



Superintendent's Report

Submitted by Nick Verhoff

August 25, 2022

Open House Thanks

Many thanks go to those who attended this past Monday's Open House. We had an excellent turnout and the teachers were pleased to meet so many parents and students for the first time. We appreciate our parents taking the time to make it to school and allow your children the opportunity to see their room, practice their locker combinations (especially fifth graders), and meet their teachers. There is no doubt that this helped them as they began their school year yesterday.

Yellow School Buses are out! Pay attention!

With school starting yesterday, our 11 Columbus Grove school bus drivers were out on the road transporting our students to and from school safely. Please allow yourself a little more time in the morning, as school buses being on the road will create some delays in traffic. Unfortunately, we experience about a dozen illegal bus passes with our buses on an annual basis. When watching the videos of these illegal passes, it is many times a driver not even paying attention (distracted driving) when passing through a bus safety zone. Please use caution when approaching school buses. We want to keep everyone safe! Many thanks to our excellent route drivers Bernie Kleman, Deanna Ricker, Shelly Schroeder, Linda Ridenour, Joanne McKanna, Mike Fanaff, Bill Heilman, Janel Hardeman, Brad Anderson, Chad McCluer, and Dan Maag.

Bus Driver Shortage a Significant Issue

If you have read any of my previous Superintendent Updates, you have likely seen a blurb asking for substitute bus drivers. I wanted to provide additional information regarding how challenging our situation has become. We recently had a bus driver resignation and will have another driver retire at the end of December. As of now, we have two individuals lined up to replace these drivers. However, this leaves our substitute driver list extremely thin in terms of availability.

The Board has taken a number of steps in its attempts to procure additional drivers. One is a referral incentive for district employees. Another step is the requirement that all new maintenance staff hires must have or be willing to get their bus driver's license. We are currently exploring a few additional out-of-the-box ideas to add a few more drivers to our roster.

Being a substitute driver is a great opportunity for stay-at-home parents, retirees, self-employed individuals, or those looking for a part-time job to earn extra income. Substitute drivers have the potential to become a regular route driver and become eligible for health and dental insurance benefits.

The requirements to become a bus driver include being at least 21 years of age, school bus driver training classes (four 4-hour sessions), bus driving instruction (driver's ed. for bus drivers), BMV driving record check, BCI and FBI background check, medical exam, drug screen, and hearing test, and a CDL test and certification.

Bus driver's licenses are renewed every six years. Newly licensed substitute bus drivers for Columbus Grove Local Schools are reimbursed for any incurred expenses incurred for obtaining his/her bus license.

Substitute drivers are contacted to drive extra-curricular trips and regular route trips when a regular route driver is off. If filling in for a regular bus route, the sub driver will be paid for riding the route in advance with the driver in order to become better acquainted with the route.

You may have read or heard of other school districts reducing their areas of bus service, going to state minimum transportation requirements, or doubling up routes in order to keep their transportation services operating in some capacity. We are going to do everything we can to prevent this from happening at Columbus Grove, but we will need to acquire additional drivers in order to minimize the chance of any of these situations from occurring.

We also allow prospective drivers the opportunity to participate in a ride-along with current drivers to gauge their further interest in driving. If you are potentially interested in becoming a substitute bus driver, please contact my office at 659-4301 and I will be happy to answer any further questions.

CGLS Continues Transport Service at Home Football Games

We will have a golf cart available to shuttle spectators from the Pendleton Street entrance of the athletic complex to the Clymer Stadium stands. We will again increase the amount of reserved parking to decrease the walking distance by making the parking lot across from the Pendleton Street entrance handicap parking only. Below is the list of our remaining home football games this season:

Friday, September 2- Patrick Henry
Friday, September 9- Delphos Jefferson (Senior Night)
Friday, September 23- Leipsic (Military Tribute Night)
Friday, October 7- Ada (Homecoming)

Please fill out Free and Reduced Lunch Waiver Form for 2022-23 School Year

The nationwide meal waivers that allowed free school meals to ALL students for the last two school years expired at the end of last school year. We encourage families that are eligible for the free/reduced breakfast and lunch program to fill out the waiver form as soon as possible. This form is now part of the group of forms that parents fill out online through Final Forms, which allows parents to update changes with information versus having to fill out all these forms in their entirety each year. Having this free/reduced form as part of the Final Forms online package should make it a bit easier for this form to be filled out and processed. If you have any questions or need assistance regarding this process, please feel free to contact my office at 419-659-2639.

Anonymous Safety Reporting System Available for Students and Parents

The Columbus Grove Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. The District encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that he/she believes to be aggressive behavior directed toward a student. In an effort to increase our abilities to address and further prevent bullying behavior, Columbus Grove Schools has designed an anonymous online harassment reporting system. If an adult or child suspects a student being bullied, they are encouraged to report the bullying behavior to school officials in person or via an anonymous hotline. This hotline can also 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.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, August 25th

JH Football vs. Delphos Jefferson – 5:00 p.m.

JH Volleyball vs. Arlington – 5:00 p.m.

Varsity and JV Volleyball @ Arlington – 5:30 p.m.

Friday, August 26th

Varsity Football @ Liberty Benton – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 27th

Cross Country @ Blue Jay Invitational @ Delphos Jefferson – 9:00 a.m.

JV Football vs. Liberty Benton – 10:00 a.m.

Varsity and JV Volleyball @ New Bremen - 10:00 a.m.

Monday, August 29th

Varsity Golf @ Quad vs. Bluffton, Jefferson, Spencerville – 4:00 p.m.

JH Volleyball @ Leipsic – 5:00 p.m.

Varsity Soccer vs. Delphos Jefferson – 5:00 p.m.

Freshman Volleyball vs. Celina – 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 30th

Freshman Volleyball @ Leipsic – 4:30 p.m.

JH Volleyball vs. Wayne Trace - 5:00 p.m.

Varsity and JV Volleyball @ Leipsic – 5:30 p.m.