

NEWSLETTER

CRETE-MONEE SD 201-U



CM201U.ORG
AUGUST 2023



Unity Starts With "U"

IMPORTANT DATES

- **August 7-21:** Late School Registration
- **August 8-10:** Kindergarten Screening (8-11am and 1-3pm)
(1500 S. Sangamon St. in Crete)
- **August 12:** Support Day, Drive-thru School Supplies Giveaway, 9-11:30am
(1500 S. Sangamon St. in Crete)
- **August 24:** First Day of School (Grades 1-9)
- **August 28:** First Day of School (PreK, Kindergarten, + Grades 10-12)



Message from Dr. Kara Coglianese, Superintendent of Crete-Monee School District 201-U

We are excited to start the 2023-24 school year and can't wait to welcome students and staff back! As you read our latest newsletter, the school district has been busy with numerous projects at the school buildings and summer school academics. We can't wait to enjoy these new improvements and see how our students have grown over the summer academically.

We are launching this year's theme as "Supporting U" and we want to emphasize the importance that the school district plays as an extension within the community providing and supporting our families. We encourage you to get engaged with the resources and programs we offer to the community.

Thank you for your ongoing support and I am proud to serve with you!

Dr. Kara Coglianese
Superintendent



Message from Maurice Brown, Board of Education President

Dear Community,

On behalf of the Crete-Monee School District 201-U Board of Education, I would like to invite you to engage with us as we plan ahead for the 2023-24 school year. I have had the great pleasure to serve as one of your board members over the past 12 years, and I am excited to have been recently elected as board president.

In this role, I believe in the utmost importance of being good stewards of your tax dollars when it comes to managing the district's finances and balancing budgets, while sustaining quality services for our school community. Our school board values the open, transparent, and respectful collaboration we have with one another, our superintendent, and the district's leadership team. This partnership supports our ability to best serve the students and families of CM201-U.

As we enter a new school year, we are focused on the continued safety and well-being of our students, staff, and schools, along with improving our academics and program offerings. We continue to be thoughtful and holistic in our approach to making our schools the safest they can be from external factors, while also meeting the varying needs of our students.

We will be engaging with the community as we move toward launching a new district strategic plan, and we are seeking honest feedback. Please be advised that more information will be shared come early 2024. Let's join together in making our district the best place to raise and grow our children and community as we continue our motto: Unity Starts with "U"!

Yours in Service,
Maurice Brown





FOCUS ON SAFETY FOR 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR

The safety and security of our students and staff remains our top priority. To that end, the district continues to make safety a strategic focus across our schools.

At the start of the previous school year, we began requiring all students in grades 2-12 to use only clear backpacks. For the 2023-24 school year, we are now requiring all students to use only clear backpacks (PreK-12). This policy is part of a multilevel strategy to reduce the likelihood of a safety incident occurring. We will continue to monitor these efforts throughout the school year.

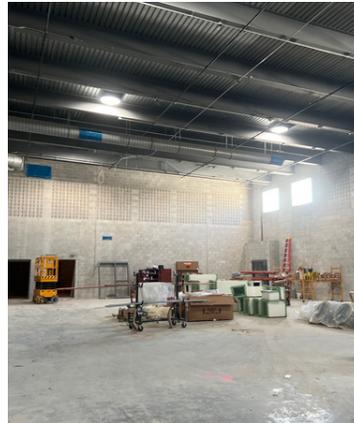
Additionally, CM201-U has submitted an application to receive a grant to implement the Evolv system in our schools. As an alternative to installing metal detectors, Evolv consists of two towers that students and staff will pass through upon entry into their school. A designated security team will be assigned to the process to greet staff and students and address identified threats. Should the red notification lights on the towers alert the security team to a threat, the individual will be moved to a secondary screening location. We are currently awaiting approval to retain Evolv devices for the high school.

This system will provide an efficient and effective method for detecting weapons and adding a layer of security for students as they enter school each day. Learn more at www.evolvtechnology.com.

We are also moving forward with hiring additional security officers. At the start of the 2023-24 school year, CM201-U will have a security officer stationed at each school building. Additional officers are still being hired at the high school to fill open positions and to meet the additional operational requirements of the Evolv detection system.

Additionally, FEMA response and incident command training has been initiated for security officers. Similar training will be provided to school administrators, in coordination with local first responders. Emergency response drills are currently being planned for the upcoming school year. Variations to previous drills and implementation of new drills is also part of the planning process.

We will continue to share and welcome our community's engagement in identifying ways we can ensure our school facilities are as safe and secure as possible. Thank you for your support in these critical efforts.



BUILDING RENOVATIONS UNDERWAY THIS SUMMER

This summer, crews have been hard at work on a number of building renovation and improvement projects to prepare for the 2023-24 school year. Below are the projects happening at each of our facilities:

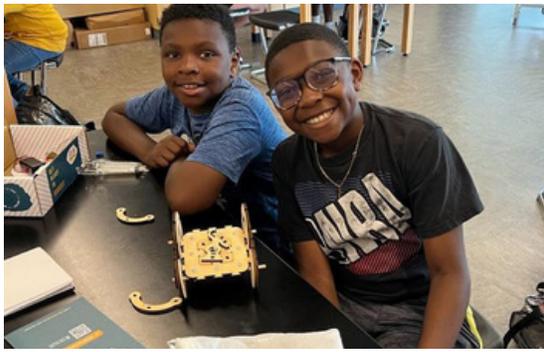
- **Balmoral Elementary:** Adding new HVAC heating and air conditioning, asbestos abatement, and new flooring in the classrooms
- **Crete Elementary:** Adding new HVAC heating and air conditioning, asbestos abatement, and new flooring in the classrooms
- **Coretta Scott King Magnet School:** Adding new HVAC heating and air conditioning, asbestos abatement, and new flooring in the classrooms
- **Talala Elementary:** Asbestos abatement, new flooring in the classrooms
- **Crete-Monee High School:** Addition for Bridges Program (estimated to be completed by October 2023) and a new scoreboard for the football field
- **New Central Office Building:** New flooring and office renovations

Unfortunately due to supply chain issues, these remaining elementary schools will not have functioning air conditioning at the start of the school year.

The school district also has continued to introduce new instructional technology into every learning space across the district. In the Summer of 2021, we began the process of removing outdated SmartBoards at CMMS and CMHS and replacing them with Newline Touch Panels to increase collaboration and engage instruction. This summer, we were able to continue with installations at the Early Learning Center, Monee Elementary, and Talala Elementary. We will conclude the project in the Summer of 2024 with Balmoral Elementary, Crete Elementary, and Coretta Scott King Magnet School. We are excited to have improvements ready for our students, staff, and families by the time school begins this August!

The projects taking place add to what has already been accomplished across our buildings from previous years. Rooftop heating and air conditioning units were installed in the common areas of Balmoral Elementary, Crete Elementary, Coretta Scott King Magnet School, Talala Elementary, and the Early Learning Center. The same buildings also received new indoor sprinkler systems.

Additionally, Crete Elementary underwent an east wing renovation, and both Talala Elementary and the Early Learning Center had additional HVAC systems installed.



SUMMER SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Elementary, middle, and high school students took part in summer school programming from June 20th to July 27th. The school district prides itself in developing summer academic support for over 500 students, thanks to the efforts of numerous teachers and summer staff who employed varied teaching methods. Our summer school programs help sustain academic progress and address learning gaps while offering enrichment opportunities, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Incoming fifth graders, middle schoolers, and ninth graders engaged in hands-on experiences and developed problem-solving skills.

With reports of significant future growth in STEM careers, the district is developing a STEM pathway beginning at the elementary level. Revolutionary technological breakthroughs, particularly artificial intelligence, stand on the verge of significant changes in the foreseeable future. Education Week reports that STEM associated careers will experience substantial growth by 2031. To meet this trend, the district is positioning itself to enhance students' learning in STEM fields and explore various career paths. We invite you to check our website this school year to discover new programs we are developing to bolster our STEM Pathways, ranging from elementary levels through Career Technical Education (CTE) at CMHS. Our staff also facilitated social and emotional development through the summer programs, fostering positive interactions among students and teachers.

This summer, we developed two new programs:

1. Educator Rising Students for aspiring teachers, where 13 CMHS students explored careers in education as junior tutors
2. CMHS English Language Learners Immersion Program for enriched language experiences

We celebrate our students' learning progress and sincerely thank our teachers and staff for their guidance and dedication.



DASHBOARD SHOWS PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC PLAN



CM201-U will be completing its strategic planning process by fall 2023. If you would like to learn more about the progress we are making toward achieving our goals, check out the CM201-U Dashboard on cm201u.org. Here, you can view district data and information connected to the strategic plan.

The district will be reaching out to the community for those interested in focus groups, starting in January 2024. Please stay tuned!

CRETE-MONEE EDUCATION FOUNDATION TO HOST FUN RUN



The Crete-Monee Education Foundation will host a Fun Run on September 16. All proceeds collected from the event will go toward programs, services, and opportunities for students and teachers across all grade levels.

Registration starts at 8:00 a.m., with entry fees set at \$35 for adults and \$15 for kids. The run begins at 9:00 a.m. at CMMS. The foundation also welcomes business sponsorship at various levels: \$2,500, \$1,000, \$500, and \$250. For more details or to arrange a sponsorship, please reach out to Rev. Hunt at cm201ufoundation@gmail.com or call 708-334-1278.

CHROMEBOOK CHANGES FOR 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR



CM201-U is proud to provide each student with a Chromebook making digital learning accessible. We have upcoming changes for the 2023-24 school year. Regrettably, we must discontinue our Chromebook loaner program due to high maintenance costs. This program was initially intended as a backup for students who temporarily forgot their devices. If a student's device is under repair, the district will temporarily provide a loaner Chromebook. Students who come to school without their devices will not have access to digital learning materials. In the event of any school closures, students will use their Chromebook for E-Learning Days. Please visit cm201u.org for more information on the Code of Conduct - Chromebook Handbook and the district's E-Learning Plan.

FINE ARTS MUSIC ON THE RISE

The district has embarked on developing and enhancing a comprehensive fine arts program that includes elementary and middle school band, high school marching band, and an orchestra strings program from elementary through middle school. These opportunities will provide students with cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural benefits.

Research has indicated that participating in music education, whether through involvement in a marching band or orchestra, can positively impact cognitive functions. These benefits encompass enhanced problem-solving skills and increased proficiency in mathematics. Students in these programs frequently demonstrate higher academic achievements across diverse subjects.

A group of 30 high school students were chosen to participate in Saturday classes at the prestigious Chicago Merit School of Music, renowned for its diverse music programming catering to students with advanced skills. These fortunate students will have the chance to study under top-notch instructors and be afforded the opportunity to perform alongside other talented Merit students as part of an ensemble.

Our students will receive personalized training and continuous support from experienced teaching artists throughout their journey, ensuring they receive the finest music education support available in the Chicagoland area.

We want to continue to enrich our students' overall educational experience, contribute to their personal growth, and strengthen the sense of community within the school and beyond.



Crete-Monee School District 201-U

690 West Exchange Street
Crete, IL 60417

UPDATES FROM OUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY

Have you joined the Crete-Monee Alumni & Friends Community? We encourage you to join today! Through this digital community, we share recent news, alumni events and reunions, along with alumni spotlights. You can also find ways to get involved with your alma mater. Coming soon will be digital online copies of yearbooks to view!

Join today at cm201u.org/alumni. We also invite you to nominate a fellow alum to be featured in our Alumni Spotlight - scan the QR code to the right.

UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS:

Class of 1988 35th Reunion - August 19, 2023 at 6PM, Vintage Oak, 1392 Main St., Crete, IL, \$50 per person. Please RSVP.

Classes of 1976-1982 - September 16, 2023 at 5PM, Acorn Fest, 515 First St., Crete, IL

Class of 1993 30th Reunion - TWO DAY EVENT!

Day 1 - September 23, 2023, Dinner at Scrementi's, 6PM, 3760 Chicago Rd., Steger, IL

Day 2 - September 24, 2023, Brunch on the Spirit of Chicago, 12pm-2pm, 600 E. Grand Ave., Chicago, IL

Class of 1983 Reunion - September 30, 2023, Dinner at Midlothian Country Club, 5000 147th St., Midlothian, IL

Classes of 2010-2014 Reunion Cruise - June 7-10, 2024, Cruising from Los Angeles, CA to Ensenada, MX

Log in at cm201u.org/alumni for more details on these events!



Scan the QR code to nominate an alum!



NEW BRIDGES PROGRAM AT CMHS ADDITION

We are excited to announce the anticipated completion this fall of the new wing addition at Crete-Monee High School, providing 34,500 sq. feet of additional space. This addition will house our new Bridges program, manufacturing/vocational programs, and the programs currently offered at Monee Education Center (MEC).

Starting in January 2024, MEC will shift from its current location (5154 Main St., Monee) to the brand-new addition at the CMHS. This move will enable MEC to better serve students with a fresh and more sophisticated infrastructure, providing access to state-of-the-art facilities and advanced resources. The transition will incorporate MEC into the Bridges program and help provide better connections to students at CMHS and the broader community.

The Bridges program is designed specifically to offer alternative programming and services for students who require additional support or smaller group settings to complete their high school studies. The program, accommodating 35-75 students between grades 6-12, facilitates an individualized and comprehensive approach towards education. The program also focuses on comprehensive development, including social and emotional growth, vocational training, and transitioning back to homeschool. Moreover, it offers Individualized Academic Programming (IAP), catering to students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

A key highlight of the Bridges program is the implementation of the Classroom Community Model, promoting collaborative learning and fostering a supportive environment. Additionally, it provides essential services such as credit recovery and Crisis Intervention Behavior Stabilization (CIBS).