August 5, 2020

Dear Concord Elementary School Families,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year at Concord. I sincerely hope that your summer was filled with special memories involving friends and family. The Concord staff has been working this summer to prepare for an exciting school year. I apologize for the long communication, but I am going to try to answer as many questions as I can while explaining how school will look this year.

Thank you for your patience and all of your feedback during this challenging time. Your survey responses over the past few weeks have assisted us with our initial planning, but there is a lot more to do. At this time, unless you have received a personal call from one of the school offices or administrators, we have been able to honor all requests for Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/ Thursday, and Remote Only options. All of the families that noted they are Flexible on the survey have been contacted regarding their placement.

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

Mr. Pete Alt  Day Custodian
Ms. Jessica Cahill  Second Grade Teacher
Ms. Jessica Chapman  Office Assistant and Health Clerk
Mr. Mark R. Cross  Superintendent
Ms. Kelsey Daniluk  Kindergarten Teacher
Ms. Katie Doyle  Assistant Principal
Ms. Rachel Hyder  District Nurse
Ms. Katie Kafer  Permanent Substitute Teacher
Ms. Tina Milutinovic  Evening Custodian
Mrs. Mary Skrzycznski  Teaching Assistant
Mrs. Maggie Skurzewski  Administrative Assistant to the Principal
On behalf of our Superintendent, Mr. Mark R. Cross, Mrs. Christine Marcinkewicz, Cass Junior High School Principal, Ms. Katie Doyle, Concord Assistant Principal and Mrs. Michelle Roberts, Cass Junior High Assistant Principal, we thank you for your continued support of our school district.

**Return to Learn Updates**

In addition to the information provided here, the school district will continue to provide updates regarding our Return to Learn Framework, health and safety protocols and remote learning.

**Orientation Day**

Prekindergarten and Kindergarten students will be invited to school to meet their teachers and staff and will be able to tour their classroom. This will be a tightly scheduled event where one parent will be able to attend with one child at a specific time. All health/safety/cleaning protocols will be followed. Please watch for an email from your child’s teacher on Thursday, August 13.

First, Second, Third and Fourth Grade students will receive an email on the afternoon of Monday, August 17, 2020 from their teacher with videos that show the classroom layout, introduces their teachers (mask off and mask on), and a curriculum presentation. In addition, the teachers will be inviting each student and his/her family to a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, August 18th at a specifically scheduled time. The invite with your specific time from the teachers will go out via email on Thursday, August 13th. This will allow both parties to get to know each other. If parents have questions beyond this scheduled time on orientation day, the teachers will schedule another meeting. The Zoom meeting on Orientation Day, Tuesday, August 18th, is just a quick meet and greet.

**Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade Chromebooks**

Cass School District 63 purchased Chromebooks for all students in grades PreK-8. We want to ensure that all of our students have access to remote instruction. All of the PreK, Kindergarten, and First Grade students (in-session and remote) will get new Chromebooks at the beginning of the school year. The teachers will be teaching the students how to use these devices and will also be sending home detailed instructions to parents.

If your family will be “remote only”, there will be scheduled pick up times for supplies and devices.
School Hours

Concord Elementary School hours are 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Please be sure that students arrive between 7:40 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

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 7:40 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.
- We will stagger students in hallways and at lockers during both arrival and dismissal this year to social distance and to follow health/safety protocols. We will not be holding students in the gym until the bell rings. Students will go directly to classrooms upon arrival. Please note that we will have special procedures with added adult support for all PreK and Kindergarten students the first few weeks of school until routines are learned.
- 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 at the end of the school day. Please go through the normal car rider line and make a right hand turn to go to the parking lot in back.
- 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. that 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.

Thank you for following these important safety procedures.

Daily Physical Education and Fitness at Recess (F.A.R.)

- All students in Grades Kindergarten-Four will have physical education every 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 Physical Education and recess. Heels and sandals are not acceptable and compromise student safety while involved in Physical Education.
- 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.

- During the hybrid/remote models of schooling, students will not participate in recess in large groups as was done in the past. Teachers will schedule and facilitate fresh air/stretching/walking breaks for their individual classes throughout the day.
- Students will not be using or sharing equipment. Physical Education and fresh air breaks will be redesigned to follow health/safety protocols.

**Outdoor Fresh Air Breaks**

Please send students dressed appropriately for the weather. Children will go outside each day.

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 sleet, extremely windy, snowing excessively, or simply too wet or messy, students will stay indoors.

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 and Health Issues**

Every effort is made to ensure the well-being of your child if your child becomes ill or incurs an injury. Please take the time to review the District policy relative to the administration of medicine during school hours. 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. New, updated forms need to be completed each 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 the school office, 331-481-4010.
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. If you are unavailable to pick up your sick child, we ask you to please make alternative arrangements. 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.

All health/safety protocols will be followed as outlined by the CDC and IL/DuPage County Departments of Health. Those guidelines will be shared in a separate document.

**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 precut and that they do 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 lunch or snack is appropriate for your child, it becomes our responsibility as a school to facilitate a healthy environment for all of our students, including those with severe food allergies. For this reason and as described below, we are asking all parents who provide their children with lunch at school to not include any products or ingredients that contain tree nuts, peanuts or peanut derivatives.

**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.
To reduce the risk of issues with severe food allergies, Cass School District 63 is asking all parents who provide their children with lunch at school to not include any products or ingredients that contain tree nuts, peanuts or peanut derivatives. We thank you in advance for your cooperation on this matter.

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.


### School Lunch Program

Students will be eating in their classrooms with adult supervision each day. There may be days when teachers take their classes outside for lunch when it can be done so safely and comfortably.

While it is your parental discretion to determine what type of healthy lunch or snack is appropriate for your child, it becomes our responsibility as a school to facilitate a healthy environment for all of our students, including those with severe food allergies. For this reason and as described above, we are asking all parents who provide their children with lunch at school to not include any products or ingredients that contain tree nuts, peanuts or peanut derivatives.

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 they 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.

- Although we will accept cash or a check in an envelope clearly labeled with your child’s name and lunch on the outside of the envelope, for health and safety reasons we are asking all parents to please pay online.
- 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 the 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.

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**

For health and safety purposes during the 2020-21 school year, visitor access to the school will be limited in both number and location.

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, emails and team websites.

- **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](#) – 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](#) – This nonprofit is dedicated to educating adults about how to identify and respond to child sexual abuse.
  - [Stop It Now!](#) – 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.

- **ASSESSMENT PROGRAM** — Students in Grades One-Eight will be participating in the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing in the Fall, Winter and Spring this year. 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-Two will be taking the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA3). This assessment helps determine strengths and weaknesses in a student’s overall reading ability. The DRA3 will only be administered to students in Grades Three-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 communications and during Parent/Teacher Conferences.

- **ONLINE TEXTBOOKS** — Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies books are available online. You will be receiving information about online access from teachers during the beginning of the year curriculum presentations. 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. In addition, all links to specific textbook pages needed for lessons will be embedded in a daily Google Classroom communication.

- **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.
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

**TITLE I LITERACY SUPPORT** – Cass School District 63 receives some federal funding through the Title I 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**

For the 2020-21 school year, due to health and safety guidelines, volunteer opportunities within the school building will be significantly minimized or eliminated.

**Preparing for Student Arrival at School**

To maintain the health and safety of students and staff, we are implementing social distancing protocols throughout the school day. These are some examples of the changes being put into place:

- All people in the school building are required to wear masks.
- Desks will be spread apart in the classrooms and excess furniture is removed.
- Locker visits will be scheduled and staggered.
- Hand washing schedules are developed (e.g. before lunch, and after lunch).
- All classrooms are equipped with hand sanitizer.
- All classrooms are equipped with PPE (e.g. Masks, gloves, face shield, plexiglass partitions, disinfectant).
- All outdoor Physical Education areas, blacktop and the gym floor have been labeled to help students with social distancing.
- Increase all cleaning/disinfec ting protocols.
Here are some ideas and ways to help students prepare for re-entry into school and build more independence.

**Positive Attitude:** As a parent myself, I understand that the decision to send your child(ren) to school and/or keep your child(ren) home during such a challenging time is a big one. As you know, how your family approaches and manages events, obstacles, challenges, and successes is largely determined by you. Your child(ren) will be looking for guidance and you will be their first resource. Please stay positive, and put on a strong, happy smile. This will go a long way in your child(ren)’s success.

If anything comes up during the school year, keep the lines of communication open with the teacher(s) and support staff. If you need further assistance, please reach out to the Concord School Office (331-481-4010) and we will support and assist you in any way we can. For specific social/emotional assistance, please contact Ms. Helen Park, our school counselor, at hpark@cassd63.org.

**School Supplies:** Please label all school supplies with your child(ren)’s name on them. Please use permanent marker and/or stickers/labels. Students will not be able to share supplies as part of our health/safety protocols. If you ordered a school supply kit from CARE, all of the supplies will be labeled for you and delivered directly to the teachers’ classrooms.

If your family will be “remote only”, there will be scheduled pick up times for supplies and devices.

**Shoes:** Please send all students to school in gym shoes each day (Of course, boots are permitted in the winter.). If your child does not know how to tie shoes, please send him/her in gym shoes with Velcro fasteners. This will help teachers maintain social distancing protocols and avoid having to tie students’ shoes. Here are some shoe tying video resources:

Learn to tie your shoes here

**Water Bottles:** All of our drinking fountains will be shut off/covered as part of our health/safety protocols. Students need to bring a water bottle with an attached straw (this will help minimize students having to remove masks) that they can refill at the water bottle refill. You may also send your child(ren) to school with an extra bottle of water they are able to keep sealed in their locker.

**Lunches:** Please send pre-cut, easy-to-open, nut free food for lunch each day. This will help minimize the need for teachers to open packages and help us follow our health/safety protocols. Teachers will help any child that needs assistance, but your cooperation and assistance in working with your child to send lunches where they can be more independent is very helpful and appreciated.
**Masks:** All students and staff will be wearing masks that cover their noses and mouths every day throughout the school day. Mask breaks outside in the fresh air will be scheduled by each teacher. It is our goal with the smaller class sizes and the ability to be outside (weather permitting) and social distance in physical education classes, students will be able to get extended time without a mask during physical education.

To help your child get accustomed to wearing a mask all day, you can practice at home. Start slow with the amount of time your child wears a mask, and then slowly increase the time each day. Another idea is to have your child(ren) try out a few different varieties of masks to see which types are the most comfortable.

When school starts, please send your child to school wearing a clean mask, with 2-3 more clean masks sealed in a plastic ziplock bag. If one mask becomes uncomfortable or dirty, your child will have a spare or 2 to switch out. All masks will be sent home each day.

**Chromebooks**
Please be sure to send the Chromebook (fully charged) and the charger in the bag provided to school each day your child(ren) attends.

**Remote Learning**
On the days your child(ren) are remote learning, it is important to follow the learning schedule as best as possible. Remote learning will be different than it was in the Spring. Teachers will be following a regular school day schedule 8:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. on Mondays – Thursdays, with an alternate schedule on Fridays. The specifics of each class’s schedule will be communicated by the teachers each day.

In order to provide consistency and help make things as easy as possible for students and parents, all staff will be using Google Classroom (Grades 1-4) and SeeSaw (Grades PreK and Kindergarten) to send out the daily schedule, lessons and work. All links for the learning for that day will be embedded within Google Classroom. In addition, all staff members will be using Zoom for all live lessons and meetings. These Zoom links/invitations will also be embedded into the Google Classroom. There will be some live instruction, some videos, some textbook/curriculum links, and some independent work each day.

**Zoom Etiquette**
The teachers will be teaching the students and sending to parents the Zoom Etiquette and Expectations for our school.
- Students will be required to use their names to be admitted to the Zoom meetings.
- Both video and sound should be on. Teachers can also control this on their end.
- While participating, students must follow all school rules and behave as if they were in the regular classroom.
- Students should be fully dressed and ready for the day.
- Students should be in a learning environment free from distractions (pets, toys, other objects that make noise or can be distracting to them and/or their classmates).

It is my hope that I have answered some of your questions and have explained some of the health/safety and curriculum/instruction things the staff has been diligently working on this summer. On behalf of our team, welcome to the 2020-21 school year. Thank you for your continued support and patience during these challenging times. I know if we continue to keep the lines of communication open and work together, we will have a great school year.

Happy Learning!

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