



Re: Welcome to the 21-22 School Year

Date: July 6, 2021

Greetings & Well Wishes Families,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 Academic School Year at CATA!!!

There is so much to tell you...

We are excited to see all your beautiful faces as we plan to be fully onsite on August 11, 2021 at 7:25am. Please be mindful that our school day has changed this year. Homeroom is 7:25-7:30am and students are tardy after 7:30am when first period class begins. We will provide breakfast from 7:05-7:25am. Students arriving after 7:25am may not receive breakfast so please, please, please, be on time. We want everyone to get the day started off right with a good breakfast. New this year as well is the end of our school day. We are still awaiting confirmation from Columbus City Schools' Transportation Department, but as of today, our academic day ends at 3:00pm. That is a 30 min change from last year. So please plan accordingly. We had at most 200 students onsite last year, so pick up is going to require patience and grace as we do all we can to safely and efficiently dismiss 600 students.

Curriculum changes are coming to CATA.

To bridge the significant instructional gap caused by the pandemic, we are redesigning HOW we deliver instruction to our students. In the past, school operated on a remediation model, where students were given assignments maybe 2 or 3 grade levels below because that is where they scored on our diagnostic exams. We have examined the data and evaluated the research and it is clear that model does not best serve our students. We never actually catch them up to grade level because we spend a great deal of time reteaching full courses when we should have a laser focus on the specific skill(s) they hadn't finished learning and **Accelerated Learning** will allow us to do just that. We will teach every course at grade level, analyze the standards, check for prior knowledge and target instruction to focus on exactly what skills students need to master that standard in real-time. It may sound a bit confusing but, the point is we are teaching at grade level in all classes for all students to close this educational gap. Please know, your learner may be a bit frustrated as they are adapting to stretching their minds and building up their mental stamina. Please be encouraging and patient. The majority of our students haven't done traditional school in over 17 months. They will need your support in staying focused, completing ALL of their assignments, getting good sleep, and being prepared to learn new content. Here's the bottom line...

We ARE going to bridge this educational gap. However, there is no way CATA can do this alone. If we are going to get our students where they need to be to not only pass the State exams in October (3rd grade Guarantee), the Spring OSTs (grades 3-12), and positioned to be employable and/or college ready when they graduate, we need all of our students at school, on time... every day. That work cannot begin when our students are in high school. It must begin as soon as they come through our doors and be



reinforced daily at home. Yes, students will have homework. Yes, students will need to read daily. Yes, mom, dad, and caring adult we need you to be an active participant each and every day. If you haven't heard from their teacher, email/Dojo/Remind/text them. Don't wait on an interim report or report card for your child's status in school. Teachers are going to be super busy planning and developing lessons to teach every student at grade level. As a member of your child's educational team, your support is critical to that teacher's success with your learner. If you don't know or understand something... ASK.

CATA is only as strong as its family support. This is why we are also asking for parents to become involved in re-activating our PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) to help increase parent engagement, support the vision of CATA, support CATA teachers, coordinate Parent University sessions and provide perspective that only parents can. Applications will be made available at our **Back to School event on August 9th from 5pm-7:30pm**. Please plan to attend so you can meet your child's teachers and get important information and any updates about the **start of school on August 11th at 7:25am**.

Again, it is critically important that our students get here on time, each and every day. They have a lot to cover to get ready for Ohio State Tests (OSTs) and we cannot afford to lose one minute of valuable instructional time. Even arriving 5-10 minutes late has an impact. Many tardy students come in feeling rushed or anxious and that impedes focus. To be completely transparent, our staff won't have a lot of time to manage those chronically tardy students' learning gaps. Please, help your learner avoid the added stress of additional late nights and weekends making up missed assignment. So, I am humbly asking you to make certain your learner arrives BEFORE 7:25am every day. Breakfast will begin at approximately 7:05am giving them plenty of time to eat and get right to the business of learning. Homeroom ends at 7:29am. First period starts at 7:30am. **Our academic day ends this year at 3:00pm**. Please plan accordingly as we have mandatory teacher meetings/planning sessions beginning at 3:05pm sharp, every day. Picking up students late has a negative impact on teachers' ability to spend time collaborating, planning, adapting, and preparing to best meet the needs of your learner. We need to keep that time as free of disruption as possible. So, I am asking that you please be onsite before 3pm so we can call your student right to you as soon as possible (unless your child rides a bus).

Please remember we are a uniform school. All students must be in grade level colors unless they wear CATA gear. **Hoodies, cardigans and sweaters are allowed, however they must be solid colors that match the grade level dress code polo shirt underneath**. Elementary learners (EK/TK-5) wear solid navy blue polo shirts; middle school learners (6-8) wear solid maroon polo shirts; high school learners (9-12) wear solid black polo shirts. All students are to wear solid khaki bottoms (pants, skirts, skorts, shorts –no holes and past fingertip length). The emphasis on dress code in this welcome letter is to help us all be on the same page so we don't have to call you to bring a shirt, change of pants, or take your student home. We are planning for a distraction-free school year. Again, we've got a lot to do to support our students and dress code cannot be a distraction from those efforts. So, I ask that you support CATA's long established dress code policy by making sure before they leave your sight every morning, your child is properly dressed for school at CATA. Thank you in advance.



There will be several documents coming home for you to sign and/or complete online (from your phone). Please make certain the office has the most current telephone number and address for you. To ensure it's updated, make it a habit to tell your child's homeroom teacher of changes as well. You are our single most important ally in the success of CATA kids. We cannot do this work to the best of our abilities without you. Please be active and engaged in all aspects of your son/daughter's educational career. To support that, CATA will be rolling out a Parent University program to assist our parents and guardians in becoming more well-versed in the activities and support structures of CATA. More information about the Parent University will be coming within the next several weeks.

Behavior Intervention looks different at CATA. CATA still has our 3 Before Me intervention system in place. This is where your child's teacher engages in three positive corrective action interventions before they send the student to the office with a discipline referral. At least two of those interventions involve reaching out to you for support. The goal is to build a strong relationship and healthy communication between the student, teacher, and parent. (The exception to 3 Before Me is if the student is engaged in an act of physical violence or aggression. Those incidents may require immediate office intervention and support). Please be aware that our staff intends to rely on your input and guidance on how best to manage challenging behaviors.

Teachers and students are also engaging in Restorative Practices aligned with our Social Emotional Learning goals to maintain a positive and supportive school culture. In addition, we have built a tiered behavior management system that incorporates more alternatives to suspension. CATA will be offering after-school and Saturday School behavior intervention sessions to support students in learning and navigating the expectations of our CATA Culture. More detailed information will be provided in the student handbook provided to your child during the first week of school.

Finally, and most importantly, thank you for entrusting us with the care and support of your baby. We know you absolutely want the very best for them and we will do all within our power and resources to provide just that.

We look forward to seeing and hearing from you often. And as always...

Have a Blessed CATA Day!!!

Principal Bates