

Work Session Meeting | 07/24/2025 – 5:30 PM

Dr. Frank R. Petruzielo Educational Services Facility | 1205 Bluffs Parkway, Canton, GA 30114

- I. **Call to Order Work Session**
- II. **Superintendent Welcome**
- III. **Board Member Items**
 1. June School Board Training Recap, Chair Janet Read Welch
 2. School Board Meeting Calendar 2025-2026
- IV. **Superintendent Reports**
 1. Academics and Accountability:
 - a. Back to School 2025-26
Dr. Debra Murdock, Chief School Leadership and Operations
 2. Finance:
 - a. Third-Party Validation of Floating Homestead Exemption Projections
Kenneth Owen, Chief Financial Officer
 - b. Local Legislation HB 845 - Legislative Update
Mike McGowan, Chief of Staff
 3. Capital Outlay:
 - a. Monthly Capital Outlay Report
Trey Moores, Chief Support Services Officer
 4. Safety and Security Report:
 - a. Semiannual Report on School Safety and Security
Chief Buster Cushing, Chief Safety and Security Officer
 5. Other Reports:
 - a. Athletic Apparel Update
Dr. Debra Murdock, Chief School Leadership and Operations
- V. **Adjournment**



School Board Meeting Calendar 2025-2026

Work Session will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Board Business Meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

July 24, 2025
August 21, 2025
September 18, 2025
October 16, 2025
November 20, 2025
December 11, 2025
January 15, 2026
February 12, 2026
March 19, 2026
April 23, 2026
May 14, 2026
June 18, 2026



Cherokee County
School District

Preparing for the 2025-26 School Year

Board Report

July 24, 2025

SUPPORTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY GOVERNANCE MODEL

Core Beliefs

1. All students are highly engaged in their education and capable of reaching their full learning potential.
2. Employees are trusted and supported as professionals and provided with resources to elevate student outcomes.
3. Families and our community are involved partners in student success and can expect all students to receive the best education possible.
4. Schools are positive and welcoming environments with clear expectations and accountability in all academic and operational areas.

Core Policies

- Policy **BAB**: School Board Governance
*Balanced Autonomy with Supportive Accountability
Cohesive System of Teaching & Learning*
- Standards
 - Instructional Resources
 - Monitoring Student Learning
- Accountability & Support
- Superintendent Evaluation
 - Aligned School Improvement Goals
 - Targeted Support
- Policy **IFAD**: Literacy in CCSD

Student Achievement Goals

	READING			ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			MATHEMATICS	
	Baseline (2024)	GOAL (2027)		Baseline (2024)	GOAL (2027)		Baseline (2024)	GOAL (2027)
3 rd Grade	72%	78%		47%	53%		57%	65%
4 th Grade	65%	71%		47%	53%		61%	70%
5 th Grade	78%	84%		56%	62%		56%	65%
6 th Grade	63%	69%		48%	54%		44%	50%
7 th Grade	74%	78%		45%	54%		48%	60%
8 th Grade	75%	81%		48%	54%		51%	59%
High School	80%	86%		56%	62%		49%	55%

Key Priorities

1. Elevate the Excellence in academics and achievement for all students
2. Elevate the Excellence in effective School Board-Superintendent Governance
3. Elevate the Excellence in the district's coordination of goals, systems, and processes
4. Elevate the Excellence by embracing a pervasive high-quality school environment defined by high standards, effective supports, and consistent practices

Elevate the Excellence!

Important Dates of Note

- ✓ Superintendent's ElevateED Conference: June 4th
- ✓ Superintendent's Leadership Symposium: July 15
- ✓ New Teacher Induction/Orientation: July 16-17
- ❑ First Day for Teachers/Pre-planning: July 25
- ❑ Open House Dates: July 30-31
- ❑ First Day of School: Aug. 1
- ❖ Open House Dates and School Start Times are found on our Cherokeek12.net website.

Elevate the Excellence!



Academics & Accountability



- ✓ Teacher Toolbox: Unit 1 resources and standards alignment are complete for all grade levels in the four core content areas.
- ✓ CCSD Customized Teaching and Learning Standards, aligned in Teaching and Learning Maps, are updated and available for teachers and students.
- ✓ Teacher and student resources are ready at our schools for distribution for the four core content areas.
- ✓ Specialized procedure and programmatic guidance documents (Special Education, gifted, ESOL, REP, EIP and Title I) have been distributed to appropriate school-based leaders.

Elevate the Excellence!



Human Resources

- ✓ 100% Principal & Assistant Principal Fill Rate
- ✓ 99.7% Teacher Fill Rate
- ✓ 98.2% Classified Fill Rate
- ✓ 100% Transportation Fill Rate
- ✓ 97% Cafeteria Fill Rate
- ✓ 96% Custodial Fill Rate
- ✓ 733 Substitutes Active



Elevate the Excellence!



Finance

- ✓ 100% Kronos 2.0 fully tested and implemented.
- ✓ 100% Timekeepers trained on Kronos 2.0
- ✓ 100% Principals and Bookkeepers trained on new school-based budget processes.
- ✓ 100% FY26 entered into the Financial Management Platform.
- ✓ 100% New Employees entered in the payroll module.

Elevate the Excellence!

Safety and Security

- ✓ 100% Fully Staff – Police officers and safety monitors.
- ✓ 100% Camera mapping complete.
- ✓ On track for all Crisis Alert System testing to be complete.
- ✓ 100% Police body camera test and training complete.



Support Services



- ✓ 100% of our 472 CCSD buses passed state inspection
- ✓ 100% Bus routing software operational.
- ✓ 90+% Summer projects complete (painting, flooring, lighting).
- ✓ Free Home ES build is complete and ready to receive students.
- ✓ Creekland MS and Creekview HS additions complete.
- ✓ 90% Summer Custodial Projects complete.

Elevate the Excellence!



School Leadership and Operations

- ✓ CCSD Principal Leadership Competencies will be utilized fully for SY2025-26.
- ✓ 100% School-based Leaders trained on new Code of Conduct and Harassment Training which includes enhanced consequences for vapes and school threats.
- ✓ ElevateED and Superintendent's Leadership Symposium complete.



Elevate the Excellence!



Technology



- ✓ 100% Student schedules are on track for completion.
- ✓ 100% Student Information System is fully operational with job family responsibilities assigned.
- ✓ 100% Active students are rostered and ready for all technology applications.
- ✓ 100% Network installation complete at new construction sites.

Elevate the Excellence!

Important Information for Families



STUDENTS



PARENT CANVAS



CALENDAR



MENUS



PAYMENTS



BUS INFO



Handbook



ASP



Forms



Microsoft 365



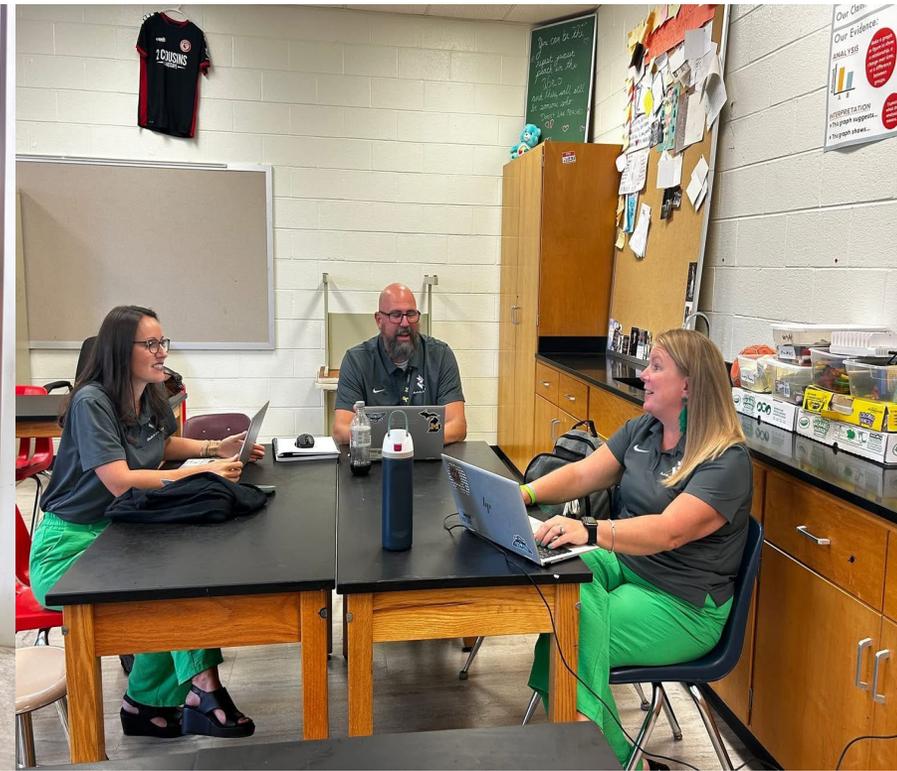
PTA & Partners



Emergency
Notification

- ✓ Open House Dates & Times
- ✓ School Start Times
- ✓ Bus Stop Times & Location

- ✓ Lunch Payment and Forms
- ✓ ASP Information
- ✓ Handbooks



Cherokee County
School District

Preparing for the 2025-26 School Year

Board Report

July 24, 2025

Status: Validation of HB581 Estimate

**Third-Party Validation of Floating Homestead
Exemption (HB581) Projections
School Board Work Session
July 24, 2025**

Background

- House Bill 581 (HB581) was passed by the Georgia General Assembly during the 2024 session and established a referendum that placed a constitutional amendment on the November 2024 ballot creating a floating homestead exemption, capping the growth of the local tax digest at the rate of inflation, unless taxing authorities opted out.
- The Cherokee County School Board opted out of the exemption after learning the exemption could result in a loss of up to \$54M in local revenue to the school district over a five-year period.
- This loss of revenue would have been on top of the almost \$14M in lost revenue due to the expansion of the local Senior Exemption.
- The Board unanimously passed a resolution opting out of the homestead exemption at their February 13, 2025 meeting.
- At the March 20, 2025 Board meeting, the Board voted to authorize a forensic audit, which was subsequently rescinded at a called Board meeting on March 27, 2025 and replaced by unanimous vote of the Board with a request to have a third-party validation of the projection calculations used to determine the financial impact had the Board not opted out of HB581.

Current Status

- Staff attempted to identify a local CPA firm or individual to perform the validation work but failed to find someone willing to perform the scope of work.
- A formal Request for Quote was issued on June 17, 2025 and a firm from Washington, D.C, STA PLLC, provided the sole quote, which was subsequently accepted at an initial cost of \$18,000 but subject to increase, depending on the final scope of work.
- An engagement kickoff meeting was held on July 14, 2025 with representatives from STA PLLC to further define the key goals of the validation and establish a timeline for completion
- Staff provided STA PLLC with data pertinent to the development of the estimated loss of revenue, including the digest data received from the Cherokee County Assessor's office in November 2024, the formula and assumptions used to develop the estimate and guidance received from the Georgia Department of Revenue relative to the inflation factor.
- Staff will meet with STA PLLC representatives every two weeks to obtain status updates
- The final report is expected to be completed before the August 21, 2025 School Board meeting.

Report: HB845

Local Legislation HB845 Update School Board Work Session July 24, 2025

Background

- House Bill 845 (HB845) is local legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly during the 2025 session, establishing the position of internal auditor and providing for the selection, powers and duties of the internal auditor.
- The selection of an individual or company must be made from a list of nominations provided by the local delegation, with associated costs the responsibility of the School Board.
- Responsibilities include:
 - “Appoint, employ, and remove such assistants, employees, and personnel as they deem necessary for the efficient and effective administration of the office.
 - Conduct one- and five-year performance and financial audits.”

Current Status

Completed

- ✓ Schedule of already-required annual audits (see attached).
- ✓ Plan to distribute audit reports to School Board and delegation in hard copy format (in addition to standard practice of posting to the CCSD website).
- ❑ Current CCSD internal auditors (2) scheduled to audit of each school with a Principal or Bookkeeper change, random selection of departments and daily selection of transactions to ensure compliance with statutes, policies and internal controls.

Awaiting

- ❑ List of eligible companies/individuals to perform requirements of HB845 from the local delegation.
- ❑ Clarity on timeline.

Scheduled Audits for FY26

Type of Audit	Performed By	Timeline	Status
School Nutrition Summer Feeding Program	Georgia Department of Education	Summer 2025	Completed, No Findings
Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and Independent Auditor's Report	Third-Party, Independent Auditor	December 2025	Preparation of Financial Statements
Ed-SPLOST Report	Third-Party, Independent Auditor	December 2025	Not Started
Preliminary/Official Statement	Disclosure Counsel	January 2026	Not Started
Credit Rating Reports	Moody's S&P	January 2026	Not Started
Internal Audits	CCSD Internal Auditors	Change in Leadership/ Bookkeeper and Random Selection	In Process

All third-party audit results are published on the CCSD website





Projects in Construction

Cherokee HS Replacement

Replacement Facility

Carroll Daniel Construction

Substantial Completion: 12.2025

Anticipated Occupancy: 08.2026

- Installation of the ceiling grid and above ceiling inspections continue in the main academic building. The HVAC system is being prepped for fan/AC operation.
- Preliminary punch list in the CTAE building is ongoing. Installation of motion sensors for classroom lighting is complete. The building is ready for conditioned air. Installation of the ceiling tile and casework is underway.
- The outside concrete pour for the sidewalks and drywall installation are complete in the auditorium. Painting and ceiling tile installation will begin next week. The auxiliary gym bleachers and wood floor deliveries have been scheduled.
- Installation of the ceiling grid and lay in light fixtures in the cafeteria is underway. The outside concrete pour for the entrance sidewalk and the loading dock dumpster pad is complete. Above ceiling inspections have been scheduled.
- Installation of the high bay store front frames is nearing completion in the main gym. Painting, block fill, and gym rail installation are underway.
- Exterior brick installation for the athletic buildings continues. Preparation of the fields for synthetic turf has begun and installation of the perimeter fencing for baseball and softball has been scheduled.
- Sod installation has begun, and installation of site sidewalks is ongoing. Removal of the Georgia Power temporary poles has been scheduled.



Capital Outlay Report

Work Session | 07.24.2025



Capital Outlay Report

Work Session | 07.24.2025



Creekland MS

Classroom Addition

McKnight Construction Company

Substantial Completion: 05.2025

Anticipated Occupancy: 08.2025

- The classroom addition interior is 99% complete.
- Installation of the sidewalks is complete, with final grading and landscaping remaining.





Creekview HS

Classroom Addition ~ Auxiliary Gym

McKnight Construction Company

Substantial Completion: 05.2025

Anticipated Occupancy: 08.2025

- Construction of the classroom addition is 97% complete.
- The installation of the elevator, curbs, sidewalks, and asphalt paving is ongoing at the classroom addition.
- The gym's structural steel, slab on grade, roof, metal framing, block walls, brick, and ceiling grid installation are complete. The building is nearing the "dried in" phase. The MEP rough-in and civil work are ongoing.
- Demolition, MEP rough-in, block wall, and door frame installation for the interior renovation are underway.



Capital Outlay Report

Work Session | 07.24.2025



River Ridge HS

Auxiliary Gymnasium

SmithBuilt Construction Group

Substantial Completion: 04.2026

Anticipated Occupancy: 08.2026

- Interior renovation, including installation of the new rubber flooring and floor protection in the weightroom, is ongoing.
- Steel erection continues. Installation of the roof trusses is scheduled to begin next week.
- Temporary HVAC units to be delivered by the end of the week for existing space.
- The Fire Marshal has been scheduled for an overhead inspection.



Capital Outlay Report

Work Session | 07.24.2025



Sequoyah HS

Auxiliary Gym and Facility Improvements

(Press Box & Field House)

Carroll Daniel Construction

Substantial Completion: 11.2026

Anticipated Occupancy: 01.2027

- The LDP (Land Disturbance Permit) has been received.
- The general contractor will be fully mobilized by July 21st.
- The 2 week schedule includes temporary fencing, private utility locates, installation of student pathways, and demolition of the existing wrestling building.

Capital Outlay Report

Work Session | 07.24.2025



Teasley MS

Driveway Improvements

Summit Construction and Development

Substantial Completion: 08.2025

Anticipated Occupancy: 08.2025

- Curb and gutter installation, GAB installation, and final prep for the new parent entrance are underway.
- Asphalt is scheduled to be installed later this month.
- The new brick monument has been completed and is ready for installation of the new LED sign.



Capital Outlay Report

Work Session | 07.24.2025



Woodstock HS

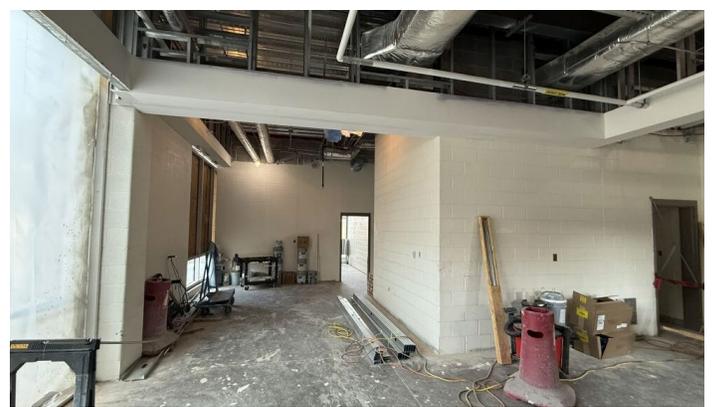
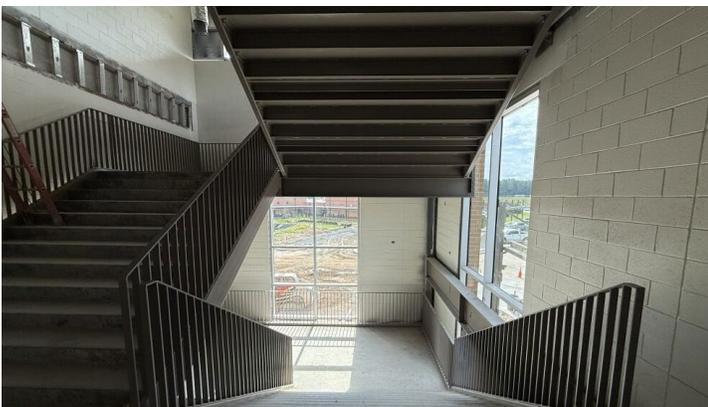
Classroom Addition

SmithBuilt Construction Group

Substantial Completion: 01.2026

Anticipated Occupancy: 08.2026

- Installation of the curb and gutter is complete.
- Start-up of the water chiller and energy recovery unit (ERU) has been conducted.
- Ceiling grid installation is ongoing.
- Installation of the ambulance simulator and paving and striping have been scheduled.





Projects in Development

Creekview HS

Home Football Fieldhouse Expansion

CROFT & Associates

Anticipated Construction RFP Issuance: 06.2025

Anticipated Board Action: 08.2025

Anticipated Construction: 09.2025

Anticipated Occupancy: 03.2026

- This project was issued for RFP on June 26th with Proposals due on July 24th.
- Capital Improvements staff will submit the final scoring evaluation for consideration by the Board at the August Board meeting.
- Pending approval by the Board, a Pre-Construction meeting has been tentatively scheduled for early September.



Board Report

School Safety & Security

Chief Buster Cushing

SUPPORTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY GOVERNANCE MODEL

Core Beliefs

1. All students are highly engaged in their education and capable of reaching their full learning potential.
2. Employees are trusted and supported as professionals and provided with resources to elevate student outcomes.
3. Families and our community are involved partners in student success and can expect all students to receive the best education possible.
4. Schools are positive and welcoming environments with clear expectations and accountability in all academic and operational areas.

Core Policies

- Policy **BAB**: School Board Governance
*Balanced Autonomy with Supportive Accountability
Cohesive System of Teaching & Learning*
- Standards
 - Instructional Resources
 - Monitoring Student Learning
- Accountability & Support
- Superintendent Evaluation
 - Aligned School Improvement Goals
 - Targeted Support
- Policy **IFAD**: Literacy in CCSD

Student Achievement Goals

	READING		ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS		MATHEMATICS	
	Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)		Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)		Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)	
3 rd Grade	72%	→ 78%	47%	→ 53%	57%	→ 65%
4 th Grade	65%	→ 71%	47%	→ 53%	61%	→ 70%
5 th Grade	78%	→ 84%	56%	→ 62%	56%	→ 65%
6 th Grade	63%	→ 69%	48%	→ 54%	44%	→ 50%
7 th Grade	74%	→ 78%	45%	→ 54%	48%	→ 60%
8 th Grade	75%	→ 81%	48%	→ 54%	51%	→ 59%
High School	80%	→ 86%	56%	→ 62%	49%	→ 55%

Key Priorities

1. Elevate the Excellence in academics and achievement for all students
2. Elevate the Excellence in effective School Board-Superintendent Governance
3. Elevate the Excellence in the district's coordination of goals, systems, and processes
4. Elevate the Excellence by embracing a pervasive high-quality school environment defined by high standards, effective supports, and consistent practices

Elevate the Excellence!

Framework for Safety and Security at CCSD Schools

We have a three-pillar approach to school safety and security—Preparation, Prevention, and Response—and every investment, process, drill, exercise, and plan is aligned to one of those three pillars.

(1) Preparation

(2) Prevention

(3) Response

Community & Safety Recommendations

Next investments	No Cost Improvements
 <p>Increase the number of School Police Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added 6 Officers since October • 1 officer to cover 2 elementary schools • Adding Security Monitors for Etowah, Cherokee, Sequoyah 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident-based • Overall Awareness 
 <p>Expand the window security film</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 	<p>Continued Community/Parent Education</p> 
 <p>Expand our camera capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing public safety to view school cameras in the event of an emergency 	<p>Bi-Annual Safety & Security Board Report</p> 
 <p>Advance the interoperability of our communications capability with public safety agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed WiFi connections for police radios • Installation of Bi-Directional repeaters 	<p>Expand crisis alert badging to additional job families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All support professionals providing direct service to a school • District staff supporting schools • Custodians, support service technicians, technology, and school nutrition 



Not Started



In Progress



Complete and On-Going

On the Horizon for 2025-2026



Next investments	No Cost Improvements
Hire Security Monitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added 3 security monitors at our multi-building campuses- Etowah HS, Cherokee HS, and Sequoyah HS 	Monitor Security Protocols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Door locked and secured ID checks before entry Daily safety meeting
Police Body Cameras <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body cameras for police and security monitors 	Mapping of School to Public Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General maps available to Police and Cherokee 911 Detailed mapping of rooms and exterior doors
Emergency Response Guides in Classroom	School-based safety and security committees
Evaluate Stop-Arm Cameras on Buses	Update significant incident response and recovery plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure a secondary reunification site



 Not Started

 In Progress

 Complete and On-Going



Cherokee
County
School
District

Safety and Security – Preparation Training



Safety and Security – Preparation Drills

- Fire Drills
- Severe Weather Drills
- Code Red Drills
- Code Yellow Drills
- Table-Top Exercises



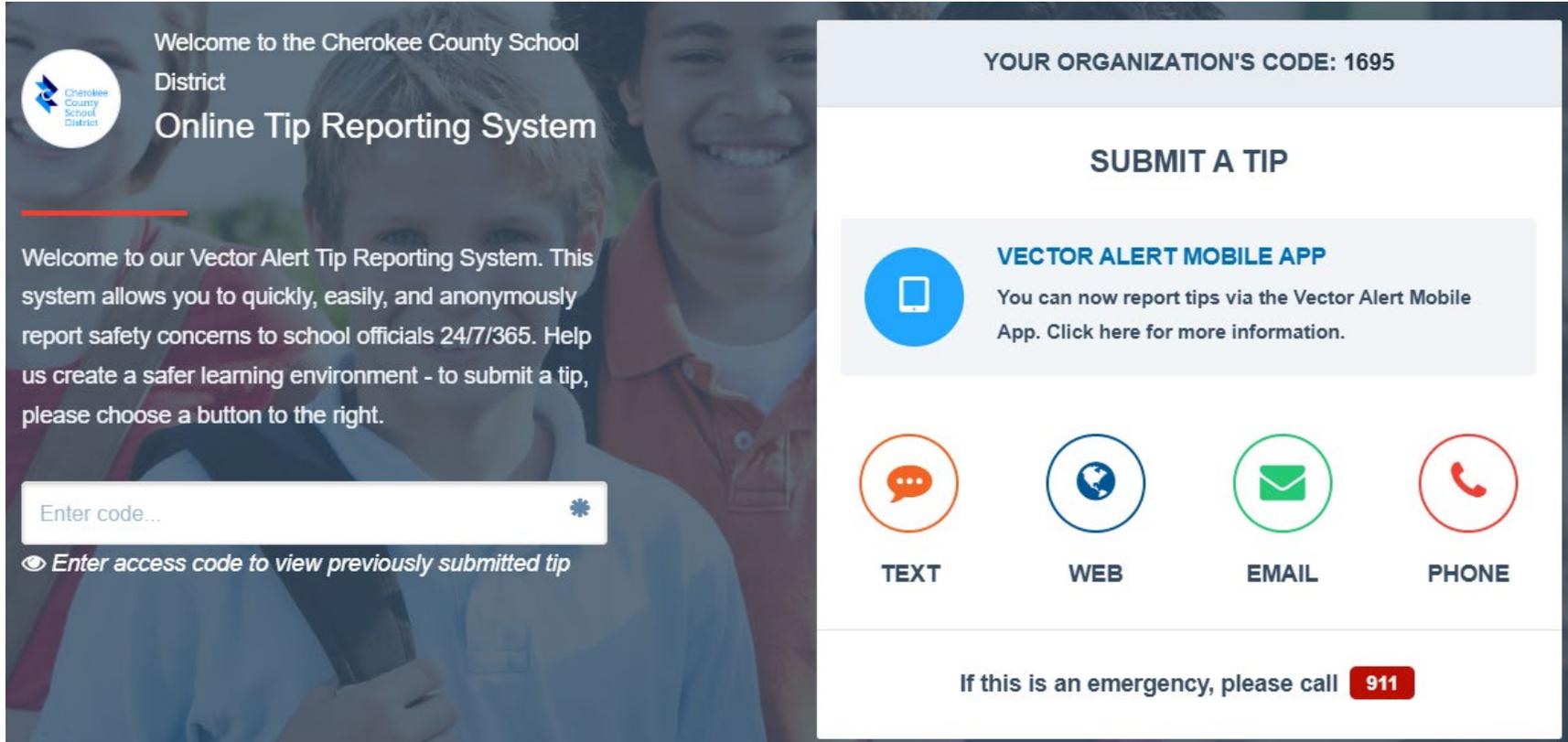
Office of Commissioner of
Insurance and Safety Fire
Protect | Enforce | Educate | Inform

Safety and Security – Prevention

Daily Routines & Protocols

- Daily Safety Huddle- Admin Team, School Police, Nurse, Custodian
- Consistent Visibility
- Routine Monitoring of Protocols
 - Exterior Doors Locked
 - Classroom doors locked
 - Employee badge
 - Visitor check-in badging
- AED / Narcan on-site

Safety and Security – Prevention



Welcome to the Cherokee County School District
Online Tip Reporting System

Welcome to our Vector Alert Tip Reporting System. This system allows you to quickly, easily, and anonymously report safety concerns to school officials 24/7/365. Help us create a safer learning environment - to submit a tip, please choose a button to the right.

Enter code... 

 Enter access code to view previously submitted tip

YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CODE: 1695

SUBMIT A TIP

 **VECTOR ALERT MOBILE APP**
You can now report tips via the Vector Alert Mobile App. [Click here for more information.](#)

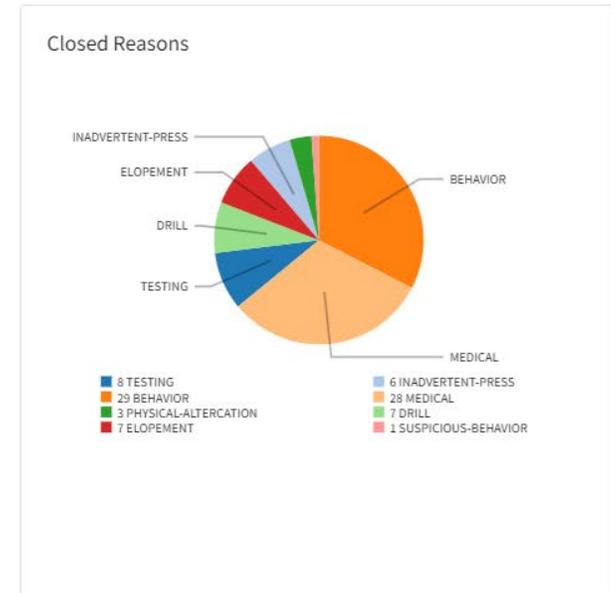
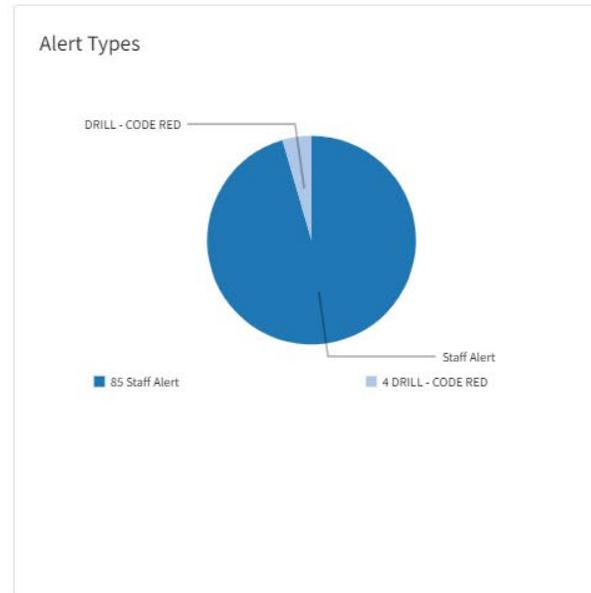
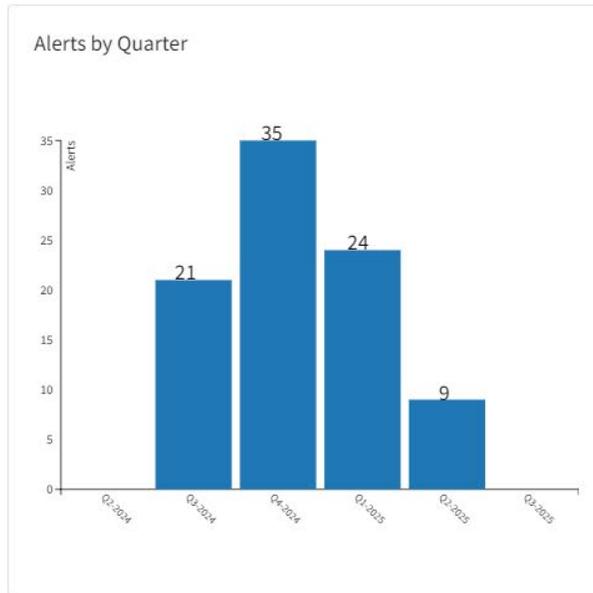
 TEXT  WEB  EMAIL  PHONE

If this is an emergency, please call **911**

Safety and Security - Response

Crisis Alert Activations CCSD

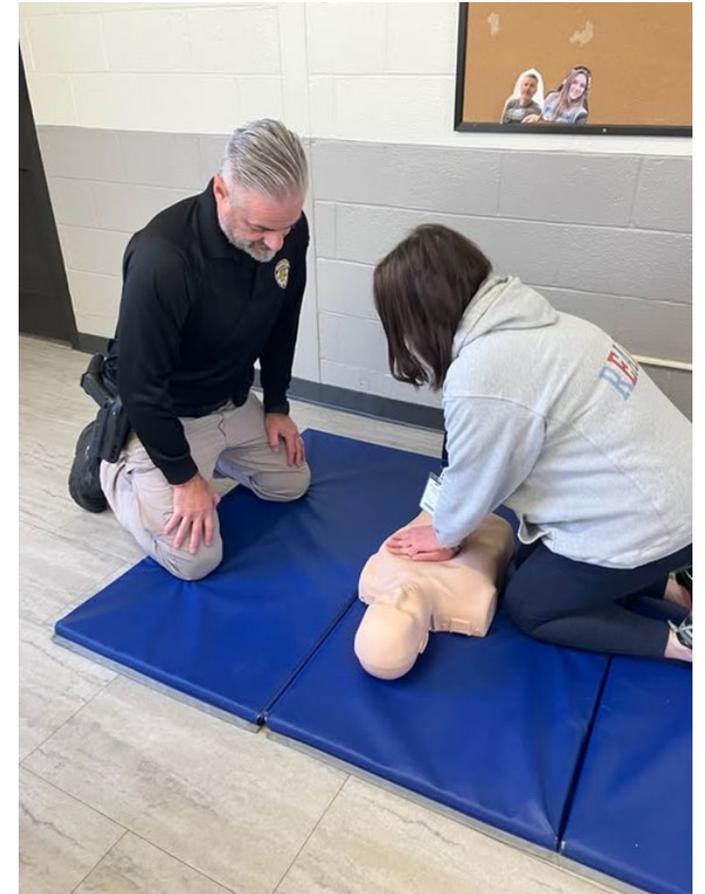
Alerts Report for Cherokee High





Cherokee
County
School
District

CCSD Division of Safety and Security



SUPPORTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY GOVERNANCE MODEL

Core Beliefs

1. All students are highly engaged in their education and capable of reaching their full learning potential.
2. Employees are trusted and supported as professionals and provided with resources to elevate student outcomes.
3. Families and our community are involved partners in student success and can expect all students to receive the best education possible.
4. Schools are positive and welcoming environments with clear expectations and accountability in all academic and operational areas.

Core Policies

- Policy **BAB**: School Board Governance
*Balanced Autonomy with Supportive Accountability
Cohesive System of Teaching & Learning*
- Standards
 - Instructional Resources
 - Monitoring Student Learning
- Accountability & Support
- Superintendent Evaluation
 - Aligned School Improvement Goals
 - Targeted Support
- Policy **IFAD**: Literacy in CCSD

Student Achievement Goals

	READING		ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS		MATHEMATICS	
	Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)		Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)		Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)	
3 rd Grade	72%	→ 78%	47%	→ 53%	57%	→ 65%
4 th Grade	65%	→ 71%	47%	→ 53%	61%	→ 70%
5 th Grade	78%	→ 84%	56%	→ 62%	56%	→ 65%
6 th Grade	63%	→ 69%	48%	→ 54%	44%	→ 50%
7 th Grade	74%	→ 78%	45%	→ 54%	48%	→ 60%
8 th Grade	75%	→ 81%	48%	→ 54%	51%	→ 59%
High School	80%	→ 86%	56%	→ 62%	49%	→ 55%

Key Priorities

1. Elevate the Excellence in academics and achievement for all students
2. Elevate the Excellence in effective School Board-Superintendent Governance
3. Elevate the Excellence in the district's coordination of goals, systems, and processes
4. Elevate the Excellence by embracing a pervasive high-quality school environment defined by high standards, effective supports, and consistent practices

Elevate the Excellence!



Cherokee
County
School
District

SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS

- Athletic Apparel Update
Dr. Debra Murdock, Chief School Leadership and Operations

At the request of the School Board, stakeholders were polled regarding a district-wide model for athletic apparel. Feedback sessions were held with athletic directors and head coaches representing all 26 sports at each of CCSD's six traditional high schools. Feedback was collected from 139 coaches.