



Chesterfield Township School District

Office of the Superintendent

Scott Heino

Superintendent Update

March 17, 2023

Improving Communication Efforts

One of the topics often identified as an area for improvement by District parents/guardians is communication. While there is regular communication between a teacher and student's parent/guardian, we are focused on improving the way in which we share reminders and news about what is happening in the school. Recent efforts include this update along with a recent Main Office newsletter that shared important dates, school events and reminders. The principals also hosted *Coffee and Bagels with the Principals* on March 15th which was an opportunity to speak to the principals directly, which was well-received. Stay tuned for increased communications efforts that will help the community be better informed.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

This year I have often shared how we continue to refine our safety and security measures to keep all students, staff, and visitors safe while here in the building and outside on our playground.

One of the steps we are taking to improve safety and security is to provide an official security presence during the school day with a Security Officer. With the goal of performing building security surveillance and assisting staff and students in maintaining a safe and comfortable school environment, the Security Officer will monitor security cameras and doors, regularly circulate throughout the building and grounds, assist with visitor check-in as needed, among other important security tasks.

Starting March 20th, our two new Security Officers will be working in the district. Security Officer David Walls and Security Officer Robert Chianese will be joining the district on Monday. We will only have one Security Officer on site at a time, but the two Security Officers will share the time each week so that we always have someone here who is familiar with our students, staff, and procedures. Both Security Officer Walls and Security Officer Chianese are local and have extensive experience and training as career police officers.

Even though we are creating a safer, more secure learning environment with a daily Security Officer, I still want to recognize and thank the Chesterfield Township Police Department who have worked so closely with the district and also provide a daily presence in and around the school. This will help to ensure a seamless start for our new Security Officers.

STAFF UPDATES

Health and Physical Education

In April we will welcome Jason Desch, our new Health and Physical Education teacher. Jason joins us with years of experience in HPE. He shared that he and his family recently adopted a puppy, and he is excited about coming to Chesterfield.

Student Teachers

Each semester Chesterfield helps to develop a new generation of teachers by hosting student teachers and pairing them with a teacher mentor. This spring semester we welcomed the following:

Chelsea Blanchard- 3F	Sarah Lubitsky - 1Ma
Anna Capron -5B	Jennifer Palafox -Christiansen
Grace Cosgrove- 3D	Emily Patterson - 6B/C
Kaitlyn Eldridge- K-R	Meghna Ramesh - 1Mu
Ariana Guido- 6A	Anna Roberts - 2L
Janey Kogan-Christiansen	Evan Sapirman - 6S/S
Shannon Laykin- 4F	Kimberly Sibilia - 1B
Nia Watson - Feder	

There are no better mentors than our Chesterfield teachers. Thank you!

UPDATE: SUPERINTENDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In my December newsletter I invited parents to join a new parent advisory committee that would provide an opportunity for parents to engage in an open discussion with me regarding district initiatives and allow them to share their perspective on our school district.

I am pleased that our new Superintendent Advisory Committee held its inaugural meeting on Monday, January 30th and was well attended by ten members representing a cross section of our community. With a focus on open, productive dialogue, I solicited topics from each new member in advance of our first meeting. We launched our first meeting discussing how to improve school communication and safety which were priorities on the committee's list. I want to thank our parent volunteers who are serving on the committee.

Our next meeting will be held later this month and I look forward to sharing with the full school community the progress we make as a group.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM

Under the direction of music teacher Ms. Sophia Isnardi, the Chesterfield band program currently has 112 students from the 4th to 6th grades. Our beginning band consists of 75 students, and our advanced band consists of 37 students.

Beginning band students are currently working on their concert songs *Hot Cross Buns*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Go Tell Aunt Rhodie*, and *Mozart Melody*. *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* will be performed by percussion students only.

Advanced Band students are currently working on their concert songs *Dragon Slayer*, *Beethoven's 9th Symphony - Ode to Joy*, and *Let's Go Band!* *Dragon Slayer* has quickly become a band favorite!

Upcoming Spring performance dates are:

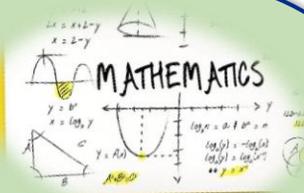
April 4th – Family Arts Night (Chorus and Advanced Band) ~ 5:00 p.m.

April 20th – Band Performance (Beginning and Advanced) ~ After School

Thank you to Ms. Isnardi for her efforts to develop the CES instrumental program. Thank you also to the parents and guardians who support Chesterfield's music program.

We hope to see you at Family Arts Night!

Math Curriculum Update



Math Pilot Completed

We have completed the process of piloting math materials, collecting stakeholder feedback, and reviewing all of the data. As a district we have made the decision to move forward with Illustrative Mathematics (IM) in Kindergarten through fifth grade and Amplify Math (based on Illustrative Mathematics) in 6th grade. We are excited about our decision and we have already begun the process of preparing for our transition!

Our Vision

IM K-12 Math is a problem-based core curriculum built on the principle that all students are capable learners of grade-level mathematics. Students learn math by doing math. They are encouraged to use their current understanding of math, their lived experiences, and the world around them as resources for problem solving. By starting with what students already know, teachers invite all students to contribute to mathematical learning, centering student thinking, and being responsive as students develop conceptual understanding.

Implementation

We as a district have been studying the best practices in math instruction since last school year and we have continued that process this year. During our most recent in-service training teachers began to dive into their new materials to become familiar with the philosophy, the structure of the lessons, and the resources available to them. This professional development will continue over the summer with training provided by the publishers of our materials and through the next school year with the support of consultants and our instructional coach.

In addition to selecting new math materials, we will be rewriting our math curriculum. Our Math Curriculum Committee members, who have already been hard at work through the pilot process, will begin writing the curriculum in the upcoming months and throughout the summer. This new curriculum, along with our new materials, will be implemented in the 2023-2024 school year.

We would like to thank all of you who provided us with feedback. This helped us through the decision-making process and will guide us in our work in the year ahead. We would also like to thank all of the staff members who volunteered to pilot the new materials. Their additional time and effort were truly appreciated. Finally, we would like to thank the Math Committee members who have committed their time and effort to finding materials and writing a curriculum that will help our students reach their full potential.

Thank you, Committee Members!

Jillian Biddle, Erin Casey, Nicole Hartman, Anne Lawrence, Jen Maicher, Kristen McIntyre, Tracey Miller, Karen Perez, Maria Prince, and Carla Rigolizzo.

SCHOOL BUDGET UPDATE

It's rabbit season, duck season, rabbit season, duck season, NO IT'S BUDGET SEASON! At the March 15th BOE meeting the preliminary budget for the 2023-2024 School Year was presented to the BOE and the public. The presentation can be found [here](#). The district is proposing a third consecutive year of no increase to the tax levy.

As you can see in the presentation, next year our upper grades (grades 3-6) will continue to average 100 students per grade level while our primary grades (grades K-2) are now showing an average of 80 students per grade level. As a result, we are removing three class sections from the budget for the 2023-2024 School Year. Grades K-2 will have 4 sections at each grade level and grades 3-6 will continue to have 5 sections at each grade level. Overall, grades K-6 will have average class sizes of 20-21 students. Based on our current configuration, this is only a change for 2nd grade. Kindergarten and 1st grade already have 4 sections, and second grade will move from 5 sections to 4 sections next year.

The budget presentation also includes budget highlights. Next year the budget will support the implementation of a new math curriculum, a security officer position, a third section of our pre-school program, continued mental health support, continued safety and security upgrades, and support for improving teacher evaluation.

As many of you know, several years ago our district was involved in collaborative efforts across the state to bring fair funding to Chesterfield. The Chesterfield Township School District was one of many school districts in New Jersey who was underfunded which created a significant financial strain on the district as our school's student enrollment experienced rapid growth. A grass-roots effort led by former Chesterfield Township School District Board of Education member Andrea Katz engaged board members, teachers, support staff, administration, students and parents to advocate for fair funding. As of the 2023-2024 School Year we are fully funded! That is a huge accomplishment that has brought this district so many programs and services for our students.

As a reminder, the annual budget hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26, 2023.

CHANGES IN BOARD POLICY: Smart Watches

The District has witnessed an increase in student use of personal devices and smart watches. Our Board of Education regularly reviews policies and during the February BOE meeting approved revised Board Policy 5516: Use of Electronic Communication and Recording Devices (ECRD) to include smart watches.

The Board of Education recognizes staff and students' rights to privacy and should not be subject to having a video or audio recording taken for any purpose without consent. The Board also recognizes such recordings can be disruptive to the educational program and challenging to maintaining the integrity of the educational program at Chesterfield.

Per Policy 5516, "Electronic communication and recording device (ECRD)" includes any device with the capability to audio or video record or is capable of receiving or transmitting any type of communication between persons. An ECRD includes, but is not limited to, cameras, cellular and wireless telephones, smart watches,..."

Policy 5516 specifically limits the use of any smart watch exclusively as a watch and in silent mode. No student is permitted to turn on any ECRD while on school grounds unless granted permission by a school staff member supervising the student in a curricular/co-curricular activity. Please advise your child/children that Policy 5516 will now be enforced. Thank you for your cooperation.

CES Celebrates 100th Day of School

On February 10th CES celebrated its 100th day of school! Students and staff were encouraged to dress up as a 100-year-old, while classrooms hosted activities to mark this very special day in the school year. Staff pictures were also taken with a filter that instantly gave us a glimpse of what we might look like at the age of 100, which was amusing for all.



REACH Program Students Take 1st Place in Law Fair Competition

The Chesterfield Township Elementary School REACH Program (formerly known as the Gifted & Talented Program) is a dynamic small group program that is both challenging and meaningful to our students. The program supports a learning environment that encourages students to reach their highest potential.

The goal of the program is to allow students to engage their creativity, strengths, and abilities to the greatest extent possible. The program focuses on promoting high-level thinking and developing students who are well-rounded, 21st century learners. The units of study are project-based and thematic, allowing opportunities for discovery, open-endedness, and real-world connections.

Every year, during a "Mock Trials" unit, our 4th grade REACH students enter the Law Fair Competition for 3rd – 6th graders hosted by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation. There is a winner for each grade level and this year, Chesterfield's 4th grade won 1st place!

Out of 91 entries, CES 4th graders were amongst the top 11 in the state. To enter the competition, students must develop and write an original mock trial case that includes the following components: facts, issue witnesses, witness testimonies/statements, instructions, sub-issues, concepts, and law.

Our winning students are:

- Olivia B. (4M)
- Shloka M. (4M)
- Christian M. (4S)
- Aadhya T. (4S)
- Landon S. (4F)
- Shaunak B. (4F)
- Jack K. (4H)

On May 15th, our students will be going to the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick to perform their winning mock trial case in a room that simulates a courtroom, complete with a judge and jury. Students will also have the ability to act as the jury for another case that will be performed that day as well.

Congratulations and good luck on May 15th for a successful performance!

