



August 10, 2023

Dear Cornell Elementary Families,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! Believe it or not, we will be starting another fantastic school year in just under a week. The entire Cornell Elementary School staff is excited to welcome you back to school! We have enrolled many new students this summer, so there will be plenty of new friendships forming at Cornell! Cornell has been experiencing very consistent enrollment over the past several years, beginning the 2023-2024 year with approximately 470 students and four sections of each grade level, K-4!

We are anticipating a year full of learning and all of the new things we are going to explore together during the 2023-2024 school year! We are truly pleased to have you as a part of our school family and want to share a few things that our school community is deeply committed to:

**The OPS Vision:** *Leading in educational equity. Educating students to care and positively impact their community.*

**The OPS Mission:** *Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life.*

**The Cornell Vision:** *At Cornell Elementary, we strive to create a collaborative learning environment that embraces our diverse school community, honors all voices, and celebrates the joy of learning.*

Our schoolwide theme for the 2023-2024 school year is **You Belong!** We look forward to weaving this theme into our learning experiences and school events, showcasing just how much we value every member of our diverse school community! Our schoolwide CR-PBIS expectations for all will continue...*Be Respectful, Responsible, and Safe!*

*Teacher assignments will be emailed on Friday, August 11th!*

Included in this communication is important information that will help you get off to a smooth start. We can't wait to see all of you! We are very excited to be partnering with your families this year. We truly appreciate that you have entrusted your child(ren) to Cornell Elementary School for the upcoming school year! As always, please contact the main office with any inquiries you might have.

Enjoy the remainder of your summer vacation!

Warmest Regards,

Tracy Ojerio, Principal

**Tracy Ojerio, Principal**  
tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net  
4371 Cornell Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864  
Phone: 517-706-5301

*Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life."*

## **General Cornell Elementary School Information**

### **Cornell Kick Start**

Families are invited to our **Cornell Kick Start** this **Thursday, August 17th from 5:00-6:00pm**. We strongly encourage families to walk to Kick Start if they live nearby, as parking may be challenging! Be a good neighbor—please refrain from parking along Cornell Road and/or blocking driveways in the neighborhood!

Suggested Attendance: 5:00-5:30pm: students whose last name begins with A-M  
5:30-6:00pm: students whose last name begins with N-Z

This will be an opportunity for parents and students to meet the teacher and see the classroom prior to the first day. Hopefully, this will put some of those first-day jitters to rest! Please note that this event is not intended to be an opportunity to hold a conference with the teacher. Please arrange another time to talk with your child's teacher if there is something specific that needs to be shared.

Representatives from OPS Transportation Department, OPS Health Team, and OPS Food Services will be onsite during Cornell's Kick Start event, should you have questions or concerns relating to transportation/routing, medical/health needs and/or breakfast/lunch services!

### **Suggested Supplies: [Classroom Supply Lists](#)**

While we have an abundance of resources available in our classrooms, we know that students often enjoy picking out their own supplies to bring to school. Below is a list of *suggested* supplies for each grade level. Please note that if you are unable to contribute the listed items for your child, Okemos Public Schools & Cornell Elementary Staff will ensure that your child has the materials and resources necessary to be successful at school!

All students will be provided a weekly vinyl Friday Folder which will include any homework and important information from the week. Please take care to look at the information in these folders and send them back to school with your child each week!

### **Transportation Information: [Bus Schedules](#)**

As the school year approaches, please be advised of important transportation information. Annually, buses are re-routed to address changes in ridership and provide efficiencies. Therefore, bus routes and bus numbers may not be the same as last year, and bus stop locations and times may have changed. Updated bus schedules for the 23-24 school year should be posted in August.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to get students to and from the designated bus stop safely and to monitor their child(ren) while at the bus stop. Parents/guardians of kindergarten students must be at the bus stop to receive their child at drop-off time.

During the first few weeks of school and during inclement weather, buses tend to run late. If a bus is minimally ten minutes late, you may call 706-5050 with questions.

**Tracy Ojerio, Principal**  
tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net  
4371 Cornell Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864  
Phone: 517-706-5301

*Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life."*

### **Start of School**

The first day of school is **Wednesday, August 23rd**. This is a **HALF-DAY**. School starts at 8:50am and dismissal is scheduled for 12:00pm.

Mark your calendars- **NO SCHOOL** on **Friday, September 1st & Monday, September 4th** in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

### **2023-2024 Classroom Teachers**

Kindergarten: Katie Casson, Vanessa Nahat (Stephens), Amy Petersburg, Kris Schoen

1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Ashleigh Fesko, Erin Gutierrez, Lisa Hall, Christina Schuesler

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Ashley Andersen, Molly Hughey, Megan Malkus, Alana Pignataro

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Gracie DeLadurantaye, Kendra Hixson, Breanne Dykeman (Mason), Andrea Tousignant

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Jamie Coy, Jen Harnick, Lindsey Price, Tena Sinila

### **Staffing Updates**

Mrs. Fesko will be on leave until mid-October. We are excited to welcome Mrs. Ellen Lewis as her long-term substitute teacher. Mrs. Lewis has been a frequent and highly requested substitute for Cornell Elementary over the past few years and is loved by many!

Mrs. Coy will be on leave until early November. We are very fortunate to have Mrs. Summer Godette, a frequent Cornell substitute and past long-term substitute for Mrs. Price, who will join our team to lead Mrs. Coy's class until she returns. Mrs. Godette is excited to join the 4th grade team!

This Fall, we are welcoming Ms. Erin Holt, as our second full-time Special Education Resource Teacher! Ms. Holt graduated from MSU and completed her internship in the Lansing School District. She is joining the OPS team following a highly successful long-term substitute assignment for Mrs. Beck last Spring! We also welcome Ms. Stephanie Earley and Ms. Angie Hill as new SE Paraprofessionals on our team!

We are happy to have each of these amazing people join our Cornell Staff and engage with our students in the classroom!

### **School Hours**

Full Days 8:50am-3:45pm

Half-Days 8:50am-12:00pm

Students should be in the classroom at 8:50am each day! ALL students arriving after the 8:50am bell will be marked tardy!

### **Daily Schedule**

8:30-8:45am Breakfast served daily in the Cafeteria (optional-beginning on Aug. 24th)

8:35am Arrival begins-Students may enter the school

8:45am First bell rings and students may enter their classrooms

8:50am Final bell - School Begins!

3:45pm Dismissal begins - Students exit to designated areas

Please note important dates on the [OPS District Calendar](#)!

**Tracy Ojerio, Principal**

[tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net](mailto:tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net)

4371 Cornell Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864

Phone: 517-706-5301

*Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life."*

### **Procedures for Arrival**

Only students who are participating in the breakfast program & members of the 4th Grade Safety Patrol should arrive at 8:30am and ring the buzzer at Door 1.

All other students who arrive at 8:35am wait outside until the staff opens the doors.

- Walkers will line up on the blacktop in the back of the school building.
- Car Riders will line up in front of the school.
- Bus Riders will line up by the gym door (3).

These areas will continue to be designated as “drop, hug & go” zones! Staff members will assist until students have learned the AM procedures for entering the school building. Students and parents are not permitted to visit classrooms or other areas prior to the first bell, unless an appointment has been prearranged with the teacher. This is an important time for staff to prepare for the day of instruction.

### **Procedures for Dismissal**

Only students who are participating in the 4th Grade Safety Patrol should leave class prior to the 3:45pm bell. Safeties should be on their assigned post at 3:40pm.

All other students will be dismissed at 3:45pm to the following supervised areas:

- Walkers are dismissed to the blacktop in the back of the school building.
- Car Riders will line up in front of the school by grade level.
- Bus Riders will line up in the gym and exit using Door 3.

Staff members will supervise students in these designated locations. Students and parents are not permitted to visit classrooms or other areas after the final bell, unless an appointment has been prearranged with the teacher.

### **Curriculum Nights**

Curriculum Night will continue to be an asynchronous event, accessible from the comfort of your home! Teachers will share information about grade level curriculum, classroom procedures, as well as links to connect to grade level resources, videos, and other information through their classroom newsletters. Look for this information to be shared in mid-September!

### **Lunch Account Information**

Our breakfast and lunch programs will begin on the first full day of school, August 24th. No meals are served on the half-day, August 23rd.

Your child may bring a lunch from home or choose a hot lunch at school. With the approval of the 23-24 Michigan School Aid budget, all students may receive school breakfast and/or lunch at no cost, regardless of income. **This does not include “a la carte” items, “extras,” or “doubles,”** which will be charged to student accounts. Monthly menus can be found on the OPS Food Services website or by downloading the Nutrislice App. Information on how to pay for your child’s lunches online is available below. If you want to deposit money into the account online, you will need to get your child’s school ID# by sending an email with your child’s name to [nisreen.abulibdeh@okemosk12.net](mailto:nisreen.abulibdeh@okemosk12.net) or [jennifer.darjes@okemosk12.net](mailto:jennifer.darjes@okemosk12.net). We will email your child’s ID# to you.

**Tracy Ojerio, Principal**

[tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net](mailto:tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net)

4371 Cornell Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864

Phone: 517-706-5301

You may also send meal payments to school in a sealed envelope with your child's name clearly written.

Monthly OPS Food Service [Lunch Menus](#)

Information about making an online [Meal Magic Payment!](#)

### **Lunch Supervisors Needed**

We need 2 Lunch Supervisors for our lunch program! Our supervisors, who are typically parents at our school, can work a couple of days or all five days a week. The hours are approximately 11:15am-1:35pm. If you would like more information, please contact Nisreen Abulibdeh at [nisreen.abulibdeh@okemosk12.net](mailto:nisreen.abulibdeh@okemosk12.net).

### **Student Info & Emergency Contacts For Returning Families - Important!**

We are using an online system for parents to verify/update student information and emergency contact information. Each returning family will receive an email with a link that allows you to access and update your information. If you do not receive that email, please contact the main office with any changes that need to be made to your child's registration information, [jennifer.darjes@okemosk12.net](mailto:jennifer.darjes@okemosk12.net).

**Tracy Ojerio, Principal**

[tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net](mailto:tracy.ojerio@okemosk12.net)

4371 Cornell Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864

Phone: 517-706-5301

*Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life."*