

# Community School of Davidson

## August Open House

### Elementary and Middle School FAQ

*"A small group of thoughtful people could change the world.*

*Indeed, it is the only thing that ever did."*

Margaret Mead

1:00 High School Open House – no general session

2:30 Middle School Open House

General sessions: 2:30 – 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 3:00 8<sup>th</sup> grade

3:30 Elementary School – no general session

**A Word from Joy:** My biggest hesitation about giving up the 45 minute general sessions at the August Open House was that I would lose my opportunity to personally welcome you back as well as my one moment to share our insight and vision for the coming year. You see, the true magic in CSD is directly related to the people and relationships that exist in our school. I deeply believe that CSD magic is fragile like a marriage or any relationship. With care and attention and effort, it can only get better. However, if we allow the negativity of the world around us to enter into our special school, we could lose the magic that we all so deeply value. In middle school, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students study the human body in a biology unit. I am always struck by the interconnectedness of the human body. Stress or sickness in one portion of the body very quickly impacts other portions of the body. When I sit at my computer too long without stretching my muscles, I quickly have a low back ache, shoulder pain, neck pain, and then comes the headache. Interconnectedness. This same phenomenon is alive and well in our school each day. I recently heard an ad on the radio state that the average adult smiles around 50-60 times per day. I chuckled to myself thinking that the parents and staff members at CSD break that record in the first two hours of the day! Why and how do we always make it so? Although CSD is not a perfect place, there is much to smile about as we look around. Our children are loved. Our students are honored. Our parents care about all children, not just their own. We are helping other schools change and grow by sharing the expertise of our teachers and our curricular materials. Our teachers work hard but they love harder! Our school is a positive and happy place and yes, brain research proves that this DEFINITELY impacts learning. We started out as a school with 18 children in a mobile unit hosted by a gracious local church and this year, we are finally serving 937 students in elementary, middle and high school. Our children will make a difference in this world. I believe it with my whole heart. CSD will make a

difference in education beyond the lives of our own students. As we begin a new year, please know that we realize our school is not perfect. We will make mistakes. We will apologize. We will sometimes disagree. However, our intention is always pure. We wake up each day with the hope of helping children reach their potential and when we make mistakes, we apologize and try harder the next day. It is our intention to leave this world better than we found it and we hope that you share this vision with us and will do the same. Let's all be appreciative and humble. Let's all carefully choose our words. Let's all assume the best of each other rather than the worst. Let's all take a deep breath and remember that we are on the same team even when something goes wrong. Let's take a day or two to ponder and think before we shoot off a hurtful email. Let's go directly to each other when we have issues rather than talking to others and promoting negativity.

Recently, a wonderful CSD parent shared a quote with me from Nice Bike, by Mark Scharenbroich author of I am Creed that we use at CSD). When he writes about honoring, connecting and acknowledging others, he says, "It's being passionate about serving others, not because of what it does for you, but of what it does for the person being served....It's becoming a contributing and active member of a group or organization. It's building a foundation for a lasting relationship strengthened by personal contact. When you communicate a kind message, you honor and connect with others. Those you may never know the true measure of your action, it can be life changing." I hope that we can keep these words in our minds and our hearts as we strive to continue our journey at CSD in a loving and giving way that always focuses on what is best for all children. Thanks for sharing your precious children with us this year. Know that we feel the enormity of that responsibility and are honored to have your trust. Our staff revisits important quotes and thoughts on a weekly basis to keep us focused. Below is a quote we have discussed many times. Know that we take this responsibility as the life of our school.

***"I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized."*** (Dr. Haim Ginot)

## Open House FAQ

### Administration:

- Joy Warner [jwarner@csdnc.org](mailto:jwarner@csdnc.org)
- Kevin Green [kgreen@csdnc.org](mailto:kgreen@csdnc.org)
- Leslie Tomko [ltomko@csdnc.org](mailto:ltomko@csdnc.org)
- Marianne Coale [mcoale@cadnc.org](mailto:mcoale@cadnc.org)
- Ralph Pillsbury [rpillsbury@csdnc.org](mailto:rpillsbury@csdnc.org)
- Connie Wessner [cwessner@csdnc.org](mailto:cwessner@csdnc.org)

## **Student Placement Process:**

At CSD we take this process very seriously. Teachers and administrators work together in the spring to create balanced classrooms where students are placed with best fit teachers. We conduct new student screening to allow us to better place students who are new to CSD and we greatly appreciate parent and former teacher input to this process. We do not take teacher requests as this promotes a competitive environment among teachers which directly negatively impacts children. We ask our teachers to work closely as teams as they work and plan together. Thus, all students get the benefit of the all teachers at their grade level rather than just the teacher they have that year. This part of our collaborative environment of CSD is very special and we appreciate parents respecting this policy and appreciating all teachers at CSD as dedicated professionals.

## **Parent Handbook:**

Please pick up a parent handbook at the front foyer during the open house if you are new to CSD. We appreciate your taking time to read this each year. Note a few important points.

- **Elementary School** - Dress for mess at CSD. Students will do many messy activities. Please do not send them to school in clothes that are irreplaceable. Close toed tennis shoes are required every day in elementary school. No exceptions. We run, and jump and dance and climb every day. Please do not put teachers in the awkward situation of addressing shoes with students. We want their time to be focused on instruction. No umbrellas at school please. We prefer raincoats. Much safer in the halls! 😊
- **Middle School** - No hats in building, no spaghetti straps, no shorts shorter than fingertip length. Students will be asked to change clothes and parents will be contacted if students do not adhere to dress code. Students may wear flip flops, sandals, boots, etc. as long as they have appropriate shoes for P.E. class. Absolutely no cell phones, ipods, technology from home should be seen with students during school hours. Items will be confiscated.

Please note the suggested snack list sent to you already. We only allow healthy snacks during snack time. No cookies, chips and candy for snack, please. Water every day and no sodas or sugary drinks in lunch boxes, please. Thanks for helping us to set healthy eating habits while at school.

## **Sickness and Medication:**

No medication can be administered at school without a doctor's note. Do NOT send medication in with a child in their backpack. Consider the possibilities in a worst case scenario if a child shared medication with another child while in the hall before entering their classrooms in the morning. Although we want students to have great attendance, the health of all is most important. If your child is sick, keep him/her home. If there has been a fever, he/she must be fever free for 24 hours before you send your child back to school. If children have vomited, again, they should be well for 24 hours before they return. We are diligent about hand washing, cleaning of tables, light switches and bathrooms but we need your help as parents to keep our school as healthy as possible.

- **Middle School** – Please note the new immunization requirements for 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Students may not come to school without having this immunization and providing proof to school.
- **Kindergarten** – Health Form, birth certificate and immunization records **MUST** be provided prior to the first day of school.

### **Parent Training Sessions:**

There are MANY opportunities for parents to grow and learn at CSD. We invite you to take advantage of our parent education sessions and book study groups throughout the year. These sessions are always free and open to the public if you have friends in the community who would also like to attend. We have an open door policy with parent volunteers and will use you to support children in our school every day that you want to be here! All parents must attend parent volunteer training (watch for schedule of sessions to come during the first two weeks of school) before volunteering at CSD. We require parents to sign for permission to do a sexual predator background check at this training. Kindergarten parents are asked to refrain from volunteering and visiting in the classrooms until we get all students acclimated. This usually takes about a month and we appreciate your patience.

Please remember that we ask that every family give an average of at least one hour per week to the school. This can be volunteering in the classrooms but for us working parents, there are many weekend, evening and at home tasks that we can do to support the program and students at CSD. Research shows that parents who are actively involved in the school have students who achieve and who understand the importance of education. PLEASE help CSD continue to break the “20/80 rule” (20% of the people do 80% of the volunteer work) of most organizations. Let’s let this be a year of 100% involvement!

### **Absences and Tardies:**

The only absences that are excused are those due to illness, doctor’s visits, and pre-approved educational opportunity trips. **When your child is out sick, you must send a note/email to the teacher so he/she knows to mark as excused. If we do not get a note, we will mark this as unexcused. If your child is tardy due to doctor appointment, you must bring an excused tardy slip from the doctor or we will mark the tardy as unexcused.**

### **After School Enrichment (ASE):**

This usually begins by late September. You will receive information via email as well as you may check the CSD website. Most ASE classes are one hour classes offered once per week for six week sessions. There are many varied opportunities that appeal to different interests including art, sports, dance, drama, martial arts, fitness, etc. We do not currently offer before/after school childcare but we are looking into the possibility for the future.

**Hot Lunch:**

We offer optional hot lunch on Mondays and Tuesdays and this usually begins in mid September. There is a fee for hot lunch but we do have free and reduced lunch forms for families who have financial difficulty. Please email Joy if you need support. We want to help all of our families at CSD as much as possible.

**Lemonade Drop In:**

For the first day of school, **grades 1-5** schedule half day visits to acclimate students in smaller groups. In elementary school, you will register with your classroom teacher to send your child for one of two slots:

- 9:00 -11:00 slot or (drop off carpool will begin at 8:30 and end at 9:00, pick up carpool will begin at 11:00 and end at 11:30)
- 12:30 to 2:30 slot (drop off carpool will begin at 12:00 and end at 12:30, pick up carpool will begin at 2:30 and end at 3:00)

**Kindergarten Students** will make one hour appointments (9:00, 10:00 or 11:00) for class visitations on the first day and parents will stay with their children for the entire visit. We ask that you not bring siblings to this appointment if at all possible so that you can focus all of your attention on your kindergartner's first day of school. It is a very special day.

**Middle School Students** all come for the morning half of the day on the first day of school. You should use the 8:30 – 9:00 drop off and the 11:00 – 11:30 pick up for them.

**Communication:**

We apologize now for the many emails that you will receive from CSD. However, it is our best tool for keeping parents informed and an integral part of our school community. If you are not getting mass emails from us currently, please let an administrator know immediately. We also encourage you to check our CSD website [csdnc.org](http://csdnc.org) regularly for important information. Many of your questions can be answered by checking our website.

- **Elementary** - You will receive weekly newsletters from elementary teachers.
- **Middle school** - Teachers will also send regular newsletters but the distribution schedule varies for each team. Elementary students will bring home a weekly communication folder and this is important for you to look over each week. Middle school students also use an agenda and accordion folder for organization and time management and you will also want to look at these daily. One of our main goals in middle school is to help our students learn basic organizational skills to prepare them for high school, college and life. For many students, these skills do not come naturally and they require the constant intervention of parents and teachers. We promise, though, that if you are diligent, your efforts will pay off with independent young adults who can successfully manage their lives.

It is imperative that you read and discuss learning topics with your children. This DOES impact achievement for students as well as it gives your children the message that you are involved in their education. If you have questions or concerns for teachers or administrators, please email us. We do our best to be responsive to your concerns and will try to get back to you within two business days unless there are unusual circumstances with travel or family. Our teachers give much of their time and hearts to your children and we do ask that you respect the time that they need with their own families in the evenings by not phoning them unless there is an emergency.

### **Parking:**

Parking at CSD is limited. The parking lot across Davidson Gateway (across from the school) is NOT our parking. Please do not park there. You may park in our front parking lot, in designated parking spaces on Davidson Gateway, in the small Harris Teeter parking lot that runs along our carpool lanes (we have their permission) and in the parallel spaces along carpool as long as you don't mind being blocked during carpool dismissal. ALWAYS hold hands with young children and even with older elementary children, please keep them close in the parking lot. We never want to have to face a tragedy in our parking lot.

### **Carpool:**

We will open carpool no later than 8:10 each morning but we oftentimes open it early. Do NOT drop your child off anywhere EXCEPT the 5 designated carpool stations where an adult opens and closes the car doors. If carpool is closed, you must drive around and walk your child in so that you can get him/her a tardy slip. No students are allowed to be dropped off at the front door/parking lot. Please do not disregard this request. Parents, please do not use the handicapped parking places for ANYTHING unless you have a parking sticker. The reserved parking spaces are reserved for auction and CSD parking place lottery winner. Please honor this by never parking in these spaces.

- **Elementary** carpool begins at 8:10 and ends at 8:40. Instruction begins at 8:45. Afternoon pick up for elementary begins at 2:30 and all parents who have only elementary students should be in line no later than 2:45. You may ONLY arrive after 2:45 if you also have middle school students to pick up with your elementary students. If you have both, you may pick up both at 3:00 if you so desire.
- **Middle School** instruction begins at 8:30 so we encourage middle school parents to drop off between 8:10 and 8:20. The middle school back door will be shut at 8:25 each morning so you should plan to be in line by 8:10. If you come through carpool later than 8:25 with middle school students, you will be directed to drive around to the front and sign your child in at the front desk. Middle School carpool begins promptly at 3:00 and parents who arrive earlier should stay out of the elementary carpool lane until 2:55.

We have a very efficient system for carpool and if you will be patient with us for the first two weeks, it will quickly improve and move efficiently. I promise you that the teachers who stand in the heat, the cold, and the rain, would gladly be waiting in a car during carpool so please be considerate and appreciative of how they receive our students and send them home so kindly every single day. Please make sure you pick up a carpool sign for your car during the open house. Please, no colored markers, no

decorations, just BIG BOLD LETTERS for my old eyes to read during carpool. This is critical for our carpool efficiency. Although we know your faces and your children, remember that windows are tinted and it is difficult to see anything but those signs. Yes, it is extremely helpful if you put your sign tilted upwards in the front window nearest to the middle of the two carpool lanes where the carpool caller walks. Thank you!

Example:      **ELI WARNER**

**5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE MERITHEW**

Or

**SMITH**

**JOHN 5<sup>TH</sup> PAGAN**

**SUSIE 3<sup>RD</sup> WASHAM**

**JACOB K      OLMSTEAD**

**Davidson Walks and Rolls :** This is a Town initiative to promote community, health and fun. Please support the Town of Davidson in this effort by participating during our monthly Wednesday walks. Stay tuned for more information to come soon.

**Fundraising:** We wish it weren't true but fundraising will always be a part of CSD existence. We have a beautiful elementary, middle school and now high school facilities because we have conducted aggressive fundraising every year at CSD. Although the buildings are complete, the loans are far from paid off. Our ability to make our loan commitments as well as conduct an exceptional educational program with excellent adult to student ration is dependent upon careful budgeting and fundraising. We understand that these are difficult times for many of our families so that means the rest of us will have to do more than our part. It has been touching to see children do mini fundraisers and parents host babysitting nights so that they can have a small role in the vision of this school. Every single dollar counts. Please consider participating in our fundraising activities in the coming year:

- **CSD Auction:** November 6
- **CSD Annual Golf Tournament:** April, 2001 (TBA)
- **The Future is Here Capital Campaign:** Please visit website for information if you have lost your packet. Please consider forwarding our packet to extended family members and contacts who are interested in education and our vision for improving education.

Thanks to our successful fundraising last year, we have:

- Four elementary classrooms with new natural light added to the roof.
- New 14 seat activity bus.
- New AC unit in our elementary building.
- New polished concrete floors in two of our middle school classrooms.

- New Promethean Smart Boards in middle and high school
- A BEAUTIFUL high school building with a 10,000 square foot fully loaded gymnasium, a state of the art work out room, natural lighting, and room for a future arts wing.
- Money to take care of our construction loan commitments

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Practicum:** Will be discussed at open house but we expect we will run practicum out of high school on Fridays which means that you may be adjusting your drop off from middle school to high school on Fridays for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. We'll confirm with you at open house.

**Attached is the Middle School Only FAQ that is on our CSD website. We have included it for your easy access.**

**1. What is a charter school?**

A charter school is a public school, which operates independently of existing public schools in its area. Charter schools encourage the use of unique and innovative teaching methods to improve learning experiences for all students. Since charter schools are public schools, they are tuition free, with funding coming directly from federal, state, and local taxes. Charter schools receive funds for operating expenses from the state, but do not receive capital/building funds. For parents who are seeking a *choice* in public education, charter schools may meet that need.

**2. Where may I learn more about NC charter schools?**

The NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has a website where further information can be found. Go to [www.dpi.state.nc.us](http://www.dpi.state.nc.us) and under DEPARTMENTS, click on "Charter Schools."

**3. Do CSD students take the state mandated ABCs tests?**

Yes. Since we are a NC public charter school, our students are required to take all standardized tests as mandated by the state of North Carolina. NC End of Grade (EOG) testing begins in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and is taken annually through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students in grades 9 through 12 take End of Course (EOC) tests at the end of specific core courses. NC also conducts Writing and Science Tests at various grades throughout elementary, middle and high school.

**4. How do I enroll my child in CSD?**

Since Community School of Davidson is a public charter school, all students are admitted through a lottery system. We encourage parents to first attend one of our Open House sessions in order to determine whether CSD is a good philosophical fit for your family. Students who submit a registration for

admission prior to the annual enrollment deadline are entered into the lottery. For further details, please visit our [Enrolling](#) page for further information.

**5. How does the lottery work?**

For a detailed description of the registration and lottery process, please see [Admission](#) page for further information.

**6. How can I make a donation to CSD?**

We welcome public and private assistance in our efforts to provide funding for our public charter school. For further details on how you can contribute, please visit our [Fundraising](#) page for further information.

**7. What are the school hours?**

The elementary school day begins at 8:45 am and dismisses at 2:30 pm. Middle school day begins at 8:30 am and dismisses at 3:00 pm. For more details, please see [Parent Handbook](#) – School Day and Student Attendance.

**8. Do you have daily bus transportation?**

CSD does not provide daily bus transportation. Parents are responsible for the transportation to and from school for their child. Many families form carpool systems in their surrounding neighborhoods and some families make arrangements with local daycare facilities for before- and after-school drop-off and pick-up.

**9. Do you have an activity bus?**

CSD does own a standard size school bus and a 14 seat school bus which are used to transport students to and from field trips and service learning opportunities. Students are taught and are expected to follow appropriate and safe passenger behavior. Bus safety procedures are reviewed and practiced on a yearly basis with every grade level.

**10. Do you have extended day child-care?**

No, but After School Enrichment (ASE) opportunities are available throughout the year. Please visit the [For our Parents](#) section, as schedules are posted you may view them there.

**11. What is your inclement weather policy?**

The primary concern when inclement weather strikes is the safety of students, parents and staff. For information regarding school closings/cancellations, please check our website and watch area TV stations (WSOC-9, WBTV-3, NBC-6). To view inclement weather our policy, please [click here](#).

**12. Do you offer Gifted Education?**

Rather than having a separate gifted/talented pull-out program, we use an inclusion gifted program. Our mission is to provide every child the opportunity to succeed in ways that reflect his/her own aptitudes and interests. With our low student to teacher ratio, we are able to differentiate instruction for all students throughout the day and ensure that students are working on appropriately individualized learning tasks. We also offer several explore electives and clubs that support and expand unique gifts and talents in our students. Additional advanced course offerings begin in 8<sup>th</sup> grade with the introduction of high school Algebra 1 offered for course credit. For more detailed information, please see [Parent Handbook – Gifted Education](#)

**13. Do you follow Charlotte Mecklenburg School calendar?**

No. However, since we do have students with siblings in CMS schools, we make an effort to schedule our major breaks (winter break/spring break) around the same time as CMS schedules theirs, whenever possible.

**14. Do you have a Library?**

Yes, we have three designated media rooms, one in the elementary school, one in the middle school, and one in the high school.

Our elementary school houses a book room for both students and teachers. The book room is primarily designed for instructional purposes with a plethora of genres and resources.

Our middle school houses a more traditional library/media center with shelved books, a mini-computer lab, study tables, and comfortable seating clusters. We continue to fill our media center shelves with quality literature through on-going fund raising efforts.

Our high school media center is currently completing construction.

**15. Do you have a cafeteria?**

No. Students bring a bag lunch each day and lunch is eaten in their classrooms with teachers. An optional hot lunch is offered 2 days per week, with local food vendors delivering lunches to the school. [Hot Lunch Forms](#) are filled out and fees are paid at the beginning of each semester. For more details, please see [Student Handbook](#) – Lunch. We also have periodic ‘Spirit Pizza Days’ sponsored by our Spartan Booster Club, which allows students to buy pizza for lunch.

**16. What sports do you offer?**

Community School of Davidson is a member of the [Western Piedmont Athletic Association](#) and offered the following middle school sports in 2009-10 school year. This year we hope to expand and offer swimming, volleyball, and lacrosse:

<b>Fall Sports</b>	<b>Winter Sports</b>	<b>Spring Sports</b>
Cross Country	Boys Basketball	Baseball
Co-ed Soccer	Girls Basketball	Softball
Football	Cheerleading	Co-ed Golf
Cheerleading	Co-ed Tennis	Dance Company

**17. What is “looping” and what are the benefits?**

Community School of Davidson utilizes a looping system in both elementary and middle school. Looping means a teacher stays with his/her class for more than just one year. In elementary, teachers stay with their class for two years, (K-1, 2-3, 4-5), and in middle, although students change classes and have multiple teachers for the different subjects, the core teachers (math, science, social studies and language arts) stay with their class for three years (6-7-8). By staying with the same teacher for a looping cycle, students are able to develop a deeper relationship with their teacher and students in their class, and this in turn, positively impacts their learning. Multiple year experiences also enable teachers to get to know students well, as learners, so they can successfully and appropriately challenge them in all academic areas without wasting time annually figuring out the learning needs and levels of new students.

**18. What are the carpool procedures and hours?**

All carpool students may be dropped off or picked up at the back door. For morning carpool, cars form a single lane and doors open at 8:05 am and close at 8:25 am for middle school students and 8:45 am for elementary school students. For afternoon pick-up, cars form two lanes and carpool begins at 2:30 pm for elementary students and 3:00 pm for middle school students. Doors close at approximately 3:20 pm.

**19. What if I'm late for dropping off or picking up?**

If you arrive after carpool has closed in the morning, please park and walk your child into the school building through the front doors. You will need to sign your child in on the computer at the front desk and a tardy slip will be automatically printed for you. Please accompany your elementary child to their classroom and give the teacher the tardy slip. Middle school students may walk to their lockers and classrooms unaccompanied, but are also asked to give their teachers the tardy slip.

If you arrive after carpool has closed in the afternoon, please park and walk into the school through the front door. Your child will be waiting near the front desk.

**20. Do children go directly to their classrooms once they are dropped off?**

From 8:05 – 8:30 am, arriving elementary students will be seated in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade hallway and the hallway between 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> hallways, as well as the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> hallway. Assistant teachers are stationed in the hallways as monitors and appropriate behavior is expected from all students. Students may talk quietly, read, write or draw during this time; please leave all toys at home. Elementary students are released to their classrooms at 8:30 am. Any elementary students arriving after 8:30 am will go directly to their classrooms.

From 8:05 – 8:25 am, arriving middle school students will go directly to the MS gym. Staff members are present as monitors and appropriate behavior is expected from all students. Middle school students are released at 8:25 am to go to their lockers and then proceed to their classrooms.

**21. May I walk my child in?**

We encourage you to drop your child off in carpool in order to nurture independence. However, if you need to walk your child in before the school day begins, elementary students may be walked in *with*

*parents* through the front doors only and accompanied all the way to their classroom. Parents may accompany middle school students to the front desk.

## **22. What if I need to pick up my child early?**

Please walk into the school through the front doors and sign your child out on the computer at the front desk. The receptionist will phone your child's classroom and a staff member will accompany elementary students to the front to meet you and middle school students will be dismissed to proceed to the front desk.

## **23. What if my child is absent due to illness?**

As a courtesy, please email/call your child's teacher. Upon return, please send an excuse note in with your child. For more detailed information, please see Parent [Handbook](#) – Absences and Tardiness.

In order to maintain a healthy environment for all our students, we ask that you follow these guidelines to assist you in determining whether your child should attend school:

Please keep your child home...

Until they have been fever free (less than 100° F) for 24 hours.

If they have vomited/had diarrhea within the last 24 hours.

If they have red conjunctiva of the eye with discharge.

If they have an unexplained/undiagnosed rash.

Until they have had a prescribed antibiotic in their system for 24 hours.

## **24. Can staff administer medication to my child?**

School employees are allowed to administer medications prescribed by a doctor upon written request of the student's parent or guardian and appropriate form signed by physician. The medication used at school must be in its original container with the child's name, the dosage information, the drug, and the physician's name printed on it and we must have the completed medication form with the doctor's signature. We recommend that you keep copies of this form in your car for those unexpected doctor

visits. You may download this form from our website. For more details, please see [Parent Handbook - Medication](#).

**25. How do you communicate with parents?**

Email is our primary source for sending out general information from the Director. Teachers send newsletters regularly, via email and/or hard copy (as needed by parents), detailing classroom information and activities occurring in the various content areas. As needed, teachers will contact parents with any concerns, using email, written notes, or by phone. There are also monthly elementary and middle school newsletters written by the Director to keep parents informed as well as to serve as a resource for parent education. For more details, please see [Parent Handbook](#) – Communication to Parents.

**26. Do you give grades?**

We do give Progress Reports with a grading system but we do not give traditional letter grades in elementary school or middle school. We do assess our students regularly, utilizing a variety of assessment tools, including: written assignments and theme study reflections, performance tasks, traditional paper/pencil tests, exit slips, and teacher observations. A portfolio is kept for each student, with examples of their work from throughout the year, as a way to show progress and mastery of subjects. Report cards are issued three times a year, detailing a student's progress toward specific goals in the various core academic subjects.

In middle school, we assess our students regularly, utilizing a variety of assessment tools, including: tests, quizzes, work portfolios, written assignments and theme study reflections, exit slips, performance tasks and teacher observations. A portfolio is kept for each student, with examples of their work from throughout the year, as a way to show progress and mastery of subjects. Report cards are issued three times a year, detailing a student's progress toward specific goals in the various core academic subjects. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade we transition our students to a traditional letter grade report card to prepare them for high school grades.

To view an examples our report card, please follow the following links to either [Elementary School](#) or [Middle School](#). You will find grade specific examples under curriculum at each grade level.

**27. How do you hold students accountable if you don't give grades?**

All student work is thoroughly checked and assessed by teachers. Our goal is mastery of content, so if a student's work is incorrect, or not a representation of the student's best efforts, the teacher will guide the student toward improvement. We often ask students to re-do incorrect work or work that is not at the appropriate level of quality.

### **28. How will kids compete if you don't give grades?**

We do not believe that education is a competitive activity. Rather, we believe that education should afford students many opportunities to work collaboratively as a team as well as to learn appropriate content and study skills. To have one student “win” means that another student “loses.” We believe that all students are capable of learning and we would not be doing our jobs if we let students fail, or lose. There is a great body of research that states that students who learn in an environment such as ours, focusing on intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning, will ultimately reach higher levels of achievement in college and life. We have found that when students leave our school and move to a more traditional school, they are successful in their academic learning as well as the more traditional grading system. We do hope, however, that when students leave our school, they are motivated to learn more intrinsically and do not require traditional grades to keep them on their lifelong journey of learning.

### **29. Won't my child need grades for high school?**

Neither elementary nor middle school grades have any bearing on a high school transcript or grade point average. Our high school will use traditional letter grades superimposed on a “mastery grid.” Failure is not an option at CSD. Successful mastery of course content will determine readiness for future high school course selection. Our students will be well prepared for the college admissions process with their transcripts adequately reflecting their abilities as learners.

### **30. What electives do you offer?**

In the elementary school, we have “Connect” classes, which include PE, Art, Music, Spanish, and Science Enrichment. The science enrichment is in addition to the classroom science instruction integrated into units of study and is offered for 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade only. Students attend each of these classes once a week throughout the year. Further information please go to our [Special Area Classes](#) section of our Elementary School area.

In middle school, we have three types of electives, Branch, Focus, and Explore. Branch electives are required yearlong classes, which include PE, Technology and Spanish. Focus electives are year-long arts-related classes, which, in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, include: [Art](#), [Art 3D](#), [Band](#), [Craftsmanship \(Woodwork and Industrial/Mechanical Arts\)](#), [Dance](#), [Drama](#), [Jazz/Pop/Showtime Chorus](#), and [Photography](#). Students select two classes from these Focus Elective options in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students select three shorter classes from the following choices: dance, showtime, band, drama, and art, so that they can

experience more options and find their niche. Explore Electives are trimester-long mini-courses designed to expose students to a variety of activities and interests. These courses are taught by staff, parents, and community members and differ each trimester. We highly depend upon parent volunteers for this program to be a success! For elective course descriptions, please see [Middle School Electives](#).

### **31. What is the discipline policy?**

Community School of Davidson uses positive discipline. We set very high standards for student behavior. Rather than centering on the behavior itself, we focus on underlying causes of the behavior to help students problem-solve appropriate ways to resolve conflicts. Respect is modeled by all in our building and is expected from students and adults alike. For further details, please see [Student Handbook](#) – Behavior and Discipline.

### **32. What is the parent's role?**

Parents play a pivotal role at Community School of Davidson. A vital partnership is created between home and school with parents being viewed as the child's first and most important teachers. We need and expect your help in educating our students. We ask that each family consider giving the school one hour per week to support the overall educational program. Research supports parent involvement and the positive impact on student learning. There are many volunteer needs in both elementary and middle school. In the elementary setting there are many opportunities to help out, such as assisting in the classroom in various capacities, accompanying classes on field trips, providing teacher requests for supplies, and helping with the [Fast Forward Program](#). In the middle school, volunteering looks a little different than in elementary school. For example, the [Explore Electives](#) program is dependent on individuals who are willing to volunteer their time and service to the school. Many parents also support instruction by providing clerical assistance which allows teachers to focus on the students and their learning. Opportunities for involvement may also exist at the classroom level, depending on the need. We also have multiple opportunities for parents who work outside the home and are interested in volunteering. There are “at home” activities that can be done in the evening or on weekends and during our summer workdays. Another way to participate is by joining parent committees.

### **33. Why aren't there any locks on the lockers?**

We abide by a strict honor code at Community School of Davidson, making our expectations explicitly clear to students from the very beginning of middle school with regard to respecting other people's property. Students understand and appreciate the importance of respecting others' privacy; therefore, locks are not needed or desired.

### **34. What are student-led conferences?**

Student-led conferences allow students to become actively involved in reporting their progress as learners to their parents. Students first meet one-on-one with their teachers to discuss their performance in class, strengths, and areas in which to grow. Next, they create a Power Point presentation to share with their parents during the conference, highlighting their achievements, successes, and challenge areas. In addition, students select pieces of work from each class, of which they are exceptionally proud, and build a portfolio to exhibit during their conference. Students take a leading role during conference discussions, communicating and accepting responsibility for their progress, setting goals for themselves for the upcoming trimester, and demonstrating a growing understanding of themselves as independent learners. Ultimately, we want students to understand their own learning and to be empowered to take the lead for that learning as they grow into young adults. This can only happen if we gradually allow them to take the reins with increasing responsibility as they grow into high school.

We also have a very active Booster Club, which supports the teams with various fund raising events. For further details, please see [Spartan Booster Club](#).

### **35. What is your student Advisory program?**

Starting in middle school, students are assigned, by grade level, into an Advisory group of about 10-12 students led by a middle school staff person, or “Advisor.” These small communities stay together for 3 years and focus on building relationships within their own advisory group as well as in the school at large. For further details, please see [Advisory](#) in our Middle School area.

### **36. How do you help kids learn organizational skills?**

Community School of Davidson encourages and expects middle school students to begin taking “ownership” with their learning. One way we do this is to issue each middle school student a Stephen Covey-produced Day Planner/Agenda. Advisors and teachers work with students, teaching them to use this tool as a means of managing their weekly assignments and work load. Students also use an accordion folder as an organizational tool for all classes. Organizational skills and time management are in integral part of our Advisory program. From time to time, advisors may also help students with organizing their lockers and accordion folders as well as “check in” with them to hold them accountable for using these tools appropriately and effectively.

### **37. How is homework handled in middle school?**

Students have a week to complete homework assignments, which may include nightly reading, literature circles, weekly word study, and math problems. From time to time, students may have additional projects due that will require work at home. It is expected that students meet deadlines and turn in homework on time. Students will be held accountable for any work that is not completed and turned in on time and will

be required to complete any missing, late or poorly done assignments during "Homework Club," which is held during Open Lunch and Explore electives.

**38. Is there still a focus on the arts in middle school?**

Yes, at CSD, we define literacy to include words, numbers and the arts so we continue to nurture this learning in middle school. In addition to Focus and Explore electives, 6th and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students also participate in an annual stage performance/sharing. This performance is a culmination of an in-depth unit of study and allows for integration of all the arts from the various electives. There is also an after-school Drama Club, which performs a yearly musical production.