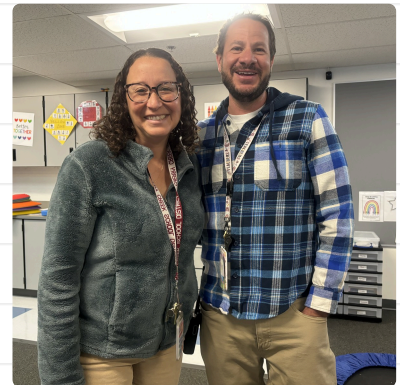




## *From Principal Francis*

Dear Cottonwood Families,

In an effort to keep families informed, we wanted to dedicate some space in this newsletter to better explain exactly how your fundraising money is used and how the PTO Sponsored position impacts our day to day life at Cottonwood. Today, we will explain how our Behavior Tech positions benefit our school. This is a unique position to Cottonwood that is only possible because of your fundraising support through our COT PTO. Most schools do not have this position and we are grateful for your contributions. Thank you to all of you who support your neighborhood school through your time, your partnership, your kind words, and your giving!



**The two Behavior Techs are members of the COT Mental Health team.** They staff and run **The Cougar Den**, which is a classroom space that provides a sensory and self-regulation outlet for students. The Den is designed to provide students with a safe and controlled environment where they can actively manage their sensory input, allowing them to calm down, focus better, and regulate their emotions when feeling overwhelmed, thus improving their ability to learn and participate in classroom activities effectively. Teachers refer students to the Den if they feel the students need additional time and space beyond the supports already available in the classroom

setting, such as calm corners, whole class movement breaks and flexible seating, etc.. Students who participate in the Den program will have scheduled breaks to visit the Den and utilize the tools in the space to help with self-regulation which then benefits all classrooms and all students. In addition to individual break times, students in the Den program participate in weekly lessons on self-regulation with the Behavior Techs, through a curriculum called The Zones of Regulation. With the support of the Cougar Den and Behavior Techs, we see fewer disruptions to whole classroom learning. The Behavior Techs also participate in recess and lunch duty responsibilities to strengthen and build relationships with all students at Cottonwood during more unstructured times of the day.

Stay tuned for more information about other PTO sponsored positions as well as common language around self-regulation that can be used at home.

Sincerely, Mr. Drew A Francis

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## *December at a Glance...*



12/02-12/11 Star Testing K-5th

12/10 Book fair 2.45pm - 4pm

12/12 Spelling Bee 1.30pm

12/12 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting

12/16-12/19 Spirit Week

12/20 Winter Parties

12/23-1/06 Winter Break

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## *District Information*

### *School Attendance*

#### **Holiday Season and School Attendance: A Reminder**

As the holidays approach, we know many families have exciting plans, but we want to remind you of the importance of maintaining regular school attendance during this time. The weeks before the break are often filled with critical lessons, assessments, and preparations for the new term.

Missing school can create gaps in learning that are difficult to catch up on. Make-up work does not fully help students recover missed instruction, and one student's absence impacts classmates' progress due to the collaborative nature of learning.

Every school day counts in helping your child grow academically, socially, and emotionally. **We encourage you to plan travel and events around the school calendar whenever possible.** If you know your child will be absent, please let us know in advance so we can support their continued learning.

[Winter break: Dec. 23- Jan. 6](#)

Thank you for helping us meet our attendance goals. Wishing you a joyful and safe holiday season!

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### **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

Date: Thursday, December 12th 2024

Time: 9.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.

Where: SARC (14188 E Briarwood Ave, Centennial, CO 80112)

Topic: *Transition Program Presentation*

[Upcoming SEAC meetings](#)

### **Golden Heart Awards**

It is that time of year again to nominate incredible individuals for the 2024-2025 Golden Heart Awards!

This prestigious award is for any individual who has "opened their heart" to touch the life of a Cherry Creek School District student with special needs. This includes, but is not limited to, bus drivers, teachers, cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals, specials teachers (media, art, P.E., music), those in support positions, students, and community employers.

Nominations are open now and will close on December 13th at 4 PM. We cannot accept late entries.

Attached is a letter detailing this award and a link to submit nominations. It is also available via the following link:



[Golden Heart Nomination Form](#)

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*Educator of the year nominations*

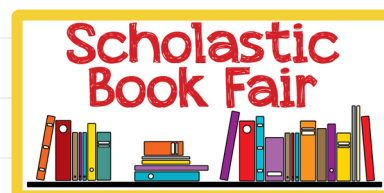
Cherry Creek School District has many wonderful teachers. We also like to recognize our outstanding educators who strive every day to help students be inspired to think, to learn, to achieve and to care. Deadline is 1/17 for nominations.

## Nomination Form

### School Information

#### *Book Fair is coming!*

As the holidays approach it is almost time for our annual Scholastic Book Fair! Our new librarian Miss Elle has been hard at work planning for a great Holiday Book Fair. It will be a wonderful opportunity for your child to explore the joy of reading and a great way to support our Cottonwood Library! There will be everything from thrilling adventures to heartwarming stories that will inspire imagination and curiosity. It's a great chance for children to discover new books that will keep them engaged and excited to read at home. **We invite you to visit the fair with your child Tuesday, December 10th after school till 2:45-4pm**, and help them pick out books they'll enjoy for the holiday break. Your child will also be given a wishlist to fill out that they can bring home to have you review. We look forward to seeing everyone there!



#### *Spelling Bee*

Our Cottonwood **Spelling Bee will be held on December 12th at 1.30pm**. If you have a sibling to a speller that would like to attend in person, please let the office know when you check in and they can call the sibling down. Cottonwood 3rd-5th grade students will watch the Spelling Bee live over zoom from their classrooms. The doors will open at 1:30 and the Bee will begin promptly at 1:40. Please let me know if you have any questions. The Spelling Bee is such a fun event!



If you would like to attend in person, please complete the rsvp below so that we have a good idea of how many chairs to set up.

Ms Riley

RSVP HERE

## Spirit Week Dec 16th- Dec 19th



Check out the fun for next week!

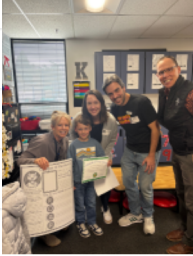
## WINTER SPIRIT WEEK

Monday, December 16	BEANIES & WINTER HATS
Tuesday, December 17	PIJAMA DAY
Wednesday, December 18	Ugly Sweater Day
Thursday, December 19	Winter Plaid or Flannel
Friday, December 20	HOLIDAY PARTIES



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## *Cougar Of The Month*



**Kindergarten - Clark Duggan**



**1st Grade - Olivia Sremba**



**2nd Grade - Sophia Shenu**



**3rd Grade - Alwin Lu**



**4th Grade - Keith Moran**



**5th Grade - Amelia Koehler**

### **STAR Testing** ★ ★ ★

The mid-year STAR assessments will be given to students K - 5 in the areas of reading and math. Testing will continue this week through Wednesday, December 11th. Make-up testing will be scheduled from December 11th through December 18th.

## *Highlights from the 5th Grade Parade*





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## *School Of Choice*

School of Choice (SOC) applications for the 24-25 school year are now being accepted. Through SOC, the Cherry Creek School District gives district residents and non-residents the opportunity to apply for enrollment in a Cherry Creek school of their choice. The first lottery will run in February 2024 on or before the 15th of the month. Subsequent lotteries will run bi-weekly starting February 28th.

Applications are considered based on lottery number and space availability for each school. Priority is given to students with siblings who will be attending the same school and children of district employees. There is a limit of one application per student, on which 3 different schools can be requested. Addresses must be up to date for residents of the school district in order to be considered for School of Choice. If you are moving at a later date, applications for School of Choice can be submitted once you move and update your address with the district admissions office.

Please note, School of Choice does NOT apply to you if:

- You live within the Cottonwood Creek boundaries and you want your child to attend our school.
- If your student was previously accepted through the SOC process to Cottonwood Creek, and continues to meet the eligibility criteria.

If you have any questions about the SOC process or your student's enrollment status, please contact Alison Button at (720) 554-3201. More information available at

<https://www.cherrycreekschools.org/domain/1145>

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## *From the Clinic*

Stay Healthy This Holiday Season!

The holidays are a wonderful time for celebration, but they also bring an increased risk of illness.

To help keep your family healthy during this busy season, here are a few hygiene tips:

Wash hands often and stay home when sick. If your child is feeling unwell, keep them home to rest and recover fully before returning to school.

We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season! If you have any questions or need additional resources, don't hesitate to contact our clinic.

Health & Wellness Reminders: [A note from the Health Clinic](#)



## Helping Hands

### Reminder - Donations are due by Thursday!!

Please use the sign up genius link below to adopt one child, a whole family, or send gift cards, wrapping paper or tape.

We appreciate any support you can give. If you have questions call Kori Shaiman at 720-554-3215.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805044EAAAA2CA02-46192172-giving#/>



### helping hands flyer.jpg

[drive.google.com](#)

### Library Volunteers Needed

The Cottonwood Creek library needs volunteers to help with: checking out books for students during their weekly class visits, checking books back into the computer system, and re-shelving. You are welcome to sign up for as many shifts as you'd like each day/week/month through the end of the school year.

**You can Sign Up [here](#).** If you'd like to volunteer during your child's allotted time, please read the sign up description for a schedule of each class' weekly visit.



Please contact Rachael Holsted, PTO Library Coordinator, with any questions at: [rachael.holsted@gmail.com](mailto:rachael.holsted@gmail.com)

*A visit from our friendly SRO, Adam, and his dog Riley* 





*Don't forget!* 🙌

### **Birthday Treats:**

We love to celebrate birthdays at COT, but please remember that if you plan to bring birthday treats for the class:

1. Let your child's teacher know ahead of time!
2. Treats need to be STORE bought - no exceptions!
3. Ingredients must be listed on the packaging!
4. Drop off in lobby *before* 9.30am! Leave a sticky note with their name and teacher on it!

Thank you for your understanding as we monitor food allergies for our students.





**Smore Templates**

Smore is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters