



I hope you and your families had a summer filled with joy and relaxation! As the school year approaches, I want to ensure that you have all the necessary information for a successful year. The school year will begin on Monday, August 24, 2026, at 7:30 a.m. Students who enter after 7:35 am will be considered tardy to school.

This year's instructional and social emphasis will focus on social-emotional learning, providing students with the tools and strategies necessary to take ownership of their education through Inquiry-based Learning. Many of the student activities and educational supports will center on these practices. Please partner with us by reading the home materials, contacting your child's teachers with any questions, and helping your child set academic and social goals for the year. Also, please sign up for Parent Portal to monitor and track your child's progress in real-time. Please click this link for more information: [Parent Portal \(Aspen\) | Chicago Public Schools](#). Email Mr. Davis, Assistant Principal, at_prdavis1@cps.edu with your questions.

This year, students will continue being offered breakfast and lunch for free. Students who want milk will have to pay \$.40 or take a vegetable and fruit to pair with their milk at no cost. Home lunches are welcome. Students will have lunch and recess daily from 11:20 a.m. - 12:10 p.m. Please note that lunch is scheduled for 20 minutes for Levels 5-8 and 25 minutes for Levels 1-4. Therefore, students must balance their time between socializing and eating. Please click [here](#) for more detailed information about breakfast and lunch.

The school fee is \$125, which includes subscriptions, awards, instructional supplements, assembly programs, and other resources. It must be paid by Friday, August 28, 2026. School fees may be paid by check or money order in the main office; cash will not be accepted. You may also log on to your child's Aspen Parent Portal account to pay the school fee.

All volunteers, including field trip chaperones, recess volunteers, and Best Lunch Bunch, must complete the CPS Level 1 Volunteer Registration process. The link is online only. Please visit the following link to sign up for volunteer programs at [Chicago Public Schools](#). *Please note: Parents/Guardians will only be allowed to volunteer if they go through the process.* Once you have completed the form, email your intent to volunteer to Mr. Davis, Assistant Principal, prdavis1@cps.edu.

Academic Instruction

The Keller instructional staff will continue Inquiry-based Learning practices while utilizing digital platforms, including Google Classroom, Saavas, Amira, Freckle, and IXL. These platforms enable staff to engage students and continue rigorous, individualized instruction. Students in levels 1-4 will be provided with an assignment/agenda book to track assignments and maintain communication between home and school. Students in levels 5-8 will utilize Google Classroom. The agenda book is included in the school fee; however, if it is lost, a replacement can be provided for a \$16 fee.

The Second Step will be utilized to help students build lifelong Social and Organizational skills. These programs emphasize Positive behaviors while empowering children to think critically, practice empathy, and express themselves effectively. Additionally, it provides teachers with a more objective way to track behavior patterns and develop solutions.

Aftercare

Keller will utilize Orion's University for fee-based, after-school care: <http://www.orionsuniversity.com/>. Orion's philosophy and programs align with Keller's mission and vision, which include building students' capacity to solve real-world issues, offering STEAM-oriented activities, and promoting Social-Emotional Learning. Beginning in late September, Orion's will run concurrently with Keller's Out-of-School Time programming. Orion's will begin on the first day of school, August 24th. Orion's University runs from 2:30 p.m.- 5:30 p.m. For more information, including cost, please visit, General Company Program Link:

<http://www.orionsuniversity.com/>

Orion's University Email*:

info@orionsu.com

*=This is the preferred method for contacting the Orion's University Program staff and registering information.

After School (Late Pick-up)

To help us offer Late Pick-up as consistently as possible throughout the school year, this program will run from 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Students will be supervised in the lunchroom, and we kindly ask that families sign their students out at the security desk upon pick-up each day. Thank you for your partnership in picking up your child promptly, as your cooperation helps us maintain this valuable service for our school community.

Arts Programming

Keller students will continue with a full-time music program. At the same time, we are exploring arts partnerships with external organizations, such as the Beverly Arts Center. Please continue to check your email for updates. Please reach out to Mrs. Conley Dunbar with any questions you may have.

Attendance

Attendance is the cornerstone of learning. Given that Keller's attendance goal of 97% was achieved last school year, this year's goal is 98%! Ambitious? Yes, I know we can do it! When a child is absent from school or chronically late, instructional minutes are missed, leading to learning difficulties, negative behaviors, and frustration about feeling disconnected from school or classmates. As such, the attendance initiative will continue to be implemented. Students who are chronically late or absent one or more days a month will be placed on an attendance plan. **Please see Keller's Attendance/Tardy Policy [here](#).**

Awards

An awards celebration will be held at the end of the school year to recognize student accomplishments. Please click [here](#) for the tentative award categories and their descriptions.

Cellular Accessory Policy

Cell phones, e-readers, iPads, smartwatches, and other similar devices are classified as electronic devices. The use of cellular devices at Keller Regional Gifted Center is prohibited. However, we realize that some students may need to carry a cellular device for before- and after-school travel. Completion of this form is required if your child will be carrying devices for before- and after-school travel. [This form](#) must be signed and returned to your child's homeroom teacher.

Communications

Keller will continue to utilize the school's website, www.keller.cps.edu. The website will serve as a general communication and display tool, showcasing the Keller Community. Additionally, the website features a language feature that enables it to be viewed in several languages.

The Eagle Watch will continue to be distributed weekly via the District's Platform. *It* will spotlight student achievements, events, and activities. Teachers will continue to distribute weekly newsletters that include information on activities, assignments, and celebrations.

You may find additional details about Keller's Communication Plan [here](#).

CPS Required Initiatives/Policies/Resources

Per CPS Policy, sexual health education will be taught at all levels. Guardians and Parents will be notified before instruction occurs. The course will be developmentally appropriate and align with the National Sexuality Health Standards. You may find information on this policy [here](#).

CPS Aspen Parent Portal is a great way to stay abreast of your child's grades and instruction, and serves as a communication tool for you and your child's teacher. The portal allows you to set alerts for assignments, which will give notice in 'real time.' If you do not have an Aspen account or are unable to access your account, please visit the following link: [Parent Portal \(Aspen\) | Chicago Public Schools](#).

Cultural and Heritage Celebrations (collaboration with Parents)

Celebrate Our Community's Cultures & Heritage!

Each month, our school will highlight a different culture and heritage to celebrate the diversity and richness of our community. Families are invited to participate by decorating our Culture & Heritage Bulletin Board and adding other decorations around the building to share traditions, symbols, and stories that represent their culture. We have room to accommodate more than one culture each month, so families are welcome to celebrate together or alongside one another.

This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your heritage, teach our students about global traditions, and help us create a welcoming environment that honors all backgrounds and cultures. Please click [here](#) to sign up. (Level 1 or 2 volunteer clearance is required.)

Dress code

Keller does not have a uniform policy. Keller students are expected to dress neatly and comfortably to avoid distracting themselves and others from their academic responsibilities.

Students are required to follow the appropriate dress code:

- Shirts must have sleeves that cover the armpits to armpits, and the torso must be fully covered.
- Garments covering legs must be mid-thigh or longer.
- Clothing must cover all parts (stated above) in any position, i.e., sitting, standing, etc.
- High heels or shoes without an ankle strap are prohibited for safety reasons.

Students who do not adhere to the dress code will be sent to the office, and the parents will be required to provide an immediate change of clothes.

Entry and Dismissal Procedures

Students may be dropped off beginning at 7:20 a.m. Please park legally and walk your child to the door. A staff member will receive them at this time. Students who come after 7:35 a.m. will be issued a Tardy slip. Before proceeding to class, all tardy students must come through the main entrance and obtain a tardy slip from the main office.

All students may enter the building at 7:20 a.m. and will be dismissed at 2:30 p.m.

- Students in Levels 1 and 2 will enter and exit through the main entrance on 108th Street (flag pole).
- Students in Levels 3-5 will enter and exit through the Sacramento Avenue entrance.
- Students in Levels 6-8 will enter and exit through the Whipple Avenue entrance.

PLEASE DO NOT:

- Block our neighbors' driveways.
- Stop in the middle of the street to let your child out.
- Let your child out on the street side of your vehicle.
- Allow your child to walk in between parked or moving vehicles.

Doing so places yourself and your child in harm's way.

PLEASE DO:

- ➔ Park legally and follow the flow of traffic.
- ➔ Pull up to the curb to safely allow your child to exit your vehicle.
- ➔ Let your child get out on the curbside of your car.
- ➔ Allow your child to use crosswalks safely.

Facilities

The summer has been spent ensuring that Keller's operating systems are repaired and functioning appropriately. Mr. Cottonaro (Keller Engineer), Ms. Powell, and other custodians have been cleaning to ensure your child returns to a clean and safe environment.

Friends of Keller (FoK)

Friends of Keller (FoK) is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, comprised of all-volunteer parents, committed to raising funds and building community while supporting the mission and day-to-day operations of the Annie Keller Regional Gifted Center in the historic Mt. Greenwood neighborhood of Chicago. If you want to assist with FoK activities or contribute, please contact FoK at <https://friendsofkeller.wixsite.com/website>.

Keller Athletic Association (KAA)

Keller Athletic Association (KAA) ensures that students have access to athletics. The association is composed of volunteers (Keller Parents/Guardians). They organize sports clinics, games, practices, and other events. They are always in need of assistance, and no experience is necessary. For more information, reach out to KAA at kellereagles@gmail.com. Each adult/parent volunteer must clear the CPS Level 1 background check.

Local School Council (LSC)

The Local School Council (LSC) is an organization of Parents, Teachers, and Community Members whose role includes the following:

1. Approving how school funds and resources are allocated
2. Developing and monitoring the annual School Improvement Plan
3. Evaluating and selecting the school's principal

Keller's LSC meets in person on Thursdays every month. However, the community may attend in person or virtually; meeting links will be sent out monthly in advance of the meeting dates. The dates and times are as follows:

Meeting Time	Location
Sept. 17, 2026- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Oct. 15, 2026- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Nov. 19, 2026- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Dec. 17, 2026- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Jan. 21, 2027- 3:30 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Feb. 18, 2027- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Mar 18, 2027- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Apr 15, 2027- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
May 20, 2027- 5 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center
Jun 3, 2027- 3:30 pm	Keller's Multipurpose Media Center

LSC Members- Keller

Currently, there is a vacancy for a Parent Representative. Please reach out to Principal Conley Dunbar for more information at caconley@cps.edu.

Member	Role	Demographic
Chalese Conley Dunbar	Member	Principal
Carla Pollard Stewart	Chair	Parent- Lvl. 8
Nonyerem Onyebuagu	Member	Parent- Lvl. 4& 6
Erin Morales-McDuffie	Vice Chair	Parent- Lvl. 8
Jamie Campbell	Member (FOIA/OMA)	Parent- Lvl. 6
Sarah Lichtenstein-Walter	Member	Parent- Lvl. 2 & 5
PARENT VACANCY		
Hampton Morales-McDuffie	Member	Student Lvl. 8
Ethelyn Wess	Member	Teacher
Diannia Jemison	Secretary	Teacher
Michael E. Brunson	Member	Community
Sarah Johnson	Member	Community
Queen Jones	Member	Non-Teaching Staff

Meeting information will also be shared in *The Eagle Watch*. This is also a forum to share concerns, thoughts, and/or compliments. All are welcome to attend LSC Meetings.

Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker. Students in levels 4-8 are required to purchase a lock from the school. Outside locks may not be used, as school locks have a control key in case students have trouble accessing their lockers. Locks will be available in the main office for \$8 each. Students are not to bring valuables or excessive amounts of money, as Keller will not be responsible for lost or stolen items. Students in levels 1-3 do not currently require locks.

OST- Out of School Time- After School Program

OST for Keller will begin in mid-to-late September. Programming for Levels 1-8 varies and is subject to availability. OST runs from 2:30 p.m. to (approximately) 4:00 p.m. More information is forthcoming.

Parent/Teachers Association (PTA)

The Parents/Teachers Association (PTA) is an organization of Parents and Teachers whose collective goal is to engage the community through education and fun activities. The PTA sponsors several events/activities at Keller, including the monthly Best Lunch Bunch and book fairs. All are welcome to participate and join! You may reach out to the PTA at pta.keller@gmail.com. Please remember that you must be approved as a CPS volunteer.

Staff

*BOLD- INDICATES HOMEROOM

Staff Member	Homeroom or Location	Grade Level	Grade Level and Subject Area	Email
*Ms. Jemison	107	1st	Self-Contained	djemison1@cps.edu
*Ms. Thompson	108	2nd	Self-Contained	ctthompson1@cps.edu
*Ms. Velazquez	201	3rd	Self-Contained	tlvelazquez@cps.edu
*Ms. Bonnett	202	4th	Self-Contained	jrbonnett@cps.edu
*Mr. Pickett	203	5th	5-8 Social Studies	rspickett@cps.edu
*Ms. Molenhouse	204	6th	5-8 Science	kmmolenhouse@cps.edu
*Ms. Tates	210	7th	6- Pre-Algebra 7- Algebra 8- Geometry	lmates@cps.edu
*Ms. Wess	209	8th	5- Math 1-8 Spanish	emwess@cps.edu
Dr. Mundy	208	ELA	5-8 ELA/Writing	gmundy@cps.edu
Ms. Walsh	211	Gifted Coordinator	1-8	lkwalsh@cps.edu
Ms. Guinane	Team Room	Special Ed./ Case	1-8	sguinane@cps.edu

I cannot wait to see those bright faces and smiles and hear all the chatter about the activities of summer on the first full day of school, Monday, August 24th, at 7:30 a.m. ☺

Educationally Yours,

Principal Conley Dunbar, caconley@cps.edu

