

August 2025

TROJAN TIMES



Central Lake Public Schools

MISSION: Central Lake Public Schools exists to educate students, strengthen families, and enrich our community.

From the Superintendent



Dear Central Lake Public Schools Students & Families,

We hope you've enjoyed a restful and rejuvenating summer! As we prepare to kick off another exciting school year, we are thrilled to welcome our students, families,

and staff back to Central Lake Public Schools. The 2025-2026 school year officially begins with an Early Release Day on Monday, August 25.

We are especially excited to **welcome several new staff members** who bring fresh energy, expertise, and dedication to our school family:

- Brad Plackemeier, Secondary Principal and Athletic Director; Liz Hughes, Elementary Principal; Tyler Hart, Secondary Social Studies; Scott Barrett, Public Safety; Heather Cunningham, 3rd Grade; and Angel Shaw, At-Risk Paraprofessional.

We also have some exciting **internal transitions**:

- Donovan Eggleston will be teaching Middle School Social Studies along with Natural Resources; Julie Stenback has moved into the 6th Grade classroom; and Larry Rager is returning to teach part-time Secondary Math.

Please join us in giving all of them a warm Central Lake welcome!

As the weather cools and the leaves begin to change, **fall sports arrive** with excitement and anticipation. We are looking forward to a great year, so please come out and support our volleyball, football, and cross country teams!

We're also pleased to announce the upcoming launch of our **new Central Lake Public Schools App**, coming in late September! This app will replace InTouch and serve as a "one-stop shop" for all CLPS communications, featuring push notifications, updates, calendars, and more. Be sure to download it from the App Store once it's live! We will make sure to communicate when it's available.

Behind the scenes, our **Maintenance Team**, led by Mac Eckhardt, has been hard at work all summer - cleaning, painting, organizing, and preparing our buildings for the year ahead. We extend a heartfelt thank you to them, as well as to our Technology Team, who have worked tirelessly to set up classrooms and systems across the district.

This summer also marked significant planning efforts as we continue the design phase of **Series I of our bond project**. While renovations are not expected immediately, we are carefully creating a thoughtful and efficient scope of work that will benefit our students and community for years to come.

Additionally, thanks to our **Safety and Security Grant**, CLPS now has state-of-the-art security upgrades, including advanced cameras, vape, and sound detection systems, and enhanced controlled access to buildings, further ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for everyone. Through additional grant opportunities, we have been able to upgrade our audio and video technology in both the gymnasium and the Herrick Athletic Complex and purchase a state-approved Language Arts curriculum for the Elementary School.

We encourage all families to stay connected and informed by closely following the school calendar and checking for updates. Don't miss out on the many exciting events ahead, including the inaugural Trojan Trek exploratory courses at the end of the year. As part of the Central Lake website, check out the link towards the top right of the homepage called "Central Lake Heritage Site!"

Let's make 2025-2026 a year of growth, exploration, and success - for every student, every day.

With Trojan Pride,

Dr. Ryan L. Cunningham
Superintendent of Schools

Fall Calendar 2025-26

2025

Aug 25	First day of school, 1/2 day
Aug 26-28	Full days of school
Aug 29- Sept 1	No school
Sept 2	School resumes, full day
Oct 24	1/2 day, Parent-Teacher Conf.
Nov 5	No school, Prof. Development
Nov 26	1/2 day
Nov 27-28	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 22- Jan 2	Winter Break

2025

Jan 22	1/2 day, Parent-Teacher Conf.
Jan 23	No school, Prof. Development
Mar 27- Apr 6	Spring Break
May 25	Memorial Day
June 12	Last day of school, 1/2 day

Daily Schedule

Full Day:

7:55a.m.-3:00 p.m. MS/HS

8:00 a.m.-3:05 p.m. Elementary

Half Day:

7:55-11:25 a.m. MS/HS

8:00-11:30 a.m. Elementary

Schools of choice: Choose CLPS!

Central Lake Public Schools is accepting applications for School-of-Choice students. We have several openings in multiple grades. Contact: Tiffany Truscott at ttruscott@centrallake.org



Secretary to the Superintendent: (231) 544-3141 ext. 54334
Elementary School: (231) 544-3141 ext. 54300
Middle/High School: (231) 544-3141 ext. 54200

www.centrallake.org



Welcome, new Central Lake staff members!



HEATHER CUNNINGHAM,
3rd Grade Teacher

With over 15 years of experience as a dedicated 4th grade teacher at EEK Elementary in Ovid-Elsie Area Schools, Heather brings a wealth of expertise in classroom management, technology integration, and fostering a nurturing environment for diverse learners.

Heather holds a Master of Arts in Elementary Education from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Sport Studies with a minor in Business Administration from Central Michigan University. Her background includes designing engaging lesson plans, implementing differentiated instruction, and utilizing tools like Eureka Math, Zearn, and Google Suite to enhance student learning. As a summer school teacher and former paraprofessional, she has a proven track record of supporting student success through small group instruction and targeted interventions.

Heather is eager to bring her skills and enthusiasm to Central Lake Elementary, where she will continue to promote academic excellence and social-emotional growth for her students.



TYLER HART,
Secondary Social Studies Teacher

Tyler Hart has joined the district as the new Secondary Social Studies Teacher at Central Lake High School. Tyler is a graduate of East Jordan High School and earned his degree in social studies from Michigan State University. He has been a valued member of the CLPS team,

previously serving as a paraprofessional. He is now excited to bring his passion for history and civic engagement to the high school classroom.

His dedication to our students and his strong educational background make him a great fit for our secondary social studies program. Hart looks forward to continuing to build strong relationships with students and inspiring them to think critically about the world around them.

TROJANS



From the new High School Principal and Athletic Director

Dear Central Lake Families,

Welcome to the 2025-26 school year! I'm incredibly excited to join the Central Lake community as your new Secondary Principal and Athletic Director. I've spent the past 20+ years working

in education as a teacher, coach, principal, and most recently as a superintendent. I'm looking forward to getting to know our students, families, and the greater Trojan community.

Our school day will continue to follow a schedule designed to promote structure and success. Middle and high school students may enter the building at 7:30 a.m. through the main doors only, with the academic wing opening at 7:47 a.m. Class begins promptly at 7:55 a.m., and the school day ends at 3:00 p.m. Breakfast will be available each morning, and late-arriving students may pick up a grab-and-go option before heading to class.

As part of our ongoing commitment to student safety, all building doors will remain locked during the day. Visitors must buzz in and report to the main office. Any student arriving late or leaving during the day will need to sign in/out at the front desk. We appreciate your support in keeping our school secure.

This year, we'll continue to build on Central Lake's strong tradition of academic excellence, personal growth, and community pride. Students will be expected to meet high standards for attendance,

behavior, and effort, both in and out of the classroom. Whether it's in the hallways, at lunch, on the athletic field, or in a club meeting, we want every student to feel supported and challenged to be their best.

Student handbooks are available on our website at www.centrallake.org, and I encourage all families to review them together. They're a great resource for understanding expectations, procedures, and school policies.

Please know that I'm here to support your child's success, and I believe that a strong partnership between school and home is the key to helping students thrive. I'm looking forward to working with you and your family throughout the year. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, concerns, or just to say hello.

Let's make it a great year together.

Brad Plackemeier
Secondary Principal/Athletic Director
(231) 544-3141 ext. 64201
bplackemeier@centrallake.org

School picture day is Aug. 26!

Smile! K-12 student Picture Day will be
Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2025.

From the new Elementary School Principal



Welcome Back!

Dear CLPS Elementary Families,

It is my honor and pleasure to welcome you to the 2025-26 school year! I hope you had a wonderful and relaxing summer break.

As the new Elementary Principal I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and share my sincere excitement in joining the CLPS Elementary team. This is my 18th year working in the Central Lake district, previously serving as a teacher in the Middle/High School. Originally from downstate, my family and I have loved living in northern Michigan and being part of the Central Lake community. My husband, Matt, and I have two young children, Jackson and Oliver, who will be in the early childhood wing this fall.

School paperwork is on its way to you in the mail. Please complete all necessary forms and return it by August 25th. It can be dropped off to the Elementary office or sent with your student(s) on the first day of school. Additionally, please make time to review the Student Handbook available on the website (centrallake.org), as it has been updated to reflect the most recent practices and policies.

This year, our Elementary Open House will take place after the start of school on Wednesday, September 3rd, rather than before school begins as in previous years. We're excited about this change, as it gives students the opportunity to act as tour guides, proudly showing their families their classrooms, introducing teachers, and sharing some of the work they've already started. That being said, if you have any questions or would like to stop in before then, the Elementary Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., please don't hesitate to call or stop by!

From the Special Education Supervisor

Welcome back to school! As your Special Education Supervisor, I'm thrilled to embark on another enriching journey with each of you. This year promises discoveries, growth, and achievements. Our special education team is fully in tact, and we welcome back our four staff members: Amy Peck and Alexis Couturier at the elementary level and Lisa Hoogerhyde and Erin Rees at the secondary level.

Communication, collaboration, and engagement are paramount to the success of our special needs population. We look forward to serving our students and community for the upcoming school year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your teacher, provider, or me: Sara Tausch: stausch@centrallake.org (231) 544-3141 ext. 54235

There are a few more updates I'd like to share with you.

We are making some changes to drop off and breakfast this year. The school day will continue to run from 8:00 a.m.- 3:05 p.m. and breakfast will continue to be free for all students. However, instead of serving breakfast in the classroom, we will be serving it in the cafeteria starting at 7:30 a.m. for all K-5 students. Students will start to transition to their lockers and classrooms after breakfast starting at 7:55 a.m. This will allow us to maximize instructional time in the classroom and accommodate families who need an early drop off.

We'll have a new face on campus this fall! Ms. Julie Stenback has made the transition from 3rd grade to 6th grade. And although we are sad to see her move over to the other building, we are excited to welcome Mrs. Heather Cunningham to the elementary! With more than 15 years of experience in elementary education, Mrs. Cunningham is dedicated to creating a warm, supportive classroom where every child can thrive. Her passion for engaging lessons, strong classroom management, and commitment to both academic and social-emotional growth will make this a wonderful year for our students.

Lastly, we are excited to announce that we have adopted a new literacy curriculum, HMH Into Reading. Grounded in the latest Science of Reading research, this program builds strong foundational skills while fostering background knowledge across content areas. With this new curriculum we look forward to accelerating literacy growth and nurturing confident, lifelong readers.

We'll see your student(s) on the first day of school, Monday, Aug. 25, and all our elementary families on Wednesday, Sept. 3, for the Open House.

Liz Hughes

K-5 Principal

lhughes@centrallake.org

Jobs for Michigan's Graduates partnership

CLPS is partnering with Char-Em ISD Career and Technical Education Department and Jobs for Michigan Graduates (JMG) through Northwest Michigan Works to support student learning and work experiences in and beyond traditional classroom doors.

This collaboration provides youth with skills to overcome barriers while supporting them in achieving education and career goals. Josh Todd is returning to support CLPS students through classroom instruction, individual and small groups, weekly meetings, and field trips. In addition, he works directly with the Senior Capstone class to support post-graduation planning. For more information, please contact Mr. Todd at josh.todd@networksnorthwest.org.



TROJAN TREK, EARLY CHILDHOOD, COUNSELORS

Central Lake MS/HS Trojan Trek Program

The Trojan Trek program at Central Lake Middle School and High School is an innovative initiative designed to expand educational opportunities for students through diverse elective and exploratory courses. Running from May 11 to June 5, 2026, immediately following the completion of the second semester on May 8, 2026, this program offers students a unique chance to engage in specialized learning experiences tailored to their interests and needs.

Program overview

Trojan Trek aims to enrich the academic and personal growth of middle and high school students by offering a variety of elective and exploratory classes. These courses are crafted and taught by teachers who select a subject of their expertise or passion, spending the school year developing a comprehensive curriculum. The program encourages creativity and flexibility, allowing for a wide range of course offerings, including:

- Academic courses to deepen subject knowledge.
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) courses to foster innovation and technical skills.
- Exploratory courses to spark curiosity and introduce students to new fields or hobbies.
- Remedial courses, where applicable, to support students in strengthening foundational skills.

Course selection and availability

Teachers will finalize their course offerings throughout the school year, and the complete list of Trojan Trek classes will be available to students after the spring break in 2026. This allows students to review and select courses that align with their interests or academic goals, ensuring a personalized and engaging experience.

Goals and benefits

The Trojan Trek program is designed to:

- Provide students with opportunities to explore new subjects or deepen their knowledge in areas of interest.
- Encourage teachers to share their passions and expertise through unique, student-centered curricula.
- Enhance the educational experience by offering diverse, hands-on, and innovative learning opportunities.
- Support student growth in both academic and exploratory contexts, fostering well-rounded development.

By offering this dynamic range of courses, Central Lake MS/HS aims to inspire curiosity, creativity, and a love for

learning through the Trojan Trek program.

Welcome back! From the K-12 Counselors

The 2025-26 school year is right around the corner, and we look forward to another wonderful year! Our Middle School High School counseling team Kris Hoeksema, Mental Health Professional through the Health Department of NW Michigan, Shana Wojtowicz (Rooted in Wellness Counseling, part-time) and increased elementary support with Jessica Newton (Communities in Schools) and Jackie Wakelend, Student Support Specialist. Spyhalski will continue to support both elementary and middle/high school.

The MSHS counseling office will continue to house the pantry with food, clothing, and school supplies. Central Lake Public Schools is fortunate and unlike many others in the area when comparing our support (social, emotional, behavioral) and resources to those of other schools in the area. As a team, we will collaborate to make a positive impact on our students' well-being and support families at the same time.

Mrs. Mary Spyhalski

mspyhalski@centrallake.org • (231) 544-3141 ext. 54220

Little Trojans Early Childhood Program

We have been busy running our summer programming and preparing for the school year! Little Trojans Early Childhood Programs is a tight-knit community dedicated to providing play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum, embedded professional development, and qualified early childhood educators. Through partnerships and funding from the CLEO Purdy Endowment Fund, Head Start, and the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), we offer tuition-based Infant and Toddler tuition-free preschool-aged programming.

Our classrooms closely follow the CLPS district calendar and build in time off for holiday breaks, inclement weather days, and dedicated professional development days for staff. Please contact me, Stephanie Stedman, with any questions at sstedman@centrallake.org or (231) 544-3141 ext. 54331.



Central Lake Public Schools fall athletics

Go Trojans!

For more information, check out our school website centrallake.org for additional dates and times of fall sports.

Athletic Director: Brad Plackemeier | bplackemeier@centrallake.org

Watch our games on livestream!

Use the links below to watch our middle and high school athletic events live! Home games in the gym can be accessed through the NFHS network and/or hudl. Football games at the stadium will only be available through the hudl site. Away games will depend on the providers the other schools utilize to livestream their events.

[Central Lake Athletic Livestreaming - hudl](#)

[Central Lake Athletic Livestreaming - NFHS Network](#)

First home games 2025-26

Football

Varsity:	08/28	vs. Marion	7 p.m.
MS:	09/10	vs. Gaylord St. Mary	6 p.m.

Special football dates to note:

09/19	Veterans' Recognition Game vs. Pellston	7 p.m.
09/26	Homecoming Game vs. Bellaire	7 p.m.
10/16	Senior Night vs. Cedarville	7 p.m.

Volleyball

Varsity/JV :	08/26	vs. Alanson	5:30 p.m.
MS:	09/3	vs. East Jordan	5:30 p.m.
Senior night, varsity:	10/27	vs. Ellsworth	7 p.m.

All students: **Week of Sept. 22 is Homecoming week.**
Homecoming dance is Sept. 27.

Join our Transportation staff!

Central Lake Public Schools is seeking bus drivers for the 2025-26 school year. To apply or to inquire, please contact Amanda Teal at ateal@centrallake.org or (231) 544-3141 ext. 54223.

Submit nominations for Athletic Hall of Fame

Central Lake Public Schools is accepting nominations for the Athletic Hall of Fame. Nominations may be made for individuals, teams, or others who have significantly contributed to the CLPS athletic community. **The deadline for this year's submissions is Aug. 25.** Send nominations to Dr. Ryan L. Cunningham, Superintendent, at 8169 W. State St., P.O. Box 128, Central Lake, MI, 49622, or by email to rcunningham@centrallake.org.

Email Cunningham or call (231) 544-3141 for complete criteria and submission format.

Join the Central Lake Sports Boosters!

Supporting Central Lake athletes and sports programs through:

- Fundraising
- Concession sales
- Promoting Trojan pride

Meeting time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: High school cafeteria

Meeting dates:

- **October 14, 2025**
- **December 9, 2025**
- **February 10, 2025**
- **April 14, 2025**

Everyone is welcome! Help us help our athletes; come to a meeting to see what it is all about and join in on the fun!



Go, Trojans!

CENTRAL LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

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