

School Board

Members

President – Kevin White

VP – Liz O’Donnell

Clerk – Cindy Damm

Treasurer – Mary Arnold

Bill Braun

Joe Conlin

Mike O’Brien

Board of Education

Calendar of Events

April

5 Spring Election

6 Strategic Plan Meeting 4-8

11 Board Meeting

25 Board Meeting / Reorganization

May

9 Board Meeting

23 Board Retreat

June

13 Board Meeting

Cardinal Composers

Around 80 K-8 students in Columbus School District are discovering how good it feels to be selected and honored for their writing or artwork. Their work is showcased in the premier edition of Cardinal Composers.

This project is funded by the Columbus Educational Endowment Fund. Students recognized in Cardinal Composers receive a free copy of the book and a certificate at an award ceremony on April 26 at 6:00 p.m. at Columbus Middle School. Brian Johnson will be presenting on his journey to becoming a published author. Charlie Cardinal will be available for photos. Building principals will be passing out the awards.

In addition to the composers receiving a copy of the book, several businesses in Columbus will also receive copies to keep in their waiting rooms or on their shelves for community members to read. Hopefully the community will enjoy reading the wide range of stories in our schools and the artwork will definitely impress the readers.

Making the Right Choice

Columbus Elementary School OR Discovery Charter School?

Did you know that you have a choice in your child’s education here in the Columbus School District? In grades kindergarten through third, we have two school options, Columbus Elementary School (CES) and Discovery Charter School (DCS). There are many things alike with the two schools; for example, they are both housed in the same location, they both have highly qualified staff, and they both are run by the same building principal, district administration and school board.

So, what makes the two schools different? The answer is simple, science! Parents who make the choice and enroll into DCS know that their child will thrive in an environment where science and nature is the major focus. Whether the child is learning to read, write or add; the charter school will do so through the lens of science and nature. So, if you have found your child digging in the dirt for some worms, playing with bugs, or traveling through the woods uncovering stones – DCS might be the right choice as they have outdoor learning experiences embedded in their curriculum.

Columbus Elementary School also teaches science through a program called Project Lead the Way (PLTW) but the general focus on education is much more rounded. Parents who choose CES would do so for a more comprehensive education that doesn’t have a specific focal point like science. These students would thrive on structure and consistency, as they take less field trips and outdoor classroom events.

Here is a quote from a parent who has twins which are in both schools, “*The decision to put one twin in CES and one in DCS was easy. They are different kids with different interests. My daughter in DCS loves nature, making inventions out of things, and gardening. My other daughter loves music, art, and has zero interest in getting dirty outside. She thrives in the more traditional structure of CES.*”

Myths & Facts!	
Myth	Fact
Charter Schools have tuition	Although some charter schools have tuitions, Discovery Charter School does not!
DCS is for gifted and talented students	Anyone can be in DCS. It is not a gifted and talented school.
DCS students do not get recess, music, art, or phy ed	Although the charter school students have a different schedule, they do receive recess, art, music, and phy ed.
CES doesn’t have the same technology as DCS	Both schools have the same amount of technology. How the technology is used will vary from each school.
The Discovery Charter School is run by the teachers	While some charter schools are teacher run, DCS is run by the Columbus Board of Education AND the DCS Governance Council.

Attention Students Entering Kindergarten!

There will be a kindergarten “**Choice Night**” on **April 20th** from 5:30 – 7 PM. This event is for all students entering kindergarten for the 2016-17 school year. You will be able to explore and learn about both Columbus Elementary School Kindergarten and Discovery Charter School Kindergarten. Come see the classrooms, meet the teachers, and learn more about your choice in your child’s education. Questions? Call the Elementary School Office at 623-5950.

Reading Proficiency... (continued from Page 1)

At the building level, all principals have established building-wide literacy goals and have monitored those goals at transitional points in the school year so that they could be responsive to providing staff with appropriate resources. The principals gave presentations about their progress at the March 14 board meeting. Core instruction and interventional support both play a role in reversing student literacy struggles. Each building also holds quarterly data review meetings and makes decisions about intervention placement for students who are below grade level.

At the teacher level, most teachers in district elected to have a literacy-based student learning objective goal. Like the principals, they monitor student growth and make adjustments to how they teach accordingly.

From a community perspective, whether you are a parent, grandparent, older sibling, cousin, etc., there is no denying the influential power that you hold in a child’s life. One way to use this influence is by role model in reading. If a child sees you read, they will want to read too.

With summer fast approaching, your influence is needed even more.

Students who struggle with reading tend not to want to read for fun; teachers begin to worry about the *summer slide*. Students who do not read over the summer usually have skill regression by fall. There are a variety of things you can do to help keep your child’s reading skills advancing over the summer.

- Read with your child several times a week. Reading to young children helps them develop vocabulary and leads to early literacy development. Elementary age students can benefit both from being read to but also from reading to someone else. For older children, consider choosing a title you both can read and then discuss later.
- Reading does not have to mean long, boring novels. Help your child read things that are interesting to them and read a range of things from books, magazines, newspaper articles to signs out in public.
- The public library is a wealth of free resources. If your child does not have a library card, please consider getting them one.
- Columbus School District will be offering **two summer school sessions for all students this year: June 13-30 and July 11-28**. The elementary and middle schools will be sending out reading, writing, and math invite letters to students who teachers really want to target for an extra little skill boost over the summer. If you receive an invite letter, it is at the discretion of the parent(s) to accept it or not. All children will have the opportunity to take classes that are interesting to them in one, both, or neither sessions.



Columbus Education Endowment Grant Winners

Reading Recovery Receives Books Written by Kristin Vander Sanden and Missy Greene

We are thankful to the Columbus Education Endowment Committee for selecting us to be recipients of a \$1000 grant to be used toward the purchase of leveled books for our Reading Recovery students. Reading Recovery is a program offered specifically for first graders. Reading Recovery activities include rereading familiar books, writing, phonemic awareness and phonics skill instruction as well as reading new books. Students selected for the program receive a 30 minute, one-on-one lesson. Most Reading Recovery students make accelerated progress in learning to read and write within 12 to 20 weeks. Reading Recovery teachers typically work with 8 – 10 students throughout the year.

We applied for the grant in order to increase the variety of books we have access to at different reading levels. Choosing a just right book for each student is important for his/her success at each reading level. Increasing the variety of books allows us to select appropriate books for each student based on interest, characters, known words, and language structures.

The leveled books are an integral part of the Reading Recovery program. Three to four books are used daily during lessons and then two to three are taken home each evening to be read for homework. Thus, working with four students daily over 12 -20 weeks requires access to many books.

SAVE THE DATE! Wednesday, May 4th from 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Color Columbus Run for the Columbus Education Endowment



April, 2016

Message from Superintendent

Happy April!

This newsletter focuses on two topics. The first topic is quite possibly the most important instructional mission in schools today. Literacy or the ability to read, write and speak about complex text is a skill vital to student success in academia and the work force. The articles in this newsletter focus on reading proficiency at the early grades and some programs focused on increasing our students' levels of literacy proficiencies. With just over half (57%) of all Columbus School District's students reading at grade level, our goal is to increase the reading level of all students while accelerating the levels of those students who are significantly below grade level. In order to improve these numbers, we must make literacy our community mission.

In addition, this newsletter explains the education choices offered for students in kindergarten through third grade. Columbus offers two schools within one building – Columbus Elementary School (CES) and Discover Charter School (DCS). We are fortunate to offer choices for our students and their interests in learning for these early formative years. While DCS and CES are different in the approach to learning, we want every child and parent to understand that neither school is more special than the other. Columbus School District strives to make every child's experience personalized to their learning needs.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this newsletter or any educational issues.

Go Cards!

ANNETTE DEUMAN



Reading Proficiency

Third grade reading proficiency is researched probably more than any grade level. The reason 3rd grade stands out is because a student's reading proficiency at the end of 3rd grade is an important predictor of success for the rest of that student's life. Third grade to fourth grade is also a transitional time in curriculum when instead of teaching students to read, students are asked to read to learn.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is an important research organization into this work. In a 2010 report titled "EARLY WARNING! Why reading by the end of third grade matters," research revealed the following:

- Half of 4th grade curriculum is incomprehensible to students who read below that grade level¹
- 75% of students who are poor readers in 3rd grade will still be poor readers in high school.² (Other reports will suggest that students below grade level at the end of 3rd grade will never catch up in their lifetime.)
- Students not proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade tend to have behavioral and social problems in older grade levels.³

Last year, Columbus School District 3rd graders had a 49.4% proficiency rate. In order for our students not to become part of the above statistics, the district and community must intervene. At the district level, we are currently in the middle of a literacy curricular review process and are examining everything about our practice from our literacy programs to the minutes per day we devote to literacy instruction to our staffing patterns and alignment. Through our review process, we will make decisions to strengthen our curriculum and instructional strategies as well as provide all staff with professional development to help students develop stronger literacy skills in all grade levels and all content areas.

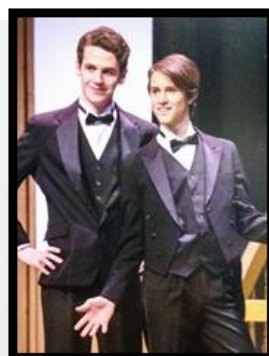
¹ The Children's Reading Foundation. Available at www.readingfoundation.org/reading.

² U.S. Department of Education, America Reads Challenge. (July 1999). *Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become a Reader*. Available at www2.ed.gov/pubs.

³ Miles, S., and Stipek, D. (2006). "Contemporaneous and Longitudinal Associations Between Social Behavior and Literacy Achievement in a Sample of Low-Income Elementary School Children." *Child Development*, 77(1), pp. 103-117.

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Learning Today, *Leading Tomorrow*



Mission

Columbus School District empowers students to be community, career, and college ready.



Upcoming Events

April, 2016

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| 5 | Spring Election – Vote! |
| 5 - 28 | Wisconsin Forward Testing |
| 6 | Board Retreat – Strategic Planning Meeting |
| 11 | Board Meeting – Columbus City Hall – 7 PM |
| 13 | Late Start Day – Classes begin at 10 AM |
| 20 | Kindergarten Choice Night – 5:30 – 7 PM |
| 25 | Board Meeting – Columbus City Hall – 7 PM – Organizational Meeting |
| 27 | Late Start Day – Late start for students K-8; Grades 9 & 10 start at 7:50; Grades 11 & 12 start at 10:45 AM due to testing |

May, 2016

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| 4 | Color Columbus Run – 1:30 – 3:30 PM |
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Athletic Events for High School athletes can be found at www.columbus.k12.wi.us (link on right side of page.)

GO CARDINALS!

