

February 29, 2016

RISE UP

RESPECT
INTEGRITY
STRENGTH
EXCELLENCE

UNDERSTANDING
PRIDE



Principal Update

February has a reputation among educators as being a month of restless students who are tiring of winter and school. Winter days are dark and cold but school does not need to be a dreary place. As I walk through our building, here are some of the things I see your children doing in classrooms:

- Participating in Socratic seminars—a highly active form of classroom discussion
- Creating Spoken Word presentations—a popular new form of modern poetry
- Playing gaga ball—a fast moving and fun game from Israel that combines kick ball and dodge ball
- Participating in readers theater—an expressive reading of stories by class that brings literature to life
- Creating amazing artwork—come see our walls!

These are just some ways that CA teachers keep our students active and learning. Columbia Academy was just the place to be in February!

Columbia
Academy

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Principal
Duane Berkas

Assistant Principal
Jon Moberg

Assistant Principal
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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

Parent Teacher Conferences—March 3rd!

Parent Teacher Conferences are Thursday, March 3rd from 4:00—

7:30. We hope all parents who could not attend the February conference will be able to attend. This is an opportunity to speak directly with your child's teacher and make plans on how you can work together to help your child be successful the rest of the school year. We look forward to seeing you!



CA AVID interviews in March

AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) is a system-wide approach to promoting academic achievement that leads to college readiness. AVID has been at our high school for over six years and has helped many students be the first in their family to ever go to college. Columbia Academy implemented AVID school-wide this year. One strategy is our daily binders and planners. Next year, we will also have an AVID elective class for 7th graders. In this class, students will work with a teacher and tutors to develop a strong set of college-readiness skills including writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and critical reading. Invitations will go out to current 6th grade students and parents to apply to be part of this class. Please contact us for more information.

CA Solo/Ensemble on March 10th

The 2016 CA Solo/Ensemble performances are scheduled for **March 10th at 6:30 at Columbia Academy**. This year's program will have a café theme and thus will take place in our cafetorium! Our directors are planning to join in the performances for a joint student/teacher production. Come celebrate music and the hard work of your child!



Columbia Academy News

Spoken Word Artist works with CA students

Sixth-grade theater students at Columbia Academy have been preparing for their next performances and received a lesson from Spoken Word Artist [Frank Sentwali](#) of COMPAS (Community Programs in the Arts) during a workshop Tuesday, Feb. 16. Sentwali performed multiple spoken word pieces* for the students, shared the history and evolution of the art, as well as stories that have inspired his own written work throughout the years.



Water safety classes for sixth graders

The Columbia Academy PE team has once again provided water safety instruction as part of the 6th grade PE curriculum. PE teachers Allicia Anderson and Amber Wroblewski were joined by the CHHS swim coach Blair Eckstrom at the pool each school day in February where they provided water safety lessons for our 6th graders. With swimming being one of the leading causes of death of adolescents, we feel this is an essential component of the curriculum. A special thank you to the full CA PE team and the Office of Teaching and Learning for making this possible!

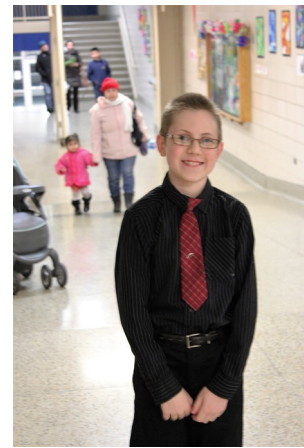
MCA Prep sessions

English teachers at CA are helping students prepare for the MCAs through after school practice sessions. Math teachers have sent home goal sheets and are working with students regularly after school as well. MCA scores are used for placement of students in next years classes and are an important indicator of whether or not a child is on a college and career pathway. Please encourage your child to work with his/her teachers to get prepared!



Columbia Academy News

Columbia Academy celebrates culture of academics



The first Culture of Academics Night was celebrated at Columbia Academy in February. Our gym was full of students and proud parents who came to celebrate their academic success in the first half of the school year. Awards that were part of this evening included A and B Honor Roll, Academic Growth, Geography Bee finalists, and Scholastic Arts Award winners. Students were given the message that their achievements are important and that their hard work is valued by their parents, our school, and the community. It is also our hope that formal nights of recognition can provide motivation to more students to work hard so they can be part of these celebrations in the future. A big thank you to those who donated time and money to make this event possible; a big thank you to parents for coming and demonstrating you are serious about your child's success.

Columbia Academy News

CA United Basketball Team wins on and off court



The CA United Basketball team took first place in their tournament at Bethel College this past week. Congratulations to the many players from Ms. Bluth's and Ms. Kenevan's classes as well as Ms. Nelson's WEB leaders. The Columbia Academy United Team built relationships among an amazing group of students. We are proud of each member who played hard, cheered loudly, and showed what it means to RISE UP! Here are a couple of comments from the team members:

"My favorite part of today was playing with and really meeting Ms. Bluth's kids. I'm proud of how well we all worked together and played as a team. I learned that this school has a lot of determined and dedicated people here. I like that we all treat each other equally and that we all get along"

"I liked being a fan and cheering for all of the teams. We had an impact today and were able to join something very special. We made a difference."

"I really enjoyed seeing everyone's faces when we all made points, had perfect shots, and tried our hardest. I loved seeing their emotions, and that they could have this really fun chance to be like everyone and also have fun. I think we showed RISE UP today by cheering for every team and we had very good sportsmanship. I'm so proud to be part of Columbia Heights"

Columbia Academy News

Supporting academic success

Columbia Academy is working to implement a system of supports for all students. This includes working with students more intensively through mentorship and tutoring both during and after school. We know that many of our students who struggle in large classes can do great things with more guidance from adults. Here are three programs we have started this year. If you are interested in volunteering in school, we would love to talk to you about opportunities to work with us during or after school!

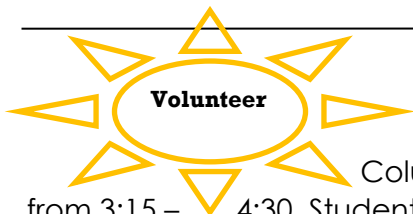
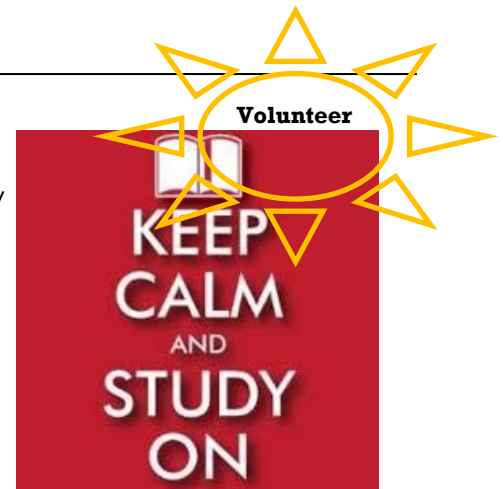


CA Mentorship Program

Columbia Academy is piloting a formal mentoring program with some of its students. Both building and district staff have volunteered to be part of the program and to check in with their mentees for at least 20 minutes every week. This is one more way we hope to influence our students to RISE UP and to be more successful in school and in life. It is a short amount of time but over 50 students in our school now know they have one more adult in their life with a vested interest in them as individuals.

High School Readiness support

Columbia Academy has implemented a High School Readiness Study Hall for students who are struggling in many of their classes. Our hope is that with time in the day to complete work, these students will be more likely to pass classes. It is also our hope that we can recruit volunteers to work one-on-one with students in the lab on completing assignments. If you are interested, we would love to talk with you about being involved, even if it is just for an hour a week. Please contact us if you are interested in learning more!



After school 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. 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 and/or as a place you could volunteer. Please contact us if you would like to hear more!

Columbia Academy News

CA Robotics completes season in state tournament



One final congratulations to the CA Robotics team who made it all the way to the State Tournament on February 5th and 6th and competed valiantly against mostly high school teams. We are proud of Coach Kennedy and the hard working team!



CA Athletics Update

We had approximately 25 students participating this winter on our high school athletic teams including gymnastics, wrestling, girls' basketball, dance, and boys' swimming. Congratulations to all including Dylan Nichols (see picture) who was the only 8th grader in the conference to reach the section finals in high school boys' swimming.

CA Hylander Band joins high school pep band

Bill Streff, former principal of the middle school, and a man of many good ideas recommended to our band directors that we join the high school pep band for a basketball game. We did and what a great experience it was. Our 8th graders got a taste of the fun they will have at CHHS and our basketball team and fans were given an extra dose of Hylander pride. Thank you Mr. Streff for a great idea and the start of a new tradition!



Columbia Academy News

Thank you!

Thank you to Joanne Student for her kind gift that helped support our Culture of Academics Night. Thank you to the Culture of Academics planning committee, our custodians, the high school choir, parent volunteers, and so many more who helped make the Culture of Academics Night a success.

A special thank you to the Office of Teaching and Learning for their help with swimming, AVID, PLCs, and more. It is greatly appreciated!

Breakfast with the Principal in February

We have resumed the long tradition of breakfast with the principal at Columbia Academy with the new year. Come join our administrative staff on Friday, March 11th 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:

Parent-Teacher

Conferences



CA Solo/Ensemble	March 3 4:00 – 7:30
Homework lab	March 10 6:30 p.m.
Homework lab	March 7 3:15-4:30
Homework lab	March 10 3:15-4:30
Homework lab	March 14 3:15 –4:30
Homework lab	March 17 3:15-4:30
Spring Break (no school)	March 21 – 25
Homework lab	March 28 3:15—4:30
Homework lab	March 31 3:15 –4:30
End of third quarter	March 31
CA Spring Dance	March 31 3:30
RISE UP breakfast	April 5 th

School Board Elections

For more information on the elections or other school board news, please see the district website.

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.