

Cal COMMUNICATOR

FALL 2026

CALEDONIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

LEARN | GROW | BELONG



A STRONG START *at Cal*

Connected,
ready, and excited
for a new school year!

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A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE. A FUTURE OF OPPORTUNITY.

A Letter from the Superintendent

A STRONG START. A YEAR FULL OF OPPORTUNITY.

Dear Caledonia Community,

There is always something special about the beginning of a new school year! Our buildings come alive as they are once again filled with students learning, reconnecting with friends, meeting new teachers, and settling into new routines.

This fall brings several exciting opportunities for our students and families! PreK and Young Fives are now available at every elementary school, allowing more of our youngest learners to begin their school experience close to home. We are also celebrating continued bond progress at Duncan Lake Middle School and Cal-Plex, along with improvements at the Duncan Lake Early Childhood Center made possible through district improvement funds.

While facilities help create strong learning environments, it is truly our people who bring those spaces to life. We are pleased to welcome a number of new staff members to CCS this year who join the rest of our dedicated staff that every day display our shared commitment to supporting Caledonia students and families.

But most of all, it's our outstanding students who continue to give us plenty to celebrate. In this issue of the Cal Communicator, you'll find just a few of the many stories of achievement and success that make Caledonia a leader in education. We are extremely proud to see our students and graduates leading the way in career and technical education, the arts, athletics, and so many other areas.

These accomplishments reflect just some of what makes Caledonia special. Thanks to our families and community for your continued partnership. We're looking forward to another great year together!

Sincerely,



Dirk Weeldreyer
Superintendent
Caledonia Community Schools



Our students are **known, challenged, connected, and prepared** because they are surrounded by people who **care about them and believe in their potential.**



Board of Education Upcoming Regular Meetings

Meetings are held monthly at 6 pm in the Administration Office located at 8948 Kraft Ave. The remaining 2026 regular meetings include:

September 21

Tim Morris
President

John Bandrow
Vice-President

Brittany Barber Garcia
Treasurer

October 19

Jessica Kohn
Secretary

November 16

Kyle Clement
Trustee

December 14

Shawn Collins
Trustee

Jennifer Nichols
Trustee

Board Information & Meeting Details:

[https://www.calschools.org/
our-district/board-of-education/](https://www.calschools.org/our-district/board-of-education/)



Start the School Year *Connected & Ready!*

Your go-to tools for the school year.



CCS APP

Access school & community information **all in one place**. Choose the schools and groups you want to follow and turn on notifications.

<https://www.calschools.org/resources/app-support/>

Scan Me!



MEAL MAGIC

Check meal balances, add money for additional purchases, review account activity, and complete your **Education Benefits/Meal Application**.

<https://caledonia.familyportal.cloud//>

Scan Me!



MY RIDE

View your student's bus stop, route, and pickup information and receive transportation updates.

<https://www.calschools.org/resources/my-ride-support/>

Scan Me!



POWERSCHOOL

Please complete your annual forms in PowerSchool by **September 30, 2026**, and confirm that your contact information is current. **District Code: GHDL**

<https://www.calschools.org/resources/powerschool-support/>

Scan Me!



District Calendars

Scan the QR code to view the complete Y5–12 and preschool calendars, including all program-specific dates and daily schedules.

www.calschools.org/our-district/district-calendar/

Scan Me!



Together, we're ready
for a great year!



www.calschools.org

Fall at *Cal* Early Learning

This fall marks an exciting expansion of early learning across Caledonia Community Schools. **Free Full-Day PreK** and **Young Fives** are now available at every elementary school, giving more children the opportunity to begin their CAL experience right in their neighborhood school.



New at our Elementary Schools



Free Full-Day PreK + Young Fives

Students are settling into their classrooms, meeting new friends, learning routines, and becoming part of their school communities. Having these programs in every elementary building allows many of our youngest Scots to start school close to home.

 Available at all CCS Elementary schools.



Preschool at the Early Childhood Center



Tuition-Based Preschool + Free PreK + More!

The Early Childhood Center continues to be home to CCS tuition-based preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, along with Little Scots, Early Childhood Special Education, Free PreK, and YMCA childcare. Families recently kicked off the year with an open house where children met teachers, explored classrooms, completed scavenger hunts, and started making new friends.

 Duncan Lake Early Childhood Center



Points of Pride

From the First Classroom...to What's Next!

There's a lot to be proud of across Caledonia! From academic achievement and hands-on learning to the arts, athletics, and opportunities beyond the classroom, our students continue to learn, grow, and make their mark. These Points of Pride are just a few examples of the great things happening across Caledonia and the many ways our students are preparing for what's next.

AP Achievement Continues

427

Students Took
AP Classes

742

AP Exams Taken

86.7%

Earned a Score of
3 or higher



Nat'l Academic Recognition

Student Achievement



Award-Winning Craftsmanship

Hands-On Learning



CAL Voices Take the Stage

Arts & Alumni

2026 National Recognition Program

30

College Board Awards

21 *Cal* **9**

School Recognition
Awards

First-Generation
Recognition Awards



Caledonia High School students earned 30 College Board National Recognition Program awards, including 21 School Recognition Awards and nine First-Generation Recognition Awards. These honors recognize students with a qualifying GPA and outstanding performance on the PSAT10, PSAT/NMSQT, and/or AP Exams.

2026 CHS graduate Ben Moss earned first place at both the regional and state MITES competitions for a custom disc golf basket he designed and built through the Kent Career Tech Center Welding Technology program. The project combined his passion for disc golf with the welding, creativity, and problem-solving skills he developed through hands-on learning.



CHS Choir Director Kara Stevens assembled a 16-member choir to perform alongside Josh Groban at Acrisure Amphitheater. Joining her were Caledonia graduates Sam Heath, Ryan Linton, Ayden Taylor, and Christian Moorlag, showing how the connections and love of music built at CAL continue well beyond graduation.

What Makes *Cal* Different?

It comes down to the experience we want every student to have at Caledonia. No matter their age, school, interests, or path, these four things guide the work we do every day. They shape how we support our students, challenge them to grow, and build the strong academic foundation that prepares them for what comes next.

YOUR CHILD WILL ...



BE KNOWN

Caring teachers and staff know each student, understand their strengths and needs, and help them grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Real Relationships



BE CHALLENGED

High-quality instruction, innovative learning experiences, and personalized support empower every student to reach their full potential.

Higher Expectations



BE CONNECTED

Welcoming schools and a strong sense of community give every student opportunities to get involved, find where they belong, and feel like an important part of CAL.

A Place to Belong



BE PREPARED

Students graduate ready for college, career, and life with the knowledge, confidence, character, and real-world experiences to thrive.

Bright Futures



STRONGER TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE

Data shows Caledonia students are growing, achieving, and succeeding!



Academic
Growth
Above State
Trends

4,530
Students Choose
CALEDONIA

Cal



1:1
Student to Device
Ratio (1st - 12th)



Award-Winning
Programs, Arts,
Athletics &
Communications

427
Students
Taking **AP**

Rooted in Community

A lot has changed at Caledonia over the years, and we'll continue to grow with the needs of our students. But at the heart of CAL are the people who make this community special. Every Scot has a story shaped by teachers, coaches, staff, families, and others who encourage them, support them, and make a difference along the way. And when we hear from our families, we're reminded just how much those people matter.

EVERY SCOT HAS A STORY...



Thanks to Fox Motors of Caledonia for hosting our Fighting Scots and continuing to support our students and community!



MORE THAN FOOTBALL

**Five Scots. Five stories.
And those who made a difference.**

When five Fighting Scots joined Coach Whitney Bell at the Fox Motors Pigskin Party, the conversation went well beyond football. They talked about **teachers** who made school fun, **coaches** who helped them grow, **family members** who inspired them, **teammates** who supported them, and the **lessons** they've learned from **one another**.

- 🏈 Lincoln Senti: "Mrs. Lockwood & what's next at Cornell"
- 🏈 Bryce Backus: "Family, teammates & the CAL Walk"
- 🏈 Ben Geerdes: "Mr. Oster & an interest in finance"
- 🏈 Thomas Hodgson: "Grandma, Mr. Pranger & strength training"
- 🏈 Kylan Spencer: "Learning leadership from the seniors"

Different stories, but a common thread:
People Make the Difference!

Our Community SPEAKS



"...(Student's Name) mid-year transition was seamless thanks to your welcoming and nurturing attitude. We are so grateful for the happiness she experiences at school because of you."

"...(You) are the most positive, caring, and inspirational person I know! Thank you for ALL of the lives you have touched and made BETTER! Our kids, staff, and community are blessed beyond measure to have you!"

"...Thank you so much for being a bright spot in (Student's Name) day! Math has never been her strongest subject, but we're so proud to see her thriving this year. She loves being in your class! We appreciate you so much!!"

#WeAreCal

Building Progress



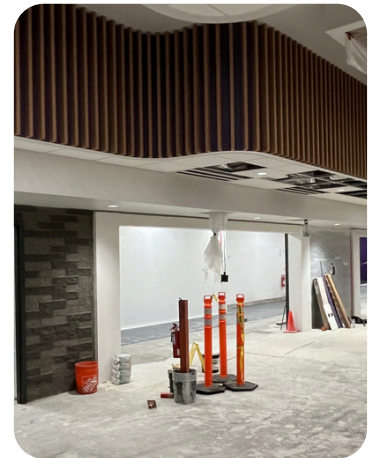
Bond projects continue to take shape across Caledonia Community Schools, creating updated spaces that better support learning, connection, and the student experience. Here is a look at some of the latest progress happening at Duncan Lake Middle School and Cal-Plex.

Duncan Lake Middle School Transformation

Work continues at Duncan Lake Middle School on a major renovation centered around the cafeteria and activity entrance. Crews have been working to reconfigure the cafeteria, update the kitchen and serving areas, install new lighting and ceilings, and refresh flooring, walls, hallways, and the nearby ramps. The exterior has also received a fresh new look, replacing the building's longtime orange with an updated finish. Work will continue next summer to create a more defined and welcoming activity entrance.



Crews are currently focused on equipment installation, flooring, and other finishing details. Once complete around the end of November, the renovated cafeteria will offer a brighter, more functional space with improved flow and more room for students to eat, connect with friends, and recharge during the school day.



Cal-Plex Progress Continues



Bond work continues to move forward at Cal-Plex as several major pieces of the project take shape. Parking areas are nearing completion, light poles have been installed around the premier field, and construction continues on the backstops for the T-ball fields. Seeding is underway across the new fields, while work has also begun on the new entry road off Kraft Avenue to provide better access to the site.

Each new addition brings the vision for Cal-Plex closer to completion. We look forward to the time when student-athletes and community teams take to the fields and families begin enjoying this new space together.

Other *Cal* Projects

A Fresh Start for Our Youngest Learners

The Duncan Lake Early Childhood Center (DLECC) received a refresh this summer with new paint and carpeting throughout the building thanks to district improvement funds. These improvements created brighter, more welcoming classrooms and shared spaces where young learners can play, explore, and grow.

Thank you to the DLECC staff members who packed up and moved out of their classrooms before the work began, then moved everything back in and prepared their spaces for students. Their flexibility and extra effort helped make the transformation possible.



School Meals

Fueling Success Every Day!

Breakfast and lunch are **FREE for all CCS students** for the 2026-27 school year!

Nutritious meals help our students learn, grow, and be their best, both in and out of the classroom.

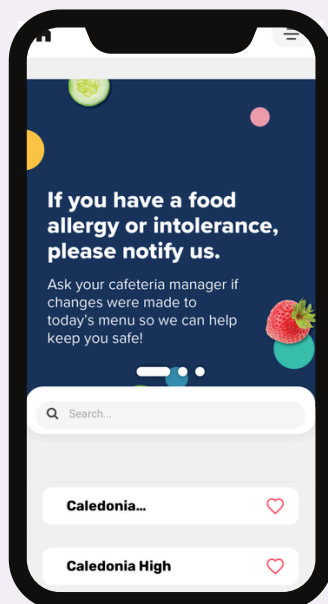


NUTRISLICE APP

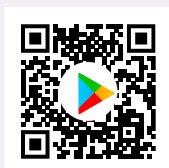
Lunch Menus Right at Your Fingertips!

- ✓ Current and Upcoming Menus
- ✓ Nutrition Information
- ✓ Allergen Information
- ✓ Meal Photos
- ✓ And More!

Download the free **Nutrislice app** in the App Store or Google Play (Search Nutrislice)



App Store



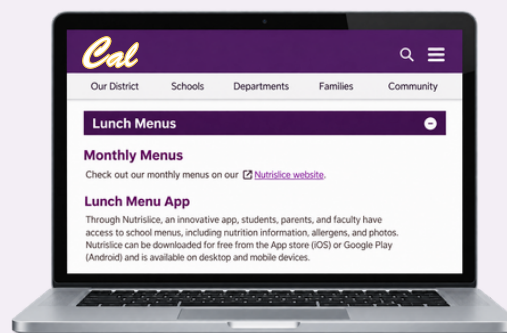
Google Play

ON OUR WEBSITE

Prefer to use our website? The same information is available on our Food Service page.

www.calschools.org/foodservice

Check it out, today!



BREAKFAST SERVED DAILY IN OUR CAFETERIAS

High School North/South:	7:00 am
Duncan Lake Middle:	7:00 am
Kraft Intermediate:	7:00 am
All Elementary Schools:	8:30 am
Duncan Lake Early Childhood Center:	9:00 am



A great way to start the day!

Meal Benefits Application

Why Every Family Should Apply

Free meals are continuing for the 2026–27 school year, **but all families should still complete the Meal Benefits Application each year.** The application helps determine additional benefits for eligible families and provides important funding for programs and resources across CCS.

HOW YOUR APPLICATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE



MORE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

Additional funding for academic intervention, behavioral supports, professional development, special education, technology, and internet access.



LOWER FEES FOR FAMILIES

Eligible families may receive discounts on college applications, SAT/ACT/AP tests, credit recovery and Chromebook Care Plans.



ATHLETICS

Reduced pay-to-participate fees for qualifying student-athletes.



MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Eligibility may also connect students with scholarship opportunities.

It's Simple to Apply - Here's How!

- 1 Log in to the Meal Magic Family Portal.
- 2 Select Benefits.
- 3 Complete the application for the 2026-27 school year.

<https://caledonia.familyportal.cloud/>



Applications must be submitted every year to update eligibility.

Apply Today!



Meal Accounts & Charges

Caledonia Community Schools provides nutritious meals in accordance with current state and federal program guidelines. Students must have sufficient funds in their meal account to purchase à la carte or other items that are not provided at no cost. Parents and guardians may add funds online through the District's Food Service website.

Meet the Leaders

Supporting Our Schools

Both new and familiar faces are stepping into various leadership roles across Caledonia Community Schools this year. Together, they bring experience in instruction, student support, school culture, special education, early childhood, and athletics.

District & Student Support Leadership



Jacqueline Grimes

Director of Special Programs

Jacqueline brings more than a decade of experience in special education and school psychology, including 10 years as a school psychologist. Most recently, she served as a Special Education Supervisor with Grand Rapids Public Schools after working as a Special Education Coordinator in the state of Wyoming. She is passionate about creating inclusive learning environments and ensuring students receive the support they need to succeed. Jacqueline holds an Educational Specialist degree in School Psychology and a Director of Special Education certification.



Kaylynn Lohr

Assistant Director of Special Programs

Kaylynn brings 12 years of experience with Grand Rapids Public Schools, where she served as a special education teacher, teacher consultant, and supervisor. She has a strong background in supporting students with diverse learning needs and collaborating with families, educators, and support teams. Kaylynn holds an Education Specialist degree in Educational Administration and Supervision, a master's degree in education, and a bachelor's degree in special education.



Brent Huck

Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning

Brent has been part of CCS since 2020, serving as principal of Caledonia Elementary, which was named a 2023 National Blue Ribbon School under his leadership. Before joining Caledonia, he served as both a teacher and elementary principal. In his new districtwide role, he will use his collaborative leadership style and strong relationships with staff to support teaching, learning, and student success across CCS. Brent holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in educational studies from the University of Michigan.



Kaitlin Allen

District Preschool Coordinator

Kaitlin brings more than a decade of experience in early childhood education, beginning her career working with children ages 3–5 in the Head Start program before becoming a lead infant and toddler teacher. She later moved into leadership roles as an assistant director and director, gaining experience in both the classroom and early childhood program administration. Kaitlin holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Central Michigan University.



“ Strong leadership helps create places where every student is known, supported, and challenged. ”

School Leadership & Athletics



Jeremy Palmitier

Caledonia High School
Interim Principal

Jeremy joined CCS in 2025 as Assistant Athletic Director after more than two decades in education. His experience includes serving as a teacher, high school assistant principal, athletic director, alternative education administrator, elementary principal, and longtime coach. A familiar face in Caledonia athletics, Jeremy brings a collaborative leadership style and a strong commitment to building relationships, supporting staff, and putting students first. He will provide stability and continued support for CHS during the district's search for its next permanent principal.



Peggy McCormick

Caledonia High School
Assistant Principal

Peggy joins CCS from Godfrey-Lee Public Schools, where she served as a middle and high school assistant principal. She previously spent 18 years teaching at the secondary level, including 10 years in high school and eight years in middle school. Peggy brings extensive experience with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. She is passionate about building relationships, supporting staff, and creating a school environment where students can thrive.



Tricia Maday

Emmons Lake Elementary
Principal

Tricia joins CCS from Hudsonville Public Schools, where she served as Director of Early Childhood and oversaw preschool and Early Childhood Special Education programs. She also previously served as an assistant director and taught special education at both the elementary and high school levels. Her experience includes supporting students with learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. Tricia brings a collaborative, student-centered approach and is committed to building strong relationships with Emmons Lake students, staff, and families.



Taylor Kastens

CCS Interim Assistant
Athletic Director

Taylor has served CCS for the past seven years as a physical education and health teacher at Duncan Lake Middle School, where she also leads the Unified Sports program. She is entering her sixth season with Caledonia Girls Soccer after serving as both a varsity assistant and head coach. In her new role, Taylor will oversee middle school athletics and assist with daily athletic operations. She is committed to creating an outstanding experience for student-athletes while supporting coaches and families across the district.

Community Connections

Stay connected to opportunities, resources, events, and information available to Caledonia families throughout the year.



Stay Connected Locally Community Events



Looking for activities outside of school? Follow **"Community" in the CCS App** or visit our **Community Events page** for information on local programs, events, and community activities in the area.



www.calschools.org/community/community-events-flyers/

Digital Tickets & Season Passes

Digital **tickets and season passes** are available for purchase at the link below or in person at the CHS Athletic Office. Remember, you'll need the **EventLink app** to show your pass. Screenshots won't be accepted.

Scan the QR code to visit our EventLink Resource page for ticketing help, EventLink app downloads, and more.

<https://www.calschools.org/resources/eventlink-support/>



Caledonia Resource Center

Explore fall classes, youth and adult programs, fitness, theatre, trips, and 55+ opportunities. Residents age 60+ may also pick up a free Lifetime Golden Age Pass during business hours. **Please bring your driver's license.**

9757 Kraft Ave. | 616-891-8117 | Monday - Friday | 8:00 am - 4:00 pm



Required Annual Notices



As part of our commitment to transparency and compliance, we want to remind our community that required annual notices are available for review on our website. You can find this important information, including compliance documents, policies, and notices, on our District Transparency Page or in our Student Handbooks. We encourage you to visit these resources to stay informed about our school district's operations and responsibilities.



WHEN IT COMES TO BUS SAFETY

The Fighting Scot knows the rules of the road!



Yellow Flashing Lights?
"I slow down because kids are there!"



Red Flashing Lights + Stop Arm?
"I STOP—because it's the LAW!"

Let's all follow the Fighting Scot's lead to keep our students safe as they travel to and from school each day.

Yellow overhead flashing lights (✱) mean the bus is **preparing to stop**. **Red overhead flashing lights** (✱) and **extended stop arms** (STOP) mean drivers **must stop** and wait until the **red lights stop**, no closer than **20 feet** from the bus.

When **yellow hazard warning lights** (⬇) are flashing, **proceed with caution**. Thank you for doing your part to keep our students safe on the road!

CALAPALOOZA 2026

Cal ON A BOAT
Friday, October 9



www.caledoniacef.org/calapalooza



Music



Games



Honored Alum



Pep Rally



Homecoming



Booths



Food Trucks



Marching Band



Football

Making A Bigger Impact

Since 1998, the Caledonia Education Foundation (CEF) has expanded opportunities for CCS students by providing support beyond district funding:

- **\$50,000+ annually** in grants for innovative educational programs
- **\$20,000+ annually** in scholarships for graduating CHS seniors
- **\$10,000 annually** through the Essentials Fund for students and families in need

The Foundation has invested **more than \$600,000 in grants** since its founding. Events like **CALAPALOOZA** help this support continue across every school and grade level.



Paid for by Caledonia Community Schools
8948 Kraft Ave SE
Caledonia, MI 49316



Success starts at CCS!

ENROLL NOW!

Enroll online at www.calschools.org

Calpride

- ✓ Free PreK
- ✓ Tuition-Based
Preschool
- ✓ Young Fives
- ✓ Kindergarten
- ✓ All School-Age
Students

Caledonia Administration Office

8948 Kraft Ave SE • Caledonia, MI 49316
616-891-8185



www.calschools.org



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[caledonia_community_schools](https://www.instagram.com/caledonia_community_schools)

