



APRIL 2021 | ISSUE NO. 9

# District Newsletter

## Know your truth

*While you are busy doubting yourself, someone else is admiring your strength.*

Some days it's hard to find that silver lining. Deadlines stand unmet. Emails from parents are filling your inbox. Your to-do list has entered its second or third page. Turning on social media just makes your blood pressure rise. It all feels overwhelming and you begin to question your ability, your purpose. In moments such as these, it's critical to redirect your focus and reflect on truth.

### **Truth #1: You make a difference.**

Every day you make a difference and have an impact on those around you. Our actions, words, and perspective will all guide how a day unfolds. Each action, or reaction, is a choice. Remember the impact you have made on students this year. What you may dismiss as inconsequential, may be the defining difference in their life.

### **Truth #2: You must stay grounded in gratitude.**

Negative emotion is cast aside by positive feelings. Having a solid gratitude practice retrains your brain according to research done at the Mindfulness Awareness Research Center at UCLA. At a neurochemical level, gratitude acts as a catalyst for neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and nor-epinephrine.

### **Truth #3: You are stronger than you think.**

Give your body, and mind, the credit it deserves. You have made it through a year no one could ever predict. You have overcome every obstacle and hurdle set in your path, because you're here today. Maybe a bit bruised, but you're here. So on those days you begin to question yourself, stop and remember "I'll make it through this, too."

SUBMIT YOUR STORY

*Share the positive, innovative, and exceptional stories from your school so that we can share them with the community!*

# CMCSS BRIGHT SPOTS

## MARCH MADNESS BRINGS JOY

Emily Gordon and Lauren King, educators at Rossvie Middle and the Student Council Sponsors, went above and beyond to make the school's recent "March Madness" engaging and inclusive for all students. "They were very thoughtful to come up with fun, light-hearted, and even charitable opportunities," said Leslie Burdine. Traditional students had homerooms compete against each other each day to earn "points". There were similar opportunities each day for the virtual teachers/students to participate as well. "It was so well-planned and organized and they communicated all the information so clearly to make it easy for teachers to share with their students. This really served to further build "community" and foster a team mentality with my virtual students and we enjoyed it very much!"



CMC EDUCATION FOUNDATION PRESENTS

## THINGS THAT MAKE YOU SMILE

### "KIDS SAY FUNNY THINGS" WINNER IS... GRANDMA'S TEETH MADE ME LATE

A Burt Elementary 5th grade student was running late to their Zoom class. Their excuse, "I'm sorry I was late - I had to help my grandmother find her teeth." That's one we'll have to try when we are late for our next meeting!



### CHICKEN NUGGETS ARE NOT FOR ALL AGES

A Rossvie elementary teacher got a dose of reality from her 7-year-old. When her daughter was asked what she wanted for dinner, she picked McDonald's chicken nuggets and fries. "I made a gag sound because I'm not a huge fan of McDonald's. When Gracie heard it she said, 'Mom you are just jealous because you are a grown woman and can't have chicken nuggets.'"

### BOOMER CONCERNS

One Burt Elementary 5th grader was relieved to learn a bit of history. "I'm so glad you taught us about the Baby Boom today. I had heard about it before, but was afraid to ask my mom about it since it sounded like either babies were used as bombs or something about how babies are born."

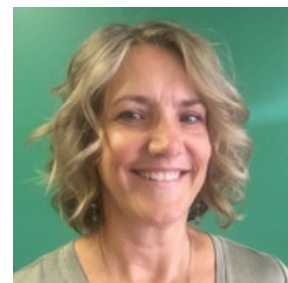


# Introduction to Leadership

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED THRU APRIL 30

This program is designed to provide essential leadership and management training to select certified and classified employees who have demonstrated interest and aptitude for broadening their leadership skills. The program covers a broad range of leadership topics to include personal leadership, interpersonal communication, team development skills, organizational change, and facilitative leadership.

[APPLY NOW](#)



## Episode 6: Pioneer Spirit

In this episode, our guests Julie Combs and Rachel Wainwright, from Norman Smith Elementary, give a glimpse into their process for leveraging technology tools to make learning more engaging for students.

The PL Surge podcast is powered by your learning journey.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN NOW](#)





# Continuous Improvement

## NEW AND UPDATED POLICES

### **HUM-A090 – Non-FMLA Leave Policy**

*Added further guidance on leave eligibility*

### **HUM-A094 – COVID-19 Related Leave Policy**

*Updated to include leave eligibility for required travel*

### **HUM-A017 – Leave for Advanced Academic Study**

### **HUM-A024 – Leave for Military Service**

*Updated both policies to align with new procedures for requesting leave through the online portal*

### **HUM-A021 – Inclement Weather Policy**

*Changed the number of days before make-ups are required under the Teachers and School Administrators section from 3 (three) days to 5 (five) days*

### **HUM-A039 – Nepotism Policy**

*Added aunt, uncle, niece and nephew to the definition of direct relatives*

## Educational Assistants and Aides

### CLASSIFIED SPOTLIGHT

Whether subtle or obvious, we must acknowledge the assistance of others. None of us got to where we are alone. CMCSS is thankful for all of our educational assistants, aides, and support staff that go above and beyond each day. Your servant's hearts and dedication do not go unnoticed. You have chosen to help in times of trouble, to guide in moments that may overwhelm, and you always offer a supportive hand. From a simple book suggestion that opens a child's imagination to an extra set of hands when the workload is too much for one person to carry, thank you for the assistance and instruction you provide to CMCSS employees, students, and the community.



# ENGAGE21

CMCSS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CONFERENCE

## *"America's Science Teacher"*

ELLEN DEGENERES

STEM teacher, best-selling author, business leader

One of Time Magazine's  
"Most Influential People of the Year"

1,500+ television appearances

Nearly one billion views  
on YouTube, Facebook,  
Instagram, and  
TikTok



## Steve Spangler

EMMY AWARD-WINNER  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

WATCH THIS SNEAK PEEK:  
THIS IS THE ENERGY  
STEVE WILL BRING!

SAVE THE  
*date*

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE DATES

**July 12 - 15 & July 19 - 22**

PLAN CATALOG OPENS MAY 3

REGISTER ON PLAN FOR STEVE SPANGLER'S KEYNOTE AND ALL OTHER VIRTUAL ENGAGE SESSIONS.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

# Game on: West Creek Senior turns video games into college scholarships

Students have a new rationale for playing so many video games - college scholarships. While the awareness of e-sports scholarships is relatively new, the potential looms large. High school students have the opportunity to earn thousands of dollars in scholarships for e-sports from reputable colleges and universities across the country.

Hunter Fecteau, a senior at West Creek High School, is proof as he boasts not only top-notch academics but also nearly \$35,000 in scholarship offers from three different colleges to join their e-sports teams.

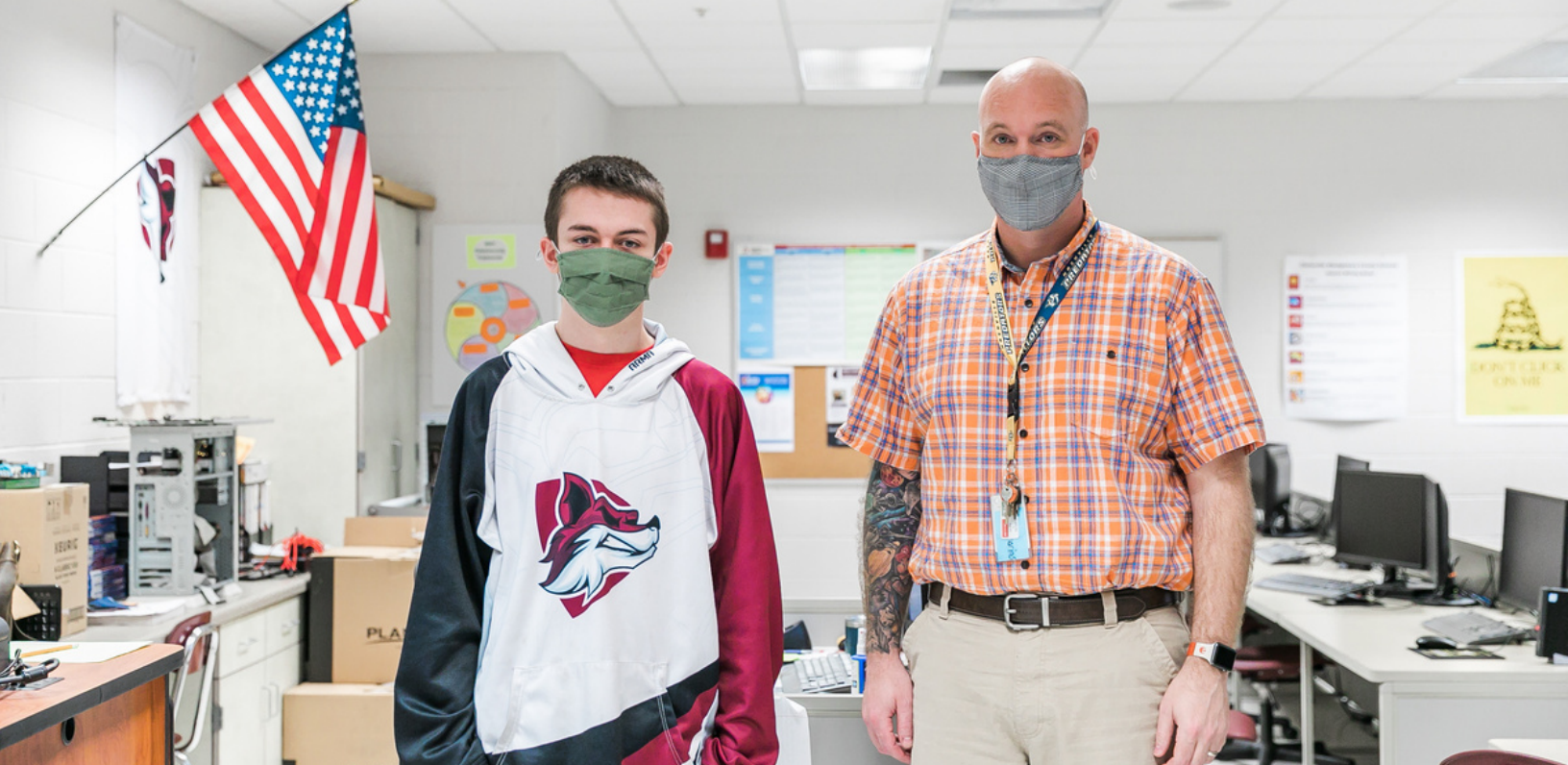
The process for e-sports recruitment is in line with traditional sports. "I had a Be Recruited profile where I play sports. [The colleges] took notice," said Hunter.

The benefit to the colleges and universities is akin to traditional athletic incentives - recognition and achievement. Enrollment is always top of mind for higher education, and reaching future students can be tricky.

With this in mind, universities are targeting students in their arena. College students represent their schools in national competitions and regional match-ups. Top performers earn notoriety while the school is afforded grassroots marketing to potential future students.

However, it does come with a balance as students must still possess other competencies and requirements necessary to a successful college career. "They are not looking for players who are the best of the best," said Hunter. "They want to help people get through college if needed."





For Hunter, his aspirations for gaming do not stretch beyond simply being a lucrative hobby. “I want to be a medical oncologist,” he said. The three colleges he’s considering have partnerships with medical schools.

As he navigated his junior and senior years of high school amid a pandemic, the e-sports club at West Creek High allowed Hunter an active opportunity to connect safely with other students. The club is only in its second year but already has amassed a large following. “We just encourage each other,” he explained when reflecting on their past season. “The club gave me something to do, something to look forward to.”

Mr. Zacharias, the club sponsor and cybersecurity teacher at West Creek, agrees with the sentiment. “Probably 70% of the conversations that go on in the server are not about video games,” he said, explaining how the students will connect through the school’s private Discord group. Video games were the common connection that brought the students together. “It opens the door to find people with similar interests.”

Principal Matt Slight was the catalyst for creating the club. He saw the benefit both inside and outside of the classroom that e-sports could bring to students. Mr. Zacharias agrees the students continue to see growth through participation. They develop life skills such as teamwork while playing together. “When I go and spectate, hearing them communicate at the moment, it’s all about leadership.”

For students interested in joining the club, Mr. Zacharias emphasizes, “Don’t put yourself into a situation where your academics are at risk. No matter the athlete, academic standards are important.”

Hunter insists the entire process would not have been possible without the support of his family, too. “My dad was with it all the way. My mom supports me. [They would say] ‘Whatever decisions you make, were going to be backing you.’ If it weren’t for them, it wouldn’t be easy, and the decision would be much harder.”

Like every soon-to-be graduate, Hunter still feels those pangs of self-doubt. The real world is fast approaching, and he’s hesitant. “I am just scared to graduate. Scared to move on, I know it’s going to hit me that I won’t be here.”

Teachers at CMCSS actively prepare their students for college and career. “We have no choice but to embrace [technology],” said Mr. Zacharias. “We won’t reach our students if we don’t embrace technology. It’s the only life they’ve known.” In 2020, CMCSS introduced 1:1 technology for all K-12 students. Teachers incorporate technology into daily instruction. “To connect with our students, we have to speak their language. Their language is technology.”



# Alive & Well

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## LAST MONTH FOR BE ALIVE POINTS PROGRAM

April is the LAST month for the 2020-2021 Be Alive Points Program! That means your time to meet the 300 points goal is ending soon!

## SUMMER WELLNESS GOAL

Think about one way you can improve your health and wellness this summer (it's ok if you say "relax", that's important too!) [Submit it here](#) for 5 points.

## 2021 ALIVE AND WELL SURVEY

Please [complete this survey](#) and submit your participation in the portal. It is anonymous, so you must submit your participation in the portal to receive points.

## 5TH ANNUAL KICKBALL CLASSIC

April 24th at Richellen Park; kickoff at 8 a.m.; Must have 9-12 players per team. [Register your team here](#).



# Fitness Classes

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## OUTDOOR PIYO

April 20, 27  
4:30 p.m. in grassy field by the Onsite Clinic at Kenwood Complex

## ZOOM PLYOGA

April 15, 29  
4:45 p.m.

## ZOOM BARRE/CORE

April 22  
4:45 p.m.

[ACCESS ONLINE CLASSES](#)



# The Benefits

## HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION

### UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Please notify Human Resources if you have had a change of address, have a name change, or need to make other updates to your personal information.

If you're adding a spouse or new baby or making any changes to your insurance, contact the Benefits Office.

Remember that changes to your insurance coverage due to a status change must be made within 30 days of the event.

If you need to update your beneficiary forms, please contact the Benefits Office.

### CONTACT US

**MONDAY - FRIDAY 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM**



**Amy  
Wigington**

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P: 920-7810



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McIntosh**

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## Great News: No Medical Premium Increase for the 2021-22 School Year!

The members of the [Clarksville-Montgomery County Employee Insurance Trust \(CMCEIT\)](#), have announced it is not necessary for a medical premium increase for the 2021-22 school year.

This is because of you! As wise consumers, you have utilized the Onsite Medical Clinic for treatment, used generics when possible, researched care from providers in the Select (S) network, and utilized Urgent Care Clinics instead of Emergency Room services when appropriate.

Find your current medical premium on your paystub or go to the [Employee Benefits page of the website \(here\)](#) to review current premiums.

# Disposition of Unused Personal Leave

THE DEADLINE TO COMPLETE THE ONLINE FORM WILL BE MAY 15, 2021

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Employees who have elected to NOT use personal leave days (or still have three (3) personal leave days\* available) for this fiscal year may convert them as follows pursuant to HUM-A037:

## OPTION 1

The three (or four\*) personal leave days will be rolled over to sick leave at the end of the year.

## OPTION 2

The employee may cash one day in at a per diem rate† and the remaining two (or three\*) days will be rolled over into sick leave at the end of the year.

In order to be eligible, an employee must have earned three personal leave days in the 2020-2021 school year and must have not used any of their three accrued personal leave days within the 2020-2021 school year. All eligible employees will receive the Disposition of Unused Personal Leave information via email in late April 2021. This email will contain the link to the online form which you must complete if you want a choice on how to dispose of your unused personal leave.

The deadline to complete the online form will be May 15, 2021. We are only accepting online forms; therefore, any paper forms that are submitted will be rejected. Any online forms submitted after the deadline of May 15, 2021 will not be accepted. Once you respond, your option will be locked in and will not be able to be changed. If you do not respond by the deadline with your selected option, then the default will be Option 1.

If you think you are eligible but don't receive the emailed link by May 1, please reach out to your payroll officer for assistance. [Link to Payroll Contacts](#)

If the option to be paid out for your personal leave day is chosen, the payment will follow our normal practice and will be on the payroll check date shown below for your applicable classification.

Classified	June 17, 2021
Administrator	June 30, 2021
Certified	August 5, 2021

\*Due to COVID-19, CMCSS closed effective March 13, 2020; therefore many employees still had 3 personal leave days and elected the option of rolling all 3 days into sick leave and were granted one extra personal leave day for the 2020-2021 school year. The granting of this additional personal leave day is only applicable for the 2020-2021 school year. Employees are still eligible to request payment for one day if you have a total of three (3) days remaining at the end of their calendar for 2020-2021 school year.

†The per diem rate is your daily pay rate which is based on your scheduled hours per day and rate of pay. For example, for a classified employee that has 5 hours as their daily scheduled work hours and gets paid an hourly rate of \$15.96 has a daily pay rate of \$79.80.





# Summer CPR Zoom Training

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For 2021-22, The Safety and Health Department will provide CPR training for current staff members during the summer through an online zoom session. After the online training, the employee will sign-up for a skills check off at Central Office. The training is good for two years and is open to employees taking the class for the first time as well as employees needing to recertify. All current employees whose CPR training expires during the 2021-2022 school year should attend one of the sessions below. Please refer to (SAF-F011) for information regarding CPR training. With Administrator approval, employees may register in PLAN for the following courses:

**SECTION# 54766**  
**06/14/21 (8:00 AM-12:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54767**  
**06/14/21 (1:00 PM-5:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54768**  
**06/15/21 (8:00 AM-12:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54769**  
**06/15/21 (1:00 PM-5:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54770**  
**06/28/21 (8:00 AM-12:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54771**  
**06/28/21 (1:00 PM-5:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54772**  
**06/29/21 (8:00 AM-12:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54773**  
**06/29/21 (1:00 PM-5:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54774**  
**07/26/21 (8:00 AM-12:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54775, ZOOM CPR**  
**07/26/21 (1:00 PM-5:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54776, ZOOM CPR**  
**07/27/21 (8:00 AM-12:00 PM)**

**SECTION# 54777**  
**07/27/21 (1:00 PM-5:00 PM)**

# COVID-19 Emotional Support for Educators

PHONE LINE TO PROVIDE  
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR  
FRONT-LINE WORKERS  
EXTENDED TO EDUCATORS



The Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), in partnership with several statewide organizations, announced the COVID-19 Emotional Support Line is now available for all Tennessee educators.

The emotional support line provides free and confidential support from specially trained volunteer mental health professionals to callers experiencing increased anxiety and stress due to the national pandemic. The COVID-19 Emotional Support Line is available to call at 888-642-7886 from 6 a.m.- 10 p.m. CT/ 7 a.m.- 11 p.m. ET daily.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant challenges, anxiety, and stressors for many, including those doing the work of educating our kids," said Commissioner Penny Schwinn. "We are grateful to our partners at TDMHSAS for extending access to this resource to all Tennessee educators, who now can get critical supports from trained mental health professionals in a confidential setting."

Specially trained mental health professionals answer incoming calls from the line and provide emotional support through active listening, helping callers identify and address basic needs, and informing callers about tools for managing stress and strategies for self-care.

In May, the COVID-19 Emotional Support Line was created by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, along with the Mental Health Active Response Team (MHART), the Tennessee Association of Alcohol, Drug, and other Addictions Services (TAADAS), National Association of Social Workers-TN Chapter (NASW-TN), for healthcare workers and first responders who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic response.

"When we created this Emotional Support Line with our partners back in May, it was intended for those working on the front lines of the pandemic working in health care and as first responders. Due to the outpouring of support as well as capacity, we are grateful to be able to announce this expansion to offer needed support to educators across the state of Tennessee," said TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams, LCSW.

"We at MHART are so thankful to be able to be a part of facilitating the expansion of this Emotional Support Line to all teachers and educators across the state of Tennessee. The fact that 5 statewide organizations have come together in the span of just a few weeks to support this expansion is a testament to the goodwill of Tennesseans and to the desperate need for a service like this for educators who have been struggling during this pandemic now more than ever. We are committed to being there for our teachers because they are committed to being there for our kids in one of the noblest and oldest professions. The future of our state depends on their success," said T.J. Stone, Executive Coordinator, MHART.

**The COVID-19 Emotional Support Line does not offer mental health treatment and is not intended to replace mental health crisis or suicide prevention services. [Learn more about the COVID-19 Emotional Support Line here.](#) Also available: [CMCSS Ability Assist through The Hartford Read: The Hartford Brochure](#)**