

COLUMBUS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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APRIL / MAY
2018



SUPERINTENDENT, JEFF BERMES

May is a time of celebration for our schools. We would like to invite you to come and join us as our students parade their differing talents. District, divisional, and state meets will soon be on us for track, golf, and softball. Our music departments present their spring concerts, with individual student performers showcasing their talents. We have a celebration that honors our senior students and the scholarships that they have earned. May is when we hold our activities evening, awarding students for their accomplishments and athletic prowess. Our FFA banquet, pie auction, and plant sale happen in May. The elementary holds many classroom celebrations, field trips, and a track and field day. Finally, our eighth grade promotion and our senior graduation happen at the end May. Our students work hard to attain their levels of excellence and we invite the public to attend the celebrations. Please look at the attached calendar for the dates and times of these events.

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At the Columbus Schools, we have had another great school year. It has been great to see our students excel in just about all areas within our current educational system. The Board of Trustees is currently moving forward with the planning and presentation of our proposed building projects to address our overcapacity issues in the elementary and building deficiencies in our middle school and high school. The good news with the timing of this building bond project is that the district will be paying off our past building bond in July of this year. The board and administration strongly felt that a new building project should not be presented to our taxpayers until our current debt obligations have been met. We are very excited in the opportunity to enhance our schools through the proposed building projects to improve our educational space for current and future students, increase safety for our students, increase building efficiency, and provide our community with a school system that is the pride of our state. The district will be moving forward with public meetings in the next few months to present our building project proposals and to seek community input. We will be setting up a District Facebook page in the next couple of weeks to present information and meeting schedules along with flyers and advertisements in our local newspaper to keep our community informed. **We ask that you get involved and support your school and students.**

This has been a great school year for Columbus. The district has witnessed a lot of successes in each our schools, and we will continue to see those successes because Columbus has strong community support that I am extremely proud to be a part of. I have found this community to be very supportive of our students and their efforts. We will continue to see incredible feats of academic prowess and outstanding sports achievements in the future. Our teachers continue to strive to be the best educators in the state. We have made a commitment to improve our buildings and grounds in order to provide facilities that serve both the needs of our educational programs and community purposes. Our long-term, sustained professional development with staff members will keep us at the forefront of leading in student achievement. We are working very hard at retaining staff and hiring qualified applicants to fill our openings. We are working to keep our general budgets efficiently managed in an effort to keep our taxpayer's burden to a minimum. School funding will continue to be a struggle as our state government continues to lower their portion of school funding requirements while passing it on to our local taxpayer-



ers. This has been a recent change in state legislation to transfer past state school funding practices by removing the burden from a state funded liability to the local taxpayer. As the Superintendent of Columbus Schools I understand that we need to be mindful of our local taxpayer's current tax load, and I will work to make sure our schools are run to the upmost efficiency in these times of reduced state funding. We will continue to pledge to our community that we will only ask for a mill levy increase when it is needed.

All in all, I am proud to be the Superintendent of Columbus Schools, and I am appreciative of the support that I have received. I would again like to thank all of the school board members and staff for all of their efforts in continuing to make Columbus Schools an outstanding school. As we close out another wonderful school year, I want to say thank you to our great community. Your support of our school system has been second to none, and I look forward to serving this community and the school district in the future. In closing, "Go Cougars!"

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL - GEORGE MCKAY

"Building a Community of Excellence, One Student At A Time"

A FINAL WORD

About 1962, my oldest brother was slightly injured in a football game. While lying on the field surrounded by various attendees my mom ran out on the field concerned that her oldest boy was severely broken. When she arrived in the small huddle my brother looked up at her and decried 'Oh mom, get out of here!' She left the field and did not return to a game for 12+ years and 3 more sons playing football. In 1974, my youngest brother finished his football days. Mom actually saw one or two of his games, as a fading last chance. After the season a local sports writer asked her to reflect about her sons playing the game. She wrote her perspective from the scenario of the laundry room where she was cleaning the stains and memories out of the uniform for the last time. She called it "A red letter day" in her life. (A side note would inform us that the phrase comes from the day(s) of the Romans, BC. It refers to a day of significance.)

Now, 44 years after that story ended, I have my 'Red letter day'. This is my last newsletter article as the high school principal. After 26 years I have many pleasant memories to reflect on. I have no intention of sharing them all with you in this writing but I might categorize them into a few general school related groups.

First and foremost is the community of Columbus. Over the years the community has shown overwhelming support for the schools. We should all be proud of our schools, both in facilities and in the students we guide toward the future. The community supported a new building project 20 years ago, mostly for the middle school and high school area(s). The complex is top notch and has met the demand(s) placed on it by changing enrollments, changing technologies and changing academic and career studies. Now, the elementary school is looking to a building project. It would behoove the entire community to keep in the loop about what the school needs and how to go about acquiring it. The little guys need room to 'grow'.

Secondly, the teachers in Columbus are very competent in doing their jobs. The nature of teaching and learning has changed in the last 26 years. More 'wholistic' learning is the order of the day in today's schools. What used to be a limited focus of 'when, where, what and who', has now been expanded more consciously toward 'how and why'. Learning used to be perceived as 'a mile wide and an inch deep' in scope and depth of content. Now it is moving toward 'narrower and deeper' understanding. Columbus teachers across the system are adapting impressively to these educational demands for change.

Third, final, and the most important, of the general groups are the students. I have not counted the total number of graduates that have crossed the stage in my 26 years. I do know that they are very fine representations of our community. I have watched them grow up through their sometimes challenging high school adolescence and become, by near entirety, productive and contributory members of societies all around the world. I like to believe that the quality of our graduates is directly related to the quality of the education they received here in Columbus. At the same time I would admit that part of their career success correlates to about the same time they had to start paying their own bills. That is the real "aha" moment of growing up. In any case, I have been extremely proud of how our students behave while in school and on the road during activities. Columbus is a fine place to be from.

My 'final word' pertains to me watching from the sidelines, not as a critic but as a spectator. A friend of mine forwarded a word to me for my consideration. The word is 'loge' (lohzh). It dates back to the mid- 1700s. It's French. A loge is a secluded box in a theater from which one can watch the play unfold from their seat. That's where I'm going to be, in the loge. I will watch as the anticipated CHANGE takes place in the schools (the stage). The performances will have drama, comedy, intrigue and fantastic players from a cast of hundreds (each year). The audience will be entertained with possibilities for the future. I will be a member of that audience in equal anticipation of what is to come.

THANK YOU COLUMBUS!!

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL - RON OSBORNE

“Equip students with the skills to develop their talents and become productive, responsible citizens.”

Spring is here and that means State Testing. Teachers and students have been preparing for the SBAC testing, (State Test), all year and it is now the time for their hard work to show. As we lead to SBAC, we want to make sure students are relaxed and focused. Having students stressed about the tests will not allow them to do their best work. Making sure they get plenty of rest and a great breakfast is very beneficial to begin the day and be better prepared for the test. The more support students feel from home and school will make the experience more effective. This test is being scored this year and results will be released to schools sometime in June, if we are lucky. For more information on this you can go to the O.P.I. web site and read about the SBAC test.

My message this month is again on the continuing conversation about bullying/teasing. Middle School life in the eyes of an adolescent is one of the toughest situations that they will go through. One of the toughest experiences I observe in the middle school is when a student comes to the office upset to relate a story to me about how another student or group of students has deeply hurt his or her feelings. The offending event can range all the way from a serious and deliberate exchange of words or even blows to a simple act of not including someone in a lunchroom conversation. Our standard response is to soothe emotions, get all related details and provide a healthy perspective and course of action. Much of our conversation centers on first helping offended students feel good about themselves and then trying to help them understand the actions of others. I always follow up by bringing in the offenders, hearing their side of the story, and providing corrective instruction and consequences, as needed. Unfortunately, middle school students are at an age where differences in body shapes, family structures, economic status, fashion and even their beliefs become more apparent and can be vulnerable targets for teasing. In addition, middle school friendships and alliances often shift frequently, leaving some students wondering why their friends from last year, or even yesterday, won't talk to them today. These situations are especially prevalent in grades 6 and 7. (8th grade students have often, but not always, matured past the point of consistent teasing.) Parents and guardians can help students deal with these issues by:

Teaching your child to be kind to everyone. Kids (like adults) are obviously not going to like everyone they meet, but they can, at least, be kind.

Helping your child understand that not all friendships are long-lasting, and that developing new friendships is a necessary and exciting aspect of life.

Helping your child understand that all the circumstances of their lives, especially physical and intellectual characteristics, are unique and worthy. Self esteem needs to be taught and reinforced often.

Teaching your child to tell an adult about hurtful events. There are some issues that children are simply not capable of solving on their own.

If families and the school work together to address issues of adolescent relationships, we can help make the middle school years a positive experience for everyone.

This is not only a school initiative, but a community one. Our students need our support 24 hours a day to understand the right message. We are all trying our best to protect our children, but we need to work together in order to solve problems and be solution-based. I encourage you to think about how you would handle a phone call about your daughter/son bullying another student even if you would never expect it. What we are finding is that a proactive approach can lead to understanding and better behavior towards one another. Thank you for your help in this ever growing matter.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL - MARLENE DEIS**“Providing a foundation of skills to prepare students for life.”**

Happy Spring to all of you! We are all looking forward to more sun and less snow! Finally all of our ice is off the roof and the mud is almost dried up...until the rains start!

The next two months typically fly by and are very busy. Please check the weekly newsletter for all of the latest news and dates for activities. One of the biggest things on our schedule for students in grades 3-5 is the state testing. The testing dates are listed below. These tests usually take about a week to complete and will cover the areas of Math and Language Arts (Reading & Writing). Please try to avoid having your child miss school on testing days. Making up tests is a scheduling nightmare and it will pull students out of their class work. Our testing went smoothly last year, so we are expecting them to go well again this year. All of these tests are done on the computer. Students are allowed to take as much time as they need to complete each test. Please help your child do their best by making sure they get good sleep and regular meals during those testing weeks.

Our focus this year has been kindness. During these spring months, students sometimes get kind of short with each other. I think that being together for the whole year and especially through our long winter plays a part in the problems that start to pop up. Please remind your child to treat others the way they want to be treated. Thanks!

Below are a few dates for you to put on your calendar. I will also be keeping my website updated as more events get planned. Buckle up – it’s time to start the wild ride to the end of the year!

April 9 – Spring Pictures with Lifetouch

April 10 – K, 1, 3 to Alberta Bair

April 16-20 – Volunteer Appreciation Week

April 17 – 2nd Trimester Mid-term ends

April 20 – Mid-term Trimester Reports sent home

April 23-27 – 4th and 5th grade SBAC state testing

April 25 – Administrative Professionals’ Day

April 30 – PIR day – NO SCHOOL

May 1 – 8 – 3rd grade SBAC state testing

May 7-11 - Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week and Testing Make-Up Week

May 16 – 5th Grade Conservation Day Field Trip

May 17 – Elementary Spring Concert 7pm in HS gym

1st Grade Zoo MT field trip

May 18 – 3rd Grade Field Trip to Chief Plenty Coups Museum

May 21 – Kinder Field Trip to RL Zoo

2nd Grade Field Trip to Museum of the Rockies

May 23 – AR Store

May 24 – Annual Field Day and Hot Dog BBQ

May 25 – LAST DAY (11:00 dismissal)

