



**WELCOME TO CONCORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**A message from your principal,**  
**Laura Anderson, Ed.D.**

August 21, 2018

Dear Concord Families,

Welcome to the 2018/19 school year at Concord. I sincerely hope that your summer was filled with special memories involving friends and families. The Concord staff has been working this summer to prepare for an exciting school year. We are excited to continue our 1:1 technology implementation this year and will be sharing more information with you as the year progresses. Please help us take care of all student devices by keeping lunches and water bottles separate from the bag in which the device is transported and/or stored. Thank you.

We are delighted to start the school year and have you join our learning community, where the focus is always on the child and valued parental partnerships. If, for any reason, we fall short in delivering this focus, we want to know. Simply contact Dr. Laura Anderson at 331/481-4010 or **LAnderson@CassD63.org**. Better yet, drop by and visit.

It is my pleasure to share with you the new additions/changes to Concord's team!

- Mr. Kevin Carver will serve as the Director of Buildings & Grounds and Director of Transportation
- Mr. Rick Ernst will serve as the Custodian
- Ms. Sarah Gray will serve as a Teaching Assistant
- Mrs. Lauren Hodge will serve as a Special Education Teacher
- Mr. Myles Moroney will serve as the Art Teacher
- Mrs. Cinda Rokicki will serve as the Permanent Substitute Teacher
- Mrs. Blair Thompson will serve as the District Social Worker
- Ms. Emiley Wimmer will serve as a Teaching Assistant

On behalf of our Superintendent, Dr. Kerry Foderaro, Mrs. Christine Marcinkewicz, our Cass Junior High School Principal, and Mr. Leland Wagner, our Assistant Principal, we thank you for your continued support of our school district.

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## **SCHOOL HOURS**

Concord Elementary School hours are 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Please be sure that students arrive between 7:45 a.m. – 7:55 a.m. so that they can be in their classrooms ready to begin the school day at 8:00 a.m.

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL REMINDERS....**

We would like to remind you of important procedures that we have in place to help us provide for the safety of students.

- ✓ All students must arrive at school between 7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. and enter through the front or the gym doors. Any student arriving at or after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy.
- ✓ When picking up your children in the car rider line after school you need to have the “Concord” sign displayed in your car with the students names written on it. Please leave the sign displayed in your window until your child is in the car safely. Extra signs are available in the office.
- ✓ Prekindergarten students will be picked up by the gym doors. Please go through the normal car rider line and make a right hand turn to go to the back parking lot.
- ✓ If you need to change how your student is to go home please send a note or call the office prior to 2:00 p.m. each day. Please do not email the teacher without also calling the office as teachers do not always have planning time to check email throughout the day.
- ✓ If your child attends B.A.S.E. after school you will need to wait until dismissal procedures are completed at 2:50 p.m. and then please sign your child out on the provided sheet from B.A.S.E.

Thank you for following these important safety procedures.

## **PARENT CURRICULUM NIGHTS**

You are cordially invited to a PARENT Curriculum Night. This is probably one of the few times that your children are asked to stay at home for a school function. In addition, the Physical Education, Art, Music, Library, Reading and Special Education teachers will be available in the gym or respective classrooms. Mark your calendars for an adult night out.

We have adjusted the grade level presentation times to account for families with students in multiple grades. Please see below for the presentation schedule. All presentations will take place in the gym.

### **Prekindergarten, Third & Fourth Grade Curriculum Night Thursday, August 30**

#### **Presentation Times:**

Prekindergarten 6:30 p.m.  
Third Grade 7:00 p.m.  
Fourth Grade 7:30 p.m.

### **Kindergarten, First & Second Grade Curriculum Night Thursday, September 6**

#### **Presentation Times:**

Kindergarten 6:30 p.m.  
First Grade 7:00 p.m.  
Second Grade 7:30 p.m.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS**

ALL Early Dismissal days this year will be at 11:15 a.m. No lunches will be served on those days.

Our first Early Dismissal Day is Friday, September 14. Please review the following procedures:

- ALL Students in Kindergarten-Fourth Grade will be dismissed at 11:15 a.m.
- B.A.S.E. (Before & After School Experiences) is available from 11:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. as well as the before school times 6:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
- Early Dismissal days are:
  - Friday, September 14 at 11:15 a.m.
  - Friday, October 5 at 11:15 a.m.
  - Friday, February 15 at 11:15 a.m.
  - Friday, March 22 at 11:15 a.m.
  - Thursday, April 18 at 11:15 a.m.
  - Friday, May 10 at 11:15 a.m.

## **DAILY PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND FITNESS AT RECESS (F.A.R.)**

- All students in Grades Kindergarten-Four will have physical education every day. In addition, as part of our physical education program, all students participate in Fitness at Recess (FAR) once a day. Prekindergarten students have outdoor physical activity every day (weather permitting) or use the multipurpose room on poor weather days.
- All children need to have closed-toe gym shoes without black soles for both PE and recess. Heels and sandals are not acceptable and compromise student safety while involved in PE and Fitness at Recess. In addition, black soled shoes leave black marks and can damage the new gym floor.
- No “wheelie” shoes are allowed to be worn by students in Cass School District 63. For the elementary-aged child, these shoes become a temptation to use and often become a distraction in the classroom as children play with the plug or wheels. They are also a potential safety hazard. Your partnership as it relates to collective child safety is greatly appreciated.

As part of our Fitness At Recess program, we have plenty of equipment for children to use. Kindly have your child keep all balls, toys, electronic games, etc. at home. These items can be damaged or lost as well as cause distractions from the established routine. The only exception to this is if an item is part of a teacher-requested class activity. Thank you for your cooperation with this request.

### **OUTDOOR RECESS**

Please send students dressed appropriately for the weather. Children participate in our outdoor Fitness at Recess program daily.

We consult the weather station to determine the temperature and wind-chill factor. If the wind-chill factor is below zero and/or the temperature is below 15 degrees, the children do not go outside. If it is sleeting, extremely windy, snowing excessively, or simply too wet or messy, indoor recess is determined.

While children are outside we monitor changes to the weather conditions and if we need to bring the children back into the building we will communicate with the supervisors using the two-way radios.

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

In a continuing effort to maintain your child’s well-being as our highest priority, it is essential that the office have current and complete emergency information. Should any information change during the year, please contact the office immediately. ALL emergency information needs to be complete and up-to-date. If there are custodial or legal issues, please contact the building principal directly. This information is regarded as confidential but shared with appropriate personnel in order to address the protection of the child.

## **STUDENT MEDICATION PROCEDURES/HEALTH ISSUES**

Every effort is made to ensure the well-being of your child should one become ill or incur an injury. Please take the time to review the District policy relative to the administration of medicine during school hours and/or if your child is enrolled in B.A.S.E. (Before and After School Program). If your child requires the use of an inhaler, please carefully review the permission form for asthma inhalers. Any student requiring administration of medicine needs to have a completed form by a physician on file. If you had a form on file last year, you will need to complete a form for this academic year. Please do so as soon as possible, especially if your child requires the use of an inhaler or epinephrine pen. Should you have any questions, please contact Debbie Vacco, 331/481-4013. For your convenience, your physician can fax the form directly to Concord Elementary School at 331/481-4011.

While we do everything possible to ensure the safety of your child, accidents do happen. In the event of a serious injury, you will be contacted. For minor types of scrapes, a band aid and TLC will be provided but you will not receive a call. For the health and safety of all students and staff, sick children must be picked up from school within an hour of parent contact. A log of all serious injuries is maintained in the office. If you have any special medical requests regarding your child, please contact the office.

## **HEALTHY SNACKS**

It is your option to provide your child with a nutritious snack to curb hunger and assist in concentration. We ask that these snacks be pre-cut and not require the use of utensils or preparation. In this way, we can provide your child with time to refresh those brain cells and continue with the learning process. Recent legislation and initiatives support the role of the school as being the agent for endorsing nutritious snacks. In addition, we do have several children that have severe allergies to certain foods. These allergies extend beyond the intake of certain foods to touching an object or surface in which foods such as peanuts or milk have left residue. While it is your parental discretion to determine what type of healthy snack is appropriate for your child, it becomes our responsibility as a school to facilitate medical/health plans. For this reason, you may receive periodic notes from classroom teachers relative to snacks as well as classroom procedures. We thank you, in advance, for your cooperation with such requests. More specific information may be provided throughout the school year.

### **Food Allergy Management Program**

School attendance may increase a student's risk of exposure to allergens that could trigger a food-allergic reaction. A food allergy is an adverse reaction to a food protein mediated by the immune system which immediately reacts causing the release of histamine and other inflammatory chemicals and mediators. While it is not possible for the District to completely eliminate the risks of exposure to allergens when a student is at school, a Food Allergy Management Program using a cooperative effort among students' families, staff members, and students helps the District reduce these risks and provide accommodations and proper treatment for allergic reactions.

Each year, the staff in Cass School District 63 develops and implements a Food Allergy Management Program that:

1. Fully implements the following goals established in The School Code: (a) identifying students with food allergies, (b) preventing exposure to known allergens, (c) responding to allergic reactions with prompt recognition of symptoms and treatment, and (d) educating and training all staff about management of students with food allergies, including administration of medication with an auto-injector, and providing an in-service training program for staff who work with students that is conducted by a person with expertise in anaphylactic reactions and management.
2. Follows and references the applicable best practices specific to the District's needs in the joint State Board of Education and Illinois Department of Public Health publication *Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools*, available at: [www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/food\\_allergy\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/food_allergy_guidelines.pdf).

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We all know birthdays are important to every child and that students like to celebrate with their classmates. Your child will be celebrated by the classroom teacher with special activities throughout the day. Sometimes parents wish to send in small tokens or treats to help celebrate. This is completely optional and not required. However if you choose to send a birthday token to school, to support student safety and welfare, we ask that you send in non-food items. This follows the Concord Elementary School's healthy snack and food allergy management program. Please work directly with your child's teacher if you have questions or need suggestions.

Non-Food item suggestions may include:

- Stickers
- Pencils
- Bouncy balls
- Matchbox cars
- Tops
- Erasers
- Bookmarks
- Puzzles
- Cards
- Crafts
- Donate a book to the classroom/school library to be read and enjoyed by others
- Donate a board game to the classroom to be used for indoor recess

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Another way that we are encouraging and endorsing healthy eating is through our school lunch program. School lunches, should you choose to participate, are provided by ARAMARK, a nationally approved company, and offer many healthy food options for students each day.

As you know, it is very important for students to have lunch each day. The nutritional value and consumption of food helps students to concentrate better in the afternoon. It is important for parents to maintain their child(ren)'s lunch accounts. The school does not have lunch to give to students who do not bring a lunch and/or have no money in their lunch accounts.

In order to help assist in reminding you about lunch for your child(ren), I would like to respectfully request that you develop a routine for your family to make sure your child(ren) either bring a lunch to school and/or have money in the lunch account each day.

- You can send cash or a check in an envelope clearly labeled with your child's name and lunch on the outside of the envelope. Payments sent this way are added to accounts each morning.
- If you would like to pay by credit card, please go into the [Lunch Payment Portal](#) and put money into each of your child's accounts. Money is subtracted from each individual child, not by family. Due to the nature of system, it may take two to three days from the time you pay with a credit card to the time the payment actually hits the lunch account. Please plan accordingly.
- Lunch menus are sent monthly via NoteTotes and are also available on the District website. Please see the lunch menu for the cost of the lunch and milk.
- Within the Lunch Payment Portal, there is an area where you can put in your email address. PLEASE ENTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS into this section. You will receive email notifications once your child(ren)'s account drops below the amount you set. You are able to customize this feature based on your preferences.

If you have any questions about the lunch program, please call 331/481-4019 and the lunch staff will assist you.

If you would like to have lunch with your child(ren), we kindly ask that you sign him/her out for the lunch period and have lunch off of the school campus, then sign him/her back in at the end of lunch. In keeping with the regulations of the national school lunch program, we do not permit families to have lunch with their child(ren) or enter the lunchroom at Concord Elementary School.

### **BUILDING SECURITY**

Because the safety of all students is our top priority, building security is emphasized. All staff members wear a lanyard and photo identification. Every room is equipped with a telephone. In addition, our Emergency Preparedness Team has compiled an emergency management plan to address varied types of emergencies, natural or man-made. This is a critical area of concern as well as priority. Every room and staff member has a copy of the plan. As the principal, my whereabouts are always known and a phone is readily accessible. This is true of the entire administrative staff, our office staff, and custodial staff.

We also have a visitor check-in system. This system requires all visitors to submit a state driver's license or photo identification card. The license or card will be scanned to run a sex-offender background check. Once the check is successfully completed, a photo visitor pass will be printed for the visitor to wear to gain access to the school.

In addition to the emergency management plan, and visitor check-in system, we have a drop-off table located in our foyer between two locked doors. When parents drop-off items (lunch, homework, band instrument, etc.) they will be placed on the table and labeled using a Post-It Note to identify student name and classroom.

## **STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

Our team eagerly awaits the challenges of a new school year! We are excited at the prospect of identifying specific curricular goals to enhance your child's learning experiences. Beyond the academics, we value a holistic approach to fostering positive social interaction, appropriate choices, and social-emotional development. Please take the time to review the district calendar and Concord Elementary School Parent/Student Handbook which highlights policies, procedures, and general information. Our staff will review the discipline policy with your children. Following is a highlight of some of the initiatives that will be facilitated this year. A more comprehensive description of each initiative will be shared with you in upcoming newsletters, team websites and during Curriculum Nights.

- ❖ **DAILY PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND F.A.R. (Fitness At Recess)** – As part of our physical education program, one of our priority goals has focused upon character development, playground safety, development of cooperative social skills, and promoting the physical and emotional well-being of our students. Students will participate in daily PE and a formal walking program and will have different choices of activities each week during FAR. Please refer to the website for more information.
- ❖ **ERIN'S LAW** - Concord Elementary School's Social-Emotional Learning curriculum will include Erin's Law. This is a state mandated, age-appropriate child sexual abuse awareness and prevention education program for our students. It is estimated that one in ten children will be sexually abused by the time they turn eighteen years old. It is also estimated that around 90% of the abusers are people the child knows. This could be relatives, babysitters, neighbors, or other family acquaintances. Out of those sexually abused children, it is estimated that 60% will never tell someone. In response to these startling statistics, and the hard work of Erin Merryn, who took a personal tragedy and created a positive change across America, Erin's Law is now implemented or pending in over half the states. In February 2011, Governor Pat Quinn was the first to sign Erin's Law for Illinois. Erin's Law will be taught during Skills for Learning lessons in the last week of February and the first week of March. For more information, here are some links to resources regarding Erin's Law and sexual abuse:

- Erin's Law - <http://erinslaw.org> – This website details what Erin's Law is, who Erin Merryn is, and provides many more resources, programs, and information on the subject of child sexual abuse.
- Darkness to Light - [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org) – This nonprofit is dedicated to educating adults about how to identify and respond to child sexual abuse.
- Stop It Now! - [www.stopitnow.com](http://www.stopitnow.com) – This nonprofit is dedicated to preventing sexual abuse of children by helping adults, families, and communities take actions that keep kids safe.

If you have questions about this program, or your child's participation in the program, please contact Helen Park, school counselor, [HPark@CassD63.org](mailto:HPark@CassD63.org).

- ❖ **ASSESSMENT PROGRAM** – Students in Grades Two-Eight will be participating in the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing in the Fall, Winter and Spring this year. First Grade students participate in NWEA testing in Winter and Spring. This is a nationally-normed test that adapts to the students' needs and gives teachers specific information about students' current levels of performance in the areas of reading and math. Students will take the tests on the computer under the supervision of their teachers. This data will be used to plan instruction based on the specific needs of students and will be shared with you at Parent/Teacher conferences. In addition, all students in Grades Kindergarten-One will be taking the Directed Reading Assessment (DRA2). This assessment helps determine strengths and weaknesses in a student's overall reading ability. The DRA2 will only be administered to students in Grades Two-Eight if a teacher deems it necessary to gather additional information about a student's reading abilities. Kindergarten teachers use the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS). The Kindergarten team will share more information about this assessment during Curriculum Night and during Parent/Teacher Conferences. Lastly, the state is in the process of redeveloping the state standardized test. More information regarding that test will be communicated when it becomes available.
- ❖ **ONLINE TEXTBOOKS** – Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies books are available online. You will be receiving information about online access from teachers during curriculum nights. Online textbooks have extra examples and even provide step by step instructions about how to complete homework tasks. Please take advantage of these wonderful technology tools.
- ❖ **MATH PLACEMENT** – Student math placement is determined at the end of each school year (with the exception of first grade, which will be determined at the beginning of the first grade school year) and will be based on the use of a comprehensive evaluation process. The components of this process include the use of a standardized test which is the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) Measures of Academic Progress, beginning of the year diagnostic assessments correlated with the math curriculum, the previous year's math achievement, and mastery of the basic skills. Your child's performance and skill level from these multiple measures will determine his/her math level placement for the year. Previous placement in an advanced class or an on-level class does not mean they will continue in that class every year. We realize that children develop their math skills at different paces. Our comprehensive evaluation system

allows your child to be monitored and placed in a class that is appropriate for his/her level of development on a yearly basis. If you have questions or additional information to share about your child's math performance, please discuss the topics with your child's teacher and/or the advanced math teacher at that grade level.

❖ **CHARACTER EDUCATION** – Due to our strong belief that student learning involves a balance between academics and social–emotional development at Concord Elementary School, we will continue to implement our strong character education program including but not limited to “Manners Matter”, Skills for Learning program, and our consistent anti-bullying messages. In addition, we will focus on RESPECT.

- Respect for self
  - ✓ Trying your best in all aspects of school and life
  - ✓ Completing classwork
  - ✓ Completing homework
- Respect for others
  - ✓ Classmates
  - ✓ Family
  - ✓ Teachers/staff
- Respect for property
  - ✓ School building, supplies
  - ✓ Home/bedrooms
  - ✓ Belongings

We will also be participating in a service-learning project that incorporates an awareness about others around the globe. Look for more information about our service-learning project in newsletters and at Curriculum Nights.

❖ **STANDARDS BASED REPORTING** – During the 2017/18 School Year, Cass School District 63 adopted Standards Based Reporting (SBR) or evidence based grading. SBR has been around for a long time and many high-achieving districts have successfully implemented this type of reporting method for some time. Our teachers have spent several years researching, gathering data and creating assessments, which tie directly to the standards students are expected to master. Your student will receive a quarterly “Student Growth Report” that will show your child's progress, detailed by a specific standard.

This type of report better serves your child educationally and we are here to walk you through how to best use this information. We are confident and feel strongly that by focusing on the standards and skills, rather than just the grading system, we can provide a more focused and detailed look at your child's academic strengths and weaknesses. We are continuously making revisions to better communicate student progress to parents.

This year all Student Growth Reports (K-8) will be electronic. We will not be mailing report cards. You will be receiving an email when each quarter's report is completed and ready for you to view. Although growth reports are issued four times a year, we recommend parents monitor student progress continuously throughout the year via the Parent Portal and by carefully looking over all

returned assignments your child(ren) bring home. If you have questions about your child(ren)'s progress, the best person to contact is your child(ren)'s teacher.

- ❖ **TITLE I LITERACY SUPPORT** – Cass School District 63 receives some federal funding through the Title 1 grant. The school district uses this funding to help support early literacy skills at the Kindergarten – Second Grade levels. The Concord Elementary School Parent Compact outlines school, parent and student responsibilities to support home-school partnerships to ensure continuous student growth.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

We value and expect parents to volunteer and be involved in their child(ren)'s education. All volunteers must adhere to all Cass School District 63 Volunteer Expectations. We promote and post volunteer opportunities on our district website. In addition, teachers will provide opportunities for parents to sign up to volunteer during Curriculum Nights. Please work directly with teachers to learn more about specific volunteer opportunities. Parents are also encouraged to become involved with our parent organization, CARE (Cass Resources for Enrichment). Please consider helping out this important organization as we work together to continue the excellent programs in Cass School District 63.

Safety is always our district's number one priority. While there are no immediate concerns, times have significantly changed and we must continually evolve in how we conduct school in order to continue to provide a safe learning environment. Most school safety experts conclusively agree that the more times school doors are open and the more visitors during school hours, progressively the less secure and safe schools are overall.

Trying to strike a balance, we moved to have student drop off items tagged and place on a drop off table in our secure school foyers last year. This year, in working together with our parent group, CARE, we determined we can no longer allow an open-door policy for the room parties at Concord Elementary School. We will reduce and limit the number of volunteers who organize and run classroom parties and these parties will not be open for visitors. If you are interested in being one of these volunteers, please look for more details in a future CARE communication.

On behalf of our team, welcome to the 2018/19 school year. Should you have any questions, concerns, comments, or simply want to introduce yourself, please drop by my office.

Happy Learning!

**Laura Anderson**

Laura Anderson, Ed.D.  
Concord Elementary School Principal  
District Director of Teaching and Learning