



August 12, 2016

Dear Columbia Upper Elementary School Families,

Welcome to the 2016-2017 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. The Columbia School District is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. We look forward to honoring the history of our district while continuing to inspire the future. Our first official day of school is **Wednesday, August 24th. This day is scheduled as a half-day. We will begin at 7:55 AM and dismiss at 11:20 AM. Friday, August 26th is also a scheduled half –day for students.**

Our staff is excited about working with our CUES students and families. To keep you informed about CUES news, our newsletter, "The Eagle Soar" will be available both online and in paper version. Families will be able to choose the most appropriate form for their needs. A letter will be sent home the first week of school providing you with this option. Additionally, we will provide updates on the Columbia Upper Elementary Facebook page, Twitter and through Remind. Please look for information at our open house 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 updated 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. With excitement, we would like to announce we have a new Art class for both CES and CUES. Art will be added to your child "Specials" rotation. With additional new Chromebooks this school year, every classroom will have access to technology daily. Students will continue to enjoy a variety of clubs and organizations throughout the year. Last school year, our Academic Games program earned state medals at their final competition. Our Robotics team competed in their first event with success. Columbia Magic and our 6th grade choir and band continue to fill our school with music. Look for more information to follow about all of these programs and more as the year continues.

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 Mrs. Meredith Denney, CUES 5th grade teacher. Mrs. Denney comes to us from Columbia Elementary School where she taught 2nd grade. She is a proud Columbia graduate and is so excited about this new opportunity. Mr. Jay Potter comes to us from Columbia Central High School where he taught Special Education. He will be working in our Resource Room with 3rd and 4th grade students. We will also be introducing a new art teacher to the CUES family before school begins. Please join me in welcoming our new staff to the CUES family.

As educators, we use data to drive best practices and instructional purpose. Our staff will work to increase student understanding and achievement. We will continue to measure student progress with the i-Ready assessment provided in the Fall, Winter and Spring. Our students will also take the M-Step assessment in the Spring 2017.

Please note some helpful information below:

- **Monday, August 22nd, CES and CUES Open Houses 5:30 to 7:00 PM.**
The CES/CUES PTO will be handing out pencils to help with the start of the school year. Open house is a great opportunity to meet teachers, staff, and classmates; tour the remodeled building, sign up for activities and have a great time.
- **Wednesday, August 24th, First day of School (1/2 day).** School begins at 7:55 AM and dismisses at 11:20 AM
- **Thursday, August 25th, 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.
- **Lunch Prices:** Breakfast-\$1.30, Lunch - \$2.80, Milk- \$.50. We encourage families to complete the Free and Reduced Meal application either at the open house or in the school office. Eligibility is required for this federal program. You may make deposits to your child's account on the Columbia School District's 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:** Mr. Bradley, Transportation Director, will be available at the open house to identify bus routes. You may also call the bus garage at 517-592-6449.

Finally, one of the most important goals among the CUES staff is to create a family environment within our school community. We utilize the Nurtured Heart Approach and will continue to build a culture based on kindness, respect and academic excellence. We are thankful for a positive community that provides continued support and encouragement. I feel a great sense of pride being a graduate of the Columbia School District and am fortunate to be 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