

# NEWSLETTER

## CRETE-MONEE SD 201U



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JULY 2022



*Unity Starts With "U"*

### Message from Dr. Kara Coglianese, Superintendent of Crete-Monee School District 201-U



We are delighted to share with you our first newsletter, which is full of important updates about the work and progress happening in our district and schools! As you read this edition, you will note that the district has been busy getting ready for the 2022-23 school year.

We are launching this year's theme as Proud to Be Part of Crete-Monee School District 201-U. We invite you and your family to join our celebration as we strive to be the best we can be for our students and community.

Thank you for your ongoing support. I am so proud to serve with you!

Dr. Kara Coglianese  
Superintendent



### Message from Nelson Albrecht, Board of Education President

On behalf of the Crete-Monee School District 201-U Board of Education, I would like to invite you to engage with us as we plan ahead for the 2022-23 school year. I have had the great pleasure to serve as one of your board members over the past five years, including the past three as board president.

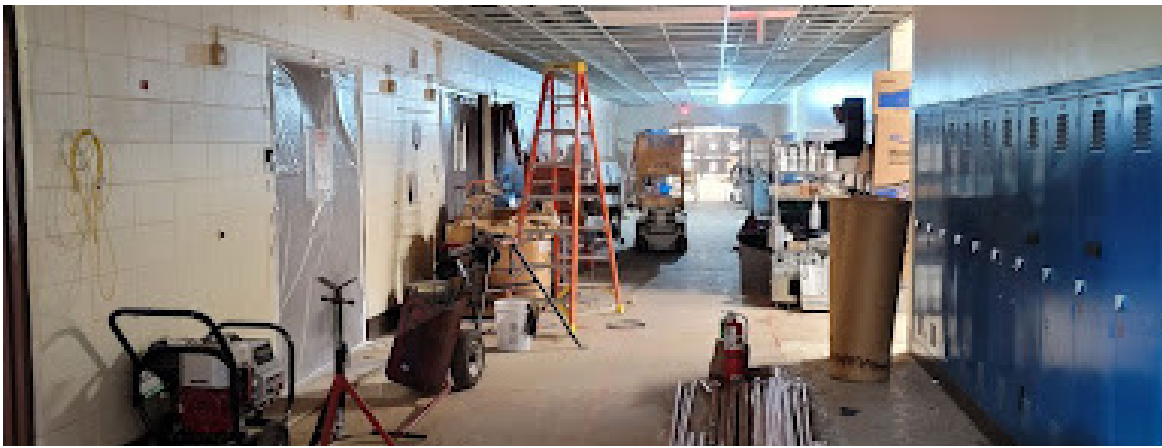
During this time, I have witnessed impressive levels of growth and renewed trust in the operations of the district. We believe we have been good stewards of your tax dollars when it comes to managing the district's finances and balancing budgets, while sustaining quality services for our school community.

Our board values the open, transparent, and respectful collaboration we have with each other, our superintendent, and her leadership team. This partnership supports our ability to best serve the students and families of the Crete-Monee School District 201-U.

As we enter a new school year, we hope to gain a renewed sense of normalcy post-pandemic. We are focused on the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and schools. We look to be thoughtful and holistic in our approach to making our schools the safest they can be from external factors, while also meeting the varying needs of our students.

We look forward to your ongoing engagement as we move toward the sunset of our current district strategic plan and launch a planning process that will set the course for the district over the next four years. Please join us in making our district the best place to raise and grow our children and community!

Yours in Service,  
Nelson Albrecht



## CREATING A SAFER AND MORE MODERN CAMPUS - SUMMER 2022 CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

An estimated \$34.4 million of summer construction is underway in the Crete-Monee School District 201-U to create safer and enhanced teaching and learning spaces for our students and staff. Identified summer projects come from the district's short-term facility improvement plan and supports the District Strategic Plan goal to provide our students with equitable, safe, and well-maintained facilities.

Most of this summer's renovations are intended to address life safety needs (fire protection sprinkler systems, exhausts, unit ventilators), improve heating and cooling systems, introduce better and more cost effective lighting, and address electrical issues.



### Here is a breakdown of improvements underway:

- **Balmoral Elementary School** - Heating and Cooling System
- **Coretta Scott King Magnet School** - Life Safety & Heating and Cooling System
- **Crete Elementary School** - Life Safety & Heating and Cooling System
- **Monee Education Center** - Life Safety & Heating and Cooling System
- **Talala Elementary School** - Life Safety, Heating and Cooling System & Electrical Repair
- **Early Learning Center** - Life Safety, Heating and Cooling System & Electrical Repair
- **Crete-Monee High School** - Introduce LED Lighting

Other renovation projects slated for this summer include adding electronic signage and marquees throughout the district and new playground enhancements at the Early Learning Center. We are excited to share that construction will also begin in the fall on our new addition to Crete-Monee High School. The additional square footage will offer more space for the district to expand career and technical education opportunities for students.

All of these projects will be completed with long-term financing using working cash and funding bonds.





## PROPOSED SAFETY PLAN PRESENTED TO DISTRICT 201U BOARD OF EDUCATION

At its June 14 and June 21 meetings, the Crete-Monee Board of Education was presented with a proposed safety plan for the district’s high school and middle school buildings for the 2022-23 school year.

Key components of the safety plan include a focus on developing relationships with students, partnering with law enforcement, and sharing information with other area Districts. The district will also emphasize better communication with families by sending out safety alerts in a more timely manner.

School and district administrators plan to maintain a strong presence through increased visibility in their respective buildings. They will continue conducting random locker searches and monitoring students’ social media activity for any possible threats to school or student safety.

The Board approved using available grant funds to provide clear backpacks to all students in grades 2 through 12 this fall.

Additionally, on June 14, the Board discussed the prospect of installing metal detectors in each school, beginning with the high school, as an added safety precaution. The Board directed the Superintendent to survey students, staff, and community members on their opinions of adding metal detectors to schools.

After a Board member’s request for data on metal detectors’ effectiveness in schools on June 14, articles and information were shared at the June 21 meeting. The information presented the benefits and drawbacks of metal detectors, along with other information to consider before the Board makes a decision.

The surveys were open from June 27 to July 7. Results were then shared with the Board at its July 12 meeting. More than 80% of respondents said they believe metal detectors would be effective at protecting the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors.

The Board’s discussions at the July regular meeting focused on piloting metal detectors at the high school first before pursuing them at the middle school. There were concerns brought up regarding the ability to staff the proposed eight detectors at the high school, along with other procedural questions.

Before a final decision is to be made, the Board directed the superintendent to reopen the survey just for staff once school reopened to obtain more targeted feedback from them. More discussion is expected at the September board meeting.

As the 2022-23 school year approaches, the Board and district will continue working together to strengthen safety practices within the Crete-Monee School District 201-U. District and school leaders will keep parents, students, staff, and community members informed as updates take place.

## DISTRICT 201-U STRATEGIC PLAN LOOKS FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

We have had an outstanding year in the Crete-Monee School District 201-U, and we’re looking ahead with excitement to what the coming school year has in store.

In fact, we have set six distinct goals to achieve over the 2022-23 school year. With the help of educators, administration, staff, parents, and our students, we are poised to meet and exceed the high standards we have set for ourselves.



# GOALS FOR THE COMING SCHOOL YEAR

We are committed to learning and growing along with our students. Here's what we're looking forward to in the 2022-23 school year as we continue our strategic planning initiative:

<b>1. Provide a challenging and equitable education for all students to promote a pathway for life success:</b>	<b>2. Nurture a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment to instill learner confidence, growth, and success:</b>	<b>3. Cultivate a high-quality, diverse staff who will foster an inclusive work environment of innovation, collaboration, high expectations, and accountability:</b>	<b>4. Create sustainable partnerships with family and community stakeholders to build a unified network of support for our students:</b>	<b>5. Provide our students with equitable, safe, and well-maintained facilities:</b>	<b>6. Prioritize our financial resources to meet our short- and long-term goals:</b>
<p>This year, we will continue to focus on professional development by emphasizing coaching and peer observations to deliver equitable instruction which engages students in learning. We'll also work to establish aligned standards impacting student assessments and curriculum planning to achieve equity and bolster collaboration.</p>	<p>We recognize that everyone comes from a unique background, with diverse skills and talents. Our goal is to foster an inclusive and respectful environment while establishing a system of academic and behavioral support. In the coming school year, we'll be focusing on creating trauma support programs and identifying the skill sets that help students successfully transition to the next stage of their academic careers.</p>	<p>We will work with our certified and non-certified staff to create a plan for targeted annual professional development based on staff's self-identified needs. This process leads to a collaborative culture of collective inquiry, action, research, and continuous improvement. We will develop professional learning pathways for certified staff to gain valuable additional experience as teachers and learners.</p>	<p>Educators understand the impact family and communities can have on a student's education. One of our priorities for 2022-23 is to continue our collaboration with the Crete-Monee Educational Foundation.</p>	<p>Our students and staff should feel safe at school within a well-maintained learning environment. We will leverage our short-term maintenance plan to address our aging facilities by adding air conditioning, pipes for accessible water, and other such upgrades. We will enhance our safety policies and procedures to include clear backpack usage for all students in grades 2-12, frequent locker searches in the upper grades, and increased partnerships with our community resources.</p>	<p>School funding can be a challenge, which is why we aim to prioritize limited resources for the most impactful results. We will continue to monitor the budgets for capital projects and facilities improvements, as well as maintain our annual reviews of contracts and agreements to ensure optimal return on investment.</p>
<p>Over the coming school year, we expect to make even more progress on these six major goals. We would like to thank our hardworking staff, educators, students, and families. Your support and advocacy helps us create a better learning environment for all.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>To learn more about our strategic plan, please visit <a href="http://www.cm201u.org/about_us/district_strategic_plan">www.cm201u.org/about_us/district_strategic_plan</a></b></p>					

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021-22

In spring 2019, we established six distinct goals as part of our Future Forward strategic planning initiative. While the COVID-19 pandemic certainly presented some obstacles we did not anticipate three years ago, our district has risen to the challenge. **Here are a few of our recent highlights:**

- We continue to outperform state achievement gaps in all areas.
- We continue to make great strides in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, along with working toward establishing and clearly communicating important policies and procedures.
- We've strengthened our relationships with emergent bilingual families by arranging more events and presentations, as well as expanded our modes of digital communication.
- We've made progress on our goal of prioritizing our financial resources, from maintaining a balanced budget over the long term to creating a plan to eliminate textbook fees.