRADING POLICIES

Homework will be given most days of the week and should be completed/submitted the next school day. Exceptions to this will be explained clearly. A score will be given on homework assignments based on completion and justification of answer.

Homework/classwork will count 30% of your grade, while quizzes/tests/projects will count for 70% of each report period (with some fluctuation). All make up tests will be given before school or during a free period. Late work is considered on a case-by-case basis.

ENGLISH I HONORS with Ms. Earle

Welcome to 8th grade Gifted Language Arts/English 1 Honors. This course counts as one year of high school English and incorporates curriculum specifically designed for gifted students. Therefore, we will combine PCS Middle School and High School curriculum for English I Honors, materials purchased through the PCS Gifted Department, and selected beyond-grade-level texts. Doing so will ensure the accelerated differentiation of materials, content, and products necessary for our CGS students to actualize their literary and analytical potential.

Our curriculum is comprised of a variety of “genres” – poetry, epics, novels, short stories, and informational texts. Writing skills include organization/focus/purpose, evidence and elaboration, and attention to conventions (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure).

Texts, topics, and projects we will engage with this year include:

- ***I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives***
- ***Romeo and Juliet*** + a sonnet project
- ***The Odyssey*** + a mythology project
- ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** + a “social justice” research unit on Tulsa Riots, Rosewood, Emmett Till, and the Scottsboro Boys
- ***Animal Farm*** + the rise of Communism

In addition, we will also use the following material provided by the Center for Gifted Studies, College of William & Mary:

- ***The Magic Lens*** (grammar and composition)
- ***Word Within the Word, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2*** (Greek and Latin stems)
- **1940’s: A Decade of Change**
- **Novels:** Maus II and Hiroshima, Anne Frank, Member of the Wedding (extra credit)

Suggested Summer Reading for English I Honors:

- Read: ***I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives*** by Martin Ganda, et al. Caitlin Alifirenka, and Liz Welch (2016) – **Related Extra Credit Assignment Forthcoming.**

English I Honors at both the middle and high school levels in Pinellas County Schools is undergoing some curricular changes for the 2024-2025 school year. Over the summer, I will be collaborating with staff from both departments, as well as with gifted staff developers and other PCS personnel. I will communicate any substantive changes in my syllabus at the beginning of the school year.

Please email Ms. Earle @ earlek@pcsb.org with any questions. I look forward to working with you!

PHYSICAL SCIENCE HONORS with Ms. Emry**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Physical Science 1 Honors course is a high school level class that focuses on the physical sciences. This class counts as a high school science credit. This course will focus on the identified course benchmarks from the 9-12 Bodies of Knowledge with high levels of complexity. Some of the topics we will cover: States of Matter, Chemical Structure of Matter, Chemical Bonding, Acids and Bases, Heat and Temperature, Forces, Newton's Laws of Motion, Energy, Waves, Cycling of Matter in Biogeochemical cycles and the special properties of water.

Students will be assessed on their retention of concepts learned in 6th and 7th grade. We will remediate benchmarks as both a whole group and as individual work to support all science clusters that will be assessed on the 8th grade Science Standards Assessment.

GRADING

Interactive Notebook, Tests, Projects

CURRICULUM

Discovery online text available through CLEVER. We will also be using the College of William and Mary text, *Nuclear Energy: Friend or Foe?*

WAYS of WORK

We will be working in our notebook almost every day and students are expected to bring their notebooks every day. Notebooks are collected and graded on test days. Grades are posted as a unit. There will be times when grades are not being entered as we are working through a unit. Some units can take up to 3 weeks to complete.

PROJECTS

Projects that support the curriculum will be assigned periodically throughout the year.

PRE-AP WORLD HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY with Dr. Bergstrom

What is Pre-AP World History and Geography (Pre-AP WHG)?

The Pre-AP World History and Geography is a high school level social studies course that focuses on the evaluation of evidence, explaining historical and geographic relationship, incorporating evidence, and presenting information in a variety of written, oral, or project-based work products. As part of the Center for Gifted Studies, additional differentiation is facilitated to meet the needs of gifted learners.

This course includes four units of study, with each dedicated to one of the four grading periods of the school year:

- 1) Geography and World Regions (a conceptual survey),
- 2) the Ancient Period (to 600 BCE),
- 3) the Classical Period (600 BCE – 600 CE), and
- 4) the Postclassical Period (600-1450 CE).

Pre-AP WHG students will earn an honors high school social studies credit (4.5) with the completion of this course and their overall academic grade will reflect on their high school transcript.

SUMMER PREPARATION FOR PRE-AP WHG

#1 – Explore National History Day (www.nhd.org)

Each school year, 8th grade CGS students are required to complete a National History Day (NHD) project in Dr. Bergstrom's class. With the 2025 annual theme of **Rights and Responsibilities in History**, we welcome a wide array of topics that could originate from various genres and time periods, whether they are regional, national, or international in scope. While more detailed information about the project will be delivered the first week of school, I ask students to begin the exciting opportunity to branch out and explore possible topics.

Don't decide yet. Key criteria for strong NHD topics include strong multiple connections to the annual theme and expansive historical impact and significance to our world. Just start brainstorming!

#2 – Review World Geography

The first unit of study in the Pre-AP WHG curriculum will be a survey of world geography and its relation to humans. Students can begin to explore and familiarize themselves with the natural/physical and political geography of the following regions of the world: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Sub-Saharan Africa, West Africa, Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East, India, China, Meso and South America, Greece, Rome, and European nations. In preparation, students can use the *AP Human Geography World Regions Maps* for study purposes. The World Regions Map can be found through a basic Google search.

#3 – Extra Credit Summer Reading

To prepare for your first Pre-Advanced Placement class in World History and Geography (Pre-AP WHG), it is imperative for students to begin exploring how it will feel to manage summer reading responsibilities that they will experience as they transition to different specialized programs in high school. Two books have been highly recommended by my colleagues who facilitate the Pre-AP WHG class from across the country. While these books are not mandatory, I will offer extra credit to students who complete one of the two books listed below, which will be included in the gradebook for either the 1st or 2nd grading periods.

Both books are wonderful introductions to our study of the Ancient World, focusing on the first of many characteristics of a civilization that will be a constant thematic connection in the curriculum for the Pre-AP WHG curriculum: ***stable food supply***. While a stable food supply is in large part the essence of this literature, students will also explore connections with the other characteristics of a civilization: written language, technology, government, religion, the arts, and social structures.

- Standage, Tom. (2005). *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*. Bloomsbury Press. New York, NY. (Amazon Link: <https://www.amazon.com/History-World-6-Glasses/dp/0802715524>)
- Standage, Tom. (2009). *An Edible History of Humanity*. Bloomsbury Press. New York, NY. (Amazon Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Edible-History-Humanity-Tom-Standage/dp/0802719910>)

To showcase this assignment's completion, students will need to complete Cornell Notes for the book that focuses on the major concepts and patterns that students identify while they read their selection. (10 handwritten pages max) Dr. Bergstrom will announce the submission date and instructions during the first week of class.

Summer Reading Assignment Expectations:

1. Select and completely read one of the two books by Tom Standage.
2. As the student reads the book, they should complete Cornell Notes that focus on the main concepts and connections/patterns presented in the material. The Cornell Notes will be submitted for extra credit at the beginning of the school year. For more information on how to take Cornell Notes, use a Google search. There are many tutorial videos available.

While these books go beyond the scope of the Pre-AP curriculum, they are offered to provide students with an in-depth and differentiated study for higher level readers. *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* refers to adult beverages, as it was far healthier to consume alcoholic drinks than unfiltered water in the ancient world. Both books are equal in historical quality and connection to our curriculum. Students and their parents should decide if they should participate, and which book would be best to read based on their preferences. Please email Dr. Bergstrom with questions regarding this summer reading opportunity at bergstromt@pcsb.org.