



Superintendent's Report

Submitted by Nick Verhoff

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School Safety at Columbus Grove Schools

With school safety recently coming back to the forefront of national news, I wanted to take a moment to give a brief summary of a number of safety measures Columbus Grove Schools has taken to maximize the safety of its staff and students. Some of the steps were a part of the new school building, which opened its doors in February 2012. One example is the 150 cameras which are located both inside and outside the school building, providing an extra layer of protection throughout the campus.

The school's external doors operate on an electronic locking system that automatically locks doors during the school day. Having a climate-controlled building eliminates the need to prop open doors or open windows for increased ventilation on hot and humid days. There are only two points of entry in our school during the day, and all visitors must be "buzzed" into the building, getting clearance first from one of our district secretaries. No visitor has a direct path into our school's hallways. All visitors must fill out and wear a visitor's badge and a record is made of each visitor during the school day.

Additional safety measures have been implemented over the last decade as well. These include one-way vinyl signage in the windows of interior doors (and multiple exterior doors as well), installation of bullet-resistant film on windows throughout the building, instituting the MARCC's radio system throughout the building with one-button access to county and village first-responders, and temporary manual door locking devices installed in all classrooms and offices throughout the building.

While these are a few of the more significant safety enhancements, other safety measures have been installed and implemented over the last decade.

We are fortunate to have the services of the Columbus Grove Police Department to assist us in maintaining a safe school environment. CG Police visit the school on a regular basis as an extra set of eyes and to provide other pertinent information for school officials as needed.

Chief Sean Hiler is member of our district's school safety team and provides valuable insight and assistance to school personnel.

While these safety improvements provide another layer of protection for our staff and students, the training of the individuals who enter our school doors on a daily basis is even more important. All teachers have been trained in the A.L.I.C.E. program, which is a proactive response protocol in the event of a serious threat of violence at the school. These safety procedures are reviewed with our students. We conduct a variety of drills regularly throughout the school year, including fire, tornado, evacuation, and lockdown exercises. These measures will be reviewed and reinforced again as we begin the 2022-2023 school year.

In addition to the physical safety measures made to the school building and training for staff and students, we created a district threat assessment team a few years ago. This team was trained under the *Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines* by Dr. Dewey Cornell. The purpose of this team is to assess any situation reported which is deemed a potential threat to the involved student(s), as well as any others in the building. Each situation is assessed through a researched-based process to determine if further intervention is needed with law enforcement. In all cases, parents of the student(s) involved are notified of the situation and many times serve as active participants in the threat assessment process. Based on the team's findings, the appropriate responses and interventions are administered to address the issue. While these situations are extremely rare in our school district, the district threat assessment team has been very effective in addressing issues at an early stage, minimizing any negative effects to students or staff.

Communications are critical in any situation involving the safety of students and staff. Internal and external protocols are in place to communicate the facts of any situation that could potentially jeopardize the safety of our students and staff. Regarding external communications, the district will use the Remind notification system, which is entering its second year of implementation.

Information shared on Remind is automatically sent through the district's social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. The district will also use its website to provide further information as needed.

One of the most important actions our students, parents, and community members can take to help ensure the safety of our schools is to immediately report ANY situation which could potentially pose a threat to the safety of staff and students. This may be a comment made by an individual. It could also be something posted on a social media account. We ask that you please notify the school district so we can investigate thoroughly and address the matter as soon as possible. Studies have shown in a vast majority of incidents of school violence, there nearly always evidence that a prior comment or social media post was made before the act of violence.

How can you contact school officials regarding potential harmful events involving students and/or staff? You can always call or email the school offices. District contact information is readily found on our district website. Furthermore, the district is part of a statewide anonymous reporting system that state officials have created, *Safer Ohio*. This system can be used to notify district officials of any suspicious or potentially dangerous activity that may affect students or staff at our school. Individuals can call or text 844-SAFEROH to report anything that is suspicious or endangering anyone at school. This online service has been in place for a number of years and has been quite effective in addressing safety or harassment issues for our school district.

Thank you for doing your part in helping us keeping students and staff safe at school. There are many facets to maintaining a safe and welcoming school and we appreciate any help you can provide to help our district to provide this safe environment. If you have any questions regarding this topic, please feel free to contact me at 419-659-4301 or cg_verhoff@cg.noacsc.org.

Thursday Night Football?

That's right! The CGHS football squad kicks off its varsity season TONIGHT at Clymer Stadium vs. the Pandora-Gilboa Rockets. Game time is 7:00 p.m. and gates open at 6:00 p.m. As we have in years past, we will provide a golf cart transport to and from the stadium to the front gate for fans who wish to utilize this service. Come on out and support our Bulldogs, who are striving for a fifth straight NWC Championship!

2022-23 Open House This Monday, 8/22

Columbus Grove Schools will host its annual Open House on Monday, August 22, from 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Please come out to meet your child's teacher for this school year. Parents can pay 2022-23 school fees at this time as well. Secretaries will be set up in the elementary gym to collect fee payments.

Final Forms for 2022-2023 School Year Now Available

Parents and students can begin filling out their Final Forms information for next school year now. Log in at <https://columbusgrove-oh.finalforms.com/> and click the "Click to Switch to 2022-23 Registration" button at the top of the page to get started. Please contact Mr. Keehn at the contact information above if you have any issues.

Please fill out your 22-23 Free/Reduced Lunch Form!

The USDA discontinued the free breakfast and lunch program that had been in place last school year. If you qualify for the free/reduced lunch program, you must fill this form out. This form has now been put online on Final Forms, making it easier for parents to fill out and submit. If you have any questions about this process, please contact Secretary Cari Fuerst at 659-2639.

Sign Up for Meals Plus

Columbus Grove Schools use the Meals Plus program to handle the transactions for the breakfast and lunch program for students at school. This program allows parents to have online access to their child's meal account, enabling them to deposit money in their account. Please visit <http://cg.noacsc.org/parents-students/alerts/meals-plus-reminders> for more information regarding this convenient system.

If you have further questions regarding the start of the school year, please visit our website at <http://cg.noacsc.org/> for more information. District office numbers are 659-2631 (elementary), 659-2156 (high school), and 659-2639 (superintendent).

Substitute Bus Drivers Wanted

Columbus Grove Local Schools is accepting applications for substitute bus drivers. This position has the potential of becoming a full-time bus driver in the future, if applicants are interested. Substitute bus drivers are contacted to drive extracurricular field trips and occasionally drive a regular morning or afternoon route. Certification requires the completion of attending a pre-service class, a written and driving test, CDL license, a medical physical exam, drug test, BMV check of driving record, and a background check. Cost for training will be reimbursed by the district for any individuals who serve as a substitute bus driver for Columbus Grove Local Schools. If you are interested in becoming a bus driver for Columbus Grove School, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 659-2639 for further information.

Beginning of the Year Items

- 1. Elementary, Middle, and High School Start and Ending Times-** The elementary school students (K-4) will start at 8:00 a.m. and dismiss at 2:55 p.m. daily. 5-12 students will begin at 8:00 a.m. as well, but will dismiss at 2:55 p.m.
- 2. School Supplies Lists-** These lists are posted on the district website. You can come to the building and receive a hard copy as well.
- 3. School Fees-** School fees for the 2022-2023 school year remain the same as last year. Fees for grades K-11 are \$60. For grade 12, fees are \$75. Additionally, for high school students taking an online technology course, there will be a \$15 fee per course. Please make checks payable to Columbus Grove Local Schools. Payments can be submitted at the offices or they may be given to your child's teacher. Secretaries will be in the elementary gym collecting fees at the Open House on Monday, August 22.
- 4. Pick-Up and Drop Off Reminder-** A few years ago, we implemented one-way transportation on Pendleton during pick-up (2:30-3:15 p.m.) and drop off (7:30-8:00 a.m.). This has worked well and increased safety measures in this high traffic area. Please remember that Pendleton will become a one-way street during these times when school begins on Wednesday, August 24.
- 5. Breakfast & Lunch Prices-** Breakfast prices are \$2.50 for K-12 students. Lunch prices are as follows: \$3.15 for K-5 students, \$3.25 for 6-8 students, and \$3.50 for 9-12 students. Please note parents are welcome to sign up for free and reduced lunches through Final Forms. Please take advantage of this opportunity if you are eligible!

Upcoming Events:

Thursday, August 18

- @ 9:00 a.m.- Student Orientation- All 7th grade and new 8-12 students (HS gym)
- @ 10:30 a.m.- 1:1 Device Orientation- All 8th grade and new high school students (Commons)
- @ 1:00 p.m.- Student Orientation- New 1st-6th grade students
- @ 1:30 p.m.- 1:1 Device distribution- 9th-12th grade students (Media Center)
- Varsity Football vs. Pandora Gilboa – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 20

- JV Football @ Pandora Gilboa – 10:00 a.m.

Monday, August 22

- 6:00-7:30 p.m.- Open House
- Apollo first day for first year students
- Varsity Soccer @ Cory-Rawson – 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 23

- Apollo first day for returning students
- Varsity Golf @ Quad vs. Lincolnview, Crestview, Ada – 9:00 a.m.
- Varsity Soccer vs. Miller City – 5:00 p.m.
- HS Cross Country @ Ice Breaker Invitational – 5:30 p.m.
- Varsity and JV Volleyball vs. Ayersville – 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 24

- First day of the 2022-23 school year

Thursday/Friday - August 25 & 26

- Kindergarten Testing