

# Cottonwood Creek Elementary

## PRINCIPAL NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 10TH, 2025

### *From Principal Francis*

Dear Cottonwood Families

Last week, we had the opportunity to kick off our Kids Heart Challenge! We welcomed a new staff member since returning in January, Lydia Zerwekh - our full-time Mild Moderate Teacher, along with a guest speaker from the Kids Heart Challenge. What stood out to me was that both of these newcomers to COT were amazed by the unbelievably positive behavior of our students—nearly 540 of them—all gathered together in the gym for the assembly. It was a wonderful reminder of how incredible our students are and a testament to the strong culture and routines we have built within our school.

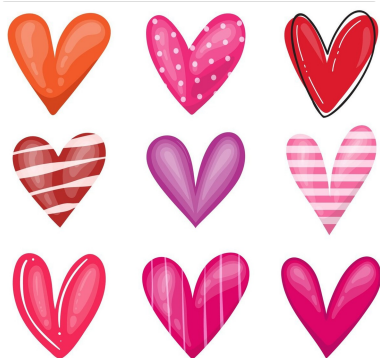
On a more personal note, it was heartwarming to see so many students participate in our one-day tribute to the Green Bay Packers, sporting green and gold in celebration of my birthday. While it felt like a lot to have the entire school join in, it was also incredibly fun to see everyone come together around a shared theme. I felt truly loved, and the “surprise” was such a special moment. One of my favorite parts was watching our youngest students—who had been keeping the secret for two weeks—struggle to contain their excitement and resist spilling the surprise!

Thank you for your continued support as a school community. I am so proud to be your Principal at Cottonwood Creek Elementary!

Sincerely, Mr. Drew A Francis



## February at a glance...



2/3 Registration for Kindergarten and Pre-K opens

2/13 SAC Meeting (8.10 am in room 147)

2/13 SEAC Meeting

2/24 Individual/Class Pictures

## District Information

### Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Date: Thursday, February 13th

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

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

Topic: *Post-Graduate Opportunities*

[Upcoming SEAC meetings](#)



### Community Night with the Denver Nuggets

Join us for Mile High Basketball Community Night with the Denver Nuggets on March 5th and April 6th or April 11th!

Click [Here](#) for more information

### Evening Classes for English as a second language (ESL)

Evening classes now being offered free to parents in Cherry Creek School District starting January through May. Please click the ESL Flyers for more information: [English](#) [Chinese](#) [Russian](#) [Spanish](#)

## School Information

### School Accountability Meeting

When: February 13th @ 8:10 am

Where: COT Room 147

Agenda:

- School of Choice
- SRO Deputy Adam Nardi

Virtual Link [HERE](#): Join the meeting

Meeting ID: 288 698 596 240

Passcode: Zk9Ux2nY

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## *Early Student Pick Up and Student Messages*

**Please note:** As of Monday, February 3rd, early student pick up will not be permitted after 2.30pm (1.30pm on Wednesdays). If attempting to pick up a student after this time, you will need to wait until dismissal time.

In addition to this change, messages called in for students must be received prior to 2.30pm. This is a safety concern and we cannot guarantee that we can get those messages out in time.

Thank you for understanding.

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## *Kids Heart Challenge*

### **Kids Heart Challenge**

Kids Heart Challenge will begin on 1/29/2025

For the COT Kids Heart Challenge page Click [Here](#)



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## *Power Week at CCHS!*

It's Power Week! Check out the calendar for daily dress up themes! [Power Week Calendar](#)



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## *Junior Great Books*

Jr. Great Books Registration is Open!

Junior Great Books is a low-key, relaxed time for students grades 1st-5th to get together while they eat lunch and discuss short stories. Each set of stories explores a particular theme and is geared toward each grade level. The stories typically take about 15-20 minutes to read at home. JGB groups will begin in early March and will meet once a week, during lunch, for approximately 6-8 weeks. (Note: Students will not miss recess.) Groups consist of 4-6 students with parent volunteers facilitating the discussion. The cost of the book is \$25. Registration closes Feb 19, 2025. Sign up today! <https://jr-great-books-2025.cheddarup.com>

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## *Class/Individual Picture Day is coming!!*

**Save the date!** Class and individual student photos will be taken on Monday, February 24th. Please note, there are no picture make-ups for this picture day. Order forms will be sent home with students later this week.

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## *Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences*

Spring parent-teacher conferences will be held the week of March 3rd. A conference Sign-up Genius will be emailed out the evening February 20th. If you have limited flexibility in your daily schedule, we suggest you sign-up as early as possible.

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## *2025-2026 Enrollment*

**Kindergarten Round-Up and UPK Registration:**

Registration for 25-26 Kindergarten and Universal Pre-Kindergarten will open on February 3rd.



Please see the attached Kindergarten Round-Up flyer. Please feel free to pass it along to any friends or neighbors who will be registering a Kindie in CCSD for next school year.

Registration for Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) is a 2-step process. It requires registration with the State of Colorado and with Cherry Creek District Admissions. The website for the Cherry Creek registration will open February 3rd and we understand that the State will also open their registration at the same time. If this is not the case, parents are encouraged to continue with their registration with CCSD. Just be sure to also submit the State portion when their website opens. Our understanding is that UPK enrollment will be into the student's school of residence with two exceptions; if an older sibling attends an alternate school or the student was previously enrolled in the CCSD Child Find Program and would like to stay with their teacher.

Please note, enrollment in a school other than your neighborhood school in UPK does not qualify the student for continued enrollment in that school for kindergarten.

If you have any problems or questions regarding enrollment for next school year, please contact Alison Button at (720) 554-3201. See [flyer](#) for more information. For Spanish click this [flyer](#)

## *Leaving Cottonwood?*

To assist us in estimating enrollment for next year, please let us know if you have plans to move out of our neighborhood or otherwise enroll your student in a different school. Additionally, please let us know if you have a 5th grader who will not attend Campus Middle School for 6th grade. To notify us of either of these, **[please complete the attached Form](#)**. **Please only complete this if you are LEAVING!**

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## *School Of Choice*

School of Choice (SOC) applications for the 25-26 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 2025 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 [here](#)

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## *Attendance and other reminders*

### **Attendance**

As we enter a new year, it seems like a good time for some reminders:

For the purpose of district-wide consistency, the attendance noticing and truancy process is being transitioned to the district level this school year.

The following guidelines apply to students grades K - 5:

- If your student is going to be late or absent from school, **a parent/guardian must leave a message on the attendance line (720-554-3295) before the start of the school day.**
  - You will need to provide:
    - the student's name,
    - your name and contact number,
    - the date(s) of absence and
    - the reason for the absence or late arrival.
  - **Absences without an attendance line message** or valid reason for the absence will be marked as unexcused. For more specific information on allowable reasons for school absences, please see the [CCSD Student Conduct and Discipline, Rights and Responsibilities](#).
  - Parents are discouraged from keeping/taking their student(s) out of school for reasons other than illness, grievance or emergency. **Extracurricular activities are not an allowable reason for school absences or tardiness.**
  - For safety reasons, attendance calls are generated to parents/guardians of students who are identified as unexcused at 8:30 AM. If you believe you received a call in error, please contact the front office immediately.
  - **A medical excuse** must be provided for students who miss a full or partial day of school due to a medical appointment or who miss more than 3 days of school within a week period due to a medical reason. The medical excuse must specify the date(s) of absence.
  - **Absences (excused and unexcused) are limited to 10 days for the school year.** To have absences in excess of 10 days excused, an acceptable medical excuse must be provided.
  - **Travel** up to 5 days per school year *may be* excused if 1) a message is left on the attendance line in advance, and 2) it will not result in the student missing more than 10 days in the school year.
  - If your student will miss school due to an unusual or unforeseen circumstance, please contact the front office.
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### **Personal Items**

- In an effort to minimize classroom disruption, only one delivery of personal items (including student lunches) will be made each day at 9:30 AM to the classrooms. Therefore, if your student forgets a necessary item at home, please drop it off by 9:25 AM to the front vestibule. Items dropped off after 9:25 AM may not get to your student. However, remember that both water and school lunch is free. **Students will ALWAYS have water available throughout the day and a lunch provided to them.**
- **All medication** should be dropped off directly to the Nurse's Clinic.
- **Musical instruments** dropped off for band will not be delivered to the classrooms. These items will be kept in the front office and your student should know to come to the front office before band practice to retrieve it.

## School Breakfast

- School breakfast is served at 7:45 AM. Students who are going to breakfast should come through the main entrance **no earlier than 7:45 AM and proceed directly to the cafeteria.** Please talk to your student about making it to their classroom by the 8:00 AM bell. Students who are late will be marked tardy. UPK students having breakfast at school must be supervised by their parents at all times.
- [Click here for the 24-25 School Meal Guide](#)

## From the Clinic

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

At Cottonwood Creek, the health and safety of our students is our top priority, and understanding allergies is essential in creating a safe environment for everyone.

Allergies have become increasingly common among children. It is crucial that we work together to address potential allergens and create a supportive atmosphere for those affected. Understanding allergies can help prevent serious reactions. CCSD is an "Allergy

Aware" environment. We encourage students to wash their hands before and after eating and the sharing of food is not allowed at school.

Your involvement is crucial in making our school a safe place for all students. Please communicate with the school nurse if your child has any allergies to specific foods or needs allergy medications in the school clinic. Together, we can create an inclusive environment where every student can thrive. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Mandy, the School Nurse, or your child's teacher.

[Ablakeney@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:Ablakeney@cherrycreekschools.org)

720-554-3208



## 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.

**Volunteer at the  
Cottonwood Creek Elementary Library!**



Please contact Rachael Holsted, PTO Library Coordinator, with any questions at:

[rachael.holsted@gmail.com](mailto:rachael.holsted@gmail.com)

*Don't forget!* 🙌

#### **Cold Weather Recess:**

With cold temperatures in the forecast, students will require outdoor winter clothes for recess. The district's policy is that, in the absence of lightning, thunder or precipitation, students will have outside recess if the temperature "feels like" 20 degrees Fahrenheit or above. Therefore, please remember to send students to school with appropriate clothing to play outside in the cold and possible snow. Unfortunately, we cannot assure that items dropped off after the start of school will be delivered to students before their recess, so please do your best to send these items to school with your child in the morning.



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