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**QUARTERLY
CONNECTION**
FALL 2025



CPS celebrates strong
start to school year
West Boulevard Elementary
School's 75th anniversary
Get the scoop
New to the team
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information

INSIDE ISSUE:

QUARTERLY CONNECTION



Columbia Public Schools celebrates strong start to 2025–26 school year

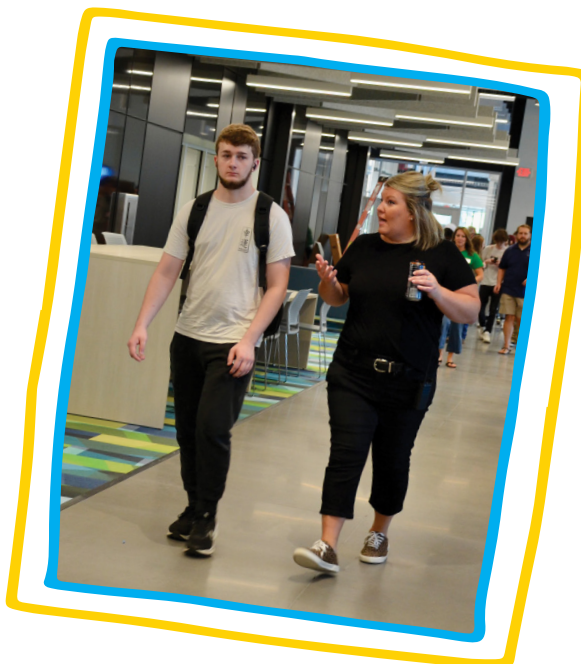
The 2025–26 school year is off to an excellent start in Columbia Public Schools. On the first day of classes, teachers, and staff across the district welcomed students and families back with energy, preparation, and enthusiasm for another year of high-quality learning.

Across CPS's 303 square miles, students began the year by meeting new teachers, riding new buses, reviewing classroom expectations, and jumping into their first lessons. Schools reported a smooth opening day with both staff and students ready to make it a great year.

"The first day of school is always a reminder of why we do this work," Superintendent Jeff Klein said. "It's about possibility, fresh starts, and the collective commitment we share to ensure every student can grow, succeed, and thrive."

This year also brings another type of "first" with the opening of brand-new learning spaces at the Columbia Area Career Center and Eliot Battle Elementary School. These facilities, made possible through the strong support of Columbia voters on

past bond issues, represent a community-wide investment in the future of local students and the workforce.



West Boulevard Elementary School's 75th anniversary celebration

West Boulevard Elementary School (WBE) is proud to celebrate its 75th anniversary this school year. To commemorate this special milestone, the WBE Parent Teacher Organization is providing commemorative shirts for all students, and the entire school will gather for an all-school photo to capture the moment.

The story of WBE began with the Columbia Board of Education's approval to purchase the property on **April 4, 1947**. Groundbreaking took place on **October 25, 1949**, with hopes of opening by September 1950. While classes did begin on **September 11, 1950**, the school was still without electricity, and a farm dinner bell signaled the start of classes, period changes, and afternoon dismissal. The building was not fully completed until after the winter break in early 1951.



Strong start to

2025-26 school year continued

First-day enrollment in CPS totaled 18,720 students, an increase over last year's first-day enrollment. While this figure is considered unofficial (official enrollment is reported on the last Wednesday of September as required by the state), it reflects steady growth in the district.

"As the doors opened and hallways filled, we saw the care each CPS staff member brought into the buildings and an atmosphere where every student felt welcomed," Klein said. "That feeling was also reflected in the incredible support from our Partners In Education, who helped welcome students back to buildings."

As Missouri's fourth-largest school district, CPS serves students and families through 39 schools and three support facilities. Beyond the classroom, CPS plays a central role in shaping Columbia's future by preparing students to be tomorrow's leaders, innovators, and community members.

"It's about possibility, fresh starts, and the collective commitment we share to ensure every student can grow, succeed, and thrive."

**Superintendent
Jeff Klein**



New to the team



Samantha Adams
Locust Street Expressive Arts Elementary School Principal

Adams brings over 16 years of educational experience, most recently as assistant principal at Mill Creek Elementary School. She began teaching at CPS, then became an instructional coach and district mentor with elementary schools within the district. She holds degrees from the University of Missouri in education, curriculum and instruction, and educational leadership and policy analysis.



Allison Chostner
Benton STEM Elementary School Principal

Chostner has 17 years of experience in elementary education, most recently as assistant principal at Benton STEM. She previously held the same role at Bush Elementary School in Fulton and taught at Parkade and Midway Heights elementary schools. She holds degrees from William Woods University, Columbia College, and the University of Missouri in leadership and education.



Dr. Kerri Graham
Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Graham has 22 years of educational experience, recently as principal at Russell Boulevard Elementary and previously as assistant principal at Jefferson Middle School. She holds a bachelor's in biology and theatre arts education from Marquette University, a master's in secondary administration from William Woods University, and a doctorate in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri.



Josh Johnson
Executive Director of Secondary Education

Johnson, a Columbia Public Schools graduate, has more than 17 years of teaching and administrative leadership. He most recently served as Director of Human Resources Certified/Salaried Personnel. His career began as a social studies teacher, later serving as principal of Gentry Middle School and assistant principal at Battle High School. He also taught education methods at Columbia College.



Dr. Jeff Klein
Superintendent

Klein has over 20 years in district leadership, most recently as chief academic officer for Columbia Public Schools. He previously served 18 years in the Park Hill School District, including nine as assistant superintendent. He began as a special education teacher and holds a doctorate in education plus graduate degrees in business and administration.



Dr. Matt Ross
West Middle School Principal

Ross has 24 years of experience in education as a teacher and administrator at Jefferson Middle and Hickman High schools, and The Columbia Academy for Learning and Enrichment. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri and graduate degrees from William Woods University.



Christopher Schmitz
Shepard Boulevard Elementary School Principal

Schmitz brings 15 years of experience in elementary education, serving as principal at Moreau Heights Elementary in Jefferson City since 2021 and previously at Thorpe Gordon Elementary for a decade. He holds a specialist degree in educational leadership from Saint Louis University and a bachelor's degree in elementary education with a minor in health from the University of Central Missouri.



Sarah Sicht
Eagle Bluffs Elementary School Principal

Sicht has 25 years of experience in Columbia Public Schools as a teacher, mentor, and administrator. She served as assistant principal at Parkade, Alpha Hart Lewis and, most recently, Benton STEM elementary schools and taught 10 years at Rock Bridge Elementary School. She holds degrees in early childhood education and educational administration from the University of Missouri and William Woods University.



Dr. Adam Taylor
Columbia Public Schools Chief Academic Officer

Taylor, a Columbia Public Schools graduate, has over a decade of educational experience, including roles as athletic director, assistant principal, Battle High School principal, and executive director of secondary education. He began teaching at Hickman High School and holds a doctorate and specialist degrees from William Woods University and a bachelor's in business administration from the University of Missouri.



Kimberly Uffmann
Russell Boulevard Elementary School Principal

Uffmann has 15 years of experience in education, beginning as a classroom teacher at Russell Boulevard Elementary, where she taught multiple grade levels before becoming assistant principal in 2020. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education, a master's in curriculum and instruction, and a specialist degree in leadership and policy analysis from the University of Missouri.



NEWS YOU CAN USE

CPS RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS

Columbia Public Schools is one of just 13 school districts nationwide to earn a Gold Medallion for school communications from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), the organization's highest honor. The district also received 13 additional national awards for its communications strategies.



DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL'S COUNSELING DIRECTOR HONORED

Anna McMillen, director of counseling at Douglass High School, received a 2025 Regional Excellence Award from the Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development for her commitment to helping Douglass students with college and career readiness.

CPS HIGH SCHOOL ART TEACHERS FEATURED IN MONTMINY GALLERY EXHIBIT

Nine Columbia Public Schools high school art teachers were honored in the Montminy Gallery exhibit at the Boone County History & Culture Center, celebrating their creativity and dedication to students. Featured artists included Shannon Blakey, Rock Bridge High School; Rayanna Crites, Battle High School; Jeri Donoho, Hickman High School; Adam Dresden, Douglass High School; Lisa Franko, Hickman & Battle High School; Lori Jobe, Battle High School; Kathryn Lindeman, Battle High School; Sheri Parker, Hickman High School; and Jodi Spriggs, Battle High School.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Significant progress continues across district projects. At the **Columbia Area Career Center**, renovations in the student enterprise community space are complete, including new countertops, lighting, and finishes, with a grand re-opening to be held in November. **Eagle Bluffs Elementary School** saw major activity with playground equipment installed, site concrete work underway, and ongoing interior finishes such as painting, lighting, and kitchen equipment installation. At **Battle Elementary School**, all major work is finished, including final punch list items and landscaping, with the addition open for the start of the new school year.

Get the scoop



There are numerous ways to get information on happenings in Columbia Public Schools.

CPS MOBILE APP: Download our app to get a personalized window into the latest news and information about the district and your student's school. Available for free via the App Store or Google Play. Search for Columbia Public Schools.

CPS-TV: CPS-TV, the channel dedicated to showcasing news and events happening within Columbia Public Schools, has a variety of videos and live events to keep you informed, including Board of Education meetings and news and information about our schools and students. CPS-TV is viewable on several easy-to-watch platforms. Watch on Mediacom channel 81 and Charter/Spectrum channel 985, or connect to the live stream at www.cpsk12.org/cpstv. Viewers can also download the Cablecast Screenweave app to their Apple TV, Roku or FireTV device and search for the CPS-TV channel. Visit www.cpsk12.org/cpstv for more details.

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS: Parents and guardians receive important messages from CPS via the contact information on file at your student's school. Be sure to keep your contact information current with the school to receive these important messages. You can also access messages through the district's mobile app. More information is available at www.cpsk12.org.

PEACHJAR: Check out the PeachJar icon on the school district homepage to access fliers for community events and activities provided by local organizations.

CPS FAMILIES PORTAL: Access all CPS apps through CPS Families Portal using your assigned ID and password, including:

- **Campus Parent:** A new streamlined, user-friendly, web-based, real-time tool allowing families to check their secondary student's current attendance, scheduled courses, grades, and more. Families can watch the Infinite Campus Parent Video or contact your scholar's school directly for more information.
- **Schoolology:** Allows access to course materials and assignments both at school and home.

COLUMBIA SCHOLAR CLINIC: The Columbia SCHOLAR Clinic offers a spectrum of services, including primary care, ophthalmology, substance-use disorders, and dental services. The facility layout comprises a lab, two primary care exam rooms, and one dedicated to vision services (optometry). (Only open to Columbia Public School Students)

Hours: 8am-5pm - Mon-Fri | **Contact:** 573-476-0022
Fax: 573-476-0023 | **Email:** help@clarity-healthcare.org
Location: 1010 Rangeline Street, Columbia, MO 65201
For more information, visit: www.clarity-healthcare.org



Hours, bus, and lunch information



www.cpsk12.org/schoolcalendar

SCHOOL HOURS

7:55 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.
8:15 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

7:40 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.

8:20 a.m. – 3:20 p.m.

7:25 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.

8:55 a.m. – 4:05 p.m.

9:05 a.m. – 3:46 p.m.

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Classes began Tuesday, Aug. 19 for grades PreK – 1

Preschool: Center for Early Learning – North
Preschool: Center for Early Learning – North

Preschool: Center for Early Learning – North morning class
Preschool: Center for Early Learning – North afternoon class

Eliot Battle, Benton STEM, Locust Street Expressive Arts, Midway Heights, New Haven, Ridgeway, Rock Bridge, and Two Mile Prairie elementary schools

Alpha Hart Lewis, Beulah Ralph, Blue Ridge, Cedar Ridge, Derby Ridge, Fairview, Grant, Mill Creek, Parkade, Paxton Keeley, Russell Boulevard, Shepard Boulevard, and West Boulevard elementary schools

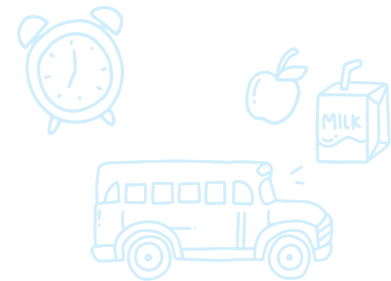
Gentry, Jefferson, John Warner, Lange, Oakland, Smithton, and West middle schools

Battle, Hickman, and Rock Bridge high schools

Douglass High School

Early Childhood Special Education morning class – Discovery Center
Early Childhood Special Education morning class – North

Early Childhood Special Education afternoon class – Discovery Center
Early Childhood Special Education afternoon class – North



BUS SCHEDULES



Bus information is available at www.cpsk12.org/transportation.

Families may select bus transportation during the annual school registration process. Please note, students in grades kindergarten through eight who live within one mile of their school and students in grades nine through twelve who live within two miles of their school are not eligible for bus transportation. Bus transportation is not generally provided for any preschool students. If you have additional questions, please contact your student's school. For information concerning school transportation routes and schedules, contact **CPS Transportation** at 573-214-3960 or cpstransportation@cpsk12.org.



Menus available online at www.cpsk12.org/nutrition.

MEAL PRICES

Parents may also pay for school meals online via the CPS Families Portal, My School Bucks: myschoolbucks.com.

For any questions about meal services, visit our website at cpsk12.org/nutrition, email lunch@cpsk12.org or call 573-214-3480.

STUDENTS GRADES K–5

Breakfast: \$2.25 | Lunch: choice of garden bar, hot lunch with garden bar, or sack lunch: \$3.20 | Additional milk: \$0.75 each

STUDENTS GRADES 6–12

Breakfast: \$2.25 | Lunch: choice of garden bar, hot lunch with garden bar, or sack lunch: \$3.40 | Additional milk: \$0.75 each

ADULTS

Breakfast: \$3.00 | Lunch: \$5.00

FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCHES AND BREAKFASTS

A new application must be filled out every year to qualify. Students from families properly approved to receive food stamps or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TANF) benefits may be automatically approved to receive free or reduced-price meals. Reduced-price Breakfast: \$0.30 | Reduced-price Lunch: \$0.40