

COLFAX

COMMUNICATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PITTSBURGH COLFAX K-8 PTO



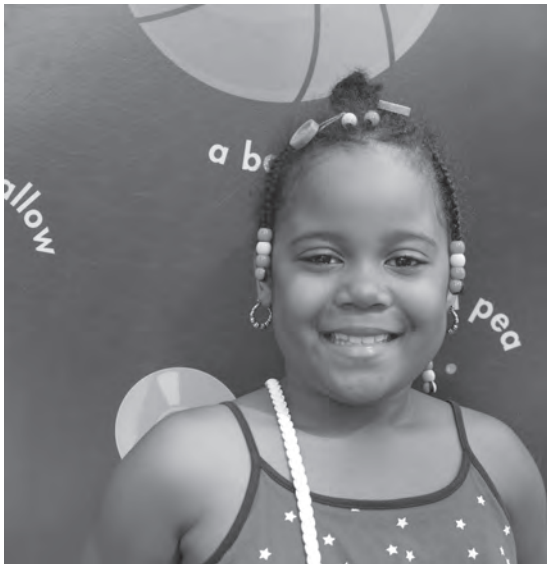
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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear Colfax family and friends,

Welcome to the 2017-18 school year! I am honored to begin my second year as your PTO President. I look forward to working with you and the Colfax community to make it a fun and productive year. And this year is certainly off to a great start! Teachers and staff arrived at Colfax the week of August 21-25, to prepare for the students' return. Weaving through the ongoing construction work, they set up classrooms, arranged lessons, and planned for an amazing year for our students. If you have not had an opportunity to see the incredible changes that were made to Colfax over the summer, I encourage you to stop by the school building.

The PTO was pleased to host a Welcome Back Breakfast for teachers and staff on Friday, August 25. Did you know that the PTO gives every Colfax teacher a \$100 gift card to purchase classroom supplies? Many teachers have expressed gratitude for this gift—which is a direct result of the generosity of our Colfax parents, family and friends. Thank you.

Back to School Night quickly followed on Wednesday, August 30. There is nothing better than seeing friends happily reunite after a summer apart. Or to see the joy on a child's face when she meets her new "best" friend. I was pleased to meet many new Colfax families at the PTO volunteer table. If you missed the table, make sure to check out the countless ways you can participate at the school at www.colfaxpto.org/volunteer. Contact VP Volunteer Coordinator Kerrie Cooley for more information. Fiesta was held on Thursday, September 28. Thank you to all who joined us to celebrate the beginning of the year with our annual pot luck dinner. It was truly a fun time, seeing old friends and making new ones! A big thank you to VP Special Events Dory Levine for organizing the event.

Finally, thanks to those who signed up to run/walk or volunteer for Run Shadyside on Saturday, October 7. This 5k race raises money for the Boys & Girls Club of Shadyside, a popular after-school destination for Colfax students. And, as an added bonus, when you register as a member of Team Colfax, you can also raise money for the PTO. Last year, we raised over \$2,000! I'm confident that we can beat that record this year.

These are just a handful of the many activities planned for the 2017-18 school year. Go to www.colfaxpto.org for a full calendar of Colfax PTO events. While there, be sure to sign up for our weekly email for up-to-date information about what's happening at Colfax. Contact VP Communications Jeanine Weiss at communications@colfaxpto.org with news or announcements.

In closing, I'll leave you with my wish for the year: *"There are no strangers in here, just friends you haven't met..."* —Roald Dahl.

Though we come from different places, together at Colfax, we are a community of family and friends. I urge you to become an involved member of our community. No role is insignificant, or part too small. Each of us can have a positive impact on Colfax and our students.

Yours truly,
Julie Wilson
PTO President, president@colfaxpto.org

2017-2018 COLFAX PTO EXECUTIVE BOARD

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PRINCIPAL REMARKS

Greetings Colfax Families,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you and your children to the 2017-2018 school year. This will be the start of my 3rd year as principal of Colfax and I am as equally, if not more, excited in the role and opportunity that I have been afforded in working with the staff, students, and families in this school!

IMPORTANT DATES

OCTOBER 7
RUN SHADYSIDE

OCTOBER 11
PSCC/PTO MEETING

OCTOBER 13
EARLY DISMISSAL

OCTOBER 27
HALLOWEEN MOVIE NIGHT

NOVEMBER 7
NO SCHOOL/ELECTION DAY

NOVEMBER 8
PSCC/PTO MEETING

NOVEMBER 10
NO SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 17
EARLY DISMISSAL

Although "Back to School Night" was delayed due to construction, we have gotten overwhelming reviews of the renovations and additions! These additions in the Main Building include:

- A renovated and relocated Media Center
- Additional physical education/recess space
- Three additional classrooms
- Updated student restrooms on every floor
- Two staff restrooms located on both floors
- K-4 Guidance Counselor and SDSS office located next to Media Center
- Speech Therapist classroom
- Coach and resource teacher space
- Updated science room
- New staff room

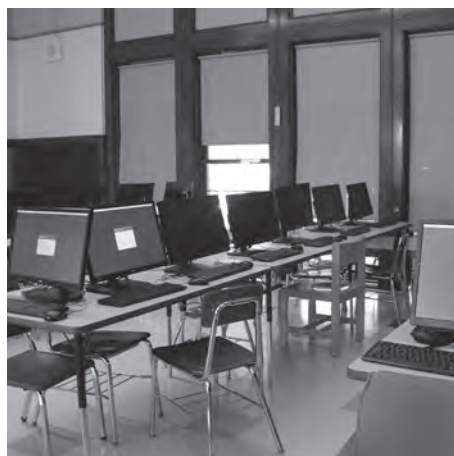
Looking ahead, we are dedicated to reaching and "tying together" the District's Strategic Plan with our School Improvement Plan that continues to be focused on the success and growth of ALL students. New curriculum, positive behavior initiatives, and Professional Learning Communities are some of the few ways in which we will consistently collaborate to execute plans in the use of data to implement best instructional practices and as a guide for specific individual and the overall building growth of our students. More information will be forthcoming regarding the new curriculum and initiatives being implemented District-wide.

A few important reminders:

- NO PARKING ON BEECHWOOD BOULEVARD DURING DROP-OFF (7:45-8:15) OR DISMISSAL (2:30-3:00)
- PLEASE MAKE ALL CHANGES IN YOUR CHILD'S DISMISSAL BY 1:30
- HOMEROOM STARTS AT 8:15. AFTER 8:15 ALL STUDENTS MUST WALK TO THEIR CLASSES BY THEMSELVES

In closing, I would like to thank you all for your feedback and support given to our entire staff. School, community, and family partnership is vital in the success of any school. And as I have said before, it is that positive partnership that makes our school great! Let's work together and expect great things for this school year!!

Warm regards,
Dr. Woods



CHESS

Last year was a successful first year for the Colfax chess program! While the newer students learned the basics of chess, the more advanced students learned about different chess strategies, followed the world chess championship as it happened, and had lots of fun.

Our hard work paid off, as Colfax students won first place team at the Pittsburgh Scholastic Chess Championships, and Colfax teams won First AND Second place at the Chess for Pittsburgh Youth Library tournament. This year we hope to accomplish even more!

Colfax Chess has two separate programs: a lunchtime chess program and an afterschool program. Thanks to the generosity of the PTO, the lunchtime chess program is totally free to all interested students. We are still planning this year's lunchtime program, so stay tuned for announcements regarding sign up.

The Colfax after school chess program will take place on Wednesdays after school, and is set to resume on October 4th. It is intended for students who enjoy the lunchtime program, and want more opportunities to learn about chess and eventually compete as a team in local scholastic tournaments. It is open to all ages, and anyone who knows the basics of chess and wishes to improve.

Note that the afterschool program does not have external funding, so there is a fee for after school chess. Interested families who would struggle to pay the fee should email Ben Johnson about scholarship opportunities.

To learn more about the afterschool program please go to www.steelychess.com/Colfax, or email Ben Johnson directly at bennyficial1@gmail.com.



A NOTE FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE

Greetings from the Health Suite! Pittsburgh Colfax is assigned two nurses this year. Rachel Short is assigned five days a week and Victoria Myser is assigned three days a week. We are both available by email and phone:
rshort1@pghboe.net
vmyser1@pghboe.net
412-529-6714

Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. Please keep us updated on your child's health. Per Pennsylvania law, all medications in the school must be administered by a licensed person or a parent/guardian/family member.

Keep eating lots of fruits and vegetables and wash your hands! May we all have a happy and healthy 2017-18 school year.

Rachel Short, CRNP
School Nurse



FACE COORDINATORS

Ms. Balik and Ms. Pozza

The FACE (Family and Community Engagement) Coordinators for this school year are Ms. Pozza and Ms. Balik. As FACE Coordinators, these teachers work with parents, community volunteers, and school staff to build relationships with the larger community and engage parents. They help organize PSCC meetings and assist the PTO with events like Fiesta, Movie Night, Carnival, and the Talent Show. They are excited for a wonderful 2017-2018 school year!





INTRODUCING FARMER TACUMBA TURNER

Our school garden is going strong, as a bountiful harvest continues! This year, we welcome a new farmer friend, Tacumba Turner, who will be taking on the garden and its educational program with our students. We look forward to a wonderful year of planting, growing, and learning!

Please join us in welcoming Farmer Tacumba! We are happy to have him in our school community!

Pittsburgh native Tacumba Turner sees working at Grow Pittsburgh as a point of convergence in his life, as it draws together his love of sustainable agriculture, working with youth, and social justice. He's glad to be bringing his skills and interests back into his community by teaching at Pittsburgh Colfax K-8 and Dilworth Traditional Academy.

Tacumba's background in horticultural science led him to an internship with City of Pittsburgh Open Space Specialist Shelly Danko+Day. His work with the Adopt a Lot program and food insecurity in urban settings solidified his resolve to make a difference in the nonprofit sector. Before working with Grow Pittsburgh, Tacumba spent time with the Student Conservation Association and GTECH.

Tacumba learned to teach at his mother's knee, often tagging along with her while she worked with youth programs. He also credits being a part of programs like The Boys and Girls Club, Slippery Rock University's Benjamin Wiley leadership course, and the NEED program with his desire to work with and mentor youth.

Tacumba believes in examining the philosophical underpinnings of our society and challenging them if they are unjust. He worked at the Hazelwood Youth Justice Program as a program manager, teaching youth how to make micro-films addressing social justice issues.

Tacumba has many interests, including photography, basketball, poetry, chess and the arts. He has a dog named Twinkie, a German Shepherd/Rottweiler mix.



CROSS COUNTRY



Cross country season starts in September and goes through October. Our returning runners are excited to get things started, and I already know many new runners are looking to make the team.

For the first time ever, both our boy and girl teams won the city championships last year...no pressure on this year's teams!

The course is a two-mile run through some trails and woods in Schenley Park. The main goal is for the kids to improve upon their own scores from the time before, while at the same time getting in better and better shape. It can be challenging both physically

and mentally, but can also be a lot of fun. We enjoy our time at practices and we also have fun getting a chance to compete against other schools on behalf of Colfax.

It is hard work that sometimes has us outside practicing in tough weather and conditions, but the pride of being part of a team and seeing something through even though it is so challenging makes it all worth it.

Wish us luck and hopefully we can have great news in the next issue of the newsletter of how things went.

—Coach Lydon



PTO COMMUNICATION INFORMATION

Want to stay informed about all the happenings in our Colfax Community?

Keeping up-to-date is easy!

If you haven't already, take a moment and join our mailing list for the weekly PTO email. Simply go to www.colfaxpto.org and click on the big blue button "Sign Up for Weekly Emails". You will be prompted to enter your email address and name, click submit, and... there you go! Once a week, on Sunday evenings, you will get an email from the PTO. You'll be reminded of upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, days off, etc.

Did you know we also have a PTO Facebook page? Join us on Facebook at Pittsburgh Colfax PTO, and get posted reminders about upcoming events and current happenings.

COBRA STORE

Megan Beakley

The Colfax Cobra Store will be in full swing starting Friday, September 22nd. For those of you who are new to Colfax this year, the Cobra Store is a major part of our school incentive program. Students in Grades K-5 each have cards and receive stamps from teachers for positive behavior and academic progress. On one to two Fridays a month, at recess, the Cobra Store is open for kids to redeem their stamps for items including snacks, school supplies, and other fun merchandise. This year Grades 6-8 will have their own separate incentive program.

Kindergarten and First Graders will fill out Cobra Store order forms with the help of their teachers, and their items will be delivered to their classrooms. Students in Grades 2-5 will be able to come to the Cobra store to shop and pick out their items. They will have the opportunity to look at the list of items available to plan what they want to "buy" before they get there.

We definitely need some more parent volunteers to make this program run smoothly! It is a fun way to connect with students as we reward them for their hard work. If you have clearances and can volunteer to work at the store or fill and deliver K-1 grade orders on any Cobra Store Fridays, please contact Megan Beakley at megan.beakley99@gmail.com.

COBRA STORE DATES 2017-2018

September 22	December 1	February 9	April 13	June 1
October 6	December 15	February 16	April 27	
October 27	January 12	March 9	May 11	
November 3	January 26	March 16	May 25	



PTO DIRECTORY

Each year, the Colfax PTO compiles a directory for members of the Colfax community. The directory is distributed to all students and staff and may be used for classroom activities. Directory information is not distributed to any outside parties.

If you have not already provided your updated contact information for inclusion in the directory, please be sure to do so! Simply go to www.colfaxpto.org, click on the "Click Here" button, and fill out the simple online form.

It only takes a couple of minutes to be included, so please take a moment to do so today! If you have any questions, email Leslie Grodin at colfaxptodirectory@gmail.com.

MIDDLE LEVEL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

This year, students in Grades 6-8 will be working with a new incentive program that focuses on earning points as a reward for demonstrating positive behaviors.

Members of the Middle School Team have developed a Positive Behavior Incentive System (PBIS) to motivate students and celebrate progress, as well keep track of daily classroom data with ease.

Each student will have the opportunity to earn 5 points per day/per class daily.

The 5 points are earned for the following 5 things:

1 ON TIME

Students arrive to class on time, entering the classroom in a respectful manner. This includes transition.

2 COMPLETES WORK

Students meet the expectations for classwork completion for the day.

3 ACTIVELY ENGAGED

Engagement looks different for all students at different times. This means you are doing your best and participating in activities.

4 SCHOOL APPROPRIATE

This includes following all behavior expectations for the classroom and school.

5 EXIT

Includes clean-up, exit, and transition.

The incentives for points earned will happen twice a month.

At mid-month, students will go to the Cobra Store to purchase items for points earned.

At the end of the month, there will be a two-period activity that will be tiered-based on points collected. The Student Council will decide on this activity each month.

FIRST GRADERS ARE HABITAT EXPLORERS!

Submitted by Chelsea Balik

The first graders at Colfax are so excited for the opportunity to walk to the Frick Environmental Center three times this school year to explore habitats in our community! Throughout the year students will explore the meadow, woodland, and stream habitats. Each first grade class will get to go explore and observe all of the things organisms need to survive. We even learned a song to remember a habitat needs food, water, shelter, space, air! During each trip, the students will end with a stewardship project to give back to the community. Everyone is very excited to have the chance to give back to nature.

Our first trip was to explore the meadow! We first walked through the meadow and collected samples of seeds to observe under a microscope. Students had so much fun respectfully gathering and observing their samples, careful not to hurt any living thing. Along with seed samples, some students collected samples of leaves, rocks, and insects. After observations of the meadow, everyone was very excited to complete a stewardship project. The students used soil, water, and seeds to make seed balls. They went to the edge of the meadow, made a wish for the new habitat, and threw the seed balls into the high grass! We hope that our seeds grow and become part of the meadow habitat at Frick Park.

Thank you to the PTO for providing this opportunity to explore nature in our community!



EARLY DISMISSAL INFORMATION AND REQUEST FORM

If you need to have an early dismissal for your child for any reason, please note the following:

- All early dismissals and dismissal changes are to be submitted to the main office by 10:00am. An early dismissal form must be completed and submitted to the main office, and a parent/guardian must pick the student up at the requested time from the main office.
- No early dismissals will be granted after 2:15pm. This will ensure that all the appropriate staff are made aware of a change in a student's dismissal routine.
- Additionally, if the way your child will be going home (example: Your child usually takes the bus, but will walk home for the day instead), a "Change to Dismissal" form must be completed and submitted to the main office by 10am.

Pittsburgh Colfax
Early Dismissal Request

Requests should be submitted to main office by 10:00AM

Date of Dismissal: _____ Time: _____

Student's Name: _____

HR Teacher: _____ Homeroom: _____

Dismissal Room: _____ Walker or Bus Color: _____

Reason: _____

Picked Up By: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian should sign out student in main office.

Pittsburgh Colfax
CHANGE TO DISMISSAL

Requests should be submitted to main office by 10:00AM

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

HR Teacher: _____ Homeroom: _____

CHANGE: *(Check the appropriate option and provide the necessary information.)*

_____ My child will be a walker today. Picked Up By: _____

_____ My child should ride his/her assigned bus. Color: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____



K-2 PLAYDATE AT BLUE SLIDE PARK

by Valentina Krauss, K-5 Representative

On Sunday, September 17, the PTO hosted an informal playdate at Blue Slide Park for students in grades K-2. Thanks in no small part to gorgeous late summer weather, a fantastic time was had by all. While parents chatted about the start of the school year, children played on the playground and dragged their cardboard up the hill to zoom down the big blue slide. Plans are in the works for two more playdates this year—one in winter and one in spring.



BELL SCHEDULE

	BEGIN TIME	END TIME
Breakfast	7:45 AM	8:07 AM
Homeroom	8:07 AM	8:15 AM
Enrichment	8:15 AM	8:45 AM
Period 1	8:45 AM	9:28 AM
Period 2	9:28 AM	10:11 AM
Period 3	10:11 AM	10:59 AM
Period 4	10:59 AM	11:47 AM
Period 5	11:47 AM	12:35 PM
Period 6	12:35 PM	1:20 PM
Period 7	1:20 PM	2:03 PM
Period 8	2:03 PM	2:46 PM
Transition to Dismissal Rooms	2:46 PM	2:51 PM
Dismissal to Buses	2:51 PM	3:00 PM



COLFAX PTO CALENDAR 2017-2018

OCTOBER

October 6
Cobra Store Grades K-5

October 7
Run Shadyside

October 11
PSCC/PTO Meeting

October 13
Early Dismissal 11:50am

October 20
No School

October 27
Cobra Store Grades K-5
Halloween Movie Night

NOVEMBER

November 3
Cobra Store Grades K-5

November 7
No School—Election Day

November 8
PSCC/PTO Meeting

November 10
No School—Veterans Day

November 17
Early Dismissal 11:50am

November 23-24, 27
No School—Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

December 1
Cobra Store Grades K-5

December 8
Early Dismissal 11:50am

December 13
PSCC/PTO Meeting

December 15
Cobra Store Grades K-5

December 25–January 1
No School—Winter Break

JANUARY

January TBD
Ice Skating Night

January 10
PSCC/PTO Meeting

January 12
Cobra Store Grades K-5

January 15
No School—MLK day

January 22-23
No School—Teacher Prep

January 26
Cobra Store Grades K-5

FEBRUARY

February 2
Early Dismissal 11:50am

February 9
Cobra Store Grades K-5

February 14 (*To be confirmed.*)
PSCC/PTO Meeting

February 16
Cobra Store Grades K-5

February 23
Early Dismissal 11:50am

February TBD
Party 4 Play

MARCH

March 2
Early Dismissal 11:50am

March 9
Cobra Store Grades K-5

March 14
PSCC/PTO Meeting

March 15
Spring Movie Night

March 16
Cobra Store Grades K-5

March 23
Early Dismissal 11:50am

March 26-30
No School—Spring Break

APRIL

April 11
PSCC/PTO Meeting

April 13
Cobra Store Grades K-5

April 27
Cobra Store Grades K-5

MAY

May 7-11
Teacher Appreciation Week

May 9
PSCC/PTO Meeting

May 11
Cobra Store Grades K-5

May 25
Cobra Store Grades K-5

May 28
No School—Memorial Day

JUNE

June 1
Last Cobra Store Grades K-5

June 5
Carnival

June 7
Eighth Grade Promotion

June 8
Last Day of School

Looking for an affordable way to advertise your business or program? Reach hundreds of Colfax families and support the Colfax PTO by placing an ad in our newsletter! Contact our advertising representative for deadlines and more information: Leslie Grodin, Leslie.Grodin@verizon.net.

FIESTA!

On the evening of September 28th, the Colfax community gathered to once again celebrate the annual tradition of “Fiesta”. Each year, our students, parents, families, teachers, and staff gather to share a communal pot-luck meal—sampling new foods, catching up with friends, and taking time to make new ones!

This year’s Fiesta was a huge success, with a pot-luck buffet that stretched down the hall, covering several large tables. The food was as diverse and phenomenal as our school community. Plates were piled high, flavors were sampled, and recipes were shared as we found new favorites to try to make again at home.

In the cafeteria, everyone gathered around the tables, enjoying their food and each other’s company in a relaxed, out-of-school atmosphere. Some even ventured outside to play basketball, burn some energy on the playground, and simply enjoy the glorious cool weather that finally found its way back to Pittsburgh!

Let’s not forget the dessert offering of the day—churros! The scent of cinnamon and sugar was unmistakable throughout the cafeteria, and yes, they were as delicious as they smelled. The churros were simply irresistible.

A big thank you to our PTO VP of Special Events, Dory Levine, and her many volunteers who worked hard to make this event a great success. It is truly a Colfax favorite and we look forward to the tradition carrying on for years to come.





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Tuesday-Friday 7am-6pm / Saturday 8am-5pm / Sunday 8am-2pm



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NuGo Slim

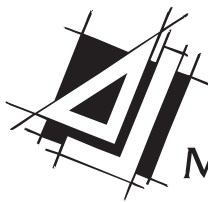


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sunburstmusic.com
(412) 475-8280



**FREE
FIRST
LESSON**



JEWISH DISCOVERY HOUR



**Every Thursday afternoon
from 2:00-3:00pm for Colfax students**

This program is an hour a week where your child can come and be with his/her Jewish friends while learning all about our special Jewish heritage.

- **GAMES** • **PRIZES** • **JEWISH PRIDE**
- **HOLIDAY PROGRAMS** • **AND MUCH MORE...**

Your children will be picked up from Colfax on Thursdays. Parent pick-up at 3:00pm from PZ congregation, corner of Shady and Phillips. Arrangements can be made for children who attend after-school programs.

Jewish Discovery Hour is a project of Chabad of Pittsburgh

JOIN THE PROGRAM!

412-421-3561 or sign up at
www.chabadpgh.com/discoveryhour

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*Early Bird
Registration for
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Age 3-Grade 5
June 18-August 16
Register by the week

**JCC
PGH**

For more information: Lewis Sohinki, 412-697-3537 or lsohinki@jccpgh.org
To register: Ethan Copperman, 412-697-3540, ecopperman@jccpgh.org

JCC Clubhouse After-School Program

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**For information: Meredith
Brown, 412-697-3520, or
mbrown@jccpgh.org**



WELCOME BACK!

from the Pittsburgh Colfax PTO