

What is Cambridge Lower Secondary?

Cambridge Lower Secondary is an advanced studies program for middle school students that builds skills, knowledge, and understanding in English, Mathematics, Science, and Global Perspectives. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the most advanced learner with an emphasis on creativity, innovation, and scholarly discourse.

Throughout the Cambridge Lower Secondary experience, students develop the skills and content knowledge necessary to meet the demands of advanced course work and ultimately transition successfully to the high school setting.

Students in the Cambridge Lower Secondary program will have the opportunity to earn credit in several high school courses, which will affect their high school grade point average (GPA) and establish the good study habits necessary to be successful in high school and beyond.

How will a Cambridge Secondary course differ from an advanced course?

Please see this Comparison Chart to see how Cambridge Lower Secondary 1 differs from a traditional advanced course.

Advanced Course	Advanced Course with Cambridge Secondary 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More teacher facilitated acquisition of concepts for students • Pacing of the curriculum is balanced and strategic • Teacher guidance needed to activate prior knowledge • Teacher and student-centered environment • Content coverage of state standards • Problem-solving • Teacher assigns projects, inquiry format and product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry-based learning that encourages students to explore concepts • Pacing of the curriculum is accelerated and flexible • Less teacher guidance needed to activate prior knowledge • Student-centered environment with emphasis on self-direction • Content coverage of state standards with greater depth and higher levels of complexity • Problem solving on more complex, open-ended questions • Student choice in project, inquiry format and product, especially as it relates to becoming a reflective, analytic learner • Performance tasks embedded within curriculum guide

How Will Advanced Courses with Cambridge Secondary 1 Infused Be Different Than Advanced Courses?

The advanced course with Cambridge Secondary 1 Infused will encourage students to use problem solving skills to access and link together knowledge from across all standards. The class will promote group work, projects and individual work, as well as encourage the use of reasoning and communication skills. While the teacher will provide direct instruction, when necessary, the teacher will act as a facilitator while the student becomes a more active learner. Content will be based on the Florida Standards and will be the standards delivered in the advanced courses. The advanced course with Cambridge Secondary 1 Infused, however, will include additional enhancements in the curriculum guides. These enhancements will assist teachers in delivering innovative, student-centered, inquiry-based learning in a highly collaborative environment that promotes higher level questioning. Performance tasks will be embedded within the curriculum guides to provide students the opportunity to apply their knowledge when given authentic context. These tasks will require much more than just recall and recognition of facts and concepts. Students will be required to transfer their learning to new content-rich problems that may include multiple standards within one performance task. Students will be given the opportunity – through various resources, performance tasks and activities – to become confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged learners.

Cambridge Secondary Teachers Receive Special Training

Cambridge Secondary teachers create an active learning environment in which a student's thinking will be challenged and classwork will extend what each student could accomplish on her/his own.

Cambridge Secondary teachers:

- have extensive knowledge in their subject area
- teach for depth of content, not breadth
- connect learning to real-world applications
- incorporate a variety of instructional strategies
- use assessment to inform instruction
- are reflective learners themselves
- model problem-solving and creative thinking for their students

Furthermore, Cambridge Secondary teachers participate in on-going professional learning on content specific, inquiry-based learning strategies which will assist them in meeting the divergent needs of students identified as gifted or high performing.

Cambridge Lower Secondary Frequently Asked Questions

My child was placed in Cambridge as a 6th grader. Does that mean they will be in the program all three years?

Students need to keep a 3.0 GPA in all core classes, have exemplary behavior and work ethic, and follow the Cambridge Contract in order to be invited to stay in the program for 7th grade and beyond. If at any time they are not able to manage these expectations, they will be placed on probation and could be removed from the program.

Does placement in Cambridge Lower Secondary guarantee my child a spot in an advanced high school program (AICE, IB, etc)?

Placement in Cambridge Lower Secondary in middle school does not guarantee a spot in a high level program in high school, however, it does prepare students for the rigor and responsibility of any high level program in high school. The type of inquiry and

research students will learn will be invaluable as they go through high school and beyond. High level high school programs look at grades throughout middle school and test scores, so Cambridge Lower Secondary students are usually highly successful in being accepted to whichever program they choose to attend.

What assessments will my student take?

Students will take the statewide assessments that correspond to the courses and/or grade level in which they are enrolled. Students in 6th grade will take the FSA ELA and Math assessments. 7th graders will take the FSA ELA and Math assessments, and also the Civics End-of-Course (EOC) assessment. 8th grade students will take FSA ELA, Math (if applicable), and Science. Students taking Algebra or Geometry Honors will take the Algebra/ Geometry EOC. We do not participate in Cambridge course testing at the middle school level.

If my student participates in Cambridge Lower Secondary in middle school, will s/he have to take Cambridge AICE courses in high school?

Participation in the Cambridge Lower Secondary program in middle school does not mean that students have to take Cambridge AICE courses in high school. Once in high school, students may choose from the various Advanced Studies options (Advanced Placement, Cambridge AICE, International Baccalaureate, and/or Dual Enrollment courses).

If my student does not participate in Cambridge Lower Secondary in middle school, will s/he still be able to take Cambridge AICE courses in high school?

Yes, participation in the various Advanced Studies options (Advanced Placement, Cambridge AICE, and/or Dual Enrollment courses) at the high school level is not dependent on participation in Cambridge Lower Secondary at the middle school level.

My student has been accepted into the Cambridge Lower Secondary program, but we have since changed our mind about participating. Can we remove him/her from the program?

If you and your student decide to not participate in the Cambridge Lower Secondary program, please notify the school as soon as possible so the school may make the appropriate adjustment to the student's schedule. The expectation is for students to participate in the Cambridge Secondary program for the full year unless otherwise discussed by the parent/guardian and school.

Does my student have to remain in the Cambridge Lower Secondary program for each grade level in middle school?

You and your student will have the option to request to not participate in the Cambridge Secondary program for the following year. This will be addressed in the spring when the school begins scheduling students for the upcoming school year. In order to remain in the program, the student must meet the requirements for the program.

How much homework will be assigned in the Cambridge Lower Secondary courses?

Homework in the Cambridge Lower Secondary courses will be qualitatively different, not quantitatively different than standard advanced level courses. For example, if a student in an advanced math course is assigned 15 math problems for homework this does not mean that the Cambridge Lower Secondary math course will have a homework assignment of 25 math problems. Instead, the Cambridge Lower Secondary math course may also have 15 math problems that will challenge students to delve deeper into their understanding and application of the math concepts. The additional rigor of the Cambridge Lower Secondary program does not necessarily equate to more homework.

Can my student join Cambridge during the school year if they didn't start in it at the beginning of the year?

Students may apply or request to join Cambridge at the semester (after 2nd Quarter). Applications would be due by Winter Break. Students must meet the qualifications and be recommended by teachers and staff.

Please contact Mrs. Jenniffer Pierson, Assistant Principal, at JennifferMPi@LeeSchools.net