

CREC Academy of Science & Innovation

Bob McCain, Principal

Cassandra Thomas, Assistant Principal



Karen Mooney, Assistant Principal

Lauren LaVecchia, Dean of Students

August 1, 2018

Dear ASI Family,

Welcome to the 2018-19 school year! We are so excited to get the school year underway! I am sure we share the common hope that it will be one filled with good health, happiness, challenge, and growth for our students and staff. We've had so many of our teachers come in on a regular basis during the summer getting ready for our students.

The school's master schedule is complete and we are working to ensure student and teacher schedules will be ready by mid-August. All of our classrooms will have a fresh look and ready for our students to start on our first day of school August 29th. Needless to say, our school is an exciting place to be and we can't wait to get started! You are entering the home of the UNITED STATES NATIONAL ROBOTICS CHAMPIONS!

We spent a lot of time reviewing the data from last year (academic, behavior and survey data) and also reviewed current trends in education research that show very promising results. We have made many positive changes for the upcoming school year that will help our students grow and learn.

School Vision: CREC Academy of Science and Innovation High School is a dynamic and diverse science and technology-based learning community. Students are inspired and prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century through a robust academic program where collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking skills ensure that our students will be college and career ready.

School Mission: Empower learning, unleash talent and lead a culture of creativity to solve global problems.

New School Hours

Our school hours have changed. We now start school at 7:30AM and end our school day at 2:30PM.

New School Schedule

The schedule we used last year was built on the concept of having 4 classes every other day with the periods lasting over 90 minutes. Unfortunately, this model failed to give our school the quality education every student deserves. This year, students will have six classes per day with

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57 minute periods. We feel this model will help all students academically to ensure their success.

New Academic Core Teams

Students will be assigned to an academic team who will support the students and parents. Each team has an assigned Team Leader. These team leaders are responsible for their team, together with a group of dedicated teachers will help strengthen students' academic ability and become leaders in life.

Grade 6 Team Leader	Mrs. Callery
Grade 7 Team Leader	Mr. Wik
Grade 8 Team Leader	Mrs. Froeb
Grade 9 Team Leader	Ms. Juda
Grade 10 Team Leader	Mrs. Kelly
Grade 11 Team Leader	Ms. Schreiber
Grade 12 Team Leader	Ms. Palazzi
Unified Arts Team Leader I - 6-12	Dr. Johnson
Unified Arts Team Leader II - 6-12	Mr. Wanner
Special Education Team Leader	Mr. DeVito

Sixth Grade Academy

Grade 6 students will be assigned to the "Sixth Grade Academy" which will focus on the social, emotional and academic needs of students. This group of teachers were hand selected by the team leader, Mrs. Callery. They are dedicated to the transition of students from elementary school to middle school. They have planned many activities to ease the transition to our school. The sixth grade will be working with a new SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) program called Second Step. The new Second Step Middle School Program is a first-of-its-kind SEL curriculum that's modern, web-based, and responsive to the needs of today's students and educators. It's underpinned by the latest research in adolescent brain development and social psychology, and it's been refined through multiple pilot programs in classrooms across the country. The result of this program doesn't just help kids do better in school. It helps them do better in life.

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Ninth Grade Academy

Grade 9 students have the most difficult transition of all grades in the school. Research from many educational studies indicates that ninth graders struggle with rigor of academics along with the emotional struggles and pressures of being in high school. With this in mind, we have partnered with the Nutmeg Big Brother/Big Sisters organization with the funding from the Domus Foundation (<https://domuskids.org/about-us/>) to bring the Mentor 2.0 program to our ninth grade students. We were selected for Mentor 2.0 after a lengthy competitive process with many other high schools. We are the only school in Connecticut to have this program. This is very exciting and promising that this program will help our students with their academic needs. Mentor2.0 includes a research-based curriculum that equips students with the skills and background knowledge necessary for college and career success. This program will match an adult mentor to all 110 ninth grader students who will mentor the students for four years until graduation. We also will be offering the Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) program for all ninth graders. This will help support the emotional

needs of our students. CBITS is designed to reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, behavioral problems, improve functioning, grades, attendance, peer & parent support, and coping skills of students. This program will be led by our counseling staff and overseen by Clifford Beers Foundation and UCLA. Ms. Juda is our 9th grade Team Leader and had the opportunity to hand select her team of teachers who will be dedicated to helping all of our ninth grade students.

No Cell Phone Rule for Grade 6-9

After a careful review of our school's data concerning behavioral incidents stemming from cell phone use in grades 6-9. After, reviewing the current research surrounding the use of cell phones in school, we have decided to ban cell phone use of all students in Grades 6-9. Students will not be allowed to use these devices during school hours. I have outlined a few reasons below:

- **Lack of Social Media Control**

Sites students regularly use are: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vine, Reddit, Tumblr, Kik, Snapchat, Pheed, Wanelo and 4Chan. These sites have contributed to and ruined the lives of many teenagers. At Innovation cell phones are the number one reason for discipline. It has a major impact in students behavioral in the classroom, we noticed an increase this past school year 2017-18. Students at this age are just not mature and/or responsible enough to handle the social media part of having a cell phone. Students typically will check these sites hundreds of times in a school day and react emotionally to what they read or see. Additionally, students have taken pictures and video of staff and

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their peers without permission and posted them to many social media sites. This breaks the confidentiality agreements that protect the rights of our students and staff.

- **Inappropriate Materials**

While we can limit the availability of many websites that can be viewed on our wireless network, the reality with today's world of technology students find links that slip through the system. Students who have a cellular plan will not be accessing the internet through a monitored network and will be able to access any site, app or program.

- **Distraction from Schoolwork.**

We have found that with the temptation of social media and texting in their hands, students focus solely on their social life instead of the lesson plan and their own learning.

- **Child Predators and Cyberbullying.**

Child predators are a problem everywhere. Using digital devices at school creates just that much more exposure and potential danger for students. In addition, cyberbullying is also an increasing issue. Permitting use of digital devices in the classroom at this age leads to more of it.

- **Cell Phone Consequences:**

- First offense – teacher takes phone until end of period and returns it to the student.
- Second offense – Security delivers the phone to Mr. McCain, Principal of ASI. Student will have to see Mr. McCain at the end of the day to conference and get phone back.
- Third offense – Mr. McCain will lock the phone in a secured school safe until parent comes to get it.
- Fourth offense – Detention/Suspension.

Parents we need your support in ensuring that all our students understand these rules and the importance of no cell phone use in school. We recommend taking some time to discuss these new rules at home. Remember a true partnership is the key to our student's success.

NEW FACES JOINING OUR ASI FAMILY



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We have been busy hiring some AMAZING new teachers that will be joining our ASI Family. They are an outstanding crop of teachers who put the needs of students first! We are very excited to have them here at ASI.

Stacy O'Donnell – will replace Julie Nunes as a new English teacher. Stacy comes to us from the Academy of Aerospace and Engineering High School where she taught English for the last seven years. She also taught English at North Salem High School and Hendrick Hudson High School in New York. Stacy graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the University of Rhode Island in English and Psychology and a Master's degree from Pace University.

Melinda Chaffee – will replace Carlos Lawrence as our new Special Education Teacher. Stacy comes to us from Hall Memorial School where she has been a middle school Special Education teacher. She also taught English at Two Rivers Middle School for eight years and worked at Moylan School in Hartford. Melinda graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the Franklin Pierce University in History and a Master's degree from Southern Connecticut State University in English.

Kelly Price – is our new Literacy Coach. Kelly was the Secondary ELA Curriculum Specialist at CREC and has taught English at Public Safety Academy, Granby Memorial High School and Tolland High School. Kelly was Teacher of the Year in Granby in 2011 and a semifinalist for the Connecticut TOY. Kelly graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut in Design and Resource Management and a Master's degree from Florida State University in English.

Jordan Schmitzer – will replace Emily Cyr as our new English teacher. Jordan comes to us from Public Safety Academy where she has been teaching English for four years. Jordan graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut in English and a Master's degree from UConn in Education.

Mikayla Pascucci – will replace Martha Shepard as our new Special Education teacher. This will be Mikayla's first teaching experience and comes to us with a very impressive college resume including winning the Madeline McKernan Equity and Education Advocacy Award and the Kappa Delta Pi Leadership Award. She did her student teaching at Bower Elementary School in Manchester. Mikayla was a Bachelor's degree from the University of Hartford in Special Education.

Jesecia Miller – will replace Drew Bennett as our new STEM teacher. Jesecia comes to us from Public Safety Academy where she was teaching Chemistry. She previously taught Chemistry at

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Hartford High School and was a science teacher at Denbigh High School in Jamaica. Jesecia graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the University of the West Indies in Chemistry and Bio Chemistry and a Master's degree from Southern Connecticut State University in Chemistry.

John Knapp – will replace Megan Legassey as our new Guidance Counselor. John comes to us from Public Safety Academy where he served as a high school counselor. John graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Plymouth State University in Physical Education and a Master's degree from Capella University in School Counseling.

ASI General Information

School begins on **August 29th for our students**. School begins at 7:30 AM and concludes at 2:30 PM. A Rules Assembly has been scheduled for students in each grade. All of our students will receive and review the CREC Academy of Science and Innovation Student Handbook. The handbook will outline expectations for academics and behavior along with a variety of other important items. During this time we will review all school rules, outline our discipline procedures and talk about maintaining high standards within our school community. The student handbook will be posted on our website for parents to review.

Food Program:

We serve all students breakfast, lunch and dinner. Dinner is only served during the afterschool program. More detail regarding the afterschool program will follow at a later time. These meals for all students are FREE. However, if your child wants a la carte items and/or extra food they will need to pay for it at time of service.

Generic Supply List for Parent:

Listed below are the basic necessities that every child needs to come to school with. Individual teachers may require additional items that are not listed.

1. 6 Loose leaf binders or notebooks, one for each class
2. Pencils and pens
3. Simple calculator OR Graphing calculator (not mandatory)
4. Composition notebook (200 pages) for Spanish
5. 2 inch Binder
6. Highlighters and Colored Pencils



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Our Team of teachers have also sent out individual grade appropriate summer letters. Please review the letter for the supply list per team and grade that's appropriate to your child. Not all teams included a supply list, this is why we included a general list above.

Dress Code Requirements

Pants/Slacks: Black, Blue or Khaki

All pants must be trouser style (loose-fitted, plain in style) and hemmed neatly. Cargo pockets, leggings, or denim are prohibited. No adornments such as patches, holes, rips, stripes, or any other decorations are allowed. Sagging will not be permitted. Belts, if worn, must be of appropriate size and fastened in a customary manner. No oversized belt buckles are allowed and belts must be worn in the provided belt loops. No studded belts are permitted.

Uniform Shirts: Black, Grey or Maroon

Polo shirts may be long or short sleeved and must have the schools Innovation logo. The uniform shirts must be purchases through our vendor:

NovelTees

81 Tolland Turnpike

Manchester, CT 860-643-6008

Other approved school apparel is:

- ASI Sports/Robotics Jackets
- ASI Honor Shirts
- ASI Approved Team Shirts

Skirts: Black or Khaki

Skirts are acceptable for religious reasons only. Students may not go back and forth between pants and skirts. Please see an administrator for clarification.

ASI Fleeces/Jacket: Black, Grey or Maroon

Sweatshirts and Hoodies are prohibited and not in dress code. If your student should decide to purchase a fleece or jacket it must be purchased at NovelTees with our ASI school logo. Reminder wearing a fleece and/or jacket students must adhere to proper dress code under the fleece or jacket.

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Prohibited Clothing:

- No MPTPA or Two Rivers gear or uniforms. Please contact or visit NovelTees for appropriate uniform shirt.
- No Northface gear or other shirts. Fleeces and jackets are welcomed only with the Innovation logo.
- No Slides, Flip Flops, high heels, open toe shoes, crocs, or Heelys. Please call the school if you have any questions.

Our annual Back to School Nights (All nights are from 6:00PM – 7:30PM) with the exception of the mandatory ECE/AP meeting (see below).

- September 5 – Back to School Night for Grades 10-12 (7:30PM-8:00PM - Mandatory ECE/AP meeting with Parents)
- September 6 – Back to School Night for Grade 9 (only)
- September 12 – Back to School Night for Grades 7-8
- September 27 – Back to School Night for Grade 6(only)

To help **parents of sixth graders** with the transition to the middle school, a special program will be held on **September 11th** from 6:00PM to 7:30PM in the Cafe. The program will focus on student schedules, opportunities available to sixth graders such as clubs, afterschool offerings and intramurals. We will also review expectations and how to communicate with staff, special events, college preparation, and any questions you may have. We encourage you to attend, especially if this is your first child attending middle school. This program is intended for parents **only**.

To help **parents of ninth graders** with the transition to high school, a special program will be held on September 25th from 6:00PM to 7:30PM. The focus of this meeting is grading, expectations for college and preparation for the rigors of high school.

Lastly, to assist you in preparing your child for school below I included some information that will be very helpful for you and your student. I encourage you to participate in various school functions throughout the year. I look forward to meeting you and your child.

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Again, thank you for entrusting ASI for your child's success in education!

Sincerely,

Robert McCain

Robert McCain
Principal

Important Dates to Start the Year

August 29 - First Day of School

September 4 – 14 – Window for Grades 6-8 I-Ready Testing

September 3 - Labor Day No School

September 5 – Back to School Night for Grades 10-12 from 6:00 PM – 7:30

PM. Additional meeting for parents with students enrolled in ECE or AP courses from 7:30 to 8:00 in the Lecture Hall

September 6 – Back to School Night for Grade 9 (only) starting at 6:00 PM

September 11 - Transition Night for 6th Grade Parents (Intended for parents only) 6:00 PM in the Café

September 12- Early Dismissal Teacher PD Day

September 12 – Back to School Night for Grades 7-8 starting at 6:00 PM

September 13 – Honor Assemblies for Students (based on 4th quarter from last year)

September 18 – School Fire Drill (Safety Committee)

September 20 – Mentor 2.0 Program Introduction for Parents (Grade 9 only) starting at 5:00 PM

September 25- Transition Night for 9th Grade Parents (Intended for parents only) 6:00 PM in the Café

September 27 – Back to School Night for Grade 6 (only) starting at 6:00 PM

Fall High School Sports Information

High School Boys Soccer

Thursday, August 23rd - 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Friday, August 24th - 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Monday, August 27th - 9:00 am to 11:00 am

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Tuesday, August 28th - 9:00 am to 11:00 am

Coach's Email: Matthew_collins@whps.org

High School Girls Soccer

Thursday, August 23rd - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Friday, August 24th - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Saturday, August 25th - 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Monday, August 27th - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Tuesday, August 28th - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Coach's Email: Kscalia@crec.org

High School Girls Volleyball

Thursday, August 23rd - 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Friday, August 24th - 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Saturday, August 25th - 4:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Coach's Email: mlance@crec.org

High School Girls and Boys Cross Country

Thursday, August 23rd - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Friday, August 24th - 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Saturday, August 25th - Time TBA

Coach's Email: bmccain@crec.org

ASI - Code of Responsibilities for our School Community

The Administration, Faculty, and Staff of ASI will:

- Create an emotionally and physically safe and healthy learning environment for all students
- Respect the dignity of each family, its culture, customs, and beliefs
- Promote, respond, and maintain appropriate communications with the family, staff and administration
- Consider the family's concerns and perspectives on issues involving its children
- Encourage participation of the family in the educational process
- Recognize, respect and uphold the dignity and worth of students as individual human beings

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- Engage students in the pursuit of truth, knowledge and wisdom and provide access to all points of view
- Foster in students the full understanding, application and preservation of democratic principles and processes
- Assist students in the formulation of worthy, positive goals
- Promote the right and freedom of students to learn, explore ideas, develop critical thinking, problem solving, and necessary learning skills to acquire the knowledge needed to achieve their full potential
- Maintain the confidentiality of information concerning students

Parent Responsibilities: We will be involved in the education of our children by the following:

- See that my children get to school regularly and on time
- Let my children know that I value education by providing a home environment that encourages my child to learn
- Ensure that all homework assignments are completed by setting up a routine for homework
- Support positive school-home relationships by communicating regularly with my child's teachers
- Support the school in developing positive behaviors through reinforcement and communication
- Talk with my child about his/her school activities on a daily basis
- Encourage my child to read and write at home and to monitor his/her TV viewing, social media and video-game playing
- Volunteer time at my child's school and attend activities when possible
- Show respect and support for my child, the teacher and the school

Student Responsibilities: We will share the responsibility for learning by the following:

- Follow BARK
- Attend school regularly and be on time
- Always try to do my best in my work and in my behavior
- Work cooperatively with my classmates and teachers
- Show respect for myself, my school, and other people through what I say and do
- Obey the school and bus rules

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- Take pride in my school
- Complete and return my homework and come to school prepared to learn every day
- Believe that I can and will learn
- Believe that others in the school can and will learn

How to Prepare for Success at ASI

Organizational Skills

Students' organizational skills become increasingly important for the achievement of success during the coming school years. School supplies which effectively assist in organization are a great asset for each student. Based upon our experience with student needs, we have included a list of supplies needed to start the year. We have found that trapper keepers and spiral notebooks are not successful organizational tools. A notebook serves as a supplemental textbook; therefore it is necessary for students to have it in class each day. Frequently, additional materials are given to the students to assist them in their learning. These materials can only be organized effectively in a three ring binder.

Homework/Classwork

All homework is designed to extend learning experiences and to stimulate pupils to study independently. It is recognized that pupils work at different rates and with varying degrees of efficiency. These factors are considered when assignments are made. Several teachers in the various subject areas coordinate homework. Each teacher has the responsibility for setting reasonable limits on the requirements for preparation beyond class time. This is done in cooperation with other teachers. Class time is provided for supervised study to ensure thorough understanding of assignments and efficient work habits. Time at home should be set aside for the completion of assigned work. It should be expected that ninth graders will have approximately one to one and a half hours of homework each night. It is most important that students complete all homework assignments by the due date. Hastily completed assignments of poor quality, and partially completed assignments seriously detract from student learning. Students are expected to complete these assignments conscientiously; your supervision of this important aspect of their learning can help them achieve greater success in school. If it

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appears that homework assignments take much longer than the time mentioned above, then a problem may exist. Please call the school if you have any concerns in this area.

Other Tips for Students and Parents for Success at Innovation

1. **Get Organized** - Come to class with all necessary books (including your agenda), three ring binder, pencils, pens, calculator, notebooks, and an independent reading book. Write down assignments in your agenda. Keep your notebook neat and organized by subject.

2. **Be Attentive in Class** - Stay focused on what is happening in the classroom. Take good notes, ask questions when you are confused about something (chances are, if you are confused, so are others).

3. **Get Involved** - There are many clubs, councils, and organizations at ASI. Get involved! It will greatly enhance your high school experience.

4. **Set Aside Quiet Time for Homework** - Block some time at home to do homework. If you establish a routine, you will discipline yourself to complete assignments.

5. **Preparation for Classwork and Homework** - All written assignments, except math, are to be submitted in pen. Cursive writing is preferred. The use of a word processor is encouraged. Pages torn from a spiral notebook are not acceptable and all assignments must include a proper heading.

6. **Set Goals** - Decide on what you want to accomplish at ASI and then develop a plan to achieve it. Remember a dream is only a dream until you write it down. Once it is written down it becomes a goal!

7. **Never Quit** - Don't underestimate you. If you are having trouble with something, ask for help. We are here for you.

8. **Follow the School Rules** - There is so much to do! You can't afford to hold yourself back. We can't allow you to hold others back.

9. **Have Fun** - The intellectual, social and physical aspects of middle and high school can be very enjoyable, if you have the right attitude.

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“BARK at Innovation”

BELIEF

Believe in yourself
Believe that you are important
Believe that you can accomplish anything
Believe that there are people who love you
Believe that you can make a difference in this world
Believe that there are people who want to help you
Believe you are the best!!!

AWARENESS

Aware of your family
Aware of your community and friends
Aware of the goals you must set for yourself
Aware of the consequences to the decisions of the things you do
Aware of those who will help you achieve your goals
Aware that your life is what you make of it
Aware that there are people who love you!!!

RESPECT

Respect yourself
Respect your family
Respect is earned each and every day
Respect the rights and decisions of others even if they are different than yours
Respect those who are older than you
Respect your school and teachers
Respect is the key to your future

KINDNESS

Do the right thing
Be helpful without being told to be
Offer to do things for free - volunteer to help

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Be kind to yourself - You must learn to love yourself before you can love others
No one stands so tall when they stoop to help a child
Be kind to all people and kindness will find you
Open your heart!