



THE STING

THE SCOOP

MEET OUR NEW STAFF
 CAPTURING KIDS' HEARTS
 CONCORD PARTNERS WITH AREA COLLEGES



CAPTURING KIDS' HEARTS: A CULTURE OF KINDNESS AND RESPECT

"The whole point of Capturing Hearts is for the kids to find value and be connected to each other in their learning. It's meant to put ownership in the student's hands" **Becky Hutchinson**

One of the toughest parts of teaching can be getting kids to follow a set of classroom rules they don't think are important. Last fall, our district teachers visited a Title One Blue Ribbon Elementary School to experience the culture and learn from the instructors there. The school had a similar demographic and performance to Concord, so the big question was: what turned things around? The answer largely comprised classroom practices they had implemented, called Capturing Kids' Hearts.

Turning Expectations into Ownership

In order to have a productive school year, teachers need to have a classroom that is attentive, respectful, and orderly. In order for students to thrive in the classroom, it is important for them to feel like they are part of the environment, that they have a drive to succeed, are that they are encouraged in their efforts and feel respected. With Capturing Kids' Hearts, the students help outline and define the social expectations of the classroom.

Each classroom creates a social contract that they agree on and sign as a group. Hand signals are created to sign when the contract is being ignored and when the contract is broken. The focus is placed on recognizing the good that each student adds to the society of the classroom. If the contract is ignored, teachers will give reminders and redirection, and provide time for the student to refocus before calls are made home or more action is taken. The goal is to reduce disciplinary action and increase a sense of loyalty.

Learning and Applying

Teachers were trained for two days in August with an instructor from The Flippen Group. There was a feeling of revitalization and excitement as the new strategy for developing classroom structure unfolded. Many of the high school, elementary, and middle school classrooms have implemented the method. Some of the sports teams have developed social contracts to outline expectations. Even the teachers and administration have established social contracts in their own buildings to establish mutually agreed-upon ways of working together and resolving conflicts.

Measuring the Impact

The school year has started off strong; there are already fewer disciplinary issues. At the end of the school year, measuring these metrics will be one way to determine whether the social contracts were helpful in reducing classroom disruptions. There is also a happy vibe in many rooms that can't be measured objectively, but it seems to stem from feeling respected and valued. The students were given a Psychological Sense of School Membership survey to see how they scored at Concord. This survey will be given again at the end of the year to see if loyalty and positivity toward the school has increased.

These social contracts help with classroom management, and they build reasoning skills in the students that will serve them well as adults. Students who can learn to create social contracts and adhere to those expectations will be more prepared to navigate the workplace and build healthy adult relationships.

If you know a Concord Student, ask them about what's on their classroom contract and what parts they have to work the hardest to uphold!



THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT WITH OUR FRIGHT NIGHT!

We had a great time at our Fright Night, which featured Three Tales of Terror from our Concord Acting Troupe!

L. Don Swartz wrote and adapted the play. The high school students worked hard and showed off their acting skills in three different plays that gave three kinds of scary thrills. At Fright Night, the three short plays combined into one included:

An adaptation of the infamous *Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe, in which a man is plagued by his employer's watchful eye.

An adaptation of *The Monkey's Paw* by W.W. Jacobs, in which a cursed monkey's paw grants three wishes, but not without a price to pay for interfering with fate.

Midnight Wax by L. Don Swartz, in which a reporter spends the night in a wax museum to write a Halloween piece.

Two shows featuring the three plays were held on Friday, November 2nd and Saturday, November 3rd. Following these two great showings, we want to thank the community for its support.

Mrs. Couling adds, "As always, a special thanks to my family—they help with set and lighting design, and they put up with all the hours I am gone. Also, a huge thank you to all of the families of the actors who have to put up with all of the practices."

Look forward to upcoming Concord productions for more chances to see our drama team in action!

SUPERINTENDENT MESSAGE:

Hello Concord Community,

As we near Thanksgiving, I'd like to express my gratitude to our students, staff, parents, and community for a wonderful start of the school year. Our staff and students have been busy working to ensure our students make substantial academic gains throughout the year. We truly believe that with time and effort every student can achieve academic mastery. As we wrap up the first quarter, now is the time to review your student's progress and engage your child's teacher in conversations about their academic performance. The partnership we have with our parents is vital to the success of our students. Fall conferences are happening the first week of November, and we'd love to see everyone there.

There is so much to be thankful for in regards to our facilities. On the construction front, the bond project we passed in November of 2017 is finally getting started. Our goal is for the work to be 90% complete prior to the beginning of school next fall. The sinking fund continues to allow us to update our facilities. We plan to provide our students with an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. At this point, Concord Community Schools plans to continue renovating our facilities with existing revenues. This means no new tax increases. We will be asking for your support to renew our current sinking fund in the spring of 2019, but this is just a renewal and not a tax increase.

We are thankful for everyone's support and involvement! Hope to see you around soon!



 **Dan Funston, Superintendent**
@DanFunston



BUILDING RENOVATION TO BEGIN

In 2017, voters passed a bond to provide the school funding for a remodeling project. Plans to update the three district buildings included improving security and creating innovative spaces for learning.

Bidding closed on October 23rd, and plans to start construction this November are already underway. Superintendent Dan Funston remarked, "We are excited for construction to begin in just a few weeks after working on this for the past year. We've had a lot of support to get this passed. It's exciting to see things all come together."

Exciting New Changes for Staff and Students

Both the K-8 and the High School will get new entrances for increased security. A new horseshoe-shaped drop and drive will help keep traffic moving safely. New doors will facilitate entrance through the office; visitors will be required to sign in before actually being able to enter the school. All buildings will get many new windows, doors, paint jobs, ceiling grids, and more. New furniture for the school will help shift the classrooms into project-based spaces where students can collaborate, moving the environments away from traditional lecture spaces.

Some building specific changes include:

A new office space will be created in the K-8 building. The window size and number will double, allowing far more natural light into the building. Research has shown that natural light enhances learning for kids, so this will be an exciting change in the classrooms.

In the high school, air flow will be improved as the unit ventilators are replaced. This update will improve the heat and allow the school to pull in cool night air during the warmer fall and spring months. The cafeteria will get a remodel, as well as AC. The library is going to be updated with 21st century changes and spaces designed to encourage collaboration.

Looking Forward to Upcoming Changes

This project has been a year in the making. The members of the district's Building and Grounds Committee (Bill Brigham, Steve Sinden, Aaron Strouss and Jason Blossom) have put tons of hours into the planning stage, and they deserve a big thanks for all their hard work. Construction should be starting soon and hopes are high that the project will be complete by September of 2019.



MEET THE NEW TALENT AT CONCORD!

This year, we are excited to introduce three new hires in the Concord district!



Kevin Specht: Band Instructor

"Concord is an amazing place to teach! I am so excited that I get to start getting students excited about music from age 5-18 and having everyone on one campus gives us the opportunity to have older students mentor younger students."

Mr. Specht played in the band himself from 5th grade through college and then three years of grad school (that's 15 years of band!). He's known he wanted to have a career in music since 8th grade, and decided he wanted to help others discover their own love for musical expression. He is forming a legacy of kids who are excited about music and want to share their understanding with others. Outside of school, Mr. Specht likes in-line skating at skate parks.

The Concord band program is helping shape students through perseverance, teamwork, social skills, and leadership. Mr. Specht has seen a pattern: students are happier and more engaged in their education when they participate in a music program. For those kids interested in learning an instrument, find Mr. Specht and he will help you get involved!

Mary Grace Perrin: English Teacher

"I taught in Concord for 10 years and left six years ago to teach in Detroit. I'm looking forward to (and enjoying) reconnecting with the Concord community. Thank you to all for the warm welcome back!"



Reading and writing is one of the foundational pillars of education. English teachers, like Ms. Perrin, are irreplaceable in the classroom. Ms. Perrin started in the mental health field before making the change to a teaching career. She saw how important a quality education is, and wanted to make a difference earlier in the lives

of individuals. She has discovered a passion for helping students learn reading and writing skills they will need to be successful throughout their adult lives. Her favorite book is *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck (though it was hard to pick just one), and her biggest grammar pet peeve is the incorrect use of apostrophes. In her free time, she likes to read, run, and quilt.



Dan Claus: Special Ed

"I chose special education because of all the different learning styles of students. I love discovering the different ways they think and learn. I have taught both high school and middle school, so I am very excited about the experience I will get at the Elementary."

Mr. Claus has been teaching for nine years now. He spends a lot of his free time with his wife and two children. Coming from a long line of teachers, Mr. Claus felt a pull towards the career himself. He holds fast to the quote "Believe you can and you're halfway there" by Teddy Roosevelt, and wants all his students to understand that drive as well.

CONCORD DEVELOPS LEADERS

"The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born — that there is a genetic factor to leadership. This myth asserts that people simply either have certain charismatic qualities or not. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born." — Warren Bennis

If we are not striving to create leaders and problem-solvers, then we have failed our kids. At Concord High School, students are given opportunities to hone their leadership skills with a special elective class offered by the school. For the second year in a row, the Leadership Skills class meets daily during 7th period and is taught by Jessica Osterhout-Koch (Mrs. OK).

Learning Leadership Through Action

Studying leadership isn't enough to form people who know how to lead; real-world knowledge and practice is needed. The students in the Leadership Skills class are asked to come up with a Leadership Project to complete as a part of their course. The projects can be anything, as long as they better the school community. Some students may choose a specific event, while others might form a charitable organization or club.

One student is working on a High School Field Day event, and as part of this project the student has to undertake the planning and budgeting for the event. Another student is learning to organize a group of volunteers through a Student Athlete Outreach Organization that works with special needs kids. Projects are driven by the individual passion of the student planning them, and so they vary widely. Some students are even working on more than the one project required.

Learning Real-World Management

Adults in professional settings have to work within budgets and meet very specific deadlines. With Leadership Projects, students are given a taste of the real world and are taught to approach their problems professionally. The realities of establishing a budget, finding funding, staying within budget, motivating others, staying driven, and meeting deadlines make up some of the values taught through these projects.

"It's super important for our kids to develop these skills in high school. This is their time to grow and develop into who they are going to be. If they learn these skills now, think about what they are going to be able to do in the future." — Mrs. OK

Taking the Opportunity to Lead

When a 7th period class was needed last year and the schedule changed, the idea of a practical leadership class was brought to the table. It isn't the kind of class most high schools offer, and it had to be supported by administration. Dan Funston, Cheryl Price, and Barb Miller are some of the school leaders who worked to establish the class. They asked Mrs. OK if she had an interest in teaching it, since she had minored in leadership. Her passion for the students has helped turn it into a successful course.

Students who take this class must be driven, self-managed, and motivated. Upperclassmen interested in taking the class as an elective can talk to their guidance counselor when setting up their class schedules.

Please keep an eye out for students who may be seeking your participation or funding support with their own Leadership Projects.



ALBION COLLEGE AND SPRING ARBOR PARTNERSHIP

"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." — Benjamin Franklin
In order to build the next generation of teachers, a partnership with Spring Arbor and Albion college has been established. The hopes for this partnership is that students preparing to become teachers will be able to gain real-world experience. In turn, these students will help Concord students and increase the resources available to the school.

Filling the Gaps for Students

Getting individualized help is a huge value for students. When Albion College and SAU students assist in the classroom, the children are able to work closely with mentors with whom they can connect. Heading up the program is Kendra Bonjernoor, who notes: "I see how our kids love these college students. They really light up when they are greeted by them. Some of the college students are also student athletes, so it helps to make connections with Concord kids right away, especially our boys."

Setting the Bar High

The Albion College and SAU students who have been working with Concord students have been great at digging in and getting to know the students. They are equally learning strategies to improve their careers and their relationships with the kids. The college students have been polite, enjoyable, and helpful. They greet the students with smiles and handshakes that brighten their days at Concord. It is encouraging to see such awesome potential and driven attitudes in the next wave of educators.

Though the program has been in place with college education departments, this is the first year that participation is really in place. Dr. Arlyn Kay is responsible in part for helping to connect the students with Kendra Bonjernoor. This program has greatly encouraged Concord instructors, who feel the revitalizing effects in the classrooms with the supportive and symbiotic relationship.

Building for the Future

Hopes are high that this program will continue to grow and develop into something bigger. Currently, there are eight college students helping Concord students. Increasing the number of students participating will help alleviate stress from Concord instructors and boost the value the school system can offer their most at-risk population. The Concord students have an interest in cheering on their mentors at collegiate events, so future plans may include finding chaperones to help get the students to the games or competitions.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 1 Picture Retakes – Elementary and Middle School
Nov. 2-3 Fall Play at 7:00 PM
Nov. 7-8 Parent Teacher Conferences
Nov. 9 ½ Day – 11:05 AM Dismissal School
Nov. 21-23 Thanksgiving Break - No School
Dec. 18 End of 2nd Marking Period
Dec. 21 1/2 Day
Dec. 24-Jan. 4 Winter Break - No School
Jan. 7 School Resumes – 2nd Semester Begins
Jan. 21 No School - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Feb. 8 Snowcoming

HAVE FEEDBACK?

We welcome our readers' comments, ideas, or suggestions. Write to us at Editor, Concord Community School District, 405 S Main St, PO Box 338, Concord, MI 49237 or call (517) 524-8850.



Concord Community School District



Check out our website!
www.concordschools.net