

July 25, 2011

Dear Patrons:

Greetings! I trust that everyone has had a pleasant summer break (it seems it has been very short). Here at school, we have been busy in preparation for what we hope will be a successful, productive year. Some of our school family have endured trying ordeals during the summer and we wish to continue to support them and remember them in our prayers. I do hope all of us have had some opportunity to relax a little and “recharge our batteries” for the upcoming school year.

We extend a warm welcome to the newest members of the CA family. We currently have 15 students in the K-3 class with Mrs. Judy Tolar. Total enrollment for kindergarten currently stands at 103(9 more than a year ago), elementary enrollment is 264(25 more than a year ago), and there are 259(18 more than a year ago) students registered for grades 7-12. This total of 626 represents an increase of approximately 7% compared to the figures from last year. Please help us to continue promoting our school and the good things happening here. While this growth makes us proud and thankful, it does create problems also. As a result of the growth trend, we have created a third section for our second grade and employed Mrs. Courtney Mitchell as an instructor. Also, we have added modular classrooms for the two K-5 classes. Future plans include a permanent facility for our kindergarten classes. Please prayerfully consider financial opportunities to make these plans come to fruition quickly. Make a commitment to share this information with someone who may be considering our school as a place to educate and nurture their child. Each patron should be a positive ambassador for our school in their respective community. Contact me, Mrs. Angie, or Mrs. Myra if you have questions concerning this matter.

Here is a list of important announcements and other information.

(1) Work Day-July 30 8:00 AM

Our annual work day will be Saturday, July 30 at 8:00 a.m. and continue until we get tired and cease. Obviously, the larger the number of people willing to attend and work, the more that can be accomplished in a shorter time period. Everyone is encouraged to attend. You will have the opportunity to help prepare our facilities for the upcoming year, renew old acquaintances, and meet new faces. Mowers, trimmers, weed eaters, shears, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, and chainsaws might be useful. If you have questions or suggestions, you may wish to contact Mr. Randy Rowell who is the chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee.

(2) Kindergarten Orientation- August 4 This year, the Kindergarten Orientation will be held simultaneously with the orientation for other students. The Kindergarten Orientation will be held in the “Bull” Flynt gymnasium while students in grades 1-12 will meet in the Fine Arts Building. I realize this may be an inconvenience for those who have students in both settings. Perhaps someone could represent you at one session, if that is necessary. At this event you will receive information concerning our kindergarten and be given the opportunity to ask questions.

(3) First Day of School-August 4

All students (grades 1-12) and visitors should report to the Fine Arts Building on Thursday, August 4, 2011 for an opening assembly to begin at 8:00 a.m. After the welcome, some introductions, and brief remarks, the elementary students will be dismissed to their rooms. Teachers of those students will impart important information at that time. Students in grades 7-12 will remain in the FAB for additional instructions. After these remarks, students will report to their homerooms for more orientation and then follow an abbreviated schedule. School will dismiss for grades 7-12 at 12:00 p.m. No lunch will be served that day, nor will after-school day care service be available. Friday, August 5 will be a full day of school with the cafeteria open. Students should be in total compliance with the handbook in reference to dress and hair. That day will NOT be a class T-shirt day. All students whose parents or guardians had delinquent accounts as of July 31 will be asked to please not attend until the account is settled.

(4) Traffic Diagram

We will follow the same traffic pattern as we have in the past. For those unloading on the west side of the campus (near Mrs. Hitt’s room), please pull forward to the flag pole if you are first in line. Please encourage your student to have books, book bags, and all other necessary items in hand when you pull up on campus so that they may exit the vehicle quickly. We certainly do NOT want to create a dangerous situation, but we also do not wish to delay the normal flow of traffic. Please be patient, especially in the afternoons, for the first few weeks of school. Placing your student’s name and grade in the windshield of your vehicle would be extremely helpful. Until 4:00 p.m., the entrance on Old Lakeview Road is only an entrance. When exiting the campus onto Highway 98, school traffic will merge from the west (jr. high and high school) and the south (kindergarten and elementary). Please be patient, considerate, and extremely cautious during these times. Remember that school buses have the right-of-way and be very observant of the 98 traffic.

(5) Cougar Store

Mrs. Sylvia Berry continues to run the Cougar Store located in the gym. When she is not there, Mrs. Amy Moree will be present. The store offers students and patrons the opportunity to purchase many items reflecting Cougar Pride as well as uniform shirts and apparel.

(6) Cafeteria

Mr. Mike Barber continues to serve as our cafeteria manger. The Cougar Cafe offers a delicious, nutritious lunch at a very affordable price when compared with off-campus eateries. Changes in the cafeteria are minor compared to last year, but we are committed to finding ways to improve our facility and make it more efficient. You are encouraged to support the cafeteria, show them patience as they serve us, compliment Mike and his staff on their hard work, and refrain from ordering other lunches for your student.

(7)Staff

I am very excited about the potential possessed by our faculty and staff this year. This will be a stressful year with great challenges, but I am confident we will meet expectations. Mrs. Angie Burkett returns to serve in the role of Assistant Headmaster and has added the duties of elementary principal. Angie has more than thirty years of experience as a science teacher and an administrator in the public schools. I encourage you to pray for her, and support her all you can. Mrs. Belinda Teston returns for her sixth year as our guidance counselor and Mr. Rick Thompson will continue his role as our attendance clerk and advisor. Coach Kenneth Williams, who joined the faculty last January, will be our Athletic Director and Head Football Coach. New faculty members include Mrs. Courtney Mitchell (2nd grade) and Coach Jerrod Jordan (English and speech). Mrs. Margaret Ann Stringer, who has served as a teacher's assistant, will be one of our four year old kindergarten instructors this year. Be certain to make these folks feel welcomed and support them in every way you can. We have created a third second grade section and I am confident that all of our faculty and staff will strive diligently to make meaningful contributions to our educational efforts. Mrs. Mimi DeOrnellas returns as our kindergarten coordinator. As we had last year, there will be two K-5 classes, two K-4 classes, and one K-3 class. Thankfully, Mrs. Myra, Mrs. Judy, and Mrs. Sheryll are all returning. Mrs. Merenda Hill will be helping in the office part time. Mrs. Tawanna Herring will continue her bus route, and Mrs. Melissa McCain will operate our other route.

(8)Academics

While I certainly believe in the importance of "educating the whole child" and seeing each grow and mature through athletics, arts, and civic involvement, my philosophy is that the academic growth of our students is our primary concern. Not all growth in this area is measured by grades or test scores, but these are important. In a perfect world, each student would work hard to obtain all the knowledge for which he is capable. I encourage students and parents to set high, but reasonable goals and work with us to strive to reach these standards. The school, the student, and the home must work together to achieve this. When a problem arises with any of the three parties, I encourage a meeting to talk rationally and politely to address the issue. Rather than criticize and accuse, let us try to assess and offer positive solutions. We will encourage our faculty to challenge our students, help them if they struggle, and encourage them to cope with disappointments. I implore you as parents and guardians to converse with your student about subject matter and achievement. You need not wait until progress report time to assess their achievement. Contact Mrs. Teston for an appointment when necessary. Our secondary curriculum includes advanced classes to prepare our students for the rigor they

are likely to encounter in college. Continuing with past policy, schedule changes will rarely be allowed. Valid reasons for changes, however, may be submitted and will be reviewed by the administration.

(9) Pizza Party, Meet the Cougars Night, Football Jamboree

On Tuesday, August 16 at 6:00 p.m., Columbia Academy will once again sponsor a pizza party. Tickets may be purchased at the Cougar Store or the business office. At approximately 6:30, we will celebrate Meet The Cougars Night in the gym where many of our fall sports teams will be introduced. All grade levels are welcomed and encouraged to attend these two events. Among the teams to be showcased are all levels of football, the softball and cross-country teams, dance, and cheerleaders. Also, Columbia Academy will host its 10th Annual Football Jamboree on Friday, August 12 and we will also host a Junior High Jamboree on Thursday, August 11. Tickets for each event will be \$ 5.00 and you are invited to come enjoy the football, food, and fellowship.

(10) Athletics

Expectations are high for all of our athletic teams this year. Competition is about to begin and practices have already begun for softball, football, and cross-country. Our basketball teams and cheerleaders attended camps this summer. The JV dance team has been busy in preparation for its performances. We sincerely ask for your continued support through your attendance, financial contributions, and verbal praise. These youngsters are not professional, but they work very hard and make sacrifices to perform their respective activities. A true fan will remember to be quick to praise and slow to criticize. I would also ask you to remember that our competition, other coaches and the officials are not our enemy. I encourage you to voice approval for any great effort by any of these young people and make every attempt to not ridicule any mistake made by any performer, athlete, coach, or official. I would like to think that after every contest or performance, those who attended, regardless of their affiliation or school loyalty, would be able to truly say that those associated with Columbia Academy displayed **CLASS**.

(11) Web-Site

We will again be updating our website(www.cacougars.com). The monthly school calendar found there should be up to date and very informative. Suggestions from you are welcomed. Hopefully, you found the site as you are reading this information.

(12) Handbook

Due to the increased cost of publishing the student handbook annually, the handbook will only be published digitally on the website. Students and parents will still sign the form indicating that they have reviewed the handbook and accept its terms. If a student does not have access to a computer with internet, the school will print a copy of the handbook for a fee of \$5.00. Requests may be made to Mrs. Myra Williams in her office. The handbook with this year's revisions will be available on the website on August 5. The handbook forms are enclosed herein and should be signed and turned in by Wednesday, August 10, 2011.

(13) Attendance


It is very important for students to be in school everyday. Of course, we realize that sickness and family crises will arise. However, any absence that is not a necessity hurts the student and invariably causes the teacher additional time and effort. Please review the portion of the handbook concerning tardies, absences, and make-up work. Our school's policy is that if a student exceeds the maximum number of allowed absences, the time must be made up before receiving credit or passing. For this school year, all make-up work due to excessive absences will be on a SATURDAY and the student will be responsible for compensating the supervisor. See the student handbook for more details. Attendance on the days exams are scheduled is especially important. There will be no giving of exams early this year other than for a school activity. Please make any travel plans accordingly. If an exam is missed and can not be made up the next day, the student will likely receive an incomplete and be asked to come in later to take a make-up test. In the event that a 4th 9-weeks exam is missed, the test must be made up by June 15, 2012. All other make-up work (such as that assigned because of excessive absences) must also be made up by this date.

(14) Contributions

We have been successful over the past years with our fundraising efforts. However, only a small number of our patrons have made contributions. Facing the difficult economic times we now encounter makes contributing to a worthy cause even more difficult, but please give some thought to making this sacrifice. If you personally know of someone who is in a position to make a financial contribution, please ask them to consider helping Columbia Academy. Because of the generous contributions of caring individuals we have been able to improve our facilities, improve equipment, outfit our athletes, and provide additional instructional technology.

Finally, I sincerely request that each of you spend time in prayer for our students, faculty, staff, support personnel, and for me. I know there will be numerous times when I make a decision not to your liking, but I pledge to make those decisions only after giving the matter adequate thought about the effect that action may have on your student. I wish the best for you and your student and will work toward achieving this goal. I will be happy to discuss concerns with you and will listen to your complaints and suggestions. Even when we disagree, you have the right to be heard and I respect your freedom to tactfully express your opinion. May God continue to bless our school this year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Baxter White, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Baxter White, Jr.