

Good Morning CMS Families and Happy Sunday!

MLK Jr Day on Monday: School will be closed on Monday in observance of the birth of Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King's birthday is actually January 15th, but the day is observed on the third Monday of January each year.

One of the traditions we have at CMS is to spend some time explaining the significance of the three day weekends we are provided throughout the year so that our students gain an understanding about why certain days are observed. Given our current circumstances this is obviously challenging and while our Social Studies teachers may have spent some class time reminding students about the importance of Dr. King's work, I always encourage families to engage in the conversation at home as well. If you can find the time on Monday, please take a few minutes to engage your middle school student in a conversation about Dr. King and his important work. We recommend starting the conversation with a simple question... "What do you know about Martin Luther King Jr?"

While I don't typically use this communication to make movie recommendations, I'll make an exception this week. The film "Selma", rated PG-13, offers an excellent look at Dr. King's work and impact. As a disclaimer, it does contain adult themes and language and I would encourage parents to watch the film prior to sharing it with your middle school student to ensure that it meets the standards and values established in your home.

Supply Pick Up Day: After having to postpone and then alter the supply pick up day program, we hope you found the contactless system somewhat convenient. In past pick-ups we have tried to provide something of a personal experience as our staff members really enjoy the opportunity to see their students in person, even if just for a few moments, as families come through our supply pick up lines. We're sorry to have missed that experience this time, however, as you may know, our cohorts continue to struggle with Covid exposure situations and we have been forced to eliminate as much risk as possible as this pandemic continues to surge.

If you missed supply pick up day, don't worry too much, we'll be rolling out the carts again on Tuesday morning at 10:00 AM and families can come through and grab their supply bags between 10 AM and 4 PM again on Tuesday. PTO gifts are still available as well, which leads me to my next topic...

PTO Gift and Messaging: It was brought to my attention on Friday that an email circulated to some CUSD parents has targeted the message on the Stress Balls the CMS PTO provided to students as part of their gift in this round of supply pick up. Specifically, the email stated, "Stop telling your mothers to be quiet. The PTO balls telling parents and children to be quiet were a fail."

To be clear, our PTO has no hidden political agenda behind any of their gifts nor are they attempting to silence any voice. Our PTO is simply trying to find ways to bring a little joy and happiness into the lives of our students and we hope that you enjoy and appreciate the small gift bags that accompany your school supply pick up.

The stress balls contained the following message: **Be Quiet. Be Calm. Be Kind.**

The message on the ball refers to the mindful living practices taught in many CMS classes and specifically, the “Be Quiet” portion of the message reminds students to “Quiet the Mind”, a key component of positive meditative practices and mindful living.

Our PTO is working hard behind the scenes to find ways to help make the most out of this challenging experience while hoping to bring small moments of joy to our students. They are working mothers and fathers who give their own time to organize events, pack 600 gift bags, and have even come to supply drop off day in person to hand out their gifts. They have students in our school and are working, just like all families, to juggle the demands of their responsibilities, keep their children plugging away, and yet they still find time to volunteer, hoping to extend some positivity and joy to all our CMS families. They do not have a political agenda and they do not deserve criticism for their efforts. It saddens me that I find it necessary to defend their work and gesture in the midst of a global pandemic and I find it reprehensible that their kind gesture to our students was twisted and politicized for a different cause. I hope that the population of parents at CMS is clear that their gift was not a political statement but a gesture of kindness. I hope that you continue to appreciate the efforts they have made to improve our situation as a school community.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this situation, feel free to reach out directly to me.

CMS Final Cohort Opens Tuesday: We have added one final learning cohort to the CMS campus and students will begin on-campus learning on Tuesday. Beginning Tuesday, we will have over 70 students on campus with every available learning space in use. The cohort model was designed to serve students most in need and if your child is struggling and might benefit from learning on campus, please contact your child’s counselor. As circumstances change we may be able to add students to these groups. We are maintaining a waiting list for cohort assignment and we must prioritize this list according to the needs of all students. Thank you again for your support and understanding.

CMS Board Presentation: On **Wednesday, January 20th**, CMS will provide our annual site presentation to the CUSD Board of Education. This presentation is an annual showcase highlighting our success stories, improvements, student achievements, and future goals. This year will be a bit different, but, we’ll be discussing our distance learning program and taking a look at what the future holds. If you’re interested in attending, keep your eyes opened for the CUSD invitation to the board meeting on Wednesday.

That’s all for now.

Please enjoy the three day weekend and we’ll see you back in classes on Tuesday morning!

