Welcome to the Class of 2033!

The 6th Grade Playbook

A Parent's Guide to the Middle School Transition

Cresskill Middle School | March 2026

NotebookLM

Our Mission

Our mission is to foster a culture of EXCELLENCE for ALL.



Empowerment: Developing leaders and critical thinkers.



Inclusivity: Prioritizing mental health, SEL, and community.



Citizenship: Preparing engaged citizens for the betterment of the world.

Your Leadership Team

Building Leaders

John Massaro, Principal

Lauren Bucco, Assistant Principal

Dan Apice, Assistant Principal of Student Support Services

Student Support

Dr. Janelle Amato, Director of Student Services

Lana Shtofmakher, Middle School Guidance Counselor

Curriculum & Athletics

Erik Roth, Director of Curriculum

Supervisors: Alexis Peck, Nadine McGrath, Grace Chun

Veronica Mullen, Athletic Director

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The Big Leap: Elementary vs. Middle School

Elementary School		**Middle School**
Single classroom & 1 teacher	→	7+ classrooms and 7+ teachers
“Homeroom” class & Specials	→	7 periods of changing classes with varied student schedules
Standards-based grading	→	Letter grades with numerical values
3 Trimesters	→	4 Marking Periods
Parent Conferences	→	Direct digital communication and the Genesis Gradebook

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A Day in the Life

Navigating the Middle School Bell Schedule



PERIOD 1 *High School students report	7:50-8:33
PERIOD 2 *Middle School students report	8:36-9:22 *Morning announcements 8:36-8:39
PERIOD 3	9:25-10:08
PERIOD 4	10:11-10:54
PERIOD 5 (Lunch for grades 8-12)	10:57-11:40
PERIOD 6 (Lunch for grades 6 & 7)	11:43-12:26
PERIOD 7	12:29-1:12
PERIOD 8	1:15-1:58
PERIOD 9	2:01-2:44
EXTRA HELP	2:45-3:20

The 6th Grade Curriculum

Core Foundation

- English 6 (or ESL)
- Math 6 (or Algebra 6)
- Science 6
- US History 6
- Physical Education / Health 6

Exploratory & Support

Cultural Connections & Exploration 6

Extended Learning 6

Next Step: Students will also select one Elective Path to complete their schedule.

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Action Required Genesis Elective Selection

Step 1: Log into the **Genesis Parent Portal.**

Step 2: Navigate to the **Scheduling** tab ➔ Click **Requests.**

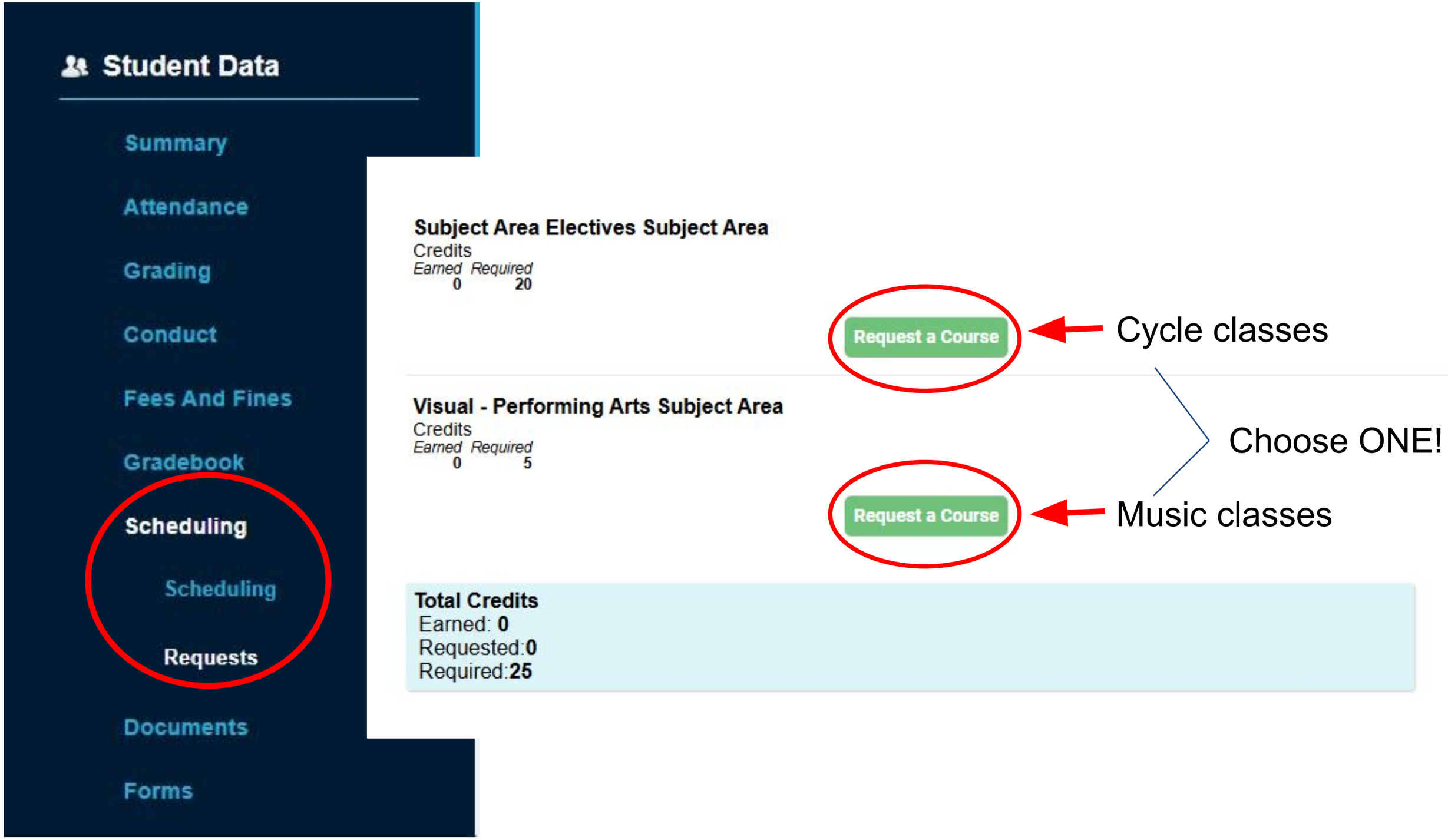
Step 3: The Big Choice (Choose ONE path only)

Branch A: Subject Area Elective (Cycle 6)
Includes one marking period of courses from various topics and subject areas

Branch B: Visual-Performing Arts
Choose exactly ONE of the following: Band 6, Choir 6, OR Band & Choir 6.

Crucial: **Only select ONE option across both categories. Do not request both a Cycle and a Music class.**

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Student Data
Summary
Attendance
Grading
Conduct
Fees And Fines
Gradebook
Scheduling
Scheduling
Requests
Documents
Forms
Subject Area Electives Subject Area
Credits
Earned Required
0 20
Request a Course
Cycle classes
Visual - Performing Arts Subject Area
Credits
Earned Required
0 5
Choose ONE!
Request a Course
Music classes
Total Credits
Earned: 0
Requested:0
Required:25

Beyond the Classroom: Clubs & Arts

Student Life & Clubs



- Brain Busters
- Environmental Club
- Various cultural clubs
- Crochet Club
- Friendship Bracelets for Charity
- and many more

Performing Arts & Music

Theater

- **Principal Players** *(Fall Drama, Spring Musical - Audition required)*
- **Lighting and Audio Crew**

Music

- **Middle School Jazz Band** *(Audition)*
- **Middle School Vocal Ensemble** *(Audition)*

Elite Opportunities

- **County/Region Band & Jazz Band**
- **Region/All-State Orchestra**

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Cougar Athletics

Middle School Athletics are subject to change annually based on student interest

Fall Season

Girls Volleyball, Girls Soccer, Boys Soccer (7th/8th only)

Winter Season

Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball (7th/8th only)

Spring Season

Girls Softball, Boys Baseball (7th/8th only)
Boys & Girls Track & Field (Open to 6th - 8th grade)

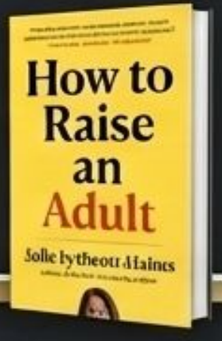
Contact Mrs. Veronica Mullen, Athletic Director, with any questions vmullen@cresskillnj.net

The Pre-Teen Transition

Promoting Independence

Moving from direct parent management to fostering grit.

Allow chiidren to experience failure, manage their own responsiblllties, and advocate for themselves.



Emotional & Social Changes

Navigating hormones, new peer groups, and the desire for autonomy.

CMS's Advisory Program. Focus on the 5 SEL core competencies:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationships
- Decision Making

Digital Safety & Social Media

Exposure to apps that require users to be 13+.

Understand that joint/monitored accounts do not prevent exposure to inappropriate content or FOMO. Cyberbullying claims are highly challenging to investigate.

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The Support Ecosystem

Encourage your student to advocate for themselves first.
If further support is needed, follow the routing guide below.

If you have a question about...	➔ Contact...
A specific class assignment or grade	**The Teacher directly (include case manager if IEP/504)**
The overall subject curriculum	**The Content Area Supervisor**
Overall academic or social/emotional growth	**Ms. Shtofmakher (Guidance Counselor)**
Attendance or daily operations	**Mrs. Collins (Main Office)**
Health concerns	**Mrs. Donna Wilson (School Nurse)**

Extra help is available with teachers (2:45-3:20 PM) and through High School student tutoring.

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The Digital Hub

1. The Genesis Portal

- Student Information System
- Required forms & contact info
- Attendance tracking
- Current numerical grades
- Report cards & honor roll

**Students will receive their own separate login to view grades directly.*

2. The School Website

Your hub for school operations, upcoming events, and student achievements.

3. The Mobile App

Cresskill Public Schools 4+
Cresskill Public Schools
2.5 • 20 Ratings
Free

Download the “Cresskill Public Schools” app for on-the-go notifications and push updates.

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The Runway to 6th Grade

Now

Log into Genesis to select your 6th-grade elective path.

Spring

5th Grade Student Visits. Ms. Shtofmakher visits EHB & MMS. Students will get an MS overview, learn to read schedules, practice combination locks, and do a Q&A.

May 27th

5th Grade Orientation (Rain date: June 2nd).

Summer 2026

Watch your inbox for Math/ELA summer assignments and 6th-grade supply lists. Take time to relax and recharge!

Late August

Final orientation just prior to the start of the 2026-2027 school year.

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What was your biggest fear coming to CMS?

Enjoy the remainder of your elementary school experience and the 5th grade end-of-year festivities!

We can't wait to welcome the Class of 2033 to Cresskill Middle School.

If there are any general questions about IEPs & 504s, Dr. Amato is available to answer them now!

For ongoing updates, visit the Cresskill Middle School Website or check the Genesis Parent Portal.

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