CELINA CITY SCHOOLS

BULLDOG CONNECTION

SUMMER 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Celina City Schools Community,

Summer is a well-earned pause after a year filled with hard work, growth, and achievement. Across our district, students and staff gave us many reasons to be proud, and this issue of the Bulldog Connection highlights just a few of those moments.

You will read about the Class of 2026, highlights from across our classrooms, community partnerships, athletics, the arts, and the many ways our Bulldogs continue to represent Celina with pride. We are also excited to welcome new staff members who will help support our students and strengthen our district in the year ahead.

This issue also includes important updates on financial planning and our facilities transition, including plans to welcome students and staff to the new 7–12 building in January 2027. We remain committed to consistent communication, responsible stewardship, and thoughtful planning for the future of our schools and community.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on Building Excellence Together and ensuring every student is challenged, prepared, and empowered for success. Thank you for your continued support of Celina City Schools, and I hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Brooke Gessler
Superintendent

CELINA HIGH SCHOOL WELCOMES NEW PRINCIPAL JEFF AMSPOKER

Celina High School is excited to welcome Jeff Amspoker as its new principal. Mr. Amspoker brings 21 years of experience in education, having served as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. He is committed to creating a school culture where students feel valued, respected, and prepared for their future, with academic excellence and personal growth going hand-in-hand.

A native of Columbus and a graduate of Bowling Green State University, Mr. Amspoker taught Spanish for 15 years before moving into administration. Outside of school, he enjoys traveling, spending time with his wife and two dogs, golfing with his son, and cheering on his daughter at Bowling Green swim meets.

As he begins this new role, Mr. Amspoker looks forward to meeting Celina students, staff, and families and building strong connections across the school community.

NEW 7–12 BUILDING TO OPEN IN JANUARY 2027

Celina City Schools is excited to announce plans to welcome students and staff to the new 7–12 building in January 2027.

The more than 200,000-square-foot facility is being built in partnership with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) and represents a major milestone in the district's long-term facilities plan.

By 2027, Celina City Schools will have transitioned from five separate school buildings to two campuses, creating greater opportunities for collaboration, efficiency, and student support.

District leaders continue preparing for the move through thoughtful planning around personnel, resources, and operations to help ensure a smooth transition for students, staff, and families.

STATE FUNDING AND CELINA'S FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

Ohio school districts are required to complete financial forecasts twice each year to help leaders and the community plan ahead, monitor financial trends, and prepare for future challenges.

Recent changes in state law through House Bill 96 (HB 96) have adjusted the timing and structure of this reporting process. While the requirements have changed, the purpose remains the same: to provide a clear picture of district finances and support responsible long-term planning based on the information available at the time.

Celina City Schools' most recent forecast shows the district remains in a stable financial position. At the same time, we continue to monitor the relationship between expenditures and revenue, as well as state-level decisions that may affect school funding in the years ahead.

Since last spring, Ohio's FY 2026–2027 state budget has been finalized. The enacted budget, HB 96, continues the phase-in of the school funding formula first implemented in FY22, often referred to as the Fair School Funding Plan. While the plan remains intact, the inputs used to determine funding have not been updated to reflect the most recent fiscal year. In short, the funding does not fully match present-day needs.

Ohio is also continuing to examine property tax policy through a Property Tax Reform Working Group and related legislation. It is important to stay informed and ask questions about the impact of any reform or ballot issue related to property tax, as these decisions affect organizations beyond schools.

These developments matter because school districts must plan within the funding structure established by state law while managing rising costs. State decisions related to school funding, property taxes, and vouchers remain important parts of that picture.

No matter the outcome of future state discussions, Celina City Schools remains committed to responsible financial planning and making the most of every dollar to support students and school operations.

CONTINUED PROGRESS THROUGH OUR OFCC PARTNERSHIP

Our district's building project continues to move forward through our partnership with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission. Approved by voters in May 2021, the project included the completed transformation of our elementary campus into a unified Celina Elementary School serving grades PK–6, along with the continued construction of a new building for grades 7–12. The new 7–12 facility remains on track to welcome students in January 2027.

Recent developments have also supported the district's long-term planning. As shared in our March 2026 update, ongoing advocacy and formal discussions initiated by Celina Schools helped address an imbalance in how interest earned on local funds was being applied to rising project costs. As a result, an expected OFCC policy change could reduce the district's required local contribution by more than $1.4 million, with the overall benefit projected to exceed $2 million, pending final approval.

We will continue to keep our community informed as work progresses, and additional updates become available.

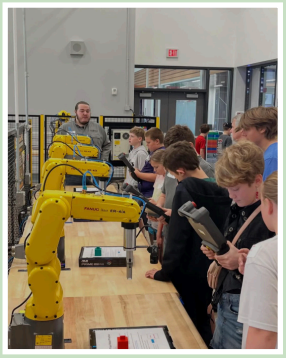
Michelle Mawer
Treasurer

Tri Star Tech Camp Sparks Creativity for Students

Tri Star kicked off the first days of summer by welcoming 100 current fifth and sixth grade students from its nine associate schools to Summer Tech Camp.

Over two action-packed days, campers explored the world of career technical education through hands-on learning and creative activities. Students rotated through eight different Tri Star programs, spending time in each area while discovering new skills, career pathways, and future possibilities.

TRI STAR
CAREER COMPACT



The camp offered an exciting opportunity to inspire the next generation of innovators and introduce students to the many opportunities available through career technical education.

Celina High School Celebrates the Class of 2026

More than 180 students received their diploma during this year's commencement ceremony, held May 17 at Celina Stadium.

A highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of more than $180,000 in local scholarships to 47 students. The scholarships were made possible through the generosity of 60 local families and organizations, reflecting the strong support Celina students receive from the community.

As graduates begin the next chapter of their lives, whether pursuing higher education, entering the workforce, serving in the military, or exploring other opportunities, Celina City Schools congratulates the Class of 2026 and wishes them continued success in the future.

Academic Excellence Shines in the Class of 2026

Celina High School is proud to recognize the top 10 students of the graduating Class of 2026. Through dedication, perseverance, and a strong commitment to academic excellence, these students have distinguished themselves among their peers.

This year's top 10 graduates are:

10	Austin Siefring	5	Luke Hierholzer
9	Larissa Jackson	4	Lukas LeJeune
8	Katie Guingrich	3	Brooke Baucher
7	Carly Stucky	2	Reagan Stumpf, Salutatorian
6	Isabelle Thobe	1	Samantha Stumpf, Valedictorian

Congratulations to these outstanding students. We are proud of their hard work and look forward to seeing all they accomplish.

CES Students Raise Over $5,500 Through Coins for Cancer Fundraiser

Celina Elementary students recently came together to make a big impact through the school's Coins for Cancer fundraiser, organized by Mrs. Simcoe, Mrs. Seger, and the sixth grade Student Council members.

The fundraiser featured friendly classroom "money wars," themed dress-up days, and even teachers getting pied in the face, all while supporting an important cause. Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of students, staff, and families, CES raised an incredible $5,595.42.

The funds were split and donated to Celina Middle School's Relay for Life event and the Cancer Association of Mercer County. Several sixth grade Student Council members then had the opportunity to personally deliver the donation checks.

Congratulations to everyone involved for making a meaningful difference in the community through this outstanding effort.

Celina High School Art Show Highlights Student Creativity

The 2026 Celina High School Art Show highlighted the creativity and talent of our student artists. The exhibit featured an impressive collection of work that showcased students' hard work, imagination, and dedication.

A special congratulations goes to our three seniors, whose talent and leadership have set a high standard. We are also proud of every student who had artwork on display and grateful they were willing to share their creativity with our school community.

Students Combine Math and Creativity Through Tessellation Art

CMS eighth graders recently put their math skills to work through a creative tessellation project. Using their knowledge of translations and rotations, students designed repeating tessellation patterns across a single page.

After completing their designs, students collaborated to determine what their tessellation shapes resembled before adding details and color to bring their creations to life.

The project combined mathematics, creativity, and teamwork while giving students a fun, hands-on way to apply classroom learning.

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ATHLETICS

Celina Seniors Sign With University of Findlay

Celina High School is proud to recognize seniors Colbie Kinney and Jackson Newcomb, who have committed to continue their academic and athletic careers at the University of Findlay.

We congratulate these future Oilers as they take the next step in their journeys and look forward to all they will accomplish at the collegiate level.

Eighth Graders Explore History in Washington, D.C.

Each year, Celina Junior High eighth graders have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. for an unforgettable educational experience exploring the history, landmarks, and stories that shape our nation.

Throughout the trip, students visited many of the country's most iconic sites, including the Smithsonian Museums, Washington Monument, and the memorials honoring Presidents Jefferson, Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Students also paid tribute to America's heroes during visits to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, World War II Memorial, and Arlington National Cemetery.

The annual Washington, D.C. trip provides students with the chance to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences while creating lasting memories alongside classmates and staff.

Important Dates for the 2026-2027 School Year

August 26 – First Day of School for Students

October 1 – No Students (District Safety & Wellness PD Day)

October 2 – No Students (County PD Day/Teacher In-Service Day)

November 26-30 – Thanksgiving Break

December 23-January 1 – Winter Break

January 19-22 – No 7-12 Students*

January 25 – 7-12 Students Return to New 7-12 Celina High School

March 26-29 – Spring Break

May 23 – Graduation

May 28 – Last Day of School for Students

A revised 2026–2027 District Master Calendar will be released in July with additional details.

**The Celina City Board of Education has approved a midyear move for grades 7 through 12 into the district's new school building.*