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Dr. Todd Stirn
Superintendent

Dr. Esther Mongan
Deputy Superintendent

Back to School Message from Dr. Stirn

I am always amazed at how fast the first quarter goes; specifically, this year it seems to have gone even faster. I believe this is because we are able to have a more “normal” year than last year. This year we are seeing much higher involvement from our students, partly due to the fact that we are following a 2020-2021 school year in which in-person and remote learning, with limited athletic and student activities, were the norm. We are thankful that Central schools have returned to full-time, in-person instruction and resumed all clubs and activities, including our annual Homecoming festivities and the Homecoming dance, even if it was held outdoors. Interestingly, the outdoor venue was seen by many of our students as a positive and may become a new tradition!

As COVID restrictions continue across our region, our layered prevention strategies within schools continue to work with positivity rates remaining below 1% of our school population. We are thankful to our students, families and staff for their patience, flexibility and understanding as we continue to implement and follow guidelines and processes from the local health department and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Enrollment across our district continues to grow and we are excited for this growth. We currently educate approximately 4700 students from early childhood through 12th grade. We continue to improve educational programs and opportunities for our students. We are working on additional educational opportunities such as increased dual credit courses, implementation of STEM activities at the elementary level, aligning career technical pathways with post-secondary schools, and many other things. We continue to remain proud of our traditions and look forward to a bright future for our youth. At the forefront of our minds are continuous goals to strive to keep students, staff and visitors safe while providing excellent learning and extracurricular experiences for every student who walks through our school hallways. I wish you and your family all the best and hope you are finding your students’ experiences this year to be positive and enjoyable.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences provide a great opportunity for families and staff to hold collaborative conversations for the success of our students. This year we will provide the opportunity for both in-person and remote conferences via Google Meet on October 21st and 22nd. Online conference appointment scheduling has begun. Check for emails from your student’s teachers with links to their appointment calendar. Please note—you must use a Google email account to schedule an appointment. If you do not already have a Google email account, we encourage you to create one as a Google email is also required to attend a Google Meet. (As an alternative, parents/guardians may choose to use their student’s district email to schedule the appointment; however, please note that the calendar invite will go to the student’s email and the student would be able to delete the calendar event.)

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Upcoming Dates

Monday, October 18thBoard of Education
Meeting, 6pmThursday, October 21stParent Teacher
ConferencesFriday, October 22ndParent Teacher
ConferencesMonday, November 15thBoard of Education
Meeting, 6pmNovember 24th - 26thThanksgiving Break - No
School for StudentsFriday, December 17th

End of Quarter 2

Monday, December 20thBoard of Education
Meeting, 6pmDecember 20th - 31st

Winter Break

ParentSquare FAQs

This year we began implementing ParentSquare as our mass communication tool. This system allows the District to send communication to our families and staff via email, text, phone call, and mobile app. Users are able to set preferences for how and when they receive these communications and messages can be translated automatically. Below are some frequently asked questions regarding ParentSquare.

Q: Do I need to download the app to receive communications?

A: No. While we encourage use of the mobile app, it is not required to receive communications (emails and phone calls) from the District. Additionally, users can log into ParentSquare online at www.parentsquare.com.

Q: How can I change my preferred method of communication and/or language?

A: When logged into ParentSquare, go to My Account to change your notification and/or language settings. This is also where you would go to combine accounts for multiple children if applicable.

Q: I'm not receiving communications. What do I do?

A: First, log into ParentSquare to verify we have your correct email and phone number on file. If not, contact your school office so they can update your record in Skyward. Depending on your email provider, some emails may go to spam. If you have previously unsubscribed from ParentSquare emails by clicking "unsubscribe" in an email, you will need to work with your email provider to whitelist our emails. For additional assistance, please contact your school office.

Q: Will all communications come via ParentSquare?

A: No. District teachers and staff may reach out via email and/or phone call.

For more information about ParentSquare, please visit the ParentSquare page on the District website at central301.net/parentsquare.

D301 Improves Opportunities For Our Students

We continually strive to make opportunities for our students even more valuable. One specific area where we are making tremendous growth is the opportunity for our students to earn dual credit at the high school in lieu of having to go to Elgin Community College (ECC). We have gained approval through ECC for 13 district teachers to instruct 23 different college-level courses at Central High School beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. This allows students to take classes at CHS for college credit which, upon successful completion, can result in significant college tuition cost savings for our families.

Our accredited Veterinary Assistant program saw great success this past school year. Our first cohort of 28 students completed their required 100 externship hours and passed their certification exam to become NAVTA approved veterinarian assistants directly out of high school. We are proud of these results and thank Ryan Robinson, Buddy Haas and Amber Ballard for their hard work with this program. We know they will lead this next cohort into similar success.

District Contact Information

District Office
847.464.6005

Central High School
847.464.6030

Central Middle School
847.464.6000

Prairie Knolls Middle School
847.717.8100

Country Trails Elementary School
847.717.8000

Howard B. Thomas Grade School
847.464.6008

Lily Lake Grade School
847.464.6011

Prairie View Grade School
847.464.6014

Transportation Office
847.464.6052

Food Services
847.464.6043

Athletic Department
847.464.6038

2021-2022 Budget Update

Last year's budget was challenged with the uncertainties of COVID-19 and these same challenges still continue. Last year, our district was able to provide instructional materials for our staff, along with tools that were necessary for our students to learn. We continue to maintain adequate reserves, which allows us to remain financially stable during these unprecedented times. COVID-19 mandates continue to affect all school districts' budgets, including Central's. Staff shortages in all departments, including food service, custodians, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, teachers, etc., continually create new challenges on how we fill these vacancies and budget for them.

Increasing student enrollments within our district boundaries, although exciting, adds pressure to our current district budget, along with spacing concerns within our school buildings as we have approached maximum capacities at several of our elementary/middle school buildings. The district has received approval through the bid process to move forward with the construction of mobile units for all elementary schools to accommodate this growth. These units will be utilized most likely in the second semester of SY22. These purchases are made possible through relief received from the federal government in the form of grants. This allows us to utilize these funds for a one-time capital expenditure. Our district is expected to receive ESSER II funds totaling \$1,042,469 and ESSER III funds totaling \$2,340,106. These funds will go towards the mobile units and other major capital projects being completed throughout the next two years to increase building spaces for students and staff and to assist in maintaining safe environments for all staff and students in our Central family.

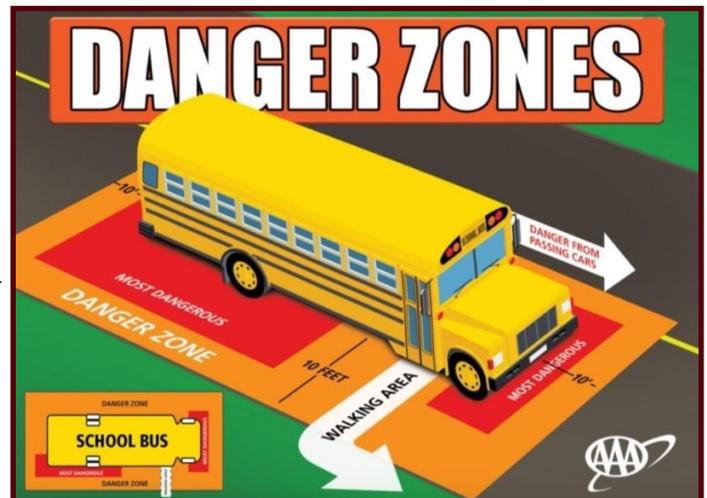
The final FY22 budget was formally adopted at our September 20, 2021, Board meeting and can be found on our website, central301.net under District Departments > Business Services, or by clicking [here](#).

National Bus Safety Week

National Bus Safety Week begins on October 18th and continues through October 22nd. This is a time for us to alert and remind everyone of the importance of bus safety. The theme this year is "Be Safe—Know the Danger Zone". The national safety board hopes that this will bring about awareness to the "safety zone" for students. The "safety zone" represents a 10 foot area around the bus that both students and parents should avoid. It is the most difficult area for the bus driver to see people and for people to see the bus driver (see graphic below).

Additionally, this week is utilized to bring about safety awareness on the bus as a whole. The Transportation Department currently operates over 80 buses that transport more than 4700 students safely annually. We want to keep this tradition of safety and will be coordinating emergency evacuation drills at each school to assist in awareness for our students. During safety awareness week, we teach and remind students how to evacuate a school bus in the event of an actual emergency.

We take pride in safely transporting the students and look forward to the rest of this school year!



Digital Bulletin Board

In order to better facilitate communication with our families and support our community partners, we have created a “[Digital Bulletin Board](#)”. This page can be found under the Communications heading on the District website. This page will feature flyers from various organizations regarding upcoming events, camps, program sign-ups, and more.

With this page, such flyers will not be included in school e-blasts, but a link to this page will be included in school communications. School-specific events, such as PTO events, will still be communicated by individual schools.

We encourage you to visit the district website (central301.net) regularly to view news items, read school newsletters, and have quick access to the District 301 Facebook and Twitter pages.

Professional Development for D301 Staff

We would be remiss if we didn't thank our Instructional Coaches for bringing many different professional development opportunities to life for our teachers! They have been instrumental in designing and implementing professional development and ongoing learning as an essential part of our educators' careers. They recognize that an understanding of current practices, educational theories and research are critical to an educator's “toolkit” which helps inform the decisions they collectively make for students.

D301 offers various opportunities for new teachers as well as veteran staff through synchronous and asynchronous learning during the school year. This fall, there are a plethora of opportunities for our staff such as Rocket Readers, Spark Boxes, PD in PJs, as well as online learning. D301 also offers PGAP, our Professional Growth Activity Program. Session topics currently include Teach Like a Coach, Focusing on Feedback, *Removing Labels*, SEL Strategies, Making Questions Count, Sharpen Your Canvas, etc. Lastly, staff always have the opportunity to work with Instructional Coaches for tailored personal professional development goals.



Parent-Teacher Conferences, Continued

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When reserving an appointment time, you will be asked to indicate your student's name and whether you will meet in person or remotely. If a preference isn't indicated, we will assume you will be meeting in person. Families who need translation services should notify their student's teacher or sofia.mills@central301.net so arrangements can be made.

More information is available on the [District website](#). For additional questions or if assistance is needed, please contact your student's teacher or the school office. We look forward to seeing you at conferences!

New Teacher Training and Fun

We're always excited to welcome new staff to District 301, and this year was no different! We were thrilled to have two days with new staff for training and team-building activities. This year's training was focused on acclimating new staff to the D301 systems, collaboration on effective instructional practices, professional responsibilities and establishing collegial relationships with one another. As we entered into the 21-22 school year, innovative instruction, collaboration and relationship building was at the forefront. That was apparent throughout the new staff induction with the creative ways the instructional coaches, alongside mentors and administration, got to know the new staff and engaged in collegial conversations. It's always exciting to see the joy and excitement from the new staff here in D301!



*Engage
the mind
Empower
the learner
Inspire
excellence
Influence
the world*

Employment Opportunities

District 301 has a number of non-certified employment opportunities available. To view a complete list or apply online, visit <https://central301.net/human-resources/non-certified-position-openings/>.

- Bus Driver - Contact Pam Porto at 847-464-6052 for more information. Training is provided!
- Custodian - Contact Dan Polowy at 847-464-6050 for more information.
- Cook - Contact Pam Mirenda at 847-464-6043 for more information.
- Paraprofessional - Contact Tara Grommes at 847-464-6005 for more information.
- Substitute - Contact Tara Grommes at 847-464-6005 for more information.
- Substitute Nurse - Contact Tara Grommes at 847-464-6005 for more information.

District 301 Welcomes New Staff

Central District 301 is pleased to welcome new staff to our growing district. Below is a list of our staff members new this year.

*Welcome
to the
Central
301
family!*

DO Lindsay Sharp, Executive Director of Curriculum 6-12

CHS Sophia Baier, Social Worker
Julia Bascon, ELA Teacher
Laura Bieniak, LMC Aide
Stephen Buchs, Asst. Principal
Teresa Folkers, Math Teacher

Jenell Genardo, SpEd Teacher
Kimberly Jacobson, SpEd Teacher
William Marshall, Science Teacher
Jordan Pedigo, Music Teacher
Kristiana Vasil, Art Teacher

CMS Sara Arnold, Administrative Assistant
Katharine Cullum, Music Teacher
Stephenie Haehnel, Science Teacher
Lauren King, PE/Health Teacher

Carson Porter, ELA Teacher
Ana Paula Santos, Lunch Supervisor
Kathleen Shackelford, SpEd Teacher
Stefka Siderova, Lunch Supervisor

PKMS Kimberly Braddock, Science Teacher
Denise Kildew, Lunch Supervisor
Kayla Kopetsky, SW Intern
Lisa Merigold, Cook

Matt Newquist, Asst. Principal
Brenda Olson, Math Teacher
Heidi Williams, Math Interventionist
Eden Yurgil, School Psychologist

CT Lori Dabrowski, Lunch Supervisor
Carolyn Hand, EC Teacher
Karina Hernandez, EL/Bilingual Teacher
Carolyn Johnson, LEADS Teacher
Karlle Kelly, 3rd Grade Teacher
Cathryn Kinnison, SpEd Teacher
Parisha Laad, Paraprofessional
Amanda Lamz, 1st Grade Teacher
Kelly Lazar, 5th Grade Teacher

Aaron Madrid, Paraprofessional
Sarah Mika, School Nurse
Sarah Nelson, 5th Grade Teacher
Shawna Niehus, Lunch Supervisor
Megan Rakow, Librarian
Desiree Tomasone, Lunch Supervisor
Carrie Zaccaria, Paraprofessional
Melissa Zozzaro, Lunch Supervisor

HBT Lisa Almgren, Lunch Supervisor
Paige Beitzel, 4th Grade Teacher
Kimberly Butler, Librarian
Kristin Chapperon, Admin Assistant
Tabitha Gibson, Cook
Johnathan Grosvenor, 5th Grade Teacher

Alyson Guenther, Kindergarten Teacher
Amanda Hofmann, Kindergarten Teacher
Erin Hollingsworth, Paraprofessional
Kaley LaFontaine, 2nd Grade Teacher
Joshua Poterack, 5th Grade Teacher
Carolyne Schoen, 1st Grade Teacher

LL Katharine Cullum, Music Teacher
Kelli Holstine, 3rd Grade Teacher
Katie Napolitano, Cook

Melissa Schultz, 4th Grade Teacher
Hannah Turk, Kindergarten Teacher

PV Paige Brock, 3rd Grade Teacher
Tanja Dietrich, 4th Grade Teacher
Lisa Duewel, 5th Grade Teacher
Jared Genz, PE/Health Teacher
Amy Iwanski, Kindergarten Teacher

Margaret MacNeille, 1st Grade Teacher
Alexa Panagakos, School Nurse
Ashley Schamberger, EL/Bilingual Teacher
Nicole Stull, Administrative Assistant
Valerie Vejseli, Paraprofessional

Trans Daniel Bookman, Bus Driver
Margaret Burkes, Bus Driver
Janet Clark, Bus Driver
Kevin Godbey, Bus Driver
Tim Gravit, Bus Driver
Kara Howard, Bus Driver

William Lee, Bus Driver
Peter Marsala, Bus Driver
Cynthia McDonald, Bus Driver
Rodney Seyller, Bus Driver
Lori Stegle, Bus Driver

B&G Julian Deihls, Custodian
Guido Dekruff, Custodian

Angel Mayen, Utility
Nicole Shinkle, Custodian