

NARWHAL NEWS

lchurchill@csaschool.org edostal@csaschool.org

Navigator News Monthly Newsletter

Welcome to our first newsletter! We will post monthly newsletters via the Tuesday Times the first week of each month. Check back here each month for updates and a quick glance at our month ahead. We will email reminders and more classroom specific information to you as needed. Be sure that both teacher emails are saved to your contacts so that you are receiving classroom communications regularly. When contacting classroom teachers, please also be sure to include BOTH on all emails in order to help facilitate a smooth and more streamlined mode of communication.



PowerSchool Forms

Please be sure that you've logged in to PowerSchool to complete all the Open House forms for this year and to make sure your contact information is correct and up-to-date. If you have issues logging in, you can contact Mrs. Dickerson at edickerson@csaschool.org directly. :-)



Contact

Please be sure to include **both** teachers on email contacts. This helps ensure messages are received and responded to in a timely manner. Our emails are always listed on the front page of this newsletter, in addition to our school phone number and classroom extension.

lchurchill@csaschool.org
edostal@csaschool.org

When we send emails out, we usually begin the title in the subject with "Narwhal Notes" so that it's easy to search. Our first email blast came before school began. Check to be sure you received that! We sourced email addresses from PowerSchool. If you have an update to your information or wish to add to our personal email list, let us know!

Important Dates

9/11 – CSA and Charyl's birthday

9/17 – Picture Day

9/21- Picture Day Make-up (NOT for retakes. A separate retake day will be scheduled later in the fall)

9/21- Annual CSA Color Run at Settler's Park

9/26- Rollerama

September Birthdays:

Happy birthday month to Grant, Vinny, Kyla, Ava, and Vanessa! :-)

Uniform Reminders

As an integral piece of our school's philosophy, CSA has crafted a uniform policy that aims to promote a safe learning environment. Please take some time to review the reminders below and make any adjustments needed. Please see the CSA Family Handbook for the full description of the uniform policy. If you have questions, we are happy to provide guidance, or you can always follow up with Leadership directly. Thank you for helping to maintain a core piece of CSA's mission. :-)

Shirts: Solid colors in white, light blue, or red. Undershirts must be solid white. Polo shirts do need to bear the CSA elementary logo.

Socks/Tights: Must be solid white or solid navy blue.

Shoes: Dress shoes are allowed in the following solid colors: brown, navy, or black. Tennis shoes are allowed in the following solid colors: black, white, navy, and grey. Laces must match listed colors as well.

Sweaters/Cardigans/Vests: Must be solid navy blue.

CSA Crew Neck Sweatshirts: **Red crewneck sweatshirts with a CSA logo are available for purchase at the Admissions Office. **This is the only uniform sweatshirt option.** Other CSA themed sweatshirts are allowed only for designated spirit wear days.

Hair accessories: Must be red, light blue, navy blue, white, brown, or black.

Leggings are not permitted except as extra layers for recess or carpool time. **Pants** must be navy blue.

Learning Targets

During September, our main focus is on fostering a strong sense of community in the classroom and building meaningful connections with our students. It's a time to get to know each child and help them feel part of our classroom family. As we ease into the year, we'll also be establishing routines and procedures to support a successful learning environment. Below are a few highlights from our academic workshops so far.

Reading: Establishing Reading Workshop, working on 3 ways to read a book (pictures, pictures and words, words only), connecting with familiar books, building reading stamina

Math: Establishing Math Workshop and working on math workstations and rotating through activities, reviewing and then growing number sense, addition and subtraction strategies, and for some learners, we may work through beginning repeated addition through arrays.

Writing: Establishing Writing Workshop, planning stories, using authors as mentors to help get ideas for what to write, and building phonetic spelling skills relative to writing experience

Character Corner

In this section of our newsletter, we will share information regarding our character education program including character traits, social protocols, emotional language, and related concepts like manners and kind acts. Although we might highlight specific concepts here, we will continue to discuss and practice all components naturally throughout the year. We encourage you to use these ideas and language at home in order to help reinforce and connect it to the classroom!

This month, we'll introduce the six character traits—Respect, Kindness, Responsibility, Getting Along, Work Ethic, and Optimism—during activities like morning meetings and read-alouds. These traits are part of the CSA character program, which helps students focus on qualities that foster positive relationships and develop work skills. In addition, we're practicing social protocols such as introducing yourself, getting someone's attention, and following directions the first time they're given. For example, in the first few weeks, we will emphasize the importance of following directions, incorporating this into our daily routines, morning meetings, and family gatherings. Mastering this protocol is essential for building a strong foundation in work ethic, responsibility, and respect. Students will engage in role-playing to explore both examples and non-examples of following directions, and we'll find connections in our read-alouds. These protocols will guide students as they adapt to new classrooms, friendships, and routines.

Through these program elements, we aim to support CSA's mission of creating a learning environment that allows students to safely grow and learn. To promote this, each classroom includes multiple "safe zones"—designated areas where students can go during moments of big emotions, challenging situations, or reflection. The purpose of these zones is to give students space to process their feelings while staying connected to the classroom community. It's important to note that these are not punishment areas or "time outs." Instead, they empower students to pause, reflect on what may have caused their feelings, and consider ways to move forward. This space is designed to foster self-regulation and a place where students can have the time and space they need to regroup and be ready to learn. While we encourage students to use these areas independently, we might also guide them to spend time there as they learn when and why it could be helpful, and there may be more initial adult guidance with these spaces as students learn how to navigate changes, feelings, and transitions. Eventually, students will learn how to use these spaces independently and Safe Zone visits become quick and lead students back to learning tasks all on their own. We always check in and support each student according to their individual needs to help them return to the group successfully.

Feel free to ask your child about their understanding of the safe zone and whether they've used it recently—it might spark some insightful and impactful conversations!

Field Trip

Our first field trip is coming up in October! We are traveling to Indian Springs Metropark. Permission slips with specific details and cost will be coming home soon in Tuesday folders. Chaperone spaces may be limited. We will utilize a sign up interest form for chaperones and if interest exceeds capacity, we will do a lottery to select chaperones and then confirm via email. Please be on the lookout for more information coming home soon in Tuesday folders.



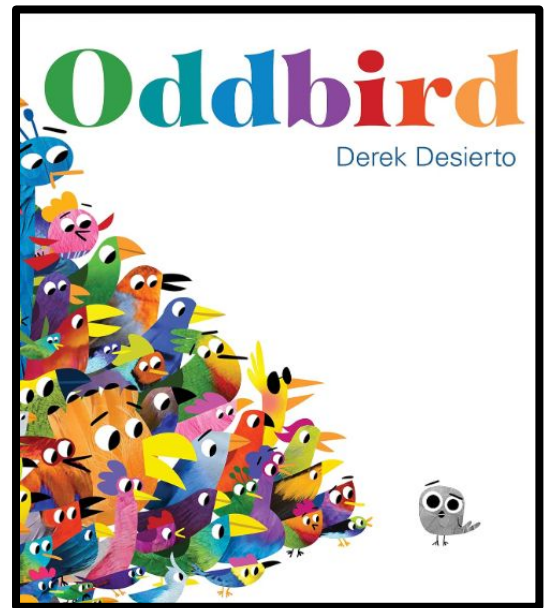
Classroom Community

One of our main focuses in September is building a strong, connected classroom community. The beginning of the year brings a lot of change—adjusting to new routines, classmates, and expectations takes time. For some students, it's a big transition from Kindergarten or even a different school entirely. It's been especially heartwarming to see our returning Narwhals step into leadership roles—offering support, kind words, and helping hands, remembering what it felt like when they were new themselves.

Creating a classroom where every student feels a true sense of belonging is at the core of everything we do. When children feel safe, valued, and supported, they're able to learn and grow with confidence. That's why we're intentional about setting the tone early, helping students see that our classroom is a place where it's okay to be themselves, to feel big feelings, and to support one another.

To start these conversations, we read *Oddbird*, a story that celebrates being different and encourages us to be proud of who we are—even when we don't fit in right away. We also read *I Like Myself*, which helped us explore the idea of self-love and appreciating our own uniqueness—inside and out. Lastly, *The Way I Feel* opened up important dialogue around emotions, helping students name and better understand their feelings, which is a big step in learning how to manage them.

Alongside these stories, students worked on various projects and engaged in thoughtful discussions about what makes them special and how we can all be more mindful of each other's experiences. From initial writing samples to personal Safe Zone cards to help with self-regulation, our Narwhals took inspiration from each of these stories, blending skill and thoughtfulness. A round of "Buddy Bingo" further helped learners to find commonalities and connections with their peers. Finding common ground with others with a basis for accepting differences is a wonderful key to building a true sense of community. We're already seeing the beginnings of a beautiful, supportive classroom family, and we're excited to keep growing together in the weeks ahead.



Narwhal of the Week/Items from Home

Reminder - students should NOT be bringing any personal items like toys or Pokemon cards to school. Exceptions would be items needed for or approved for use at after-school activities/enrichments, or for specific use/need within the classroom and pre-arranged with us. The only other approved time is when they are selected as “Narwhal of the Week” and can bring some items from home to share. As mentioned in our class handbook from Open House, our learners have the chance to do different types of share: an oral share during our Morning Meeting and also “Narwhal of the Week”. For our daily share, we usually rotate through the class list and this is an informal way to enhance public speaking skills, not requiring anything to be brought in. Throughout the year, each learner will have a chance to bring in items or pictures in more of a “show-and-tell” format, called “Narwhal of the Week”. Your learner will receive a note home in their Tuesday folder at least in the week prior to their scheduled share. We always discourage trading of items at school as well, to avoid mix-ups, and ask for your support in managing those interests (i.e. Pokemon cards ;-)) outside of school. Thank you for your support with this!

Establishing Workshops Early



As shared in our “Learning Targets” section, we’re beginning to build the structure of our academic workshop times. So how do we get started? To help students get a feel for what workshop learning looks and feels like, we divided our classroom space and group in half, allowing learners to rotate between two important activities.

On one side of the room with the retractable wall pulled, students worked on drafting their first writing sample—an opportunity to begin expressing their ideas on paper and get comfortable with writing routines. On the other side, students were introduced to our classroom library and the idea that *everyone* is a reader. They practiced “shopping” for books, learned how to care for the library, and explored the three ways to read a book: by reading the pictures, the words, or both together. We also began working on building independent reading stamina—an essential part of daily literacy practice. All students had the opportunity to do each of these activities helping to build not only their confidence as a learner, but also to get a feel for switching between groups.

These early workshop experiences are helping to set the tone for balanced, focused learning blocks where all students can grow as readers and writers.

Book Orders

Who doesn’t love a new book?? Every book order made earns our class points for free stuff! :) Each month, Scholastic offers different rewards and bonus points per order which equates to lots of free books for our learners! You can use the link below or shop more widely at [scholastic.com](https://orders.scholastic.com/XNNZQ) with class code XXNZQ when ordering:

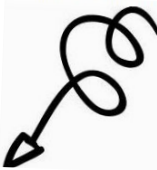
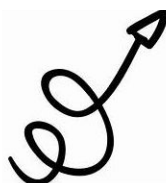
<https://orders.scholastic.com/XNNZQ>

Library Volunteers

CSA is looking for volunteers to help run library check-out for classes. This would be a weekly commitment with a morning or afternoon shift. Please email Mrs. Erica Sikma at esikma@csaschool.org for more information!

Amazon Wish List

We have put together a wishlist of extra items we could use in the classroom. We will update this throughout the year as needs and interests arise. Scan the code for the link. Thank you for considering donating to our room!



First Week Highlights

What an absolutely AMAZING and energizing first week of school! We have a truly special group of students and we can't wait to see how our family learns and grows together! Check out a few snapshots from our wonderful first week together.

