

Crown Point Community School Corporation

we are CP

Volume 4, Issue 2
February 2025

FULL STEAM AHEAD

STEM, trades &
career classes
propel students
forward

Kindergarten Enrollment Begins Feb. 25

BIG steps, bright FUTURES

Kindergarten Enrollment Begins February 25th

Welcome, Class of 2038! If your child will be five years old before August 1, 2025, and you live in the district boundaries, we invite you to enroll for kindergarten starting February 25th at www.cps.k12.in.us/kindergarten.



Feel prepared for the next big step!



Visit our website or scan the QR code above to access our complete kindergarten guide.

1 Visit our website at www.cps.k12.in.us to complete the enrollment form.

Enroll online February 25 through March 7

If you are a Bulldog Buddies Preschool family, you are already enrolled. Your child's future school will contact you with next steps.

Check your email for info to create your PowerSchool account before Step 2. Existing families can add their child to their current PowerSchool account.

Your child's school will contact you to schedule an appointment in April or May where you and your child will meet one of our teachers and a school administrator. Important information about the year ahead will be shared. **2**

You must bring your required documents to be copied at this visit (see next page).

Visit your school and bring your documents

Complete annual registration in late July.

Log back into your PowerSchool account to complete the annual returning student forms.

Your school will provide information about Kindergarten Kick Off in early August. **3**



CPCSC students must reside in our district. Check your address via our website if you are not sure whether you live in the CPCSC boundaries.

Documents You Will Need to Bring to Your Child's School:

- Child's birth certificate
- Child's immunization records
- Guardian's valid driver's license or state ID with an in-district address
- Custody documents or divorce decrees (if applicable)
- Proof of residency:
 - Home deed/mortgage/contract/property tax bill OR lease/rental agreement with current dates
 - Two of the following with the guardian's name and address: utility bill (water, internet, electric, etc.), tax return, car payment, or pay stub. Address cannot be a P.O. box.



This school year, Crown Point Community Schools launched STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs in all seven elementary buildings. The class is part of each K-5 student's related-arts rotation, rounding out a balanced curriculum alongside art, library, music, and physical education. STEM lays a foundation for students to explore computer science and engineering standards before taking more complex courses in middle and high school.

Research and Planning

Implementing a new program began with a review of existing curriculums, standards, and student needs. "We found we were hitting science standards well, but weren't necessarily meeting all of the integrated STEM or computer science goals," explained Sara Colvin, the district's new Elementary STEM Specialist. After consulting other districts and evaluating programs, CPCSC chose two interactive curriculums: SAM Labs and Project Lead the Way.

Both curriculums provide students with opportunities to build, code, design, and problem-solve in collaborative settings. The district's new STEM instructors trained over the summer before courses began in August 2024. To help educate parents, back-to-school nights included tours of the new STEM classrooms and examples of what their children would be learning. "For many parents, STEM (at least what STEM looks like now) is a new concept," Colvin said. "We're excited to show them what their children are learning."

Components of STEM Integration



As part of the district's recent capital improvement projects, every elementary school received a new STEM classroom. The design and furniture was purposefully chosen to facilitate collaboration while also being accessible.

Engaging All Students

Perhaps STEM's greatest strength is that it engages students who have a wide range of interests and abilities. Melissa Valsi, STEM instructor at Winfield Elementary, sees firsthand how the program empowers learners. "STEM is a way for students of all abilities to feel successful while exploring new concepts they might never have thought they could do," she said.

Even students who don't see themselves as "STEM kids" are finding value in the program. "For students

who are more art- or music-focused, STEM lets them use their artistic abilities to create and design," Valsi explained. From building structures to crafting unique solutions, the program encourages creativity alongside technical learning.

Shawn Brooks, STEM instructor at Eisenhower Elementary, shared a similar sentiment. "STEM is fun, tricky, and exciting. It challenges students in ways they're not used to, but they leave class smiling and eager to come back," he said. Brooks especially values the moments when students must persevere through challenges. "I'm passionate about the struggle," he said. "Our job is to give students a challenge without an easy answer. When the 'light bulb moment' happens, the excitement is incredible."

These moments of joy and engagement are why the district believes so strongly in the program's potential. "Even if a student starts the year disinterested in STEM, we often see them engage more once they figure out a challenging problem," Brooks said. "They might not realize it now, but the skills they're building—critical thinking, perseverance, and creative problem-solving—are valuable no matter what path they choose."

Moving Forward

After just a few months, the district is already seeing the program's impact. "Students are growing in their confidence," Valsi said. "It's amazing to see them using STEM-specific vocabulary and applying concepts on their own," Brooks agreed. "We use special



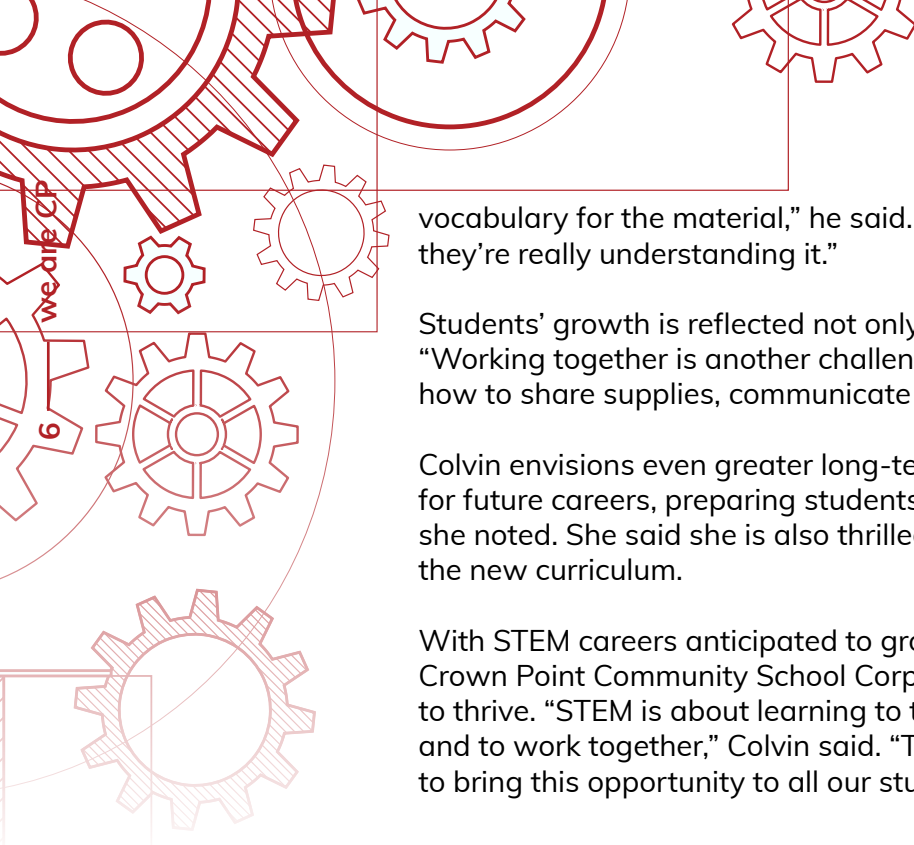
VEX Robotics is an after school program available at each CPCSC elementary school. In the last two years, multiple teams received bids to compete at the state level. MacArthur's team advanced to the World's competition in both 2022 and 2023.

The launch of STEM for all K-5 students ensures every learner receives the valuable skills and knowledge of STEM, not just those in robotics.

from CURIOSITY to CONFIDENCE

Elementary STEM engages students





vocabulary for the material,” he said. “Students are using it correctly and frequently - they’re really understanding it.”

Students’ growth is reflected not only in technical skills but also in interpersonal ones. “Working together is another challenge for students,” Valsi shared. “They’re learning how to share supplies, communicate ideas, and collaborate without arguing.”

Colvin envisions even greater long-term benefits. “This program lays the groundwork for future careers, preparing students not just for middle and high school but for life,” she noted. She said she is also thrilled to see more girls embracing STEM because of the new curriculum.

With STEM careers anticipated to grow more than three times that of other careers, Crown Point Community School Corporation is ensuring students receive opportunities to thrive. “STEM is about learning to think in new ways, to solve problems creatively, and to work together,” Colvin said. “Those are skills every child needs, and we’re proud to bring this opportunity to all our students.”



Purple STAR schools

New designation supports military families

Crown Point Community School Corporation is proud to announce that each CPCSC school has been designated a Purple Star School by the Indiana Department of Education. This recognition highlights CPCSC’s commitment to supporting military families, honoring veterans, and creating a culture of respect and appreciation for those who serve.

- The school has a dedicated webpage to provide recognition and resources for service members, veterans, and military students and families.
- The school hosts a military recognition event that demonstrates a military-friendly culture such as Veteran’s Day, 9/11 remembrance, etc.
- The school has a display recognizing service members, veterans, and/or military students and families.
- The CPCSC Board of School Trustees passed a resolution publicizing support for military students and families.
- Military service members and their immediate family members who meet the minimum qualifications for job openings will be guaranteed a job interview.

“Over the last few years, we’ve focused on numerous ways to make sure we welcome and serve all students and their families. The Purple Star School designation reflects our commitment to a quality educational experience for every CPCSC student,” Superintendent Dr. Todd Terrill said. “We are thankful for the military members and veterans who live and work in our district, and we commit to helping their children throughout their educational journey with us.”

More information, including each school’s assigned contact and resources for families, is available at www.cps.k12.in.us/purplestar.

The Purple Star designation is awarded to schools that demonstrate a strong commitment to service members, veterans, and their families. Schools receiving this honor must meet specific criteria:

- There is a designated staff member at each school who serves as the liaison for students of service members and veterans. The liaison has completed IDOE training.



Try a STEM lesson at home!



Scan the QR code with your smart phone to engage in a STEM activity at home! You’ll need 15 pipe cleaners per team.



Top Left: STEM students complete a classic lesson - flying paper airplanes. **Left:** Melissa Valsi helps Lorelai and Adelaide use the new SAM Labs platform. **Above:** Solon students Arthur and William complete a lab that tests how different materials allow light through them. They designed an umbrella to make sure their ice pop didn’t melt!

skilled for SUCCESS

Empowering students through career tech

High school is more than an academic journey; it's a stepping stone toward building character and skills that prepare students for life outside of school. At Crown Point High School, Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses provide students hands-on experiences and certifications, but it's the instructors who foster personal growth and responsibility in students that serve them through the rest of their lives.

Precision Machining

Brian Trapp, instructor for the Precision Machining program, explained that his classroom is a space where students transform raw materials into intricate components. "Precision machining is a fun, engaging, hands-on learning experience," said Trapp. "Students learn to use tools like lathes, mills, grinders, and CNC equipment to create precision components while developing problem-solving and analytical thinking skills."

Graduates of the program leave with dual credits from Vincennes University and are well-prepared to enter apprenticeships or pursue degrees in engineering and advanced manufacturing. Senior Charles Reinholtz said the program is definitely shaping his future: "I'm on the path to enter the Valpo Apprenticeship Program to earn a Department of Labor Certificate for machining. The skills I've gained go beyond the classroom—employability, teamwork, and maintaining professional relationships."

Senior Jacob Barbaro added, "Machinery has been the most beneficial class I've taken in high school. Many of the things we learn have real-world applications, and my critical thinking and logical reasoning skills have grown because of this class. I look forward to it every day." Student Keewa Yu's goal is to attend Purdue University and major in engineering. She said the program has taught her to keep working after making a mistake and to find a solution.

Trapp said the biggest challenge for students in the course is developing the ability to see many steps necessary to complete a project. "This is called process planning," he said. "It takes time to develop an understanding of the multitude of machining processes and computations that produce a precision component within .001" accuracy."

Automotive Technology

In the Automotive Technology program, instructor Dan White ensures students gain practical knowledge and life skills. From learning the intricacies of engine repair to mastering shop safety, students like Angel Escobedo appreciate the real-world applications. "Mr. White has been more than a teacher; he's been a role model," said Escobedo. "He's taught us life lessons and accountability that extend far beyond the classroom."

The program offers a progression from basic principles to advanced capstone experiences, with opportunities for internships and apprenticeships. "Our students leave with the skills to either join the workforce or pursue further education in auto technology," White explains. "Even those not entering the field gain the knowledge to maintain their vehicles and avoid being taken advantage of in repairs."

Senior Jossiah Rose emphasizes the value of teamwork and discipline. "The benefits of this class go beyond automotive knowledge. It's about becoming a well-rounded individual who is accountable and prepared for life."

"I've learned to be accountable for my mistakes and to keep my life tidy like my workspace..."
- Jossiah Rose

"My critical thinking and logical reasoning skills have grown from this class."
- Jacob Barbaro

"This class taught me making mistakes is okay - find another solution, or start over and get better."
- Keewa Yu



CPHS auto tech students take top honors at the UTI Top Tech challenge. Students earned first place two years in a row. For three years in a row, additional teams placed in the top ten. Students have earned thousands of dollars in scholarships and tools for the CPHS auto garage.

Far right: Auto students Eric Valles and Angel Escobedo check the oil levels in the CPHS auto shop as part of an under-hood inspection. **Right:** Student Keewa Yu attends the annual Construction and Skilled Trades Day during a field trip for CPHS career tech students. **Below:** Student Quinten Osburn and instructor Brian Trapp review the steps for Quinten's current project in Precision Machining.



Imagine a preschool where...

...curiosity is always the right answer. Hands get messy & discovery abounds. Children learn together by playing together.

Bulldog Buddies Preschool is for children ages 3-5 who live in the Crown Point Community School Corporation district. Space is limited. Reserve your spot for Fall of 2025 by visiting our website.

www.cps.k12.in.us/preschool

Construction Trades

The Construction Trades program, led by Doug Sowash, equips students with practical skills in carpentry, electrical wiring, and safety. Students earn certifications like the OSHA 10 (a 10-hour training about workplace safety), Ivy Tech credits, and some certificates through NCCER (National Center for Construction Education & Research). Students who complete four courses earn a Technical Certificate from Ivy Tech.

Sowash highlighted the many construction skills students learn. "They get experience with framing, insulating, window and door installation, drywall, siding, shingling, and electrical wiring. They even learn some commercial applications such as steel studs and drop ceilings."

"The biggest challenge for students is learning some of the more difficult math," said Sowash. "We also teach them to respect power tools, not fear them."

Beyond technical skills, students learn teamwork and problem-solving, which Sowash believes are invaluable. "Whether they pursue a trade or not, they leave knowing how to fix their homes or understand professional work on their properties."

Personal Growth

When asked about their experiences in their CTE classes, CPHS students each noted personal growth and skills beyond their technical learning. They recognized their instructors as mentors.

"I want them to learn teamwork, pride, craftsmanship, attention to detail, and a willingness to try new things and not give up when the going gets tough. The world can be an unforgiving place, and I hope their time with me helps them to feel that much more prepared." - Brian Trapp

Mr. White noted he was "blessed with a very good instructor" and wants to "pass that torch on" to his students. "Sometimes we also school students in becoming responsible adults."

Brian Trapp said watching his students grow both in the shop and after high school is a huge reward. "Perhaps the greatest thing that has ever been made in my class are the friendships and opportunities to be a mentor for my students, regardless of their age or station in life's many stages."



Honor the past, create the future.

JOIN TODAY
www.cphsalumni.org

For over a century, Crown Point High School has embodied educational excellence. By joining the Crown Point High School Alumni Association, you contribute directly to that legacy—helping support scholarships and opportunities for graduating seniors.

Your membership honors the past while celebrating the future. It ensures our newest alumni have even more tools to thrive. Join today at www.cphsalumni.org.



1916 CPHS Orchestra



2025 CPHS Orchestra



In addition to Science Olympiad, CPCSC middle school students excel in after school robotics programs. Taft and Colonel Wheeler's teams consistently take honors at the state VEX Robotics competition. In recent years, middle school teams have also travelled to the World's competition. Indiana is one of the most competitive states for VEX Robotics.

exploration & CREATION

Students compete in middle school Science Olympiad

For middle school students, after school clubs are an important opportunity for growth and learning outside academics during a unique developmental stage. At CPCSC, middle school Science Olympiad clubs use STEM to inspire young learners as they explore new interests.

Science Olympiad introduces students to 23 diverse events that span disciplines like biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, and Earth science. Students engage in hands-on activities, from building devices for air trajectory, designing intricate Rube Goldberg machines, to studying anatomy and physiology. Events like *Crime Busters* challenge students to analyze evidence, while others like *Dynamic Planet* and *Meteorology* delve into Earth sciences. This wide array ensures that every student finds a subject to ignite their curiosity and passion for science.

These events align with national and state standards, ensuring academic rigor while remaining engaging and relevant. For example, students studying Optics learn principles of physics while applying them to direct laser beams through mirrors, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application. Other events, like *Reach for the Stars*, introduce students to astronomy and astrophysics, broadening their understanding of the universe. Students not only deepen their content knowledge but also learn the interconnectivity of scientific disciplines.

Middle school is a transformative period when students begin to further their identities and develop interpersonal skills. Science Olympiad emphasizes teamwork, problem-solving, and perseverance. Jamie Lies, Science Olympiad coach and math teacher at Taft Middle School, highlighted the unique opportunities this program provides: "Some students who are more academic than athletic don't have as many chances to learn teamwork. Science Olympiad allows them to be comfortable being themselves while building relationships with peers."

Collaboration is central to success in Science Olympiad. Students must work together across grade levels, which provides an opportunity for older students to mentor new 6th graders, building confidence and leadership skills. Competitions, often hosted on college campuses, provide students with early exposure to higher education environments and future opportunities.

Participation in Science Olympiad encourages resilience—an essential character trait. Lies, who is also the Assistant Director for Indiana Science Olympiad Board of Directors, noted that Olympiad students are often high achievers who don't always encounter significant academic challenges. The program introduces them to productive struggle. As Traci Johnson, coach at Colonel Wheeler Middle School, said, "Science Olympiad allows students to struggle, learn from those struggles, and develop determination." Time



Taft students Morayooluwa Kareem and Tristan Barbour (top photo) and Col. Wheeler students Blake Stevens and Camden Hesser (bottom photo) prepare for upcoming Science Olympiad events.

management and adaptability matter as students prepare for multiple events.

Lies said she hopes that most of all, students leave with new friendships and a new understanding of what it means to be a teammate. "Many students make long-term friendships because of their experience in Science Olympiad," she said. "They have found like-minded people who love science and they have learned they are not alone in their passion for science."

Teacher of the Year

Nominations
open through
March 1st



Crown Point Community School Corporation is accepting nominations for the Teacher of the Year, Administrator of the Year, and Employee of the Year who will serve during the 2025-2026 school year. Nominations are open through March 1, 2025.

Students, former students, parents, colleagues, administrators, or members of the community may nominate a CPCSC teacher, administrator, and/or support employee. There is no limit to the number of nominations per person, but you must complete a separate nomination form for each nominee.

Winners are announced in May. Visit www.cps.k12.in.us/teacheroftheyear for more information or to submit a nomination.



Nominate a
teacher, support
professional, or
administrator!

join our TEAM!

CPCSC employs hundreds of licensed teachers, but it takes hundreds of additional support staff to make our district move. Join our team and discover why our schools are a great place to work. Find more information or apply at www.cps.k12.in.us/careers.

Starting pay:

- Substitute: \$110+/day. Subs are employed through our partner, ESS.
- Bus Driver: \$25.53/hr. We will train and pay for your CDL!
- Paraprofessional: \$14.95+/hr
- Custodial: \$17.56+/hr.
- Cafeteria: \$14.19+/hr.

See our open positions online!



Crown Point High School's Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program is a new addition to its curriculum, providing students with hands-on experience and a head start in the healthcare field. By the end of the course, students will have the skills to earn their CNA credential, opening doors to immediate employment or to further their education in the medical field.

The program begins with classroom instruction and lab practice, covering topics like monitoring vital signs, safety protocols, care techniques, and basic anatomy. In their second semester, students embark on clinical experiences and apply their skills with real residents under supervision.

The CNA course is yet another offering in the robust health science curriculum at CPHS, including courses like Principles of Healthcare and Biomedical Science. The class is held in a new lab, built as part of the district's recent capital improvement projects. Everything the students need to care for others is available in the lab, so

Above: CPHS CNA student Layan Zaid practices taking a blood pressure reading on fellow student Andi May. **Top right:** Principal Russ Marcinek has his blood pressure checked in the CNA lab by students. "It might be a little high," he joked.

students are well-prepared before transitioning to their second-semester clinical placements at Majestic Nursing Home. At the end of the year, students take a proctored exam and a skills test through the Indiana Department of Health before becoming certified to work independently as a CNA.

Under the guidance of Lindsey Gonzalez, a nurse with a decade of experience, students not only acquire technical nursing skills but also learn to approach patient care meaningfully. "I emphasize understanding the patient's perspective," Gonzalez shared. "This makes students stronger caregivers, teaching

them both the hands-on and psychological aspects of nursing."

For many students, the CNA program is a stepping stone toward diverse healthcare careers. Senior Christopher Bond, inspired by his stepmother's work in healthcare, hopes to become a doctor. "This class has taught me critical thinking,

teamwork, and confidence," he said. Fellow student Katie Mahle said the program is a high-reward opportunity. "It's been so beneficial," she explained. "I've confirmed my passion for nursing while also learning respect, empathy, and the importance of treating everyone as individuals."

The program's benefits extend beyond aspiring healthcare professionals. Students gain transferable skills like effective communication, stress management, and interpersonal respect. They also explore broader health and cultural considerations in patient care—insights that will serve them in any career.

Looking ahead, Gonzalez hopes her students leave the program with not only a professional credential but also a deeper understanding of compassion and responsibility. "My goal is to provide them with a solid foundation for whatever path they choose, whatever their next steps are," she said.

building a CARING workforce

CPHS students become CNAs in new course



CROWN POINT COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

1050 S. Main Street, Crown Point, IN 46307

save the DATE

Please check your school's website, social media, or newsletter for more information about each item below.

- **February 25** - Kindergarten enrollment begins (see p. 2)
- **March 1** - Teacher of the Year nominations due (see p. 15).
- **March 24-28** - Spring Break
- **May 5-9** - Teacher/Educator Appreciation Week
- **June 4** - CPHS Graduation (rain date June 5)

On the cover: CPHS student Noah Ramos works on a project in the Precision Machining lab.



presents

**THE PLAY
THAT GOES
WRONG**

March 7-9, 14-16, 2025
Tickets at cphs.ludus.com

we are CP is published by Crown Point Community School Corporation and mailed to residents in Crown Point, Winfield, and Cedar Lake.

Find us on social media and online
at www.cps.k12.in.us

