



August 24, 2015

Dear Columbia Upper Elementary School Families,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year! I hope the summer months were relaxing and enjoyable for all of you. I am so excited to share the upcoming school year with our students, staff and community. With our newly remodeled buildings, new technology and new staff we have many things to be proud of in the Columbia School District. Our first official day of school is **Tuesday, September 8th. This day is scheduled as a half-day. We will begin at 7:55 am and dismiss at 11:20 am.**

Our staff is excited about working with our CUES students and families. To keep you informed about CUES news, our newsletter, "The Eagle's Soar" will be sent home every Friday. Be on the lookout for the blue paper each week. Additionally, we will provide updates on the Columbia Upper Elementary Facebook page, Twitter and through Remind 101. Please look for information at our open houses on how to access all of these tools.

Your child's academic interest is at the forefront of our educational activity planning. Teachers will be in touch with families through their classroom websites, phone contacts, email communication and Parent Teacher Conferences. Grades will be update weekly on the PowerSchool website to keep you informed of your child's progress. You may also contact Mrs. Schatzle, our CUES and CES School Counselor, for assistance with concerns regarding academic, social or the emotional well being of your child.

Providing new opportunities for our students is the foundation for developing their academic achievement and fostering their creativity. Your child will have a new technology class incorporating the use of our Chromebooks. We will offer Choir and Band to our 6th grade along with a Music class for all students in K-6. We have a new state of the art multi media room where students will experience art classes, STEM projects and Genius Hour Project demonstrations. In addition to the exciting clubs and organizations we have had in the past, we will add an after school STEM club and Academic Games. Student ideas help to develop the programs we are able to offer. Stay tuned for an "Upcycling club"; an interest shared by one of our 6th grade students.

Our Columbia family continues to grow with new students and staff each year. We are thrilled to welcome new students from all areas of Michigan and beyond. Additionally, we welcome Mr. Benjamin Learned, CUES 6th grade teacher. Mr. Learned comes to us from Stockbridge where he taught middle school pre-algebra and elementary STEM classes. He also coached multiple sports including wrestling and baseball.

Additional changes are listed below:

- Mr. Moore will be teaching our new Technology class, K-6.
- Mr. McDonald and Mr. Iott will be teaching PE, K-6. Mr. McDonald will also incorporate Michigan Health Model concepts.
- Mr. Cryderman will teach our Music classes and lead our 6th Grade Choir.

As educators, we use data to drive best practices and instructional purpose. Our staff will work to increase student understanding and achievement based on the needs of our students as learners. For the first time last year, our students took the M-Step state assessment. Our students will take this again in the Spring of 2016. They will also participate in the i-Ready assessment in the Fall, Winter and Spring.

Mark your calendar with these events and dates you may want to remember:

- **Tuesday, September 8th, First day of School (1/2 day);** School begins at 7:55 am and dismisses at 11:20 am.
- **Wednesday, September 9th is the first full-day of school.** School begins at 7:55 am and dismisses at 2:55 pm. Breakfast begins at 7:25 am.
- **Tuesday, September 15th, CES and CUES Open Houses** 5:30 to 6:30 pm.
Free ice cream treats; compliments of the CES/CUES PTO and MEEMIC. Open house is great opportunity to meet teachers, staff, and classmates; tour the remodeled building, sign up for activities and have a great time.
- **Lunch Prices:** Breakfast-\$1.30; Lunch - \$2.40; Milk- \$.50. Free and reduced applications are available in the school office. Eligibility is required for this federal program. You may make deposits to your child's account through the website.
- **Volunteers:** We welcome parent involvement at CUES. We have a wonderful and supportive Parent Teacher Organization. Please consider joining the PTO or helping in any other way. If you are interested in volunteering at any time during the school year, a staff member will be available at the open house to provide volunteer forms and copy your driver's license. Background checks are required for any volunteer and must be completed yearly.
- **Bus Transportation:** For your convenience, bus schedules are published in this week's Torch Bearer. In addition, the Columbia School District Transportation Department will be available on Thursday, August 27th from 3:00-7:00 pm in the CUES gym to answer your transportation questions. You may also call the bus garage at 517-592-6449.

Finally, our school community is an extension of our family. We utilize the Nurtured Heart Approach and will continue to build an environment based on kindness, respect and academic excellence. We are thankful for a positive community that provides continued support and encouragement. As a Columbia graduate, I am thrilled about being a part of its bright future. Please feel free to contact me anytime as I value your questions and input. I look forward to sharing another successful and exciting school year with every Columbia Upper Elementary School family.



Sincerely,

Christi O'Neil

Columbia Upper Elementary School Principal

517-592-2181

Christi.ONeil@myeagles.org