



The BOARD REPORT

August 25, 2026 • Issue 43

➤➤ CCPS launches community platform on Parent Square

CCPS has expanded the use of ParentSquare to include **Community Connect**, making it easier for community members to stay informed and connected to what is happening throughout the district.

Through Community Connect, even those who don't have students in the district can receive text messages about upcoming events and opportunities. "We want to make it easier for our community to know what's happening in our schools and find meaningful ways to support our students," Mr. Howard said.

Superintendent Howard encourages community members to **sign up for Community Connect** and stay informed as we continue to build the platform.

➤➤ Summer Flight Academy gains already showing

Summer learning took center stage as district leaders shared the growth of Summer Flight Academy, a four-week program that provided approximately 200 students with targeted literacy and math instruction along with hands-on learning experiences.

Assistant Superintendent Kelly Fithen said students showed nearly 30% growth in phonics skills from the end of the school year to the end of the program, and additional substantial gains in math and literacy over Flight Academy's duration.

With support from Board of Education, the 21st Century grant, and the Greater Clark Foundation, the program expanded to include preschoolers. **See Page 2** for more on the program's Preschool expansion.

➤➤ **NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Tuesday, Sept. 22 - 6pm**

“NOTABLE & QUOTABLE”

"The underlying message of this meeting was that Growing Greatness takes collaboration. Whether through summer learning, stronger preschool-to-kindergarten connections, community partnerships, expanded communication, or a broader approach to accountability, we continue to focus on creating opportunities for students."

-Superintendent Dustin Howard

Board of Education
GREATNESS RECOGNITIONS
Pages 4-10

Why I Love My County



Magistrate Robert Blanton and Judge-Executive R.J. Palmer appeared before the Board to encourage CCPS students to participate in the "Why I Love My County" art contest sponsored by the Kentucky Association of Counties.

See PAGE 3 for more.



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>> Flight Academy adds preschoolers

Flight Academy expanded this summer to include 40 preschool students, giving them additional opportunities to build academic, social-emotional, and communication skills before entering kindergarten.

Director of Early Learning Jillian Blanton highlighted the collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers that grew from the program.

"So not only did we see significant growth in our students from this opportunity," she said, "but we built a really great relationship between preschool and kindergarten and made it even stronger by being committed collaborators."

For students transitioning from preschool to kindergarten, the experience provided more than additional instruction. Students had the opportunity to spend a full month in the elementary school before the school year officially began.

"As we have started this school year, we've been able to monitor these students as they transitioned from preschool into kindergarten, and they have transitioned wonderfully," said Assistant Superintendent Kelly Fithen. "The students who were able to participate have already made a tremendous amount of progress. So thank you all for this opportunity. We're very appreciative, and we hope to be able to continue this in the future."



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dustin Howard

Superintendent Howard highlighted a strong start to the 2026-27 school year, highlighting the support of community partners, including the Winchester Police Department, which had officers at nine stops during the first days of school.

CCPS plans to release its new Local Accountability Dashboard within the next month. The Dashboard comes from new legislation but also reflects two years of work with the community to determine what should be measured when evaluating the district's success.

The Dashboard will look beyond state testing to provide a broader view of student, staff and community growth. Measures will connect to the district's Portrait of a Learner, including areas such as effective communication, engaged citizenship, and committed collaboration.

The district will also examine staff growth and retention and its connections with businesses, community partners and volunteers. Howard said the dashboard will give the community more timely information rather than requiring families to wait for state test results each year.

"I want to emphasize that what the Dashboard will offer comes from asking our community the question – 'What do you want from us?' – and then holding ourselves accountable on that," Mr. Howard said.

Howard concluded by inviting the community to attend the CCPS Hall of Fame ceremony before Friday's football game Friday, Aug. 28, where 10 new members will be inducted. [See invitation.](#)



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>> Additional Business

The Board unanimously approved:

- > Parent agreements and handbooks for the Cardinal's Nest, Cardinal's Nest at BCTC and CCPS Aftercare Program.
- > A Memorandum of Understanding with Amazing Opportunity of Lexington LLC to provide tailored mental health services and referral pathways for students with trauma histories and significant risk factors.
- > A Memorandum of Understanding with Gateway Children's Services to provide family connection, substance-use support, and tiered mental health and behavioral supports.
- > A school psychologist contract to supplement staffing while three school psychologists are on maternity leave.
- > Invoices to Ross-Tarrant Architects and Codell Construction for work related to the Baker and RDC construction projects.
- > Change orders for the RDC HVAC project, including sprinkler head relocation, roof joist reinforcement, and replacement of damaged ceiling tile. Architect Brian Buckner pointed out that these are the only change orders that have come through so far, unusual for a project of this scale.
- > Second reading of clarifications to the CCPS policy on non-resident students, and second reading of the CCPS Transportation Policy, which outlines guidelines for students, parents, and bus drivers and monitors.

- > Payment of salaries and accounts payable.
- > The 2026 tax rates, including a real property rate of 65.4, personal property rate of 65.4, motor vehicle rate of 53.5, and utility rate of 3%.
- > Consent agenda items as presented.

[VIEW AGENDA](#)

Building Community Pride

Clark County students have an opportunity to showcase their creativity, celebrate their community, and have their artwork featured in a statewide calendar.

Magistrate Robert Blanton encouraged students in grades K-8 to participate in the Kentucky Association of Counties' annual **Why I Love My County** Calendar Art Contest.

The contest invites students to create artwork showing what they love about their county, including its people, places, landmarks, traditions, and heritage. Selected artwork will be featured in KACo's **Why I Love My County** calendar.

The Clark County Fiscal Court has proclaimed September 1, 2026, as **Why I Love My County Day in Clark County**, recognizing the contest as a way to encourage young people to honor their community and strengthen local pride.

"I've seen the artwork of Clark County students, and I know we've got artists who are unsurpassed," Blanton said. "We'll be right back here in a few months recognizing students whose art is going to be on the calendar."



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GREATNESS RECOGNITIONS

The Clark County Board of Education Greatness Recognitions honor staff, students, and community members who exemplify one or more of the Portrait of a Clark County Learner competencies. This is Growing Greatness in action. Congratulations to all, and shoutout to our nominators!

COMMITTED COLLABORATOR **LEAH WEBB, RDC**

Our Portrait teaches us (and our students) Committed Collaborators contribute with integrity, navigate compromise, and promote teamwork. Often when I think about committed collaboration, I picture intention, shared visions, project work, standardized teams of folks working together in a scheduled, purposeful fashion. But what about the kind of committed collaboration that becomes necessary in a split second? Those unplanned, unpredictable, unknown situations that often find us as educators, especially in the middle school environment. Last week I was reminded that GREAT Committed Collaborators are often the ones who are willing to sacrifice their time, their schedule, their priorities, to



step in and help you with yours in a moment's notice. Sometimes, you learn that the GREATEST Committed Collaborators tend to be those who have a special set of skills, needed at a particular time, and who don't hold reservations about stepping in as collaborators on a dime... The GREATEST can be those who show up, not on planned committees or with purposeful spreadsheets (although I do love me a good spreadsheet), but those who are randomly called upon during their lunchtime... who come in, whip out their lanyard off, whip out their AAC device, sit criss cross applesauce in the floor with their work clothes on, to meet the needs of a student struggling in the moment. Because of this person's selflessness, skillset, and committed collaboration, a student was able to rise from a situation where communication was hard, and complete their day successfully. Miss Leah Webb is RDC's speech language pathologist. She is kind, professional, skilled, and a fierce advocate for her students. Last week I learned Miss Leah is also an outstanding example of a Committed Collaborator.

We are thankful that our students get to learn from her at Campbell, and that our staff get to learn from her example of servant leadership and committed collaboration.

-RDC Principal Tiffany Smith, Nominator



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GROWING GREATNESS CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMITTED COLLABORATOR

JEANNIE GWYNNE



I am pleased to recognize Jeannie Hall Gwynne as a Committed Collaborator in her support of the Clark County Public Schools Police Department. Jeannie has demonstrated exceptional commitment by working closely with the CCPS Police Department to develop and complete a grant application addressing critical equipment needs. Her willingness to invest time, expertise, and effort during this process was instrumental in helping the department secure funding for much needed equipment that will directly support the safety of students and staff, and aid in the preparedness, and effectiveness of the CCPS Police Department. This collaboration exemplifies the positive impact that dedicated partnerships can have on our students, staff, and the community we serve. Jeannie approached this project with professionalism, persistence, and a genuine desire to make a meaningful difference. In recognition of her outstanding dedication, collaborative spirit, and commitment to school safety. Jeannie's efforts are greatly appreciated and serve as an excellent example of how committed collaboration can produce meaningful results for our school community.

-Chief James Hall, Nominator



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COMMITTED COLLABORATOR

FINDING HOPE

Karen Hadley/Morgan Denny



On behalf of students with sensory needs across our community, as well as those visiting our amazing events, we would like to recognize Finding Hope and Karen Hadley as Committed Collaborators. This nonprofit has met with CCPS staff and families to brainstorm ways to support individuals with neurodivergent needs. During one session, a CCPS parent shared her experience while attending the Girls' and Boys' Sweet Sixteen at Rupp Arena. Her child became overwhelmed, not only by all of the Clark County red, but also by the overall noise and activity. A Rupp Arena attendant noticed and brought the family a sensory bag, explaining that families could check one out during their visit. After hearing this story, Ms. Hadley and her group shared their desire to create similar sensory bags and make them available at CCPS events across all of our schools. We are grateful for their commitment to listening, collaborating, and helping create more inclusive and welcoming experiences for everyone in our community.

-Director of Special Education Abby McCormick, Nominator



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EMPOWERED LEADER COMMITTED COLLABORATOR **CCPS ACADEMIC TEAM**



It is my honor to recognize members of the District Academic Team for consistently going above and beyond to support our students, staff, schools, and the district. From planning, leading, and overseeing the Summer Flight Academy to designing and facilitating professional learning, and leading on-site PD academies, this team continues to step up wherever they are needed. They transformed GRC into an Opening Day extravaganza, supported Leadership Week, collaborated across departments, solved problems, filled gaps, and most importantly, supported one another every step of the way. Their work is a true reflection of our Portrait of a Clark County Learner competencies: Empowered Leader and Committed Collaborator. They lead with purpose, embrace challenges, work together to make things happen, and consistently look for ways to make a positive impact. Their leadership, flexibility, teamwork, and willingness to go the extra mile do not go unnoticed. CCPS is truly Growing Greatness because of the leadership, commitment, and collaboration of this team. Abby, Alyson, Amber, Cassie, Elizabeth, Tiffany and Teresa- Thank you for all you do for our students, our staff, and one another. You truly exemplify what it means to LIVE the Portrait.

-Assistant Superintendent Kelly Fithen, Nominator



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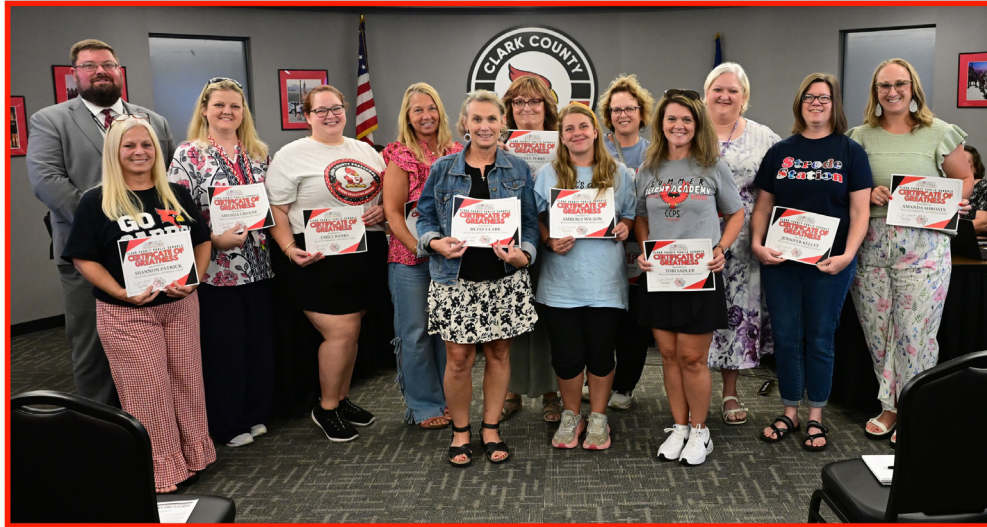
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EMPOWERED LEADER **REFLECTIVE INNOVATOR** **SUMMER FLIGHT ACADEMY**



The Summer Flight Academy staff truly embodied what it means to be Reflective Innovators and Empowered Leaders. Throughout the summer, staff continually reflected on student needs, adjusted instruction, and explored new strategies to make learning more engaging and meaningful. They took ownership of challenges and collaborated to find new solutions. By being willing to try new approaches, learn from experiences, and advocate for what their students needed, our Flight Academy staff demonstrated leadership in action and a commitment to continuously improving student learning experiences.

-Amber Murphy, Nominator

Shannon Patrick, Amanda Greene, Emily Banks, Sherry Fulks, Betsy Clark,
Renee Perry, Amberly Wilson, Susan Aschenauer, Tobi Sadler, Amy Shoemaker,
Jennifer Kelley, Amanda Shroats with Superintendent Howard.



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COMMITTED COLLABORATOR

TRANSPORTATION/FOOD SERVICES



The Clark County Board of Education is pleased to recognize two departments whose contributions played an essential role in the success of our Flight Academy Summer Program. Making a program of this size successful requires much more than what happens in the classroom. It takes a team of dedicated employees working behind the scenes each day to make sure our students grow and thrive.

Our Transportation team ensured students had reliable transportation to and from our host school, Shearer Elementary. Our Food Services Department provided a nutritious breakfast and lunch each day of the program. We ask that the department directors accept this recognition for their staff members who served our students and built meaningful connections with Flight Academy students each day. On behalf of the Clark County Board of Education, our students, families, and the entire Clark County Public Schools community, thank you to the Transportation and Food Services teams and every staff member who contributed to Flight Academy this summer. Your Committed Collaborator spirit helps us Grow Greatness every single day.

-Assistant Superintendent Kelly Fithen, Nominator

Transportation Director Daren Snell and Food Services Director Dr. Jennifer Muncy accepted the certificates on behalf of their staffs.



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GROUP GREATNESS RECOGNITIONS

EARNED SINCE OUR GROUP RECOGNITION EVENT AT RDC

GRC SOFTBALL

The Board of Education is honored to recognize GRC Softball for finishing with a record-breaking 38-6 season, and advancing to the Final Four of the KHSAA State Softball Tournament at the University of Kentucky. With their leadership, teamwork, and excellence, these ladies exemplify all competencies of the Portrait of a Learner. Congratulations! Your Greatness Shows!



Jordyn Abner, Morgan Bennett, Lexi Burke, Jillian Franco, Lila Fugate, Jayda Grigsby, Arabella Guinn, Lyric Hampton, Lilliana Hill, Kennedy Jones, Ella Kidd, Layla Henderson, Rachel Horton, Layla Lennon, Addison Mathews, Hope Meyerhoff, Megan Moberly, Morgan Parks, Savannah Stiles, Jakhia Tichenor, Zyniia Tichenor, Kylie Walton, Mallory Watkins, Hannah Whitt

Head Coach Matt Puckett

Coaching Staff: Gary Preece, Jeff Collins, Allie Martin, Brian Abner, Joe Edwards



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CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Hall of Fame

Join us as we welcome the
new 2026 Class to the
CCPS Hall of Fame!

Larry Allison
Henry Branham
Jerry Cecil
Bob Cowen
Greg Dyk
Jason Epperson
Steele Harmon
Preston Knowles
Gordon Parido
Kevin Wilson



**FRIDAY, AUGUST 28TH
7:05 PM**

PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

GRC CARDINALS VS. HUNTINGTON HIGHLANDERS (WV)

**GEORGE ROGERS CLARK HIGH SCHOOL
FOOTBALL STADIUM**

*Past and current
Hall of Fame
members and
families are invited
to attend to be
recognized.
A hospitality tent
with refreshments
will be set up at the
stadium.*



**GROWING
GREATNESS**
CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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