

Parent Guide to Eighth Grade Curriculum



This guide contains a partial listing of the curriculum your child will learn this year. Contact your child's teacher for more information.

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K-5 Schools

Baton Elementary
Davenport Elementary
Dudley Shoals Elementary
Gamewell Elementary
Granite Falls Elementary
Hudson Elementary
Lower Creek Elementary
Sawmills Elementary
Valmead Elementary
West Lenoir Elementary
Whitnel Elementary

K-8 Schools

Collettsville Elementary
Happy Valley Elementary
Kings Creek Elementary

Middle Schools

Gamewell Middle
Granite Falls Middle
Hudson Middle
William Lenoir Middle

High Schools

Caldwell Early College
Career Center Middle College
Hibriten High
South Caldwell High
West Caldwell High

Alternative Schools

Horizons Elementary
Gateway Alternative

Caldwell County Schools

Mission Statement

To provide quality instruction in a safe, caring environment.

Vision Statement

Every student will graduate from high school, be globally competitive for work or postsecondary education, and be prepared for life in the 21st century.

Board of Education

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All programs, activities and facilities of the Caldwell County School System are available to all on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. The school system is an equal access, Equal Opportunity Employer. Questions pertaining to educational equity, equal opportunity, or equal access should be addressed to the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources.

Caldwell County Middle Schools recognize that the 21st Century presents remarkably different challenges for young adolescents than in the past. Our middle schools are designed for student success. Reflecting recommendations of the Association of Middle Level Educators (AMLE), Caldwell County Middle Schools are developmentally responsive, challenging, empowering, and equitable and exemplify the following characteristics:

In Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:

- Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them.
- Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning.
- Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant.
- Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches.
- Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure it.

In Leadership and Organization:

- A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision.
- Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research, and best practices.
- Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration.
- Ongoing professional development reflects best educational practices.
- Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.

In Culture and Community:

- The school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all.
- Each student's academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.
- Comprehensive guidance and support services meet the needs of young adolescents.
- Health and wellness are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.
- The school actively involves families in the education of their children.
- The school includes community and business partners.

The Importance of Middle Level Education and Young Adolescents

National Middle School Association. (2003). *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*. Westerville, OH: NMSA.

Young people undergo more rapid and profound personal changes between the ages of 10 and 15 than at any other time in their lives. Changes occur irregularly, and no two young adolescents enter puberty at the same time or progress at the same rate. Achieving academic success is highly dependent upon their developmental needs being met.

Changes in students' patterns of thinking become evident in the ideas they have about the world and how it functions. These shifts may be apparent in the questions they ask to each other and trusted adults, in reflections about personal experiences, their views on moral issues, and through their perceptions of the things around them. Because cognitive growth occurs gradually and irregularly, middle school students require ongoing, concrete, experiential learning in order to develop intellectually.

To read more about the developmental needs of 10 – 15 year olds and the goals of Middle Level Education, visit:

<http://amle.org/>.

Parent Involvement

As students begin to age and are able to handle more responsibility, parents will often step back and become less involved with their child's academics. We encourage parents to remain involved in their child's academic success. The moment you have a concern or question, immediately call your child's teacher, school counselor or principal. Should your schedule allow, we encourage you to volunteer at your child's school. Many opportunities are available for parents to volunteer. It truly takes all of us working together to ensure the success of our students.

We look forward to building a strong school community with you. Please visit Caldwell County Schools Parent Resources website for more parent information.

<https://www.caldwellschools.com/domain/2966>

North Carolina Standard Course of Study

The link below will provide you with information on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. To access the North Carolina Standard Course of Study utilize the following link: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/k-12-standards-curriculum-and-instruction>

Mathematics

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Mathematics provides math standards are based on a philosophy of teaching and learning mathematics that is consistent with the most current research and exemplary practices. Eighth grade standards are organized by conceptual categories which include The Number System, Expressions and Equations, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability. Equally important are the Standards for Mathematical Practice, describing the behaviors or 'habits of mind' of mathematically proficient students.

Students will build upon their previous instruction in math by learning the following concepts this year:

- Approximating Irrational numbers
- Radicals and Integer Exponents
- Connections between Proportional Relationships, Lines, and Linear Equations
- Solving Linear Equations
- Solving Systems of Linear Equations
- Define, Evaluate, and Compare Functions
- Use Functions to Model Relationships
- Understand Congruence and Symmetry
- Understand and Apply Pythagorean Theorem
- Real-world mathematical problems involving Volume of Cylinders, Cones, and Spheres
- Investigate Patterns of Association in Bivariate Data

Students will also use Eight Mathematical Practices as outlined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

8th Grade Math End of Grade Assessment Specifications

Domain	Percent of Test
The Number System, Expressions and Equations	24-28%
Functions	28-32%
Geometry	24-28%
Statistics and Probability	16-20%

In accordance with House Bill 986, students scoring a Level 5 on the Math End of Grade assessment in grades 3-8, when practicable, will be enrolled in an advanced math course.

English Language Arts (ELA)

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts defines what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of each grade level. Students will use oral language, written language, media and technology for expressive, informational, argumentative, critical, and literary purposes. Students will also study the structure of language and grammatical rules in order to speak and write effectively.

Informational text pieces will be emphasized in all classrooms. Additionally, there is a strong focus on vocabulary and language, including determining meanings of words and phrases in context.

For more information, please read the sixth grade English Language Arts Parent Guide published by the North Carolina Department of Instruction by following this link:

<https://ncdpi.instructure.com/courses/914/pages/parent-guides>

8th Grade English Language Arts End of Grade Assessment Specifications

Domain	Percent of Test
Reading for Literature	36-41%
Reading for Information	43-47%
Language	11-16%

Eighth Grade Writing

It is the goal of Caldwell County Schools to strengthen students' abilities to produce and publish quality written work. Eighth grade students will practice narrative, explanatory, persuasive and argumentative writing throughout the school year in several content areas. Writing tasks occur in classes on a consistent basis in order to reinforce and assess classroom performance. Eighth grade students will also conduct research across multiple

content areas and create written products. Students will continue to choose valid sources for information and to cite sources in their writing. This will prepare students for more comprehensive research writing products at the high school level. Students will be required to use correct grammar and spelling in their writing.

Social Studies

Students in eighth grade will continue to build on the fourth and fifth grade introductions to North Carolina and the United States by embarking on a more rigorous study of the historical foundations and democratic principles that continue to shape our state and nation. Students will begin with a review of the major ideas and events preceding the foundation of North Carolina and the United States. The main focus of the course will be the critical events, personalities, issues, and developments in the state and nation from the Revolutionary Era to contemporary times. Inherent in this study is an analysis of the relationship of geography, events and people to the political, economic, technological, and cultural developments that shaped our existence in North Carolina and the United States over time. Although the major focus is state and national history, efforts should also be made to include a study of local history. The standards are organized around five strands: history, geography and environmental literacy, economics and financial literacy, civics and governance and culture. The strands should not be taught in isolation, but woven together in an integrated study that helps to tell the complete story of our state and nation.

Science

Eighth grade science is based on three instructional domains: Physical (P), Earth (E) and Life (L) science. Within physical science, students study properties and change of matter and the conservation and transfer of energy. Earth science includes the study of earth systems, structures and processes, and Earth history. Life science examines the structures and functions of living organisms, ecosystems, evolution and genetics, and molecular biology.

Science will be taught using inquiry-based instruction in order to help students build conceptual understandings of topics. Students will engage in scientific investigation and will use reasoning and problem-solving to demonstrate how science is constant, historic, probabilistic, and replicable. Science as Inquiry provides for “hands on/minds on” student activities and encourages students to think like scientists.

Eighth grade science assessments will measure students’ proficiency on the essential standards for Science.

8th Grade Science End of Grade Assessment Specifications

Domain	Percent of Test
Matter: Properties and Change	14-16%
Energy Conservation and Transfer	10-12%
Earth Systems, Structures and Processes	13-15%
Earth History	11-13%
Structure and Functions of Living Organisms	19-23%
Ecosystems	9-11%
Evolution and Genetics	11-13%
Molecular Biology	8-10%

Information and Technology

Standards for Information and Technology will be used throughout all content areas.

- Students will learn to analyze resources for relevance, reliability, bias, and intent of information.
- Students will use technology to gather, analyze, and present data.
- Students will learn to apply the research process to gather information and to properly cite sources of information.
- Students will apply responsible behaviors when using information and technology sources.

Effective use of the Information and Technology Essential Standards will become increasingly important for students as we move toward future assessments of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Healthful Living

The focus areas for students in this grade level include the following focus areas: mental and emotional health, personal and consumer health, interpersonal communication and relationships, nutrition and physical activity, and alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The accompanying objectives and curriculums can be found at:

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/teach-nc/curriculum-instruction/standard-course-study/healthful-living>

High School Courses

Some students have the opportunity to participate in high school courses during their eighth grade year, pursuant to SBE Policy HSP-M-001. Students are selected based on their ability to work independently, teacher recommendation, grades, and performance in the classroom. Students who are selected to participate and successfully complete their coursework and assessments will meet the high school graduation requirements for those courses. However, the grades earned in these courses will not count toward their high school GPA.

Student Accountability Standards

The state's Student Accountability Standards brought accountability measures for schools and families. The standards are designed to improve student achievement and increase the number of students performing at grade level. For this plan to work, however, parents must remain involved in and informed about their child's education. The standards for accountability are important because they promote:

- higher expectations for students and teachers as well as higher student achievement
- the opportunity for every student in North Carolina to receive a sound basic education
- an emphasis on workplace skills as being crucial for a student's future success
- For additional information about the North Carolina Testing Program, visit the Accountability Services Division website at

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability>

Benchmarks and Universal Screenings

Caldwell County Schools will have Schoolnet benchmark assessments and/or NC Check-Ins this school year for students in grades six through eight. The benchmark assessments will assess students on the current English Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum for grades six through eight and the Science curriculum for grade eight. Schools have been given a window of time to complete these assessments. Students will also take part in STAR Reading and Math assessments throughout the year. These assessments help teachers utilize data to drive instruction.

End of Grade Tests (EOGs)

Based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, state required End of Grade (EOGs) Tests, are given in May. EOGs are designed with an emphasis on assessing mastery of skills and higher level thinking skills. These assessments are used to ensure students are working at grade level in reading and math in grades 3-8. It is the goal of the state and CCS that all students score level III or higher. Student proficiency on the EOGs

are scored at five levels:

- Level 5 - Students demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of grade level content standards.
- Level 4 - Students demonstrate a thorough understanding of grade level content standards.
- Level 3 - Students demonstrate a sufficient understanding of grade level content standards.
- Not Proficient - Students demonstrate inconsistent understanding of grade level content standards.

Examples of EOG test questions:

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/state-tests/end-grade-eog#released-forms>

Middle School Attendance Policy

Attendance in school and participation in class are integral parts of academic achievement and the teaching-learning process. Through regular attendance, students develop patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Regular attendance by every student is mandatory. The State of North Carolina requires that every child in the State between the ages of 7 (or younger if enrolled) and 16 attend school. Parents and legal guardians are responsible for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily.

Middle School (6-8) Attendance Requirements

A. Attendance

In preparing students for the rigors of middle school and successful entry into high school, attendance is fundamental. The primary responsibility of school attendance rests with students and their parents, guardians, or custodians. In order to maintain a consistent academic environment, there will be consequences for excessive unexcused absences, tardies, and early dismissals. As stated previously, the principal may require documentation to verify reasons for absences.

A student in grades six through eight must be in attendance at least 94.4% of the school year or 170 days. Students having more than ten (10) unexcused absences may not be promoted to the next grade level.

The school attendance committee will review student absences at the end of the first three grading periods and in the middle of the last grading period. The attendance committee will

submit, to the principal or his/her designee, the names of students who are in danger of not being promoted due to excessive unexcused absences.

B. Reporting Absences

1. After the third unexcused absence, the principal or designee will notify the student's parent, guardian or custodian of the excessive absences.
2. After the sixth unexcused absence, the principal or designee will notify the students' parents, guardian or custodian of the excessive absences and refer the student to the school social worker.
3. The school social worker will investigate the cause of the unexcused absences and provide intervention as needed.
 - A. The student will also be referred to the school's Student Success Team.
 - B. In coordination with the school's Student Success Team, the school social worker will continue to monitor student attendance.
4. After the tenth unexcused absence, the principal, in consultation with the school social worker and other members of the school's Student Success Team, will refer the student and his/her family to an outside intervention agency and may file a complaint with the juvenile court counselor pursuant to Chapter 7B of the General Statutes that the child is habitually absent from school without a valid excuse. Also note, the principal or social worker may notify the district attorney or director of social services of the county where the child resides, if absences become extremely excessive. Students in danger of not being promoted due to missing the maximum number of days stated above will be reviewed by the school attendance committee. Each school will determine the consequences for students in excess of ten (10) unexcused absences.

Helpful Resources and Web Links

Caldwell County Schools
www.caldwellschools.com
828-728-8407

North Carolina Public Schools
<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/>

Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute
www.cccti.edu

Caldwell County
www.caldwellcountync.org
Health Department 828-426-8400
Social Services 828-426-8200

Caldwell County Public Library
<https://ccpl.libguides.com/mainpage>
828-757-1270

Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce
www.caldwellchambernc.com

NC Wise Owl
www.ncwiseowl.org

Schools Serving Middle Grades Students

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Collettsville Elementary

4690 Collettsville School Road, Collettsville, NC 28611
828-754-6913

Happy Valley Elementary

1350 Yadkin Valley Road, Lenoir, NC 28661
828-754-3496

Kings Creek Elementary

3680 Wilkesboro Blvd., Lenoir, NC 28645
828-754-6039

Gamewell Middle

3210 Gamewell School Road, Lenoir, NC 28645
828-754-6204

Granite Falls Middle

90 North Main Street, Granite Falls, NC 28630
828-396-2341

Hudson Middle

291 Pine Mountain Road, Hudson, NC 28638
828-728-4281

William Lenoir Middle

1366 Wildcat Trail, Lenoir, NC 28645
828-726-3910

Gateway Alternative

1889 Dudley Shoals Road, Granite Falls, NC 28630
828-396-8373