

FALL 2021

Communicator

CALEDONIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER



WELCOME BACK!

4 Update on \$15 million of improvements to schools across the district

5 Help name our new community center

7 Discover new ways to stay connected to CCS

8 Information on free and reduced lunch programs



A letter from the Superintendent

Dear Caledonia Schools Community,

I am excited to welcome everyone back to school for the start of the 2021-22 academic year. I hope this summer provided time for you and your family to recharge and get ready for all the excitement and activity that starting a new school year brings.

As the year starts and the pandemic still creates uncertainty about the future, I want to remind everyone that we have a lot to celebrate at CCS. Over the past three years we have adopted an aggressive strategic plan with broad community input and passed an operating millage renewal and \$88 million school bond. We've invested \$15 million in improvements this summer alone. All schools in our district received an "A" for proficiency based on standardized testing prior to the pandemic. We improved the graduation rate to 96.3 percent with over 16 percent of our graduating seniors this year taking one or more AP courses and receiving a 4.0 or higher and 81 percent of graduates planning to continue their education next year.

Based on past and current indicators, CCS has provided a high-quality education to thousands of students year after year, even during a pandemic. These accomplishments were obtained by dedicated parents and staff members having a unified focus on growing our students as scholars in a positive learning environment where we all engage each other with kindness, dignity and respect. The focus of providing a quality learning experience that fosters citizens of high character must remain our unified focus as a school community.

I look forward to working together and getting the school year off to a strong start.

Dr. Dedrick Martin
Superintendent



Meet Our New Administrators

Bill Martin, Caledonia High School

My name is Bill Martin and I am the new Caledonia High School principal. I am delighted to join the Caledonia community and help guide students on their educational journeys at Caledonia High School. I have lived in the greater Grand Rapids area for over 13 years and have always respected Caledonia's commitment to quality education.

I graduated from Olivet College with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Studies and Psychology and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Grand Valley State University. I have 19 years of experience in education, 12 of which I have spent in administration. Most recently, I was the middle school principal at Riverside Middle School in Grand Rapids Public Schools, serving in that role for five years. I started my career teaching world history, psychology, and teen leadership, and I am excited to return to the high school environment.



I am passionate about secondary education and believe it is integral to preparing students for college and adulthood. It is my goal for graduates from Caledonia to be prepared socially, academically and personally to succeed in the next steps of their lives. I want

to ensure every student at Caledonia High School feels welcome and encouraged to learn and grow.

I am excited to don the purple and gold and become part of the Fighting Scots family. Anyone is welcome to contact me if you have any questions or concerns, and my door will always be open to you. I am excited to serve you and your students during the 2021-22 school year.

Whitney Mitchell Krusniak, Supervisor Of Special Education and Early Childhood Programming

My name is Whitney Mitchell Krusniak and I am thrilled to be joining the Caledonia Community Schools team as the Supervisor for Special Education and Early Childhood Programming. To join such an esteemed organization is truly a gift. I look forward to walking alongside students, families and staff to ensure the continued success of our area's littlest learners.



I was born and raised on the east side of Michigan and began my career as a teacher of students with autism spectrum disorders for Oakland Schools ISD. After moving to the west side, I was privileged to be employed by the Ottawa Area ISD as an autism and behavior specialist. For 16 years I had the pleasure of serving nearly every district in Ottawa County as their communities strove to support their most challenged learners and eventually landed in Spring Lake.

Concurrently, I had the opportunity to work for the Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding and enjoyed traveling both stateside and abroad to train educators and families in the practice of writing Social Stories. My experiences have shown me time and again that working with students, their families and the educators who are tasked with improving their outcomes is simply the best job on earth.

Personally, I am the mother of two amazing, smart, funny and talented children. My son and daughter will be entering 7th and 6th grade, respectively, at Baldwin Street Middle School in Hudsonville this fall. My husband of 16 years, Eric, is a 6th grade science teacher at Nickles Intermediate in Byron Center. Together we love to travel, collect beach glass and cheer on the University of Michigan football team. We spend summers hopping between family homes in both Pentwater and Empire, and fall and winter on either the soccer field or basketball court. Additionally, I volunteer as a program coordinator for a nonprofit that supports at-risk youth and am lucky to journey alongside a group of girls ages 11-14 in a yearlong program focused on building strength, confidence and resilience. Otherwise, I may be found in my kitchen baking or hunkered down somewhere quiet with a good book.

Bond And School Improvements Update

Matthew Hess, Executive Director of Operations and Transportation

In May 2020, the community passed the \$88 million bond for infrastructure and other improvements within the school district. This summer we have made huge strides in delivering almost \$15 million in improvements across our school district.

The remodeling of Duncan Lake Middle School got a head start with work that began over spring break. Our work will finish in October. The building was safe and ready for students when school began and work continues on the entry, windows and the main office area. Students were greeted with new classrooms, a new science wing, improvements in the gym space and a new media center.

The Kraft Meadows Middle School room additions are also complete and ready for students. The expansion of the cafeteria will be near completion and available for use after the first few weeks of school. The current cafeteria space has undergone significant changes and is ready for students to use.

The administration building at 8948 Kraft Ave. will be ready for staff use early this fall. This summer we were also able to replace substantial sections of parking lots at several locations.

Kettle Lake and Caledonia elementary schools now have working air conditioning in classrooms! We look forward to continuing classroom and building work at these buildings next summer.

What's coming next?

The community center has been fully designed and is almost ready for earthwork and concrete foundations.

The replacement for Dutton Elementary School is well underway at 76th Street and Patterson Avenue with design and we are looking forward to kicking off the project this spring.



Duncan Lake Middle School's new media center



Kraft Meadows Intermediate School's new lockers

This has been a big summer of work and we are looking forward to the next three years of district wide improvements.

Scotland Yard renovations

The Caledonia Athletic Department is in the process of upgrading Scotland Yard. In July, a new widescreen digital scoreboard, windscreens and additional seating were added to the complex. Check out how great it looks! Go Scots!



New LINKS program offered at Duncan Lake Middle School

Students at Duncan Lake Middle School can participate in a new elective this year! LINKS is a Peer to Peer course designed to promote independence and socialization for students with disabilities by providing peers who model typical academic and social behavior across school environments. The purpose of Peer to Peer is to provide opportunities for students with autism access to general education curriculum and peers.

The LINKS program has been a popular elective and an aspect of Caledonia High School culture for eight years. It was also offered as an 8th grade elective course at Kraft Meadows, then a middle school, for seven years. The LINKS, or peers, also benefit from



the course as they learn about students with disabilities and have real-life opportunities to practice skills in organization, responsibility, problem solving, decision making and leadership. We are excited to expand this program and offer this experience to all our middle school students.



Help Name Our New Community Center!

A new facility is coming to Caledonia Community Schools, and it needs a name. We've been calling it the "community center," but we know the community can help us think of something better. This facility will have a pool, running track and provide recreation and education

programs for the whole community. Visit calschools.org to vote for your favorite name!

The community will be invited to the groundbreaking for our new community center at 9733 Kraft Ave. SE in Caledonia. More information about this event will be coming soon.



New Honors Structure at CHS

Beginning with the graduating class of 2022, Caledonia High School will adjust the way we celebrate academic success. CHS will no longer limit itself to celebrating the top 10 seniors, electing instead to expand the recognition of academic excellence. This change in practice is in alignment with what many other high schools are doing to recognize the academic achievements of students.

Rather than a numerical rank of students (Top 10, Valedictorian and Salutatorian), CHS will recognize academic success for the class of 2022 and beyond with the achievement categories listed below.

New CHS Honors Distinctions

- Cum Laude (meaning "with honor") will be awarded to candidates whose grade point average is 3.300-3.499.
- Magna Cum Laude (meaning "with great honor") will be awarded to candidates whose grade point average is 3.500-3.999.
- Summa Cum Laude (meaning "with highest honor") will be awarded to candidates whose grade point average is 4.000 or higher.

Over the past several years, colleges have minimized the value of class rank as a factor in determining college admission. Course selection, an upward trend in GPA, passionate engagement in school and community activities, and demonstrating leadership and initiative are the essential factors leading to admission.

The overall importance of test scores in student college acceptance rates has also decreased as

a result of many colleges moving toward a "test-optional" application process. However, CHS will still report a student's class rank if a college or university makes this request, and a student's class ranking can also be obtained for scholarship purposes.

This change is important for encouraging our students to make targeted choices in their educational planning, explore and develop new course pathways throughout middle and high school, and honor the academic achievements of as many graduating Fighting Scots as possible. In addition, given the wide variety of post-secondary pathways available to students, it is important to show the value and celebrate high levels of academic achievement in other areas beyond the traditional means of accelerating GPA elevation and attainment.

CHS is also creating a new process for selecting the student who will be awarded the distinguished opportunity to speak at the commencement ceremony. Seniors falling in the Magna Cum Laude and Summa Cum Laude designations following Spring Break will have the opportunity to apply for this honor. Each candidate will be provided with the opportunity to prepare a speech (based on the qualities listed above) and present their speech to a panel of faculty, administration and senior class officers (students).

CHS is excited about this new opportunity to celebrate all our students with high honors, redefine what honorable academic success looks like for our students, and celebrate as many Fighting Scots as possible.



Discover New Ways to Connect With CCS

Our website has a new look! This is an effort to better align with the organizational coherence goals set forth in our district strategic plan. We hope you not only love the look of the website but find it easy to navigate and stay connected with everything going on at Caledonia Community Schools. Soon we will be adding a new “Stories” section to our website to help share inspirational, impactful, exciting, entertaining or encouraging stories with our school community.

We’ve also launched a new app!

Caledonia Community Schools now has an app designed to streamline communication between the district and the community. Many of the parents in our community regularly use mobile technology to seek out the information they need. With this app, we are putting important information directly in the hands of parents and students. The app is designed to provide answers to almost any question a parent has about our school system. It also has the potential to be a lifeline in the event of severe weather



or crisis during which traditional phone lines are not working.

Getting started with the new FREE app is easy. To begin, search in your phone’s app store for “Caledonia Community Schools” and look for our logo. After downloading the app, users will have the option to choose the schools, information and alerts they would like to receive.

The new app will be available starting Sept. 10 for both Apple and Android users and works on any tablet or device with a web browser.

App instructions

1. Tap the menu button and sign in using your school account if you have one. If not, click “sign up” to start a new account.
2. Tap “schools” on the menu, then tap the gear icon to select your school.
3. Tap the menu choice with the gear icon and your name and choose how you’d like to receive notifications.



Apply for Free and Reduced Lunch Programs

Your child can receive a free breakfast and a free lunch at school.

We have exciting news: The USDA has announced it is extending the waiver for free meals to all students 18 years old and younger, and 26 years old and under if a student has special needs. This applies to all school meal programs and childcare institutions across the country, allowing us to continue serving healthy meals to all for the 2021-22 school year.

Please note: While the waiver has been extended, it is still important to apply for free/reduced lunch because those numbers are used to fund programs that help students.

Starting August 30, five (5) free breakfasts and five (5) free lunches will be available for pick up at Duncan Lake Middle School every Monday from 9 a.m. – 10 a.m. near the tennis courts. Look for the white tent!

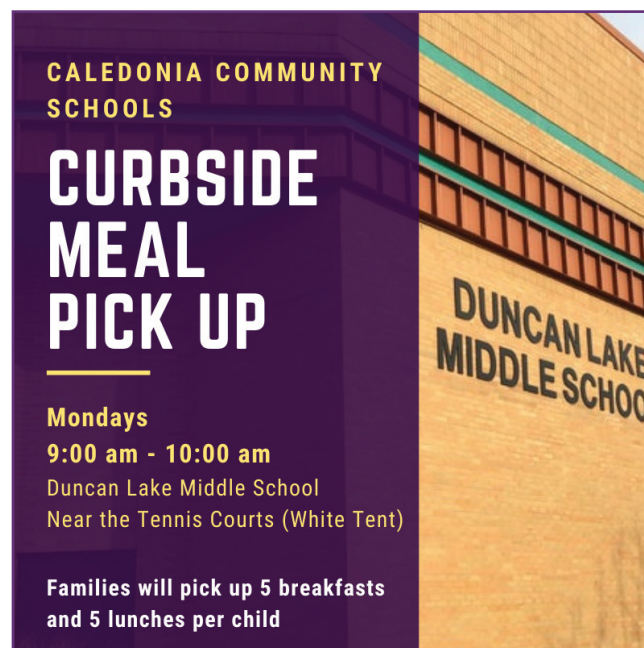
Holidays/Exceptions:

Due to Labor Day, curbside will be available on Tuesday, Sept. 7.

Free & Reduced

This year breakfast and lunch have been free for ALL students because of the USDA grant! While this is a great opportunity for our families, we know this will not always be the case. It is important that our district be able to accurately report which families qualify for free/reduced lunch. Not only can it help families ease the burden of paying for school meals, but this data is also used in the following programs that help fund our schools.

- If the USDA grant runs out, filling out the application will ensure qualified children continue to receive breakfast and lunch for free.
- Building and district-level free and reduced lunch numbers are used by the federal government to



CALEDONIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

CURBSIDE MEAL PICK UP

Mondays
9:00 am - 10:00 am
Duncan Lake Middle School
Near the Tennis Courts (White Tent)

Families will pick up 5 breakfasts and 5 lunches per child

determine "at-risk" funding which ultimately impacts staffing at Caledonia Community Schools. Positions such as our counselors, reading interventionists, Title I paraprofessionals, family engagement coordinator and more are often completely or at least partially funded with these dollars.

- We submit our free and reduced lunch numbers to the federal government in June and this information is used to determine our federal funding for the next school year. Therefore, we still need families to fill out the application if they qualify, even though there has been free lunch all year.

If your family has already filled out an application and been approved this school year, you don't need to apply again. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this application.

Go to lunchapp.com to complete the free and reduced lunch application or fill it out on paper.



School Bus Safety

What do bus lights actually mean?

We are pleased to announce that you will continue to see hazard light stops in addition to the traditional red light stops in our Caledonia community. Michigan law permits school bus stops to be made under certain prescribed conditions, which allow for either red light or hazard light stops as provided in MCL257.1855. There are many instances where a school bus can safely perform a hazard light stop and allow traffic to flow when students do not have to cross the roadway and all criteria are met according to Michigan law.

The Transportation Department is working together to provide the safest and most efficient transportation for

our students, with safety being our number one concern. **Please keep our kids safe by approaching school buses with caution and observing the light systems.**

In the event that you observe a reckless driver ignoring the flashing red lights, please assist our transportation department by contacting the Kent County Sheriff Department at (616) 632-6100, to report the location, approximate time, make, color or model of the vehicle. While our drivers are trained to report these violations, we encourage everyone to be vigilant regarding bus traffic safety and our students.

School Buses With Overhead Red and Yellow Lights

(With or Without Bus Stop Signs)

Yellow lights are flashing:

Prepare to stop



Red lights are flashing:

Stop no closer than 20 feet from the bus

Red lights turned off:

Proceed

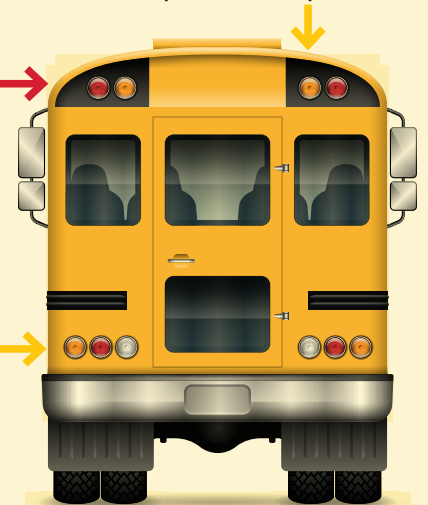
**All School Buses
Yellow Hazard Warning**

lights are flashing:

Proceed with caution

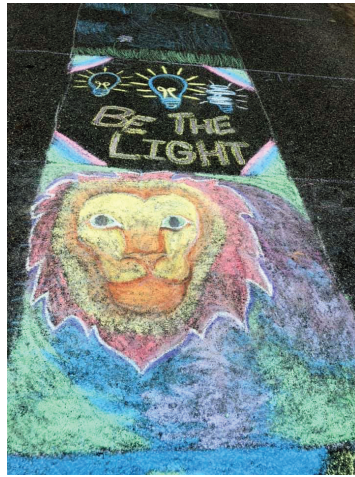
Yellow lights are flashing:

Prepare to stop



CHS Students Attempt World Record

This summer, three Caledonia High School students worked for months to plan an effort to break the Guinness World Record for the largest chalk pavement art display. The event was held on Aug. 6, in conjunction with the Kiwanis Club Kids Art Day event. Holly Barker, Kloey Brown and Kiana Haywood wanted to do something to bring our community together and provide a reason to celebrate! Groups or individuals were given



5-by-5-foot squares to create artwork. While the rain washed away the chalk before the students could qualify for the world record, the event was still a success. It was great to have so many members of our community, including Dr. Martin, out celebrating together! We are proud of our high schoolers for the hard work and planning that went into this event. Way to go!

2021/22 School Calendar



August 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
						6

September 2021						
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						19

October 2021						
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31						20

November 2021						
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28	29	30				
						18

December 2021						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	
						13

January 2022						
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30	31					20

February 2022						
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27	28					
						17

March 2022						
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27	28	29	30	31		
						22

April 2022						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
						14

May 2022						
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
						21

June 2022						
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
						3

Legend Key	
	Full Days
	Half Days
	No School
Snow Day Make up dates: February 24 & 25	

Federal holidays 2021/22

Sep 6, 2021	Labor Day	Nov 25, 2021	Thanksgiving Day	Dec 31, 2021	New Year's Day (obs.)	Feb 21, 2022	Presidents' Day
Oct 11, 2021	Columbus Day	Dec 24, 2021	Christmas Day (obs.)	Jan 1, 2022	New Year's Day	May 30, 2022	Memorial Day
Nov 11, 2021	Veterans Day	Dec 25, 2021	Christmas Day	Jan 17, 2022	Martin Luther King Day	Jul 4, 2022	Independence Day

Data provided 'as is' without warranty

Upcoming School Board Meetings

Sept. 20
Oct. 18
Nov. 15
Dec. 13

The Caledonia Community Schools Board of Education meets monthly at 6 p.m. on the third Monday. Visit calschools.org for more information.



CALAPALOOZA

EVENT SPONSOR:



SEPTEMBER 24, 2021
CAL FOOTBALL STADIUM SOUTH LOT
free admission

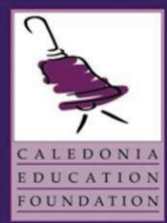
www.caledoniacef.org

SCHEDULE

- 3:00 - 8:00 P.M. - FOOD TRUCKS OPEN
- 3:00 P.M. - KID'S DANCE PARTY & CONTESTS
- 4:00 P.M. - PEP RALLY WITH PEP BAND, CHEERLEADERS, & PLAYERS
- 4:30 P.M. - LIVE MUSIC BY BARENAKED 90'S
- 5:00 P.M. - HOMECOMING PARADE
- 6:30 P.M. - HONORED ALUMNA, SANDRA WANZER, CLASS OF 1982
- 7:00 P.M. - HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME VS. GRAND HAVEN

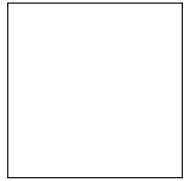


Funds raised will support Caledonia Education Foundation grants benefitting Caledonia Community Schools staff and students





Paid for by Caledonia Community Schools
9753 Duncan Lake Ave. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316



We're Happy to Have You Back!



We're excited to welcome our students back to school! Keep up with us at www.calschools.org and facebook.com/CALSCHOOLS.