



COUGAR NEWS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR CMS FAMILIES

• SEPTEMBER 2019 •



LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

CMS Families,

It has been a busy first two weeks of school and it all started with our **Cougar Community Night** last Monday! The evening began with parents and students meeting the TA teacher and learning about the role of the TA as your child's advocate and contact person for any questions or support you might need. Afterwards, time was allowed for meeting all the teachers on the core teaching team as well as all our support and Unified Arts teachers. Parents could also check in with food services, CMS sports, parks and rec and the town clerk's office before heading out with some cool Cougar swag! It was wonderful to see so many of you there! Thank you for attending.

On Tuesday, we had the opportunity to spend the day with our **6th grade students and our new 7th and 8th grade students**. Activities on this day provided opportunities

Continued...

DATES TO KNOW

SEPTEMBER

- 13 7th & 8th Grade Field Trips
- 18 School Picture Day
- 20 Back to School Dance • 6:30-9pm • Gym
- 25 Early Release Day • Noon Dismissal

OCTOBER

- 11-17 Book Fair
- 17 Student-Led Conferences • 10:30 - 6:30
- 17-18 Recess: No School for Students
- 23 Picture Retakes



Families and students meeting their TA teacher on Cougar Night.

for us to get to know each other, tour the building, learn some logistics and have fun all without the entire student body in the building.

Wednesday we welcomed **all 500+ of our students to school for the first time** together this year. Since that day we have spent time in extended TA each morning getting to know each other and building community. TAs and teams have also worked on setting norms which will be used to determine our **school wide norms**. By the time you receive this newsletter we will have our CMS schoolwide norms set. This will be accomplished by each team sending a student representative to a **school “summit”** in which the representatives will work together to synthesize each team’s proposal for norms into our final school wide norms. These will be the norms by which we will conduct ourselves and live by as CMS community members. We will be sure to share these norms with you in our October newsletter.

This year, all our staff are being trained in a program called **Developmental Designs**. This training is foundational to the philosophy of best middle school practice which explicitly teaches us about the **needs of our middle school learners** and how best to prepare our school and classrooms to meet those needs. The tenets of Developmental Design are fun, competence, relationships and autonomy. Our daily practice of **meeting every morning** in a circle to greet each other, share about a topic and do a fun activity together are all foundational to building strong community where **all students can feel accepted** and it forms the foundation for an environment in which both academic and social emotional learning can happen. Beyond morning TA, the tenets are carried out in the classrooms in the way teachers and staff are organizing their classrooms, greeting students as they enter the room, using empowering language, and modeling and practicing expectations.

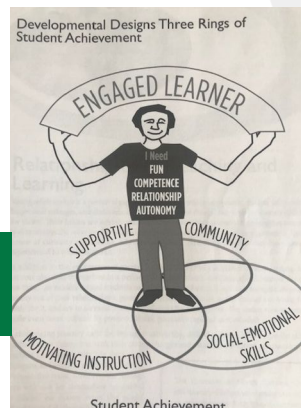
I am looking forward to greeting your children each morning and seeing them engaged in their school experiences throughout the day all year long!

Sincerely,

Michele



Handout from one of the Developmental Design trainings.



Sixth graders doing an activity during Smart Start.



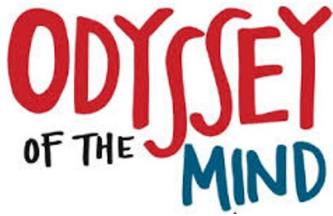
New seventh and eighth grade students getting acclimated to CMS.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION



PICTURE DAY

Picture Day is Wednesday, September 18th. Order forms were sent home with students yesterday. Please ask your child about the form or you can pre-order online at www.bsnap.hhimagehost.com and use the password: cms319.



ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

Join us for an Informational-kickoff session on October 8th from 6:30-7:30pm at the Malletts Bay School Cafeteria. This meeting is for parents and students new and returning. Please read the [Odyssey of the Mind Info Flyer](#) for more information on how your child can be involved!

STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

Student Led Conferences are scheduled for Thursday, October 17th between 10:30 and 6:30. In late September you will receive information regarding signing up for a conference time slot from your child's TA teacher. When you attend the conference with your child, the TA teacher will be there to support your student as they share with you their learning in content classes as well as life long learning skills including perseverance, participation and problem-solving. Please review our [2019-2020 Student Led Conference Handbook](#). In it you will find helpful information for what you can do as a parent to support your child in their learning. It also outlines the roles of students, classroom teachers and TA teachers as we support all our students in participating in and reflecting on their individual learning. We look forward to seeing you at conferences on October 17th!

PARENT PORTAL

Our Parent Portal is not yet open this year. This is due to several unforeseen changes in staffing which have caused a setback in getting schedules into PowerSchool as our new staff learn the system. All students do have a schedule in paper form so, if you are wondering about your child's schedule, you can ask to see the paper copy. We are diligently working to get all the scheduling information into the computer system and open the Parent Portal soon. We will send an email and text when it is open and ready for viewing. We appreciate your patience in the meantime!

MINI METRO BASKETBALL

Mini Metro Basketball tryouts will be held at the beginning of October, exact date TBD. In the meantime, Mini Metro will be hosting free open gym at Colchester High School for boys and girls in grades 5-8 to get ready for tryouts and polish their skills. They welcome anyone who thinks they might want to try out to come and join! [Check out the Open Gym schedule here.](#)



WHAT'S GOING ON AT CMS

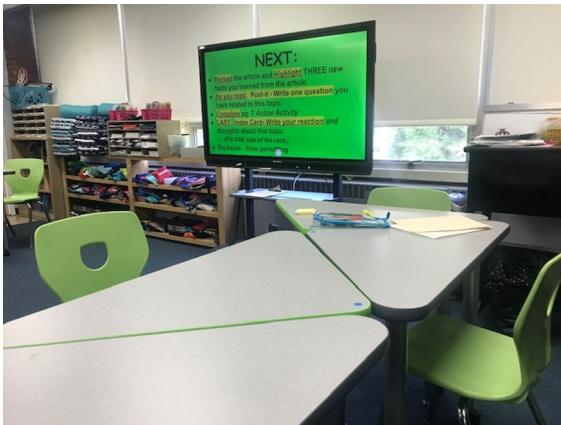


TIME FOR RECESS

We are excited to announce our students have an opportunity to participate in recess up to 20 minutes a day. During this time students are outside, weather permitting, engaging in socializing, structured games such as four square, shooting hoops, or catch. This has been well received by our students!

FAMILY BREAKFAST

Team Denali hosted a team family breakfast on Friday, September 6th. Several parents and siblings joined their 7th and 8th grade students for a team breakfast complete with fresh fruit, baked goods, bacon and juice! It was wonderful to see our school and family communities enjoying a meal together!



HAVE A SEAT...

Several 7th and 8th grade classrooms have new desks, tables and chairs. This is exciting because the desks and tables can be adjusted to varying heights and be easily moved around the classroom affording different types of seating options and arrangements for instruction. It is especially helpful to be able to easily move tables and desks in morning for TA during our daily greeting and share.

Also new this year is interactive technology in many of our 7th and 8th grade language arts classrooms and the library. These movable interactive boards replaced stationary boards and allow students hands on interaction with their learning.

PARKING REMINDER

We're thrilled with our freshly paved and marked parking lot. Please make sure not to block the two marked handicap parking spaces in the front of the school. We have noticed these two spots are often inaccessible at pick up time at the end of the day. Thank you for your attention to this matter.



PARKS AND RECREATION



Colchester Parks & Recreation is excited to jump into the fall season with a variety of programs, and a few specifically for middle school age students! Visit <http://colchestervt.gov/recreation> for more details.

All programs require pre-registration; prices are for Colchester residents (non-residents, \$10 surcharge).

R.A.D. BASIC SELF-DEFENSE FOR WOMEN (AGES 13+)

Join Cpl. Jaime Bressler from CPD to learn awareness and physical skills to protect yourself from would-be attackers. Wednesday nights, 10/2-11/6, 6-8pm at the Colchester Meeting House. \$23.00/person

BABYSITTER TRAINING (AGES 10-15)

Safe Sitter curriculum teaches babysitting skills, CPR, choking infant, behavior management, and more. Thurs., 10/17, 9am – 3pm at Bayside Activity Center. \$70/person

VIDEO & COMPUTER SPECIAL EFFECTS (GRADE 6-8)

LCATV pros will teach about green screen, Adobe Premier Pro software, and other production techniques. After school Tues, 10/29 – 11/19, 2:10 – 3:45pm at CMS (room TBD), \$57/person



PTA NEWS

Questions?
ColchesterMiddleSchoolPTO@gmail.com

Last year, the CMS PTO became a PTA! By becoming a PTA, CMS now has access to more resources and support than ever before. They are in the process of setting meeting dates for the school year and will make sure to get that information out to families as soon as the dates are set. Please plan to support PTA this year by attending meetings or volunteering to help out in some way. More to come soon!

Don't forget our bottle hut is open and the money raised goes to the CMS PTA!