

CUSD Newsletter

Monthly news and updates - Volume 1, Issue

7



Dear CUSD Families:

In recent months there have been a series of executive orders issued by the federal government related to public education, creating confusion and uncertainty for schools nationwide. The most recent order, signed on March 20th, clearly directs the Secretary of Education to “take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education and return authority over education to the States and local communities while ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs, and benefits on which Americans rely”.



At this time, we do not have clarity about how these actions may affect our district. I recognize that this uncertainty may be unsettling for some members of our community, and I want to assure you that CUSD’s systems are in place to support students in their learning. We continue to closely monitor the situation, including ongoing legal challenges filed in relation to all the orders issued.

Our primary focus continues to be on our students and providing them with a high-quality, safe environment in which to learn and thrive. We are fortunate to have a dedicated staff, benefit from financial stability, and a supportive community. While we may not be fully insulated from the possible impacts of these political decisions, I know we will collectively be able to navigate any challenges that come our way.

I am grateful to be part of this caring community and appreciate your patience, cooperation, and trust as we work

together to support all our students
during this time.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Regards,
Sharon Ofek
Superintendent

In this issue:

Music In Our Schools Month



For the past 40 years, March has been designated by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) as Music In Our Schools Month® (MIOSM®). Music education not only enriches the lives of young people, but it also helps shape their future, fostering creativity, discipline, and collaboration, leaving a lasting and lifelong impact on the lives of students. Ensuring equitable access to music education is vital as it provides all students with opportunities that extend beyond the classroom.

Every day, in classrooms and rehearsal rooms across Carmel Unified School District, music educators dedicate themselves to reaching all students with life-changing musical experiences. Parents, administrators, and the wider community benefit from the wonderful results of music performances; however, what is often overlooked are the months of practice and rehearsals and more

Carmel Unified School District celebrates Music in Our Schools Month by hosting three spectacular music festivals: choral, orchestral, and band. These festivals provide a platform for students to showcase their musical abilities, hard work, and accomplishments throughout the year as well as their progress from one year to the next. These performances not only celebrate the students' growth as musicians, but also honor the profound effect that music has on their lives. Through these performances, music's unique power to make us laugh, cry, and experience joy and gratitude is on full display, reminding us all of the ways in which music transforms and connects us.

Music is an essential part of every student's educational journey in CUSD and I encourage everyone to join me in celebrating the music educators who instill in our students a love of music.

importantly the learning process that takes place to make it all happen.

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The final performance, featuring band students from across the district, is this evening, April 2, 2025, at 7pm at Sunset Center.



Special Shout Out

A special shout out goes to the Captain Cooper Orchestra students who had a 100% participation rate at the Orchestra Festival. Thanks to the remarkable support of their teachers, parent volunteers, and the River School music teacher, these students successfully navigated some unique challenges this school year.



Celebrating Middle School Students

Past newsletters have highlighted the accomplishments of high school students in CUSD; however, it's also important to recognize the tremendous success of middle (and elementary) school students. These young students excel in a variety of areas, and their efforts deserve to be celebrated. Principal Morgan regularly celebrates the student successes in the weekly CMS newsletter, which is shared only within the CMS community. Here are a few recent highlights that demonstrate the hard work and dedication demonstrated by CMS middle school students and emphasizes the talent and potential that exists within our students.

Carmel Middle School students have enjoyed a run of recent success on both an individual and team level.

Recently, CMS was thrilled to honor 7th grade student, Charlotte Biederwell, for winning our school's spelling bee. Charlotte then advanced to the



8th grade student Sparrow Picard made the CMS Library Wall of Fame by winning our Pi Day competition after reciting an incredible 134 digits of the world's most famous never ending number.

Finally, after a great season and career at CMS, 8th grade student, Leo Glazier, was selected to play for the Monterey County All Star Basketball Team helping lead his team to a win over the Santa Cruz County All Stars.

On the team front, CMS has also had great success. Our Science Olympiad team traveled to compete in San Mateo and despite having only 5 students (most teams have 15), our small crew finished in 6th place. Even more remarkable, each student earned two medals and one student came home with 3! Congratulations to Bianca Dyas, Sparrow Picard, Austin Lin, Fiona Malone, and Olympiad Coach, Joe Guzzi!

CMS was also well represented in the County Science Fair with 9 students

county level where she finished the competition in 2nd place! In addition, Henry Bartle, another CMS 7th grade student, recently competed in the Indoor National Track and Field Championship in Boston, Massachusetts. Henry qualified to compete in the one mile race and finishing 3rd in his heat and 16th overall for all middle school boys.

8th grade student, Landon Levingston, was crowned the CMS E-Sports Champion, narrowly defeating Liam Little in the championship match.

selected to participate in the event. Jade Granberry, Michelle Nguyen, Vivian Lander, Connor Thomas, Sparrow Picard, Anya Grieser, Sienna Ketcham, Stella Ingram, and Maddie Whitford all earned the right to show off their projects and numerous projects came home with awards including Jade Granberry earning a second place finish and a special award from the International Society of Electrical Engineers.

It's been a fantastic run for CMS and we're excited to celebrate these accomplishments with our students!



Supporting Youth Mental Health: The California Youth Behavioral Health Initiatives

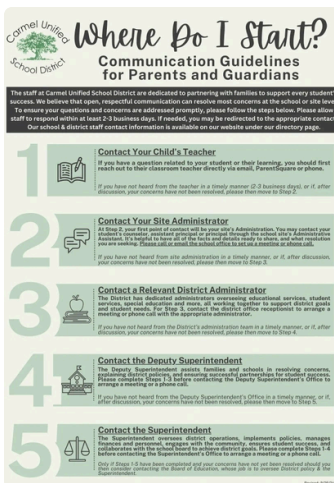
Carmel Unified School District is committed to supporting the well-being of our students, and we are excited to share a valuable resource available on our district website: the **California Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI)** webpage. This initiative provides critical mental health support and resources for young people and their families, ensuring access to care when it is needed most. The webpage offers information about available services, local partnerships, and ways to connect with professional support. We encourage families to explore this resource and join us in prioritizing student wellness. Visit the page at **CUSD Mental Health & Wellness** to learn more.

REMINDER "Where Do I Start?" Guidelines

Open, respectful communication can resolve most concerns at the school or site level. We are committed to answering your questions and ensuring your concerns are addressed promptly.

Please consult the guide below to help you decide whom to contact with any issues your student may be facing. This infographic will be located on each site and the District's directory pages.

Link to [Communications Guidelines for CUSD Parents & Guardians](#).



Earth Day

As we approach Earth Day on April 22nd, we encourage our students, staff, and families to take small steps to care for our planet. Whether it's picking up litter, planting a tree, or reducing waste, every action counts.

At Carmel Unified, we value environmental stewardship and appreciate our community's efforts to help protect the beautiful natural surroundings we are so lucky to call home. Together, we can make a difference!

Cyberbullying Prevention Workshop

CUSD is partnering with *Harmony@Home* for a parent workshop on the important topic of **Cyberbullying**. This workshop will take place both via Zoom and in-person at the CHS Library on April 10, 2025 from 5:30 - 6:30pm. We hope that you can make it in person and meet our new Bullying Prevention Coach, but for those who cannot attend in person, please **register for the workshop using this Zoom link**

The workshop will cover three main areas:

- **Cyberbullying** - the latest trends and key warning signs related to the rapidly growing issue of cyberbullying.
- **Digital Citizenship** - Discover effective ways to talk with your child about the meaning and importance of Digital Citizenship.
- **Rights & Responsibilities** - Join the conversation about how our students are being protected—and learn how parents may be legally responsible for their children's actions online.



3/12/25 Board of Education Mtg. Highlights

Reports/Presentations

- District staff presented the **Second Interim Budget Report** and received approval from the Board of Education along with a Positive Certification. Based on the current analysis and multi-year projections, the Carmel Unified School District is projected to meet its financial obligations for the current and next two years, enabling the district to provide stability in programs and services to students and the community.
- The Board approved tentative agreements between CUSD and its Collective Bargaining Partners, ACT & CSEA Unions, relating to salary & wages.

For further information regarding the above agenda items, **visit the District's Board Meeting Agenda Platform GAMUT** or **watch the CUSD 3.12.25 Board Meeting on the District's Board Meeting YouTube Channel.**

Next Board of Education Regular Meeting:
April 9, 2024



Highlight from Last Month's Newsletter:



Spring Celebrations in Our Community

Our school district community is committed to fostering understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural traditions within our community. As spring arrives, we would like to share some of the holidays celebrated by our students and families with you:

- Ramadan, observed from the evening of February 28 through March 29, is a holy month of fasting, prayer, and reflection for Muslims worldwide. Eid al-Fitr, celebrated on or near March 30, marks the end of Ramadan with joyous feasting, prayers, and charitable giving.
- Nowruz, the Persian New Year celebrated on March 20, symbolizes renewal and the arrival of spring, observed with family gatherings, festive meals, and traditional rituals.
- Vesak, celebrated on May 12, commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha. It is observed with acts of generosity, meditation, and reflection as well as colorful decorations and processions in Buddhist communities worldwide.
- Holi, celebrated on March 14, is a Hindu festival known as the "Festival of Colors," that marks the onset of spring and represents renewal, good luck, and positivity. It also signifies the triumph of good over evil and is marked by vibrant celebrations and joyous gatherings.
- Easter, celebrated on April 20, is a Christian holiday commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

observed with church services, egg hunts, and festive meals with family and friends.

- Passover, observed from the evening of April 12 through April 20, is a Jewish holiday commemorating the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt, observed with ceremonial meals called seders, retelling the story of Exodus, and refraining from leavened foods.

Photo Credit: Aspen Institute