



City Honors School

AT FOSDICK-MASTEN PARK

William A. Kresse, Ph.D. PRINCIPAL Tandy J. Hamilton ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL Angela R. Hannah ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL Carla L. McDow ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

August 24, 2022

Dear CHS Families:

Classrooms have been scrubbed, floors have been buffed, staff is energized after a gorgeous Buffalo summer and we are excited to welcome our Centaurs back to the Hilltop for a full day of school on **Tuesday, September 6!**

We are designing operations to be as normal as possible for our students- a return to the full CHS experience as we knew it. Some of our students are craving this normalcy and ready to go. However, we are cognizant of the fact that our students have been through traumatic events in the past three years, and some students are going to need additional support. For this reason, we will continue to staff two full-time social workers at the school in addition to our full-time psychologist and three counselors. We have added an attendance specialist who will be with us half-time, a CSE chair who will be in the building four days of the letter day cycle as well as a full time ENL teacher (English as a New/Other Language) to support our ENL students. We have used additional staffing provided by the district to bring back full-time band and orchestra positions after district-initiated cuts in 2018. These were the first areas we restored with the understanding that music and the arts are a critical way in which our students find healing and balance in their lives.

In addition, we are excited to announce that we have added two new electives to our high school offerings that will allow our students to earn dual credits from SUNY Erie:

- African and African-American History
- World Music

Please welcome the following teachers who are new to our faculty at City Honors this school year:

Mrs. Mariah Blocho	STARS Grade 6
Ms. Sandy Dunkleman	School Counselor
Mrs. Ellen Farrell	STARS Science
Miss Rebecca Ferer	Mathematics
Mrs. Aimee Longman	Health and Physical Education
Ms. Justine Sorri	Resource/Consultant Teacher
Mr. Corey Talford	Band
Dr. Thor Vandehoi	Physics
Ms. Andrea Russell	Social Worker
Mrs. Marcy Zicari	French

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In addition, the following CHS staff have seen their positions adjusted to another content area or permanent/full-time status:

Mrs. Kristy Mrugala	Mathematics
Mr. Driss Belkorchi	English as a New/Other Language
Mr. William O'Neil-White	English Language Arts
Mrs. Elizabeth Dirr	Social Worker

I want to thank all of the parent and teacher representatives who lent their time to serve on teacher hiring committees this summer. Parent and teacher voice is essential in identifying the most qualified teachers for our students.

Seventeen years ago we launched the first-of-its-kind STARS (STudents with Autism Rising to Success) Program at CHS. It has been life changing for our students and teachers. Over the years, mirror STARS programs have been established at the Arts Academy and Olmsted #156. To better meet the demand the district is seeing for this specialized program, City Honors has been designated to increase our capacity, adding an additional section of Regents-track 8:1:1 classes at each grade level (5-12.) When this expansion plan is fully phased-in over the next few years, we will have sixteen 8:1:1 STARS classrooms, serving approximately 128 students.

We believe we have the finest school facility in Western New York for students to learn, but we are not standing still. We are currently working with our new school district leadership and the BPS Plant Department to make substantial investments in the school building starting as soon as next summer including:

- Enhancements to the electrical and stage area of our school auditorium
- Cooling added to additional classrooms spaces
- New spaces to accommodate special services and the STARS program
- Restoration of the building's roof and façade as well as new exterior lighting
- Full restoration of Fosdick Field

Please carefully read the enclosed materials including our **CHS Start-of-School Survival Guide** which provides details about all of the 'nuts and bolts' operations information you will need to help your child begin the school year successfully.

Here are a number of additional ways that you can help your child to begin the school year successfully:

- Have them ready and looking sharp for School Picture Day on **Monday, September 12!**
- The district continues to experience a critical shortage of school bus drivers. This will affect our students in many ways. If you are a grade 5-8 parent who does not intend to have your child ride a yellow bus one or both ways, please call the BPS transportation office at 816-4895 as soon as you receive this letter. This will help the district to consolidate routes and get our students to and from school on-time. The district is also considering compensation to families that commit to transporting their own child(ren) for the full school year.

- Monitor your child’s progress finishing up their CHS summer reading. Links to summer reading lists for each grade level and all of the documents included in this mailing can be found at the [Parent Resources page](#) of cityhonors.org under the ‘Back-to-School Fall 2022’ tab.
- Participate in our Parent-Teacher “Get Acquainted” Night on **Thursday, September 15**, from 6-8 pm. This annual tradition allows parents to follow their child’s schedule, meet teachers, receive course syllabi and hear teacher presentations about their courses. We are planning to once again hold this event in person at the school this year! More information will be sent out closer to this date.
- Join us for the annual CHS Back to School Food Truck Night on **Friday, September 23**, from 5-8 pm. You will see separate communications about this event with much more information.

Finally, we know that COVID has not left us. We will continue to stress good hygiene practices with our students and encourage social distancing where possible. Over the summer, we have also added air purifiers to all classrooms and office spaces in the school. We know that COVID rates will continue to fluctuate. I assure you that we will respond using the lessons learned from the past two years to manage any spikes in COVID so that learning can safely continue. We may ask your family to be a part of extra precautions at times of heightened COVID. In the meantime, please, please consider having anyone in your household vaccinated or boosted for COVID if approved by your family doctor. The vaccine saves lives, can reduce the severity of symptoms, and brings us closer to the world we knew prior the pandemic.

Thank you for your continued support of our school. We look forward to seeing your child in person on September 6th!

Sincerely,



William A. Kresse, Ph.D.
Principal