

CUFSD NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

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FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

CATHERINE O'HARA

The new year is off to a great start in our schools, providing an opportunity to reflect on the progress made toward achieving the CUFSD District Goals for 2024-2025. A comprehensive mid-year update on these goals was presented at the January 22 Board of Education meeting and is available for review on our website.

A sincere thank you to our Board of Education, administrative team, teachers, staff, parents, and community for their dedication to advancing these objectives and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

[Review the CUFSD District Goals & Mid-Year Update here.](#)

Key advancements in school safety and fiscal planning continue to strengthen our district. A major security system upgrade was successfully completed through collaboration between Buildings & Grounds and IT teams. As we prepare for the 2025-2026 budget, we remain committed to accountability and sustainable growth.

Together, we are advancing a student-centered, future-focused district that ignites excellence, champions innovation, and drives continuous improvement to ensure every student's success. Thank you for your continued support.

Update On District Goals

Proactive Safety & Facilities Management



Ensure the continual improvement and expansion of district facilities promoting safety, security and student opportunity in the most efficient and economical manner possible.

Our Director of Technology & Data Management, Daniel Svarczkopf and Director of Facilities, Buildings and Grounds, Matthew DeRosa partnered up to install and activate the new Visitor Aware System, a significant upgrade to our already robust safety measures.

Visitor Aware is a quick-response check-in system that not only records when visitors come and go, it also screens them in seconds against criminal registries, watchlists, injunctions, banned visitor lists and more. The ability to immediately identify and screen visitors, while logging arrivals and departures, reflects the district's commitment to prioritizing a safe learning environment for students and staff.



Effective Budgetary Planning & Continuous Improvement



Create a fiscally responsible budget that effectively addresses the needs of the district while considering the concerns and input of the community.

As we develop the 2025-26 budget, our focus remains on aligning financial resources with key district priorities. We encourage you to stay informed and engaged by attending upcoming Board of Education meetings. Join us on March 5, 2025, for a presentation covering district priorities, enrollment trends, staffing, and revenue projections. Additional budget presentations are outlined, [here](#), in the [2025-26 Budget Development Calendar](#).

With a transparent and data-driven approach, we remain committed to balancing fiscal responsibility with the needs of our students, staff, and community.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 3
8th Grade Parent Night

February 8
ACT Exam

February 13
Half Day; Parent/Teacher Conf.

February 26
BOE Meeting

February 6
Family Instructional Academy

February 12
BOE Meeting

February 14-17
Schools Closed, Feb. Recess

February 27
JR Parent Night



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FROM THE
CA PRINCIPAL

JOHN
FLANAGAN

As we transition into the third quarter, I am proud to reflect on the hard work and achievements of our students and staff.

With midterms successfully completed, we look ahead to the exciting events and opportunities that await our Chester Academy community.

On February 3, we invite families of our 8th-grade students to attend our Parent Information Night. This evening will provide valuable insights into the academic and extracurricular offerings at Chester Academy, helping families prepare for the transition to high school.

Looking ahead to March, the junior class is thrilled to host the Harlem Wizards game on March 10. This fun-filled evening promises to be entertaining for all ages. Details regarding ticket sales will be shared soon, so stay tuned.

We are also excited to announce a special event on March 13. Chester Academy will welcome Rohan Murphy, a former Division 1 college wrestler and motivational speaker, who will host two assemblies during the school day (MS and HS).

Rohan's inspiring story of overcoming adversity and achieving his dream of wrestling at Penn State University is sure to resonate with our students. In addition, there will be a community presentation at 7 PM, and we encourage everyone to attend this uplifting event.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and school community.

Together, we make Chester Academy a place where students can thrive and achieve their best.

Hambo alumni return to support future grads

Five Chester alumni visited with our juniors and seniors to share their post-high school experiences, along with insights about transitioning from high school to college, on-campus living, college athletics, career paths and more. Thank you, Haley Wilton (2018), Jonathan Walters Suber (2021), Emily Petramale (2022), Molly Farley (2024) and Andre Jenkins (2024), for sharing your time and insights with our students.



Celebrating the Year of the Snake



While learning about Lunar New Year, students in Ms. Lamitie's Middle School Art Club created some s-s-s-stunning snake-themed artwork for the hallway! The snake, symbolizing luck, prosperity, and good fortune, comes to life in a variety of bold colors and creative designs.

Gung hay fat choy!



Next gen educators attend TSST conference



Juniors and seniors in the Today's Students, Tomorrow's Teachers program gathered for a day of inspiration and growth at the annual Careers in Education Conference, where they engaged in numerous workshops on education-related topics such as creativity and self-expression, navigating mental health challenges in high school, and financial literacy. The day empowered our future educators and leaders with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to pursue their dreams.

Career connections hosts mental health panel

Clinicians from the Chester-based treatment center *Nourish Your Mind* led an expert Q&A panel for our career exploration initiative. The panel gave students firsthand accounts of working in the mental health field, from its rewards to its challenges, and the educational pathways that lead to success in the field.

Thank you, Nourish Your Mind, for spending your time with our students and inspiring them along their journeys!





FROM THE
CES PRINCIPAL

MARY KATE
BOESCH

January was an eventful and exciting month at CES, full of celebrations of student achievements and community engagement.

We had another successful PBIS assembly recognizing the outstanding ways in which our students demonstrate positive behavior. During this month's assembly, students were challenged to surpass November's remarkable count of 55 students entered into the SAFE chips bucket! We are so proud of our students for embracing this challenge and continuing to embody the core values of being Safe, Respectful, Responsible, and Ready!

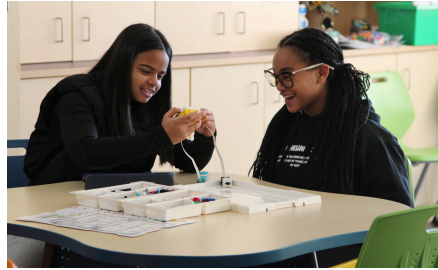
Our winter concert showcased the incredible talents of our young musicians, with the 5th grade band, CES Jazz Band, and our 4th and 5th grade Choir delivering outstanding performances. The Parent Teacher Conference (PTC) Community Band accompanied the choir, making the concert a true collaborative effort. The following day, the entire CES student body got to experience and celebrate the musical achievements of their peers with an in-school performance! If you think you'd like to be a part of the PTC Community Band, reach out to Mr. Sparkman. All instruments and skill levels welcome.

These events are a testament to the vibrant and supportive community we have at CES. From the dedication of our staff to the enthusiasm of our students and the involvement of our families, January has been a month to remember.

Thank you for your continued support in making CES a wonderful place to learn and grow.

5th graders explore motors and sensors in robotics

Ms. Daly's 5th-grade students explored the mechanics of sensors and motors with Ms. Rende, CES STEAM & Robotics Specialist. Using their LEGO Education Spike sets, they learned how to integrate these components into their builds, optimizing their robots' functionality and precision. Next week, they will apply their knowledge by constructing a driving base, preparing for more advanced programming challenges and creative problem-solving.

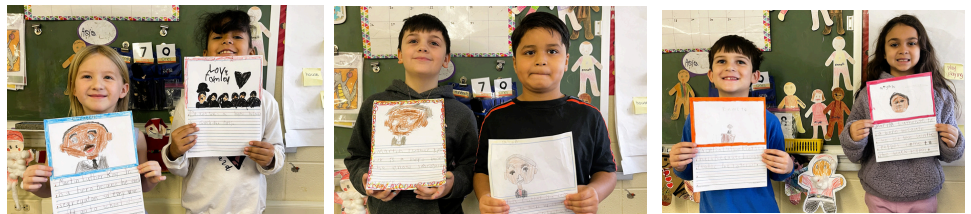


Robotics education cultivates critical thinking, teamwork, and technological literacy, providing students with essential skills for the future. Through collaboration and hands-on application of engineering and coding concepts, these young scholars are developing a strong foundation for innovation and future success.

Students reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Lessons about the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were happening in every grade level, at Chester Elementary and at Chester Academy, on January 17.

In Cheryl Coffey's class, students researched Dr. King using print and other multimedia historical resources. The students each did their own MLK drawing and shared a few of their own thoughts on what made Dr. King a hero.



Winter concert encore delights classmates

BRAVO to the elementary school musicians whose concert on January 23 was an absolute treat! Their in-school encore performance the next day was also a resounding hit with their classmates!

The performances were outstanding, and that's because of all the practice and perseverance these young musicians put into their art. Musical instruction in school offers students the opportunity to explore their creativity and enhance their cognitive skills.



Thank you musicians and Mr. Sparkman... great job!