

January 27, 2016

RISE UP

RESPECT
INTEGRITY
STRENGTH
EXCELLENCE

UNDERSTANDING
PRIDE



Principal Update

Columbia Academy, as part of Columbia Heights Public Schools, is dedicated to College and Career readiness upon graduation for all students. We know that doing well in high school is much more likely if students have developed strong academic skills in middle school. Research shows that grades and attendance in middle school are the best predictors that a student will graduate from high school prepared for college and career. This means middle school can largely determine a student's educational pathway. While it is never too late to turn things around, middle school is the time to build a strong foundation that makes success in later years much more likely. We encourage all parents to become more familiar with the many resources available to work with your child on creating a dream of going to college one day and setting weekly goals to achieve this in the work they do in middle school.

Columbia
Academy

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Principal
Duane Berkas

Assistant Principal
Jon Moberg

Assistant Principal
Rick Ostby

Dean
Camille Erickson

OUR MISSION

Columbia Heights Public Schools create **worlds of opportunity for every learner** in partnership with supportive small-town communities by challenging all to discover their talents, unleash their potential and develop tools for lifelong success.

Columbia Academy News

Welcome David Larson

David Larson is a highly respected Dakota elder and widely known for his work to promote college and career readiness to American Indians in Minnesota. We are proud to announce that Mr. Larson is also Columbia Academy's new liaison to our American Indian students and families through the program Check and Connect. Mr. Larson will be meeting with students, contacting parents, and providing guidance to teachers and administrators on how we can better serve our American Indian community. We are proud to have Mr. Larson on our team and eager to learn from him.



RISE UP breakfast

The RISE UP breakfast for Quarter 2 recognized over 50 Columbia Academy students for their acts of respect, integrity, strength, excellence, understanding, and pride. Parents and teachers joined our RISE UP students in the Media Center for the presentation of the awards. Congratulations to our RISE UP students for helping foster a positive culture in our school.



Columbia Academy News

Robotics Team Heading to State



Columbia Academy hosted the regional 6-12 Robotics First competition on January 9th. After a full day of competition, two of CA's robots and team members were on winning alliances that head on to the State tournament. Congratulations Coach Kennedy and team members!



Columbia Academy homework lab

Columbia Academy has a Homework Lab every Monday and Thursday from 3:15 – 4:30. Students need to sign up with approval from parents in order to participate. Staff will be present to assist and supervise each night. A snack will also be provided. There is transportation home for those who normally take the after school bus (this bus requires students to walk several blocks when they are dropped off; please check with us if you have questions.) We are hopeful that we can get any student who needs assistance in getting things done to attend the Homework Lab on a weekly basis. We encourage you to consider the Homework Lab for your child. Please contact us if you would like him or her to take advantage of this resource! Tutors are also there to help.

Columbia Academy News

CA hosts Columbia Heights 5th graders

Columbia Academy greeted next year's 6th graders with cheers and student-led tours of our school. The 5th graders were able to hear about the many opportunities available here and see the building that we hope will be their school next year. The 5th graders asked many questions about uniforms, after school activities, and AVID. We were pleased to have this wonderful group of students with us and look forward to seeing each of them here in our hallways and classrooms next year.



Student Council fundraiser continues



The Columbia Academy Student Council's annual Pennies for Patients campaign has officially started. The campaign will continue through the end of February. A percentage of all donations are spent on patient and community services, research, public health and professional education but a portion this year will also go directly to Patrick Baumgardner and his family. Patrick is a student in the school district who is currently being treated for Leukemia. We are encouraging all students and staff to bring pennies from home as part of this very worthy cause.

Cart Managers rise up!

A big thank you to all of our Cart Managers for their assistance in keeping our tablets charged and ready to go each day. Technology Integration Specialist Amy Oelschlager and Principal Berkas thanked the Cart Managers with donuts and juice on January 16th and were pleased to see their commitment to stick with the job they do so well each day in the second semester. Thank you Cart Managers for rising up!



Columbia Academy News

CA Band performance wows audience

The first Columbia Academy Band Concert took place last Tuesday evening in the High School auditorium. Conductors Todd Boyd, Nicole Rubis-Aakre, and Ryan Palmer led four different bands in an amazing selection of works. The auditorium was nearly full for all the performances with the audience swaying to a final medley of Michael Jackson tunes complete with a rousing drum set. It was truly a night to make parents, students, and teachers proud of the hard work and resulting excellence that was on display. Thank you students and conductors for wowing us with your music.



CA Athletics Update

- The Boys Basketball team had a very successful month of January. With lots of players on the team, Coach Opatz has been playing selected squads in different games to make sure everyone has a chance to play. With home games against Fridley and other schools still to come, there will more excitement in our gym in February.
- We have approximately 25 students participating on our high school athletic teams including gymnastics, wrestling, girls' basketball, dance, and boys' swimming. We congratulate them for being part of these teams and look forward to watching them compete for many years to come!

Columbia Academy Geography Bee finalists!

The Geography Bee took eight rounds, a building record, to determine a winner this year. Congratulations to the final participants pictured below and especially our school winner Michael King! Can you name the only country in the world that starts with the letter O?



Columbia Academy News

Thank you!

Thank you to the Booster Club for the fun pizza supper followed by the girl's basketball game last Friday.

Thank you to Math teacher Frances Lewenstein and the Student Council for hosting a fun end of quarter Fun Night including a dance, sports, and games.

Thank you to the Moe family for their kind donations of Anthony's clarinet as well as \$500 which will be used to assist with a memorial to both Anthony and Samantha in our library.

Breakfast with the Principal in February

We will resume the long tradition of breakfast with the principal at Columbia Academy with the new year. Come join our administrative staff on Friday, February 19th from 8:30—9:30 for coffee and rolls. This is a chance for us to discuss programs in school, make suggestions and get to know each other.

Important Dates:

Feb 1—29: 6th grade water safety

February 2: Culture of Academics Night (6:30)

February 6: State Robotics Meet, Bloomington Kennedy High School (all day)

February 8: CA Parent Advisory Council (5:30)

February 15: President's Day (No school)

February 19: Principal Breakfast (8:30)

February 25: CA Conferences (4-7:30)

March 3: CA Conferences (4-7:30)

School Board Elections

Naty Severson was unofficially elected to the Columbia Heights Public School District Board of Education Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2016. Severson will serve the remaining year of former Director Lori Meyer's term. As the current term for the seat is entering its fourth and final year, the seat will also be on the Nov. 8, 2016 ballot. Severson unofficially received 351 votes. Hala Asamarai received 281 votes and there were five write-in votes.

The second open seat Special Primary Election is scheduled for Feb. 9 with the Special Election for this seat set for April 5, 2016.

College Readiness Opportunities in High School

Did you know that Columbia Heights High School offers multiple ways for students to earn college credits for free while they are in high school? As early as 10th grade, qualifying students can access classes at local universities and technical colleges with no tuition costs. Columbia Heights High School is also partnering with Anoka Ramsey Community College to offer college credit classes within the high school itself. Finally, there are 13 different Advanced Placement (AP) classes at the high school that students can take with final exams that can result in students getting credit for these classes in college. These opportunities can save families lots of money while offering great preparation for successfully completing college. More information is on our website.