

Congratulations to this week's Cougar Pride Spirit Day Winners!

6th Grade: Britesen Comello

7th Grade: Lila Glazier

8th Grade: Jewelia Ibanez

CMS Staff Member: Ms. Morriss

The CMS PTO and Leadership Class hope you enjoy your gift cards that will be mailed to your homes very soon! Go Cougars!

Good afternoon CMS Families,

The week was spent successfully welcoming our first live interest based cohorts onto campus and we're happy to report that it was a big success! Students were able to enjoy Band, Strings, Chorus, and participate in Cross Country. In all, over 100 students were able to access campus to participate in the various cohorts offered and we were able to test our tracking protocols, check in procedures, and management systems to get ready for our 4th quarter opening.

What a pleasure and joy it has been to see kids here on campus participating in the activities they love. We can't wait to bring more students to our campus!

With that in mind, here are a few things we need your help with.

- CMS is now a closed campus until 5:00. Please abide by these rules and tell everyone you know not to come onto campus until after 5:00. We have been posting employees at the front entrance to inform and prevent visitors, but, we still need the help of the community to get the message out. As we continue to expand student cohorts and as CHS begins to use some of our fields, it is critical that our campus is closed and secure and that visitors remain off site until 5:00 PM. Thank you for your help with this!

- Parents need to drop off students and leave the campus. If you have a student involved in a cohort, please do not venture onto campus to see what things are like and please do not stay in our parking lot. We are under strict guidance designed to limit exposure and we simply cannot have folks on campus, even if you're just in your car. Please make plans to grab a coffee, do some shopping around the corner, or take a walk at Palo Corona Regional Park. Following this guidance will allow us to continue expansion of cohorts. Thank you!

This week I also sent out several sign up surveys. ALL sign ups for classes/cohorts will end Sunday night at midnight (February 28). It will take us a full week to shuffle classes and rebuild our schedule, so we need to have your selections ASAP. Please fill out any of the surveys sent to you by Sunday night at 12:00 if you'd like your student to participate in our live offerings.

I'll also address a few questions that have already come our way.

- **Will there be more offerings?** Perhaps... right now our focus is on adding major classes/activities that draw in the largest level of students. Decisions about offerings were based on several factors, but, we've offered everything we can at this point. Once we have these groups established we will look to find ways to add some smaller, unique cohorts allowing students unable to find an offering the opportunity to select something new that hopefully appeals to their interests.
- **Why were classes like Industrial Arts not open to some students?** As with all classes, we will have limitations to what we can do. For example, in the IA room we will only be allowed to have a maximum of 12 students per group based on social distancing guidelines. In addition, we weighed other factors in the design of our cohorts including class access. Using IA as an example again, our 8th grade students did not get the opportunity to participate in IA. We anticipate that our current 6th and 7th graders will have that opportunity next year. With limited space, we decided to offer this opportunity to our outgoing 8th graders only as this will be their last chance to access one of our most popular electives as middle school students. Teacher availability also has much to do with our decision making process. Some teachers will be teaching one subject during the day and then transitioning to another in the afternoon. There is only a certain number of classes they can teach in any given day so offerings are sometimes limited by the needs of our master schedule. Finally, certain classes were offered only to students who were previously enrolled in these classes. As these students have "hung in there" through all the Zoom sessions, they

were given priority opportunity to come to campus to continue their class. If we have additional openings when the dust settles we'll let people know.

- **When will restrictions be lifted or changed to allow students the opportunity to participate in two groups?** We're not sure. We had hoped to hear something positive on that front this week, but that did not happen. We did hear that the possibility exists of allowing students to participate in a class based cohort and an after school athletic cohort. To expand our offerings, many of our cohorts are already meeting outdoors so, if this becomes the new guidance, we'll be ready to add opportunities to existing schedules. Outside of that, we have no sway over the rules but we're doing our best to offer opportunities within the guidance.
- **What will sports cohorts look like and are you "cutting" kids?** First, we're not cutting students. We're running sports cohorts as an intramural style program where everyone can participate. The most likely scenario will involve grade based groups coming onto campus on specified days. Generally speaking, close contact within the sports world is not allowed right now so many of our programs will start out with skill building drills, skill based games, and socially distanced mini-competitions. Students will be put into pairs, small groups, or teams based on what is currently allowable, and will participate in the aforementioned activities with a set and established group. As restrictions lighten up, we'll be able to do more and we hope that we can eventually host intramural type games here on campus. As no other middle schools are doing what we are, the prospects for competition outside of CMS are extremely limited at this time. If we hear that other schools follow suit, and as guidance allows, we'd be excited to explore the prospect of potential competition (but please don't count on it!).
- **What will classes look like? What will the schedule be? Indoors or Out?** The answers to all of these questions will be discovered next week as we put things together. Once we have numbers, grade levels, etc. we can start designing plans. There are certainties of course... Industrial Arts will be in the IA building where the tools are (limiting overall numbers) but other classes like Drama could be in the theater and outside. At this point we're not sure on several things, but once we've sorted them out, you'll be first to know!

Final Thoughts

I'd like to extend my gratitude to the many staff members and community member coaches who have volunteered their time and energy to help make these classes and after school sports a reality. All of these offerings are available because people have offered to work directly with students despite existing health and safety concerns. Please be sure to send some gratitude

their way as many of them will now be harder than ever to balance online teaching, their in person cohorts, and the rest of their responsibilities as teachers, coaches, parents, etc.

In addition, I feel that it is important to let everyone know that redesigning our schedule to accommodate these activities will be a tremendous undertaking for administration and our front office staff. Elaine Eldridge, our amazing registrar and I will be buried in class lists, requests, and master schedules as we work through this process during the next week while the rest of our administrative team and office crew pick up the slack. The purpose behind this information is not to garner sympathy or accolades, it is simply to let everyone know that we are working hard to create as many positive opportunities as we can for our students. As I've mentioned before, designing a school's master schedule is an undertaking on its own. Taking one apart and putting it back together with new components mid year is something we've never done before!

I hope you all have a wonderful weekend and remember... sign ups for everything close Sunday at midnight!

With warm regards,

Dan Morgan