

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fall 2026

Community CONNECTIONS

District News • Community Education Offerings • and more!



OUR MISSION

Columbia Heights Public Schools
Creating worlds of opportunity for each and every learner
"All Belong, All Succeed"

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Community Connections is an official publication of Columbia Heights Public Schools written, edited and produced by the Communications Department.

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If you would like to join the Advisory Council or have any questions, contact Kristen Stuenkel at 763.528.4515.

Community Education Department

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The Community Education Office will be closed: Sept. 7, Oct. 16, Nov. 26-27, Dec. 24-25 and 31.

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A Letter from Superintendent Stenvik

Dear Community Members,

This year marks a special milestone as we celebrate 100 years of Columbia Heights High School. For a century, our schools have served as a hub in this community, evolving alongside the families and neighborhoods we proudly serve.



As we begin this new school year, I invite you to discover all that Columbia Heights Public Schools (CHPS) has to offer. Our district provides learning opportunities for every stage of life from infants and preschoolers to K–12 students and adult learners. Our students continue to thrive in an environment that values both academic excellence and personal growth. In the spring of 2026, 92% of students surveyed reported that CHPS provides opportunities to express themselves and develop leadership skills, while 94% of parents surveyed said they feel supported by the CHPS community.

Our schools are also places where meaningful community connections are built. Whether you’re interested in enrolling in a Community Education class, attending a theater production, concert, athletic event, or our annual powwow, there are countless ways to become involved. We also welcome volunteers in each of our schools, and our partnerships with local businesses and community organizations create valuable learning experiences, mentorship opportunities, and pathways to future success for our students.

As we celebrate a century of excellence at Columbia Heights High School, we also want to share that there will be two school-related questions on the November 3 ballot. CHPS is seeking an increase in funding through an Operating Levy Referendum, which is used for the day-to-day operations of educating our students. This is an incremental increase used to fund teachers, staff, classroom materials, student transportation and school operations. The 2026 Operating Levy is a 10-year levy. The school district would first receive these funds in fiscal year 2028 and continue to receive them through fiscal year 2038. The tax increase for property owners would be \$170 per year (approximately \$14.17 per month) for an average-priced home, with an inflationary adjustment. There is also a Permanent School Fund question, which would update the current process by which all public and charter schools in the state of MN receive funding. This fund would provide approximately \$150,000 for CHPS and would not involve a tax increase for property owners.

Please go to our website to learn more about the referendum information and to get involved in our district, where all belong and all succeed.

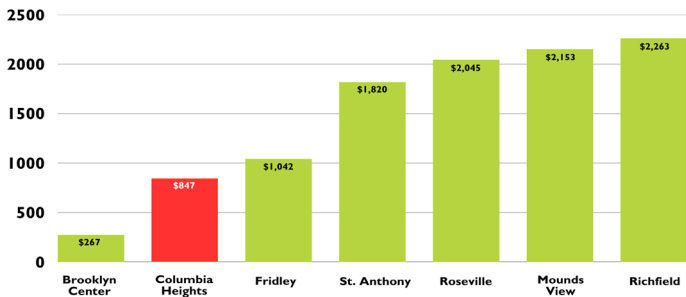
Zena Stenvik
Superintendent
Columbia Heights Public Schools



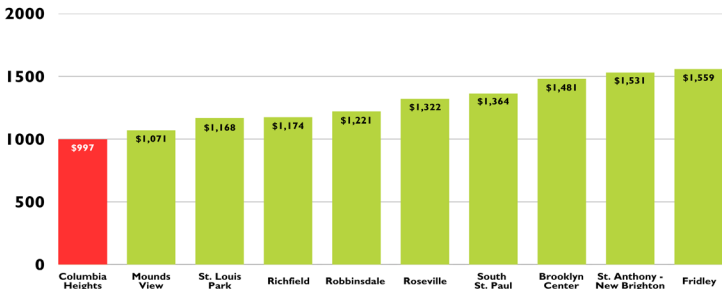
Scan the QR
code to visit the
2026 Referendum
information page.



2026 Operating Levy Authority
Neighboring Districts Comparison



Columbia Heights Public Schools
Total Property Taxes (2025)
Compared to Other Districts



More information about the upcoming operating levy question can be found on page 8 of this catalog and at colheights.k12.mn.us/2026referendum.

Participants must register – even for FREE classes – to ensure the instructor can prepare appropriately and minimum enrollment is met. Refunds for cancelling a class registration vary based on the class. Check the details in the online class description for the cancellation policy.

SENIOR OFFERINGS

Medicare 101

Medicare can be complicated, but Minnesota Aging Pathways is here to help. Whether you've been on Medicare for a few years and just need a refresher, or you're brand new to Medicare, Medicare 101 will help you understand the basics so you can manage your health care options.

Thursday Sept. 10 3:00-4:00 p.m. FREE FC Room #100

The Art of the Obituary

Are you an obituary reader? What draws you to them? Do you think you will have to write one in the future? How will you do that? Are you curious about the idea of writing your own obituary? What might that sound like? Come for conversation and education about all things obituary--tools, hints, costs, examples--, with Marilaurice Hemlock. Marilaurice is a funeral celebrant, death educator, retired liturgist and pastoral minister, lover of words, writer of obituaries, and active member of the Land Conservation Natural Burial Project.

Wednesday Sept. 16 5:00-6:30 p.m. FREE FC Room #111

The 5 Biggest Expenses in Retirement & How to Reduce Them

Retirement should be about freedom—not financial stress. In this class, we'll break down the 5 biggest expenses most retirees face and share practical strategies to help reduce or better manage them. From housing and healthcare to transportation and unexpected costs, you'll walk away with simple, actionable ideas to help protect your income and make your money last.

Wednesday Sept. 23 2:00-3:30 p.m. FREE FC Room #111

Medicare Changes for 2027

Medicare can be complicated, and it changes from year to year. Come learn about what's new in Medicare for 2027, so you can choose the best plan for your needs. This presentation is offered in the fall of each year during Medicare Open Enrollment.

Tuesday Oct. 6 2:00-3:00 p.m. FREE FC Room #111

Defensive Driving - Virtual Class

If you are 55 or older, save money on your car insurance premiums and become a better driver! Minnesota law requires that insurance companies offer a 10% reduction on auto insurance for three years if you complete a state-approved defensive driving course taught by professional, certified instructors. Senior Discount already applied. This course is held virtually - no driving or test required. Course booklet and certificate can be picked up from the CHPS District Office during open hours within a week prior to the class.

Thursday Oct. 8 5:00-9:00 p.m. \$30 (1 Session) Virtual via Zoom
Thursday Nov. 12 1:00-5:00 p.m. \$30 (1 Session) Virtual via Zoom

"Should I Stay or Should I Go?" - Steps to Review Your Housing Needs for Today and Tomorrow

In this class we will be discussing lifestyle options for senior living. Should I stay and age in place - making home modifications to reduce safety risks OR should I go – moving to a home option that may be handicapped accessible, single-level living? We will take an assessment and give you the tools to make educated decisions.

Wednesday Oct. 14 2:00-3:30 p.m. FREE FC Room #111

Preventing Frauds & Scams

Fraud and scams are on the rise, with some scammers specifically targeting older adults. But there are ways you can protect yourself and your personal information. This presentation includes information about fraud prevention, and you'll learn how to detect and report fraud and scams, so you can keep your personal information and yourself safe.

Tuesday Nov. 10 3:00-4:00 p.m. FREE FC Room #100

Managing Money: A Caregiver's Guide to Finances

If you or someone you know is facing Alzheimer's disease, dementia or another chronic illness, it's never too early to put financial plans in place. Join us to learn tips for managing someone else's finances, how to prepare for future care costs and the benefits of early planning.

Thursday Nov. 12 2:00-3:00 p.m. FREE FC Room #111

10 Warning Signs (Recognize Common Signs of Alzheimer's)

Alzheimer's and other dementia cause memory, thinking and behavior problems that interfere with daily living. Join us to learn how to recognize common signs of Alzheimer's; how to approach someone about memory concerns; the importance of early detection; possible tests and assessments for the diagnostic process, and Alzheimer's Association resources.

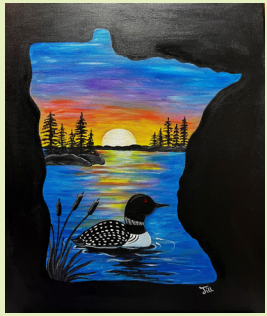
Thursday Dec. 10 1:00-2:00 p.m. FREE FC Room #111

Painting Classes with Art Van Go

Dive into a world of color and joy with our fun and dynamic painting classes! Perfect for all skill levels, these lively and interactive sessions offer a vibrant escape where participants can unleash their creativity, experiment with various techniques and craft unique masterpieces in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Jill Mason of Art Van Go Painting Parties will be leading these three-hour classes!

The week-night painting classes CHPS will be hosting this fall are “Minnesota Loon”, “Moon & Stars Ghost Girl”, “Grateful Gathering” and “Candle Glow” (dates, locations and times listed for the different classes below). Whether it’s a friend’s night out, a social group gathering, or a date night, our classes promise a rich tapestry of creativity that transcends traditional boundaries. Join us and experience the thrill of blending diverse materials and techniques to create art that is truly your own!

“Minnesota Loon”	Sept. 28	6:30-9:00 p.m.	\$40 per participant	FC Room #111
“Moon & Stars Ghost Girl”	Oct. 14	6:00-9:00 p.m.	\$40 per participant	FC Room #111
“Grateful Gathering”	Nov. 4	6:00-9:00 p.m.	\$40 per participant	FC Room #111
“Candle Glow”	Dec. 17	6:00-9:00 p.m.	\$40 per participant	FC Room #111



Parent & Me Painting Classes with Art Van Go

Join us for a fun and creative “Parent and Me” Painting Classes where you and your child can bond while learning to paint step-by-step with a professional instructor. Perfect for beginners and experienced artists alike, these classes offer a unique opportunity to create beautiful artwork together in a relaxed and supportive environment. Participants will work together on themed paintings, including “Happy Fall,” “Gobble, Gobble” and “Santa’s Coming” (dates, locations and times listed for the different classes below). One child and one adult will share one canvas. Jill Mason of Art Van Go Painting Parties will lead these fun two-hour classes!

These week-night classes are recommended for ages 4–15, but anyone is welcome, as the experience is what you would like it to be with your child! Classes are open to any parent, grandparent or guardian and their child.

“Happy Fall”	Oct. 20	4:00-6:00 p.m.	\$35 per pair	FC Room #111
“Gobble, Gobble”	Nov. 9	4:00-6:00 p.m.	\$35 per pair	FC Room #111
“Santa’s Coming”	Dec. 15	4:00-6:00 p.m.	\$35 per pair	FC Room #111



Botanical Printing - Flower Pounding Class

Enjoy the same hands-on Botanical Printing class as described above, but in an adult-focused setting designed for ages 18 and up. Participants will learn how to create unique botanical fabric art using fresh flowers and plants while making a custom fabric tote or bandana to take home.

Thursday	Oct. 1	4:30-6:30 p.m.	\$50 per participant	Blooming Heights
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Eureka Recycling Facility Tour

Join us for a tour of Eureka Recycling, a non-profit zero waste organization and social enterprise recycler based in Minneapolis. They are one of only a handful of non-profit recyclers in the United States and has provided recycling services and zero waste education to the Twin Cities metro since 2001.

This recycling tour is a partnership between CHPS Community Education and the City of Columbia Heights’ Refuse Department. Registration is required as transportation is provided but limited to 16 participants.

Thursday	Oct. 8	12:30-4:00 p.m.	FREE	Meet at Murzyn Hall
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SPECIAL INTEREST

TOURS

Quick Pickled Veggies - Make and Take with CHPS Ag. Specialist, Melissa Trent

Pickling is an ancient technique for preserving food for a long period of time! With this basic pickling recipe, you will learn how to prepare a variety of vegetables! Join CHPS Agriculture Specialist, Melissa Trent, in harvesting fresh vegetables from our school garden and pickling them. You will make and take a 12 oz jar of vegetables of your choice including radishes, beets, cucumbers, beans or carrots. You will also learn about different herbs and spices that can change the taste of your pickled veggies!

Thursday Sept. 24 5:00-7:00 p.m. \$20 per participant Blooming Heights Garden

"Parent & Me" Halloween Cookie Decorating with Suzy Vescio

Spend quality time together while creating sweet treats in this Parent & Me Halloween Cookie Decorating Class! This hands-on class will introduce you to the basics of decorating cookies with royal icing. Learn simple decorating techniques, explore icing consistencies, and create colorful designs as you decorate 3 themed cookies to take home and enjoy. This class is set up for one child to create their own set of 3 cookies with parent supervision. A parent/guardian can join the class and decorate their own 3 cookies alongside their child for an additional \$20. Recommended ages for the child attending is 6-12. The cookie design can be viewed on the registration site.

**Monday Oct. 19 5:30-7:00 p.m. \$30 for the Child
\$50 for Adult & Child FACS Classroom
CHHS Room #137**

Bake and Take Cranberry & White Chocolate Scones with Shelley Santrack from The Central Mix

Bake delicious cranberry white chocolate scones from scratch with Shelley Santrack, owner of The Central Mix in Columbia Heights. Learn techniques for mixing, shaping and baking tender, flaky scones, then customize your batch with optional mix-ins like rosemary, walnuts and other ingredients. You'll leave with the recipe, new baking skills and 8 homemade scones to enjoy.

**Wednesday Oct. 28 5:00-7:00 p.m. \$28 FACS Classroom
CHHS Room #137**

Bake and Take Homemade Pumpkin Pies with Shelley Santrack from The Central Mix

Get holiday-ready by baking a classic pumpkin pie from scratch! In this hands-on class, you'll make a flaky homemade pie crust and rich pumpkin filling, then bake your pie to perfection. While your pie bakes and cools, enjoy sampling a variety of delicious seasonal treats. You'll leave with one homemade pumpkin pie, ready to share with family and friends during the upcoming holiday season.

**Wednesday Nov. 18 5:00-7:30 p.m. \$25 FACS Classroom
CHHS Room #137**

Friendsgiving Cookie Decorating with Suzy Vescio

Do you love the show "Friends"? If you've ever dreamed of decorating the perfect cookie, now's your chance to make it a reality, and you will get to do it "Friends" style! Learn the basics of decorating cookies using Royal Icing. Learn about icing consistencies, mixing colors, and how to practice piping and flooding. Then decorate a curated set of beautiful cookies that you will bring home and enjoy! Each participant will have their own set of 6 cookies and icing. The cookie design can be viewed on the registration site.

**Thursday Nov. 19 5:00-7:00 p.m. \$50 FACS Classroom
CHHS Room #137**

Holiday Bake and Take Cookies

Get all your holiday baking finished in just one 4-hour class and take home a dozen each of 8 varieties of cookies - a perfect fit for your busy lifestyle. You'll be supplied with everything you need to make and decorate your holiday cookies. You will also have a chance for some sweet sampling! You'll take home 8 varieties of cookies! Grab your apron as participation is required and bring enough containers to hold 8 dozen cookies (hairnets and gloves will be provided). Please arrive on time and stay the full 4 hours. Children under 16 are not allowed. All supply costs included in tuition. Class meets in the high school cafeteria for a brief meeting before entering the kitchen.

Cookies being made are: Andes Mint chocolate, Thumbprints, Peanut Butter Blossoms, Snowballs, Red Velvet, Pretzels with Rolos, Sugar and Gingerbread.

Saturday Dec. 5 9 a.m.-1 p.m. \$55 CHHS Cafeteria Kitchen
Saturday Dec. 12 9 a.m.-1 p.m. \$55 CHHS Cafeteria Kitchen

Yoga

Come explore this ancient exercise system that strengthens the body while calming and focusing the mind. Please dress in comfortable clothes and bring a mat, towel, or rug for floor work. Classes will take place at the Fridley Community Center. Registration is required.

Tuesdays Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 6:00-7:30 p.m. \$50 (5 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116
Tuesdays Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27 6:00-7:30 p.m. \$40 (4 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116
Tuesdays Nov. 10, 17, 24 6:00-7:30 p.m. \$30 (3 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116
Tuesdays Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 6:00-7:30 p.m. \$40 (4 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116

Yoga Mindfulness

Explore a deeper mind-body connection with Mindfulness Yoga. Please dress in comfortable clothes and bring a mat, towel, or rug for floor work. Classes will take place at the Fridley Community Center. Registration is required.

Saturdays Sept. 12, 19, 26 10:00-11:30 a.m. \$30 (3 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116
Saturdays Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 10:00-11:30 a.m. \$50 (5 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116
Saturdays Nov. 7, 14, 21 10:00-11:30 a.m. \$30 (3 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116
Saturdays Dec. 5, 12, 19 10:00-11:30 a.m. \$30 (3 classes) Fridley Comm Center 116

ENROLL NOW in Columbia Heights Public Schools

¡INSCRÍBETE AHORA en las Escuelas Públicas de Columbia Heights!

Columbia Heights Public Schools is a small, diverse school district providing students with the skills, knowledge, tools and support they need to excel both in and out of the classroom. We are committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities, so all learners can develop to their full potential.



Become a Hylander today!

ENROLL NOW >

colheights.k12.mn.us | 763.528.4426

TEACH A CLASS

Do you have knowledge, ideas or passions you'd like to share with others? Consider teaching a Community Education class! For more information, visit colheights.k12.mn.us/communityed/community-education/adultenrichment or contact Adult Enrichment/Senior Program Manager Emma Bute.

Metro North Adult Basic Education

English as a Second (or other) Language (ESL) | Levels 1-3

Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Advanced ESL

Monday-Friday 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Adult Education Center — Columbia Heights/Fridley

4111 Central Ave. NE, Suite 100
Columbia Heights, MN

How to Register

To register for classes, call 763.706.3833 or complete the online interest form available at metronorthabe.org and someone will contact you.

FREE classes for adults!

Day and evening class times available!

FREE

classes for adults
Day and evening class
times available



CHPS is one of Minnesota's only school districts with an outdoor classroom and living laboratory used by educators and students. Blooming Heights is a great place to learn hands-on gardening skills, and to use math, science, literacy, art and nutrition.

Learn more at colheights.k12.mn.us/communityed/community-education/bloomingheights

Contact Melissa Trent for more information | TrentM@colheights.k12.mn.us

New Community Education Registration Website

Columbia Heights Public Schools Community Education has transitioned to our new online registration system from Arbiter to Arux beginning this summer. All program registrations—including PreK 3, ECFE, Mini Adventures, Adventure Club, Adult Enrichment, Driver's Education, Swimming Lessons and other youth programs—will now be completed through the new Arux site. As part of this transition, all users will need to create a new profile, including their name, email, phone number, etc. This change is designed to provide a more streamlined and user-friendly experience for families and participants. For questions or concerns, please call 763-528-4517.



Driver's Education

Students will receive a total of 30 hours of classroom instruction and six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. The classroom portion consists of ten, three-hour classes and the behind-the-wheel portion is three, two-hour private lessons. Pre-registration is required with a \$217 down payment payable to CH Community Education. Classes offered through Safeway Driving School. The additional \$180 is payable to the behind-the-wheel instructor. (\$90 on the first lesson, and \$90 on the second lesson) For more information, contact Safeway at 651.351.9150 or visit safewaydrivingschool.com.

Parents/guardians will be required to complete Safeway's Account Verification. Safeway will send out an email before class begins that gives detailed information about how to login to the student's Safeway account to verify and complete contact information and to review and acknowledge our Service Agreement.



Sessions take place at CHHS in room 105

Session 1

Monday-Thursday Oct. 5-22 3:15-6:15 p.m.
No class Oct. 8, 9, 15, 16

Session 2

Monday-Thursday Nov. 30-Dec. 15 3:15-6:15 p.m.

The following **MUST** be provided during registration:

- Student full legal name (first, middle and last)
- Home address
- Parent email addresses
- Student date of birth
- Student email address
- Parent phone numbers

CHPS Operating Levy Referendum Vote on Nov. 3, 2026

The Columbia Heights Public Schools (CHPS) Board of Education unanimously voted June 30 to place an operating levy referendum question on the Nov. 3, 2026, ballot. If approved by voters, the 10-year operating levy would provide additional funding beginning in fiscal year 2028 to support teachers, staff, classroom materials and school operations.

Operating levies provide locally approved funding for the day-to-day operation of school districts. The proposed operating levy would increase the district's referendum revenue by \$550 per pupil, subject to an annual inflation adjustment beginning with taxes payable in 2028. If approved, the proposed levy would increase property taxes by approximately \$14.17 per month (\$170 annually) for the owner of an average-valued home. Additional information about the estimated tax impact is available at colheights.k12.mn.us/2026referendum.

The CHPS Board of Education considered the referendum over several public meetings before unanimously voting to place the question on the ballot. Board members cited rising expenses, the loss of compensatory aid funding, and the potential for future reductions in Special Education funding as key factors in the decision. Recordings of those meetings are available on the district's HeightsTube 13 YouTube channel.

The following is the exact ballot question that voters will see on the November 3, 2026, ballot:

The board of Independent School District No. 13 (Columbia Heights Public Schools), Minnesota has proposed to increase the School District's referendum revenue by \$550 per pupil, subject to an annual increase at the rate of inflation beginning with taxes payable in 2028. The proposed new referendum revenue authorization would be first levied in 2026 for taxes payable in 2027 and applicable for ten (10) years unless otherwise revoked or reduced as provided by law.

Shall the new referendum authorization proposed by the board of Independent School District No. 13 (Columbia Heights Public Schools), Minnesota, be approved?

Polls will be open Nov. 3 at the district's 12 polling locations. Information about polling locations, absentee voting, and early voting is available through Anoka County Elections and on the CHPS 2026 Referendum webpage.

Additional information about the referendum, including frequently asked questions and estimated tax impacts, is available at colheights.k12.mn.us/2026referendum. Residents can also follow Columbia Heights Public Schools on Facebook and Instagram for updates. Questions can be directed to CHPS Director of Community Education and Communications Kristen Stuenkel at StuenkeK@colheights.k12.mn.us or call 763-528-4515.





Activities & Athletics Recap



Follow along with Hylander
Activities and Athletics
@hylanderactivities on
Instagram

Spring Highlights Provided by the CHPS Activities Department

March

- CHHS Speech Team placed 4th in the Section 4AA Speech Tournament.
- 9 members of our Speech Team medal at the Section 4AA Speech Tournament.
 - Hanan Mohamoud (2nd in Creative Expression)
 - Daphne Kleinschmit (1st in Dramatic Interpretation)
 - Ja'Sirah Barber (6th in Dramatic Interpretation)
 - Ian Zeimet (3rd in Extemporaneous Reading)
 - Masno Jama (3rd in Great Speeches)
 - Carlos Bustamante (6th in Great Speeches)
 - Daniel James (3rd in Prose)
 - Justin Cajamarca (5th in Prose)
 - Dejah Churchill (4th in Storytelling)



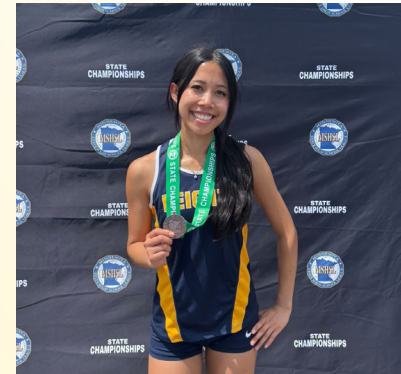
April

- Over 340 student athletes participating in Spring Sports
- CHHS hosts the Tri-Metro Jazz Band & Visual Arts Festivals
- Masno Jama, Daniel James, Daphne Kleinschmit, Hanan Mohamoud, and Ian Zeimet compete in the 2026 MSHSL Class AA State Speech Contest.
- Daphne Kleinschmit places 3rd in the Speech Drama category



May

- Successful run of the CHHS Spring Play "The Play That Goes Wrong", under the direction of Emily Shields
- Danchau Le is the 2026 Athena Award Winner
- Amjad Mohamed is the 2026 Oscar Eng Award Winner
- 17 CHHS Students earn a Superior or Excellent Award at the MSHSL Region 5AA Art Festival. Jasilyn Negrón and Olivia Candella were honored with the Spotlight in the Arts Award, the highest award that can be earned in Visual Art from the Minnesota State High School League
- CHHS Synchronized Swim Team advances to the State Tournament and two placed in the Top 7 at the State Synchro Meet
 - Short Figures: 7th Place - Liliam Taly Palma
 - Short Team: 4th Place - Amelia Dahdah, Sage Dalzell, Domenica Erreyes Mendez, Jury Pinduisaca Celleri, Annika Nelson, Maria Samayoa Villa, Liliam Taly Palma
- Track & Field Team medals at the Section 4AA Track & Field Championship Meet.
 - Norbu Lama- 3rd Boys 110 Hurdles, 6th Boys 300 Hurdles
 - Tamiah Jackson- 4th Girls Shot, 7th Girls Discus
 - Iris Bergan- 2nd Girls Triple, 4th Girls Long Jump
 - Danchau Le - 1st Girls Long and Triple Jump, 7th Girls High Jump
 - 3 relays placed 8th- Girls 4x800, Boys 4x200, Boys 4x100
- Successful inaugural season for CHHS Girls Flag Football



June

- 2 Track & Field Athletes compete in the MSHSL Class AA State Track & Field Meet. Danchau Le places 5th in Girls Long Jump. Iris Bergan and Danchau Le compete in Girls Triple Jump.
- Zoe Zuehlke and Loulou Sadrant perform in the Hennepin Arts Spotlight Showcase.
- CHPS congratulates senior athletes who are continuing their athletic careers:
 - Amjad Mohamed, who will be attending Hamline University for Soccer
 - Tamiah Jackson, who will be attending Bethune-Cookman University in Florida for Basketball
 - Elvis Placencia Pesantez, who will be attending Minnesota North College - Itasca for Wrestling
 - Skyy Phillips, who will be attending Grambling State University in Louisiana for Cheer
 - Judah Caine, who will be attending Judson University in Illinois for Basketball
 - Nour Hussein, who will be attending Crown College for Football
 - Iyanah Donald, who will be attending Albany State University in Georgia for Cheer
 - AJ Williamson, who will be attending Augsburg University for Wrestling
 - Kahlil Mkali, who will be attending St. Cloud Technical & Community College for Basketball
- 335 6th-12th grade students participating in Summer Youth Camps



Valley View Elementary's Nicole Herje Named CHPS Local #710 Teacher of the Year for 2026

Columbia Heights Public Schools School Social Worker at Valley View Elementary, Nicole Herje, has been named the 2026 CHPS Local 710 Teacher of the Year.

Herje has been a Hylander for 13 years. She began her time at CHPS as a Social Worker for both North Park and Highland. She then moved to Columbia Academy for a year before joining the Valley View team. She was the Student Support Team lead for four years, leads the Valley View Student Intervention Team, and has served on the negotiations team representing Special Education, student support, psychologists and social workers. She also has taught ENCORE classes and worked in the Summer School program. An additional job Herje does for Columbia Heights Public Schools is provide a lot of professional development for staff including: student mental health, suicide prevention, trauma informed practices, restorative practices, behavior interventions, secondary traumatic stress & teacher self-care, mandated reporting, mindfulness, and social-emotional learning.

Part of the selection process includes an essay from each nominee. In Herje's application essay, she states, "I strive to be a sense of predictability, consistency, and support for all within our school community. Advocating for families, students and teachers, even if it means I'm not liked by all in the room. Holding space for a parent who just had their spouse detained or who is escaping domestic violence. Sitting with a teacher after school who is struggling and needs to vent, be heard, cry, or be supported."

Herje received her Bachelor's degree in Social Work and a minor in Family Studies from St. Catherine University and at the University of St. Thomas: School of Social Work, she got her Master's degree in Clinical Social Work.

"I am fortunate to do what I love every day. My perspective on service has always been rooted in the belief that people are capable of healing, growth, and transformation. You'll never hear me say a student isn't capable or that they are a bad kid. I believe in meeting people where they are, honoring their lived experiences, and walking alongside them with compassion, accountability, and hope. I can't control what happens to the students and families I work with, but I can influence how it impacts them and how they heal. The families and students are amazing here and I learn so much from them every day that makes me a better human."

The award is sponsored by the Columbia Heights Federation of Teachers Local 710. With her selection, Herje will represent CHPS for next year's Minnesota Teacher of the Year award.



ENCORE offers extended learning opportunities focused on technology, arts, environmental studies, health/fitness and academic support. All class offerings are designed to provide students with the skills they will use to be successful in college and careers.

ENCORE is available to students in grades 1-8.

For more information, visit colheights.k12.mn.us/ENCORE

To learn more and to register, please visit <https://colheights.arux.app/courses/category/6/youth> or scan the QR Code

ENCORE Aquatics

If you are new to swimming or looking to advance your skills we have classes for you. Lessons will take place at the Columbia Heights High School Pool this fall on Saturdays. Levels 1-3 are available for ages 5+. See registration site for details.



100 Years of Hylanders | A Century of Hylander Pride

Calling all Columbia Heights High School alumni!

Save the date for Saturday, September 12, 2026, where we will be celebrating 100 Years of Hylanders with a special Centennial Celebration at CHHS, and we want you and all your fellow alumni to be part of it.

Whether you graduated decades ago or just a few years back, we want to reconnect with you! Fill out our Google Form to receive updates, event details, and be among the first to know what's planned for this historic celebration.

Help us spread the word by sharing this information with your fellow Hylanders!
Fill out the form that is linked on our Alumni webpage: colheights.k12.mn.us/alumni



Congratulations to the CHHS Class of 2026



Get Involved at CHPS! Join a District Committee

CHPS is committed to involving CHHS students, parents and community members on district committees. Please email the key contact person for more information about joining the council or committee.

- **Communications Advisory Council:** Provides feedback and suggestions for the CHPS Communications Department on how CHPS can better communicate (giving and receiving information) and build relationships with students, staff, parents and community members. For more information please contact Kristen Stuenkel, Director of Community Education & Communications: StuenkeK@colheights.k12.mn.us.
- **Community Education Advisory Council:** Provides feedback and suggestions for Community Education programs which include early childhood, ENCORE, child care, adult enrichment and education, and Blooming Heights. For more information please contact Kristen Stuenkel, Director of Community Education & Communications: StuenkeK@colheights.k12.mn.us.
- **Student Wellness Committee:** Provides feedback and suggestions about areas of student wellness including CHPS food service, Blooming Heights, physical, health and nutrition education, and student mental health supports. For more information please contact Kristen Stuenkel, Director of Community Education & Communications: StuenkeK@colheights.k12.mn.us.
- **Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Committee (formerly World's Best Workforce):** Committee focused on district goals and programming. The committee makes recommendations and brings ideas to the district administration to support "creating worlds of opportunity for each and every learner." For more information please contact Emily Gartner, Director of Teaching & Learning: GartnerE@colheights.k12.mn.us.
- **Native American Parent Advisory Council:** Limited to students and families who identify as Native American. This committee supports the Native American Education Program by planning cultural events and providing suggestions for curriculum that benefit Native American students and families. For more information please contact Yolanda Dorr Slowey, Native American Mentor: DorrSloY@colheights.k12.mn.us.

Child Care

Adventure Club | Kindergarten-Grade 5

Adventure Club programming facilitates a variety of activities to promote learning beyond the classroom including arts & crafts, guided group time, themed activities, dramatic play, cooking, games, outdoor play, science and more!

Hours, Dates, Locations & Fees

2:20-6:00 p.m. Regular School Days | 6:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Non-School Days

Programming is available for Highland, North Park School for Innovation and Valley View students.

Open most school vacations and non-school days.



Program Fees* Per Child	Registration Fee	After School	Non-School Day	Drop-In
	\$25	\$25	\$56	\$28

*Fee assistance may be available through Anoka, Ramsey or Hennepin County Child Care Assistance Programs.

Contact your county for details.



Learn More

For more information including fees or to register visit www.colheights.k12.mn.us/adventureclub or call 763.528.4517

Mini Adventures | 36 Months-5 Years Old

Mini Adventures is a four-star Parent Aware child care program for children 36 months to 5 years old. In Mini Adventures, your child will participate in a variety of activities including mathematics, guided group time, literacy, dramatic play, music, games, outdoor play, arts & crafts, movement and more! Early Childhood Screening is required for all participants. Independent toileting is required for children before participating.



Hours, Dates, Location & Fees

6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays, year-round at the Family Center.

Weekly Program Fees* Per Child	5 Days	4 Days	3 Days	2 Days	1 Day
	\$356	\$301	\$237	\$168	\$85

*Breakfast, lunch and snack included in weekly fee. We accept County Child Care Assistance and Pathways I scholarships. Pathways II scholarships may be available for those who qualify.



Learn More

For more information, visit www.colheights.k12.mn.us/miniadventures or call 763.528.4517

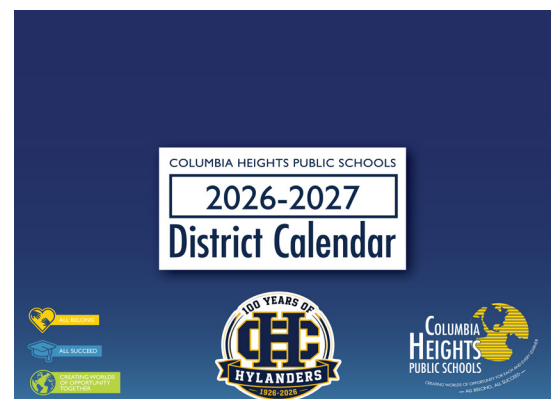


2026-2027 Calendar Information

In order to reduce waste, Columbia Heights Public Schools is sending the District Calendar to homes of enrolled students and their families. Calendars are also provided to each staff member and newly enrolled families. If you are interested in receiving this year's CHPS calendar, there are extras at the CHPS District Office that you can pick up when the district is open.

If you are unable to pick up a calendar from any of these locations in person, please visit colheights.k12.mn.us/contact-us to fill out a form and request a calendar. Please include your address within the form.

The calendar is also available online and available to download the PDF version on the District website. You can find it by scanning the QR code or by following this link: colheights.k12.mn.us/calendar.



Non-Separating ECFE

This class is designed for families who are new to ECFE or are not quite ready to separate from their child. Two licensed teachers, a children's teacher and a parent educator and a Spanish Interpreter will support this class. There will be time for parent/child interaction as well as a group time with stories, songs and activities.

Esta clase está diseñada para familias que se incorporan por primera vez a ECFE o que aún no se sienten preparadas para separarse de sus hijos. Dos maestras certificadas —una de niños y otra de padres— estarán a cargo de esta clase. Habrá tiempo para la interacción entre padres e hijos, así como un momento en grupo con cuentos, canciones y actividades.

ECFE for Spanish Speakers

Las familias disfrutarán aprendiendo y jugando juntas a través de actividades y tiempo en grupo con canciones y cuentos. Los padres se reunirán con nuestra educadora de padres para aprender sobre el desarrollo infantil, hacer preguntas y recibir apoyo para padres. Para familias cuyo idioma materno es el español.

Terrific Toddlers

Toddlers are curious and busy! Spend time with your child, exploring and engaging in activities, songs, and stories in the classroom for part of the morning. Engage in discussion with other parents/caregivers in an educator-led discussion, while your child interacts with peers and fun activities.

ECFE for ALL!

This class provides the added support of transportation (only for CHPS residents) and Spanish interpreting. Let our staff know at registration if you are in need of these services. All are welcome to enroll in this class regardless of need.

Esta clase ofrece el apoyo adicional de transporte (sólo para residentes de CHPS) e interpretación en español. Informe a nuestro personal en el registro si usted está en necesidad de estos servicios. Todos son bienvenidos a inscribirse en esta clase, independientemente de su necesidad.

Mixed Age

This class is a time to enjoy learning and playing together through activities designed for you and your child(ren). Boost your parenting/caregiving skills through an educator-led discussion for part of the class, while your child(ren) enjoy interacting with their peers.

Short Sessions

These thematic short sessions are a great way to try ECFE with your child OR if you are looking for an additional class to add to your week. Two licensed teachers, a children's teacher and a parent educator will support this class. There will be time for parent/child interaction as well as a group time with stories, songs and activities.

- September: Nature Based
- November: Art
- February: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math)
- April: Nature Based

Stay and Play

Looking for something fun to do with our child? Drop in with your child to play and learn in a classroom rich with materials to explore. No registration or fee required.

Infants

Bringing home a new baby comes with a lot of joy as well as challenges, and we are here to help! Join other families with infants to connect, play, and learn about infant development, including sleep, nutrition, attachment, and more. Each family will receive a CHPS welcome baby bag!

Traer a casa a un bebé nuevo trae mucha alegría, pero también presenta varios retos, ¡y estamos aquí para ayudarte! Únete a otras familias con bebés para relacionarte, jugar y aprender sobre el desarrollo infantil, incluyendo el sueño, la nutrición, el apego y mucho más. ¡Cada familia recibirá una bolsa de bienvenida para bebés de CHPS!

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM	Non-Separating ECFE (Birth-30 months) 9:00-10:30 a.m.	Terrific Toddlers (12-30 months) 9:00-11:00 a.m.	Mixed Age A.M. (0-5 years) 9:00-11:00 a.m.	Short Session** (1-5 years) 9:00-10:30 a.m. <i>The first class of each session will be at the Columbia Heights Public Library</i>	Infants* (0-11 months) 9:00-10:00 a.m. Stay and Play (0-5 years) 9:30-11:00 a.m.
PM	ECFE for Spanish-Speakers (0-5 years old) 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.	ECFE for ALL! (0-5 years old) 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.	Mixed Age P.M. (0-5 years old) 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.	ECFE for Spanish-Speakers (0-5 years old) 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Stay and Play (0-5 years) 4:30-6:00 p.m.	

All ECFE offerings have the same sliding scale fee, except for the Incredible Infants classes* and the ECFE Short Sessions**

\$26 (\$0-18,999)	\$72 (\$19,000-29,999)	\$116 (\$30,000-49,999)	\$163 (\$50,000+)
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*Incredible Infants

\$7 (\$0-18,000)	\$16 (\$18,001-29,999)	\$22 (\$30,000-49,999)	\$29 (\$50,000+)
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**ECFE Short Sessions

\$9 (\$0-18,000)	\$24 (\$18,001-29,999)	\$39 (\$30,000-49,999)	\$55 (\$50,000+)
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Scan the QR code for more information about each of our classes. ECFE classes are either separating or non-separating depending on the class. Each class will include developmentally appropriate activities to participate in with your child as well as parent/caregiver education.

Haga clic en el código QR para obtener más información sobre cada una de nuestras clases. En las clases de ECFE algunas te separas de tu alumno y otras no dependiendo de la clase. Cada clase incluirá actividades apropiadas para el desarrollo para participar con su hijo, así como la educación de los padres/cuidadores.



Enroll Now
Inscríbete Ahora

www.colheights.k12.mn.us/ecfe | 763.528.4517



Join the Early Childhood PTO

Join the Early Childhood PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)! Our PTO is a 501c3 and is comprised of parents and guardians involved in early childhood education and care programs. Benefits include: Providing input and feedback on early childhood programming and events, developing leadership skills, creating new friendships and support from other members and having FUN! Our PTO meets monthly to provide input and feedback about programming and community needs, plan events and raise funding for classroom materials. For more information, or to join, call 763.528.4518

Early Childhood Screening

Promote positive health and developmental outcomes and kindergarten readiness starting at the age of three (3) years. During screening, your child's speech, motor, and cognitive skills are reviewed. Your child will have their height, weight, vision and hearing checked. You will participate in a summary interview to review the screening process, social and emotional skills, and discuss any concerns you may have. Screenings last approximately 60 minutes and are held at the Family Center. To schedule an appointment, call 763.528.4517.

One-to-One Visits

Columbia Heights Public Schools offers free one-to-one visits after the birth or adoption of a new child or for parents/caregivers who have questions about their child's development and would like some support. During these visits, our licensed parent educator will provide developmental, behavioral and social emotional support to all families in person, by email, or by phone day and evening. Call 763.528.4536 or email mitchell@colheights.k12.mn.us to schedule a one-to-one



PreK

Register now!

Space available in PreK 3 and PreK 4 for the 2026-2027 school year!

PreK 3 | 3 years old by Sept. 1

PreK 3 prepares children for lifelong success! PreK 3 curriculum and assessment is aligned with PreK 4 and Minnesota Early Learning Standards. Classes are taught by licensed early childhood education teachers. Early Childhood Screening is required for all PreK 3 students. Transportation is not available. For more information, or to register, visit colheights.k12.mn.us/PreK3.

Monthly tuition is based on a sliding fee scale. Financial assistance is available to families who qualify.



Mon/Wed/Fri	\$24 (\$0-11,000)	\$46 (\$11,001-20,000)	\$68 (\$20,001-30,000)	\$92 (\$30,001-40,000)	\$116 (\$40,001-50,000)	\$149 (\$50,001+)
Tues/Thurs	\$16 (\$0-11,000)	\$30 (\$11,001-20,000)	\$46 (\$20,001-30,000)	\$62 (\$30,001-40,000)	\$78 (\$40,001-50,000)	\$100 (\$50,001+)
Mon/Wed/Fri	8:00-10:30 a.m.	FC Room 112	Tues/Thurs	8:00-10:30 a.m.	FC Room 112	
	11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	FC Room 112		11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	FC Room 112	

PreK 4 | 4 years old by Sept. 1

PreK 4 is a program that provides an engaging and educational program. PreK 4 curriculum and assessment is aligned with Kindergarten and the Minnesota Early Learning Standards. Classes are taught by licensed early childhood education teachers. Early Childhood Screening is required for all PreK 4 students. Busing is provided for PreK 4 families who live within the District boundaries. Classes are held Monday-Friday at Highland Elementary, North Park School for Innovation and Valley View Elementary.



This program is free for qualifying students and is fee-based for students who live outside of CHPS boundaries and don't meet MDE qualifications. Please see the PreK 4 page on the district website for qualifications.

Mornings 7:55-10:25 am. **Afternoons 11:45 a.m.-2:15 p.m.** **Full Day 7:55 a.m.-2:15 p.m.**

To register your student for PreK 4, visit colheights.k12.mn.us/Enroll or visit the Placement Center.

Registration Information

For more information on Community Education Registration, including class eligibility and policies, visit colheights.k12.mn.us/CommunityEd or call 763.528.4517. To register for Mini Adventures, call 763.528.4517. To register for PreK 4, visit the Placement Center or call 763.528.4426.

Hylander CONNECT



SUBSCRIBE

To receive CHPS news by email, visit
colheights.k12.mn.us/Subscribe.

HylanderCONNECT emails include monthly updates, School Board Reports and more.



Columbia Heights Public School District #13
1440 49th Ave. NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421-1939

YOUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT IN
**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



Find Us Online

Website	colheights.k12.mn.us
Facebook	facebook.com/CHPSisd13
Twitter	@CHPSisd13
Instagram	@CHPSisd13

**Enroll Now
Inscríbete Ahora** >

colheights.k12.mn.us | 763.528.4426