September Newsletter 2026

Dear CMS Families,

We had a wonderful start to the school year at CMS. Students are settling into their routines, reconnecting with friends, getting to know their teachers, and taking on new challenges in and out of the classroom. Thank you to all the parents and guardians who joined us for Back to School Night. We appreciated the opportunity to welcome you into our classrooms and share what your children will be learning this year. Your partnership means so much to our school community.

Executive Functioning

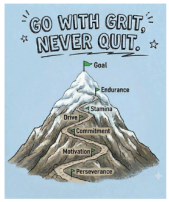
One of our priorities this year is helping students strengthen their executive functioning skills. These are the skills we use to plan, organize, manage time, pause before acting, begin tasks, and keep going when something is difficult. Following a year of professional learning with Dr. Chris Bogart, our staff identified two skills to emphasize at each grade level and developed common phrases and visuals to help students recognize and practice them.

Sixth graders are focusing on Organization and Task Initiation as they adjust to the routines and responsibilities of middle school. With the reminders “Less Mess, More Success” and “Hit Go,” they are learning strategies for managing lockers, binders, materials, planners, and Google Classroom, and habits that help them get started independently.

Seventh graders are focusing on Planning and Prioritization and Response Inhibition, or the ability to pause and think before acting. Their phrases are “Don’t Just Wing It, Plan and Bring It” and “Pause and Pivot.” They began with the *Disaster Backpack Challenge*, working in teams to decide what they would pack in just 60 seconds. They will continue practicing strategies for pausing and making thoughtful choices through our DBT skills lessons.

Eighth graders are focusing on Time Management and Goal-Directed Persistence with the reminders “Plan Ahead, Stay Ahead” and “Go with Grit, Never Quit.” They explored how they perceive time through several fun challenges, then mapped out how they actually spend their time during and after school.

Executive functioning skills grow with practice. Throughout the year, teachers will name, model, and reinforce these skills in everyday classroom routines. We also look forward to sharing ways families can support this work at home.

GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
 	 	 

Academic Integrity and Responsible AI Use

Another important part of helping students grow as learners is teaching them to take ownership of their work. Our new Middle School Academic Integrity Policy helps students understand what it means to produce honest, original work. At CMS, we want students to take pride in their ideas, show their thinking, and recognize that asking questions, making mistakes, and revising are all part of learning. Teachers will review the expectations with students and clarify what is appropriate for each assignment.

The policy also provides guidance on artificial intelligence. Teachers will tell students whether AI is permitted for an assignment and, when it is, how they may use district-approved tools. AI can support learning, but it should not replace students' own thinking. Students will learn to acknowledge permitted AI use, check the accuracy of what it produces, and protect their personal information.

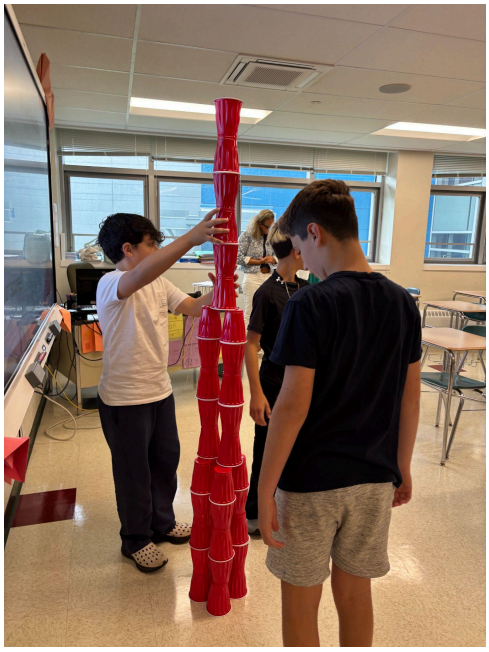
Families can support this work by asking children to talk about how they developed their ideas and encouraging them to check with a teacher whenever they are unsure whether a resource or AI tool is allowed. The full Middle School Academic Integrity Policy is available on the CMS website.

September Highlights

Students have also had many opportunities this month to connect with one another and enjoy being part of the CMS community. Our sixth and seventh graders traveled to Mountain Workshop for field trips filled with shared challenges. They designed and raced carts, took on athletic activities, launched and paddled a canoe, and found creative ways to work together. These experiences helped students build friendships while practicing collaboration and problem-solving.



During Connections, students have participated in activities that help them get to know one another and build a welcoming classroom community.



We also kicked off this year's Fun Fridays in the library media center. During September's recess sessions, students tested their football knowledge in trivia, drew pumpkin Zentangles, and made apple suncatchers. These monthly gatherings give students a chance to relax, choose an activity they enjoy, and spend time with friends and staff.



Mark Your Calendars

- **September 30:** Picture Day
- **October 9:** Pink Day
- **October 16:** Early dismissal for students; staff professional development
- **October 21, 10:00–11:30 a.m.:** Tools for Schools Fall Meeting
- **November 5 and 6:** First Coleytown Company show
- **December 4:** Open Team Meetings

Sincerely,
Janna Sirowich
Principal