

August 24, 2026

Dear CHS Families:

We're excited to welcome our students back to the Hilltop for a full day of school on **Thursday, September 3rd**.

It's a great time to be a City Honors Centaur! *US News and World Report* just ranked City Honors the #1 school in Western New York, the #2 school in New York State and #187 out of over 17,000 schools in the United States. School rankings cannot fully capture the unique set of circumstances that individual schools face or accomplishments. However, we'll certainly take this as acknowledgement that our students, staff and families are working diligently and are committed to our unique coursework here at CHS.

There's more reason to be excited. The \$12 million construction project that we began last school year is approximately 80% complete after a busy summer of work by contractors. There is still some work yet to be finished on the exterior of the building and the school auditorium, as well as other finishing touches. However, this project is already going to significantly improve the learning experience for our staff and students, as well as making our building safer and more energy-efficient.

Some of the work completed, or to be completed, includes:

- construction of 16 new instructional spaces to eliminate teachers 'on carts' and ensure that all spaces are conducive and comfortable for learning
- replacement of every light fixture in the building with energy-efficient LED fixtures
- installing air conditioning in additional spaces; improved heat and ventilation in many more
- replacement of historic, but failing, roofing, soffits and terracotta tiles on the west side of the original 1914 building (hundreds of terracotta tiles were custom reproduced by Boston Valley Terracotta)
- repairs to the Fosdick Street exterior main entrance staircase
- upgrades to the school auditorium including replacement of all electrical wiring, installation of new lighting, stage rigging and construction of a new control booth.
- addition of "ceiling clouds" in all classrooms in the original building to reduce noise and echo in classrooms
- replastering and repainting of numerous classrooms

Unrelated to the construction project, we were also able to add two new water filling stations for our students.

There are many more behind-the-scenes improvements being made to the building to make it safer and more efficient. **The most noticeable evidence of ongoing work when students return will be the fencing on either side of the main entrance while crews complete exterior repairs.** Students and visitors entering and exiting the main entrance will need to do so by exclusively using the exterior staircase as the sidewalks flanking the main entrance will be closed until repairs are complete. We appreciate your patience while this important work is completed.

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Please welcome the following additions to our faculty at City Honors:

Dr. Jennie Billera	Assistant Principal
Mrs. Jenny Crawford	STARS Business and Social Studies
Ms. Julia Kieper	Instructional Technology Coach (part-time)
Mr. Anthony Eberle	Biology
Dr. Sarah Evans	Chemistry
Ms. Abigail Griffith	ELA (now full-time with us!)
Ms. Ava Hartmann	STARS ELA (now permanent with us!)
Mr. Kyle McGinnis	Social Studies
Mr. Chad Quain	Technology (part-time)
Mr. Ryan Sajdak	STARS Science
Ms. Chelsey Smith	Spanish
Ms. Emily Tronolone	Mathematics
Mrs. Monika Zanni	Spanish (now full-time with us!)

Thank you to 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.

Please carefully read the enclosed materials including our **CHS Start-of-School Survival Guide** which provides 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:

- 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 on the [Parent Resources Page](#) of cityhonors.org under the 'Back-to-School Fall 2026' tab.
- Complete and return the enclosed **Family Census Verification Form** so we have the best possible contact information for your family.
- Participate in our **Parent-Teacher "Get Acquainted" Night on Wednesday, September 9, 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. More information will be sent to families closer to this date.
- Join us for the annual **Family Welcome Back Night on Friday, September 18, from 5:00-7:30pm**. There is a flyer included in this mailing with more information.

Thank you for your continued support of our school. We look forward to seeing your child in person on **Thursday, September 3rd**!

Sincerely,



William A. Kresse, Ph.D.
Principal