



Superintendent's Report

Submitted by Nick Verhoff

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School Safety at Columbus Grove Schools

With the 2023-24 school year beginning this upcoming Wednesday, I wanted 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. This past summer, all glass in the first story of the building has had the bullet resistant film installed.

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 Rusty Lammers is a 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 2023-2024 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 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 continue to use the Remind notification system, which is entering its third 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. These communications are used for delays/closings due to inclement weather throughout the year.

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 is evidence of 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.

Please fill out your 23-24 Free 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 out a new form. 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.

2023-24 Open House Scheduled for Monday, August 21

Columbus Grove Schools will host its annual Open House on Monday, August 21, from 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. for grades 1-12. Kindergarten Open House will start at 1:00 p.m. on the same day. Please come out to meet your child's teacher for this school year! As we have done in the past, parents may drop off their child's school supplies in the room so they will not have to bring them in on the first day of school. Parents can pay 2023-24 school fees at this time as well (Cost: \$60/student). School secretaries will be available to accept payments. We look forward to seeing you on the 21st!

Substitute Teachers Needed for 2023-24 School Year

Columbus Grove Schools are in need of additional substitute teachers for this upcoming school year. A major change that took place a couple years ago in terms of requirements for substitute teachers was the issuance of a 1 Year Non-Bachelor's Substitute License. Substitute teachers no longer are required to have a bachelor's degree in order to perform these duties. Interested applicants should have strong interpersonal skills and a desire to work with young people. Many of our substitute teachers have a preference of grade levels which they feel most comfortable. Also, substitute teachers have a choice of which days to work, based on their personal schedules. The district will work with interested candidates' preferences.

If you are interested in serving as a substitute teacher, please contact the superintendent's office at 419-659-4301 and we will be happy to assist you with obtaining your substitute teacher's license for this upcoming school year.

Thursday Night Football at Pandora-Gilboa Tonight!

Last year, the Columbus Grove Football squad opened its regular season on a Thursday night, hosting Pandora-Gilboa. The event was a success, as the athletic department set a season opening game record in terms of tickets sold. Tonight, the Bulldogs will travel to Pandora-Gilboa on Thursday, August 17 for our season opener on the road. We hope you can come out to cheer on our Bulldogs as they open the 2023 football season!

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 2:50 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 2023-2024 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 21.
- 4. Pick-Up and Drop Off Reminder-** Please remember the one-way transportation on Pendleton during pick-up (2:30-3:15 p.m.) and drop off (7:30-8:00 a.m.) each day during the school year. This has 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 23.
- 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!

Substitute Kitchen Workers and Cafeteria Monitors Wanted

If you are interested in serving as a substitute kitchen worker or cafeteria monitor, please contact the school. Kitchen worker applicants must be available weekdays with a fair amount of availability. Food service background preferred but not required (use of commercial cooking equipment and be able to prepare bulk food). Interested applicants can contact Food Service Director Kristen Hertel at cg_hertel@cg.noacsc.org. Those interested in serving as a cafeteria monitor should contact the superintendent's office at 419-659-2369 or cg_verhoff@cg.noacsc.org.

Upcoming Dates

Thursday, August 17

- 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)
- 4:30 p.m. – Varsity Golf @ Allen East Quad
- 7:00 p.m. – CG Football @ Pandora-Gilboa

Saturday, August 19

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

Monday, August 21

- 5:00 p.m. – Freshman Football @ Coldwater
- 5:00 p.m. – Varsity Soccer vs. Cory-Rawson
- 6:00-7:30 p.m.- Open House
- 8:00 p.m.- August Board of Education Meeting

Tuesday, August 22

- 4:30 p.m. – Varsity Golf @ Lincolnview
- 5:00 p.m. – Varsity Soccer @ Miller City
- 5:30 p.m. – Cross Country @ Upper Sandusky Icebreaker
- 5:30 p.m. – JV & Varsity Girls Volleyball @ Ayersville

Wednesday, August 23

- First day of the 2023-24 school year
- Apollo first day for first year students

Thursday, August 24

- Apollo first day for returning students
- Kindergarten Testing
- 5:00 p.m. – JH Football @ Delphos Jefferson
- 5:00 p.m. – JH Volleyball @ Arlington
- 5:30 p.m. – JV & Varsity Girls Volleyball vs. Arlington

Friday, August 25

- Kindergarten Testing
- 7:00 p.m. – Varsity Football vs. Liberty Benton

Saturday, August 26

- 9:00 a.m. – Cross Country @ Celina Invitational
- 10:00 a.m. – JV Football @ Liberty Benton

Monday, August 28 – Friday, September 1

- Kindergarten Phase-In Days