

# IN THE LOOP



April 2020

## Update From the Superintendent



### 4th Quarter News & Updates

I have been trying to think of a positive way to start this newsletter, but the only words that come to mind is, "This is hard." Education is a people business that is all about relationships, connection, and focus on helping kids learn and grow. I believe this is what makes it so difficult to work in this environment. We are just not wired to be with one another over wires. We are made to work alongside one another in person. Also, I don't think it's just a school thing. I believe this applies to our families, our communities, our state, and our nation.

I'm thankful for the first responders, medical personnel, scientists, and health experts who are working so hard to save lives, especially those on the front lines. I'm also thankful for those who are working so hard to keep our world as "normal" as possible and that we have almost all of our "needs" met and many of our "wants." I can tell you first hand that every Wednesday when our food service staff and community partners put those grocery sacks with food for our kids in trunks and hatch-backs, that I'm thankful for this community and the way we take care of one another. That's another thing we're good at, taking care of one another.

And finally, I'm thankful for our CCS staff and our parents who are finding ways to keep school going in this environment with the common mission of helping our kids learn and grow!

So, I know this is hard, but we will get through it and we will be OK.

-Dr. B.

# Virtual Board Meeting

## April 27, 2020

In compliance with Governor Eric Holcomb's order, the April 27, 2020, School Board meeting will be held remotely and will be streamed live on Carmel Clay Schools YouTube channel beginning at 7:00 p.m. by using this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/c/CarmelClaySchoolsCCS>

The **Public Comment** guidelines in Bylaw 0167.3 have been modified for this remote meeting. Please [click here](#) to view Bylaw 0167.3 - Public Comments at Board Meetings.

Community members can submit a written **Public Comment** for the meeting by completing the Public Comment Form between noon and 5 p.m. on Monday, April 27, 2020. The Public Comment form can be accessed by [clicking here](#). Comments will be limited to 4000 characters. Public Comments that meet the guidelines in Bylaw 0167.3 will be included in the School Board Recap.

To view the agenda for the April 27, 2020, Regular Session of the Carmel Clay School Board of Trustees, please [click here](#).

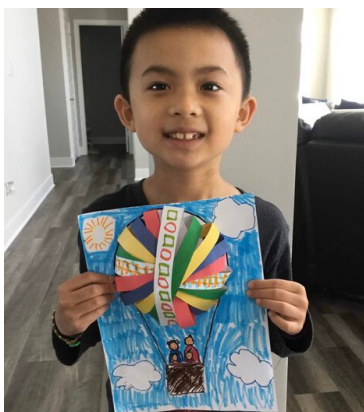


## Changes to the School Day Recommendation

We have completed our study and are ready to make the following recommendations to change the school day beginning in the fall of the 2020-2021 school year. The recommendations will be presented to the Carmel Clay Board of School Trustees for discussion at this Monday's School Board meeting with possible action taken at the May 18, 2020 School Board meeting.

### The recommended changes include the following:

1. Carmel High School and the middle schools will be recommended **to begin at 8:45 a.m. and end at 3:45 p.m.** This change is aligned with a large body of research that has found multiple benefits for adolescents by starting school later in the morning. More information about the rationale for this change can be found [HERE](#).
2. The Elementary school day will be recommended **to begin 15-minutes earlier at 7:50 a.m. and end at 2:50 p.m.** This is a **30-minute increase from the current day**. The extra time will be used to add 15 minutes to the academic block for teachers to use for activities such as social emotional learning (SEL), student collaboration, genius hour, STEM/STEAM lessons or other innovative experiences for our students. We will also add 15-minutes to the current 15-minutes of recess to create a 30-minute recess block for students each day. More information about the rationale for this change can be found [HERE](#).



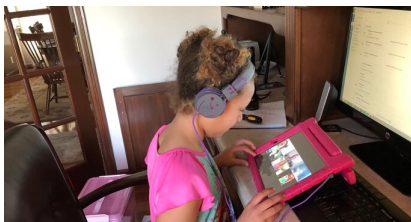
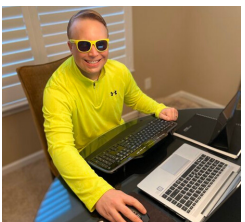


3. Currently, Carmel High School has approximately two 40-minute "Late Start" days per month. This time is used for teacher "Professional Learning Communities" where teachers can collaborate, analyze student data, and develop high-yield teaching strategies. We will be recommending implementing two "Late Start" days per month district-wide. On those days, our buses would run their routes 40-minutes later while teachers across the district collaborate. CHS and the middle schools would start at 9:25 a.m. Elementary Schools would start at 8:30 a.m. We know some families are concerned about childcare on these "Late Start" days. We plan to have no-cost childcare available for families in grades K-8 who may need to drop off their students at the regular time. More information about the rationale for the "Late Start" can be found on both links noted above.

**We know change is difficult as we have all experienced since mid-March, but we believe these changes are in the best interest of our students, staff, families and community. We gathered and considered a large amount of feedback from stakeholders throughout the CCS family. At the end of the process, we held fast to our guiding principles and believe these changes are in the best interests of our students academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.**

#### CCS Guiding Principles

- Students are at the center of every decision
- A safe, non-threatening learning environment is essential.
- Students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs must be addressed.
- Students and employees excel when held to high personal standards and expectations.
- High quality employees are vital to the success of our organization.
- Effective teaching and learning requires continuous improvement.
- Diverse opportunities benefit all students.
- Open and transparent communication maintains stakeholder trust.
- Parent and community involvement enhances student learning.
- Fiscal responsibility is fundamental to achieving our vision.



## *Class of 2020 Graduation Plans*

Graduation is a time to celebrate the many accomplishments our students have achieved during their 13-year educational journey. Our goal is to create a ceremony that keeps our traditions alive and allows friends and family to share in the moment. We continue to be optimistic that we can provide our traditional in-person event for our graduates and their families, but we are preparing options if we are still restricted from gathering. Our high school administrative staff, teachers, and Class of 2020 student leaders have been working to find ways to achieve these milestones.

#### **We are currently working on three plans:**

**Plan A.** If the social distancing order is lifted, we will hold our regular graduation at the Fairgrounds on May 31st at 2 p.m.

**Plan B.** If social distancing continues and large gatherings are still a health risk to our families, we are working on creative ways to hold a ceremony compliant with the rules in place at that time. This plan may include holding a ceremony as late as July.

**Plan C.** If it remains unsafe to gather for a graduation ceremony, or if students/families are unable to attend, we are planning a "virtual graduation" video that will be completed and posted on May 31st.

I appreciate the Greyhound administrative team and staff's response to the challenge of making graduation special for the students and families of the Class of 2020 in this environment. A regular graduation ceremony is a huge undertaking and they are planning for multiple scenarios with many unknowns. I'm proud of their efforts and big hearts for our seniors!

# Delivery of Graduation Boxes

The CHS faculty and staff continue to search for unique ways to celebrate and support our senior class. Students and families of the Class of 2020 were notified this week that each senior will receive a Graduation Celebration Box on May 11, 2020! Items in the box include a cap and gown, Distinguished and Commended Graduate attire, and the official graduation program with student composite. CHS faculty and staff have also added a special gift with a message to every senior. We wanted parents and seniors to be able to take pictures, and have everything needed to celebrate this important milestone. Our CCS transportation department will send approximately 60 bus drivers and CHS staff members to deliver a personalized graduation box to each senior's bus stop. Students and staff will follow social distancing guidelines to deliver the boxes safely.



## Virtual Learning - Assessment & Grading Update

Another virtual learning challenge is finding a fair, valid and reliable way to assess student performance. Our Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment team has worked through this challenge and have determined the following:

### Elementary Report Cards:

In lieu of letter grades or standard based scores, elementary students will receive specific feedback on areas of strength and opportunities for growth in a written narrative from their teachers. Art, music and physical education teachers will not be providing grades for second semester.

### Middle School and High School Report Cards:

Middle school and high school students will receive fourth quarter grades as well as semester grades. No final exams will be given. The second semester grade will be calculated by averaging quarter 3 and quarter 4 grades.

## End of Year Procedures

We have had several inquiries about how the end of year procedures will be handled given the Governor's order. Again, it's the same story, we have been exploring ways to have students and families return to school to clean-out lockers, return books and return Chromebooks, along with picking up yearbooks and other end of the year activities. Our goal is to keep our students and families safe and comply with local, state, and medical guidance. We are developing processes with no restrictions, limited restrictions, and postponement until it is safe to return to our schools.

## Virtual Prom



CHS is also planning a virtual Prom on May 2, 2020 from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. that will feature DJ Chad Andrews who will provide a mix of music and a light show online, including celebrity visits to the CHS prom. Students should stay tuned for additional details and a link to enter the event. Students are encouraged to get dressed up and dance the night away!



# Transportation Task Force

We have put together a Transportation Task Force to study and address the bus driver shortage we are experiencing. Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Tom Oestreich and Associate Superintendent, Mr. Roger McMichael will be leading the group that includes a wide range of stakeholders. The group is charged with finding key recruitment strategies so we can eliminate "double routing" and maintain an adequate number of drivers to serve the district.

## Congratulations Amy Beaven! We will Miss You!

Transportation Supervisor, Amy Beaven, will be retiring May 1st after 20+ years of service to CCS. She has been a dedicated member of the CCS team making sure thousands of students arrived safely to and from school. Amy has worked countless hours and has taken immense pride in providing students and families with safe, efficient, and dependable service. Amy's ability to develop positive working relationships with school staff, bus drivers, parents and city personnel enabled her to meet the challenges of transporting thousands of students! Amy has been a creative and strategic problem-solver, including working to improve technology on our buses and finding ways to manage the ongoing bus driver shortage. We are so thankful for the hard work, heart and passion Amy has poured into her work at CCS. Her positive attitude and sense of humor will be missed! Please join me in congratulating Amy on a wonderful career and well-deserved retirement. We wish you all the best in your next adventure!



## Welcome to the CCS Family!

### New Assistant Director of Facilities and Transportation - Gary Clevenger

We are extremely pleased to welcome Mr. Gary Clevenger as our new Assistant Director of Facilities and Transportation. Carmel Clay Schools received 90 applications from candidates all over the state and beyond for this important position. Gary earned his bachelor's degree from Western Governor's University in Business Administration and is excited to relocate his family to Carmel.

Mr. Clevenger started his transportation career as the State Training Specialist for the Indiana Department of Transportation. He traveled the state training school bus drivers while focusing on increasing the safety of students on and around school buses. He then served as the Assistant Director of Transportation with Washington Township Schools and most recently served as their Director of Transportation. His primary responsibilities included collaborating with district/building administrators and law enforcement personnel on all transportation operations for the school district. He managed the day-to-day operations and professional development for a transportation staff of 170+ (office, drivers, aides, mechanics, etc.) while also managing strategic departmental and district goals.

We are excited for Gary's future work with Carmel Clay Schools and he is a highly organized professional with a wide array of school transportation experiences that will make him an asset within our school community.

### New Assistant Director of Special Services- Joanna Mulligan

We are excited to welcome Mrs. Joanna Mulligan as our new Assistant Director of Special Services. Joanna earned her bachelor's degree from Indiana University in Bloomington in Elementary Education and Special Education while going on to obtain her masters' degree in Educational Leadership. She also received her Director of Exceptional Needs license and an Educational Law Certification from IU.

Mrs. Mulligan was a special education teacher at the Center for Inquiry before becoming the Special Education Coordinator with the Hancock, Madison and Shelby Education Services. This was an inter-local serving special education students in six school districts. Most recently, she has served as the Assistant Director of Student Services for the Southern Hancock School Corporation responsible for Early Learning Programs, Essential Skills Programs,

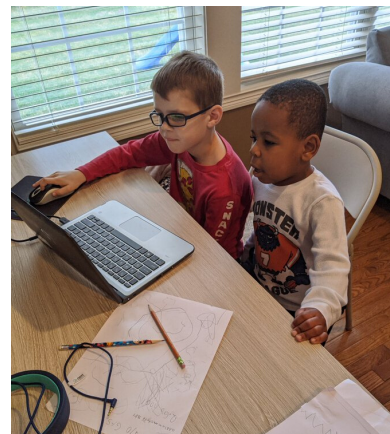
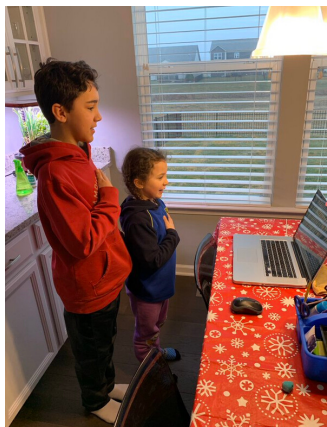


supervision of special education staff, including teachers, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, physical therapists, school psychologist, and Deaf Hard of Hearing teacher, among many other responsibilities.

We are excited for Joanna's future work with Carmel Clay Schools and she is a very enthusiastic professional with a wide array of experiences in special services that will make her an asset within our school community.

## *New Elementary Construction & Redistricting Update*

Work is continuing at both construction sites with steel going up at Clay Center Elementary School, while groundwork and soil stabilization are going on at the new Carmel Elementary site. As we approach the opening of the new schools, we will be going through a redistricting process in the fall of the 2020-2021 school year to rebalance elementary enrollment across the district. We will be utilizing several strategies to engage parents, staff, and community members in the process. We will roll-out that process in the coming weeks.



### New Carmel Elementary School Construction



### Clay Center Elementary Construction

