

August Newsletter

Welcome Back Students, Parents, And Staff

Sherri Nelson, Executive Director/CEO

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year as we explore the world as our classroom! This school year marks Connecting Waters Charter Schools' (CWCS) 21st year of serving students and families in the Central Valley and the Bay Area with excellence through personalized education while providing parent choice and flexibility! We are proud that we have family generations who continue to choose Connecting Waters Charter School as their educational partner. I have always thought of our staff, parents and students as family. If you are new to the family, welcome, and I look forward to hearing amazing stories about your journey with CWCS.

I assure you that you are in good hands with our outstanding teachers, whom we call Education Specialists, along with all of our amazing support staff. We are here to serve you as we work with you to unlock your student's learning potential at Connecting Waters! You are not alone on this journey, and we will help you every step of the way.

Connecting Waters Charters Schools consist of a network of three charter schools; we function similar to a small school district: Connecting Waters (Waterford or School 1), Connecting Waters East Bay (Union City or School 2), and Connecting Waters Central Valley (Modesto or School 3). Each school has a resource center where you can meet your teacher and/or your tutor, and check out various materials and resources.

We are committed to supporting our families through:

Our Mission:

Connecting Waters Charter School is a collaborative educational community, promoting academic excellence in preparing students for college and career while providing individualized public education through challenging, unique, and varied learning.

Our Vision:

Our vision is to enhance life-long educational outcomes by partnering with families to provide stimulating learning opportunities across multiple regions.

And Our Goals:

1. Increase the percentage of students who are on-track to graduate college and career ready
2. Close the achievement gap in the low performing students in English and Math
3. Increase the percentage of English Learner students who achieve proficiency in English Language Arts and Math
4. Community Outreach to foster positive relationships

We are thankful for our governing board members who ensure that our schools are fiscally sound and meeting our academic state requirements. Please visit the [Board of Directors](#) webpage and learn more about our wonderful board members who volunteer their time for our school! Thank you all for your service to our students, parents, staff and school!

- Nina Vieira- Current CWCS Parent Board Chairman
- Robert Avila - Community Member and former CWCS Parent Board Co-Chair

- Bonnie Cerruti - Community Member and former CWCS Parent Board Secretary
- Erika Melton - Current CWCS Parent Assistant Board Secretary
- Kaneez Fatima - Current CWCS Parent Board Member
- Jennifer Louie-Monzon - Current CWCS Parent Board Member
- Denise Davis- Board Member and former CWCS Parent

Welcome some of our newest staff members:

RSPs:

Kaitlyn Nelson
Andrew Franca

Educational Specialist:

Kendall Costello
Alison Miller
Cali Miller
Sarah Polini-Tarter
Felicia Ram

Other:

Maged Botros, APEX Instructor
Cheryl Gomes, Math Teacher

SGI:

Aishatu Muhammad (Arabic Instructor)
Misbah Rashid (Multiple Subject Tutor)
Lucy Henneker (HSI Tutor)
Heidi Brubaker (Multiple Subject Tutor)
Kalema Muller (Math & English Tutor)

Classified Staff:

Amy Myers, PLT/504 Assistant
Robert Davis, Executive Admin Assistant
Tatiana Montoya, Library/Site Assistant
Marissa Cupples, SpEd Scheduler

We appreciate all of our current and new employees in the various departments. We have a remarkable team and we consider one another family! We are all here to support our parents and students. You are not alone on this rewarding and challenging journey.

Family Connect Festival

We are excited to bring back our Family Connect Festival (In Person)! Join us for our Back-to-School Celebration and learn some “cool stuff!”

For CWCS Parents, Students and Staff Sponsored by: Connecting Waters Charter Schools

Date: Friday, September 22, 2023
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Location: Connecting Waters Central Valley

Questions: Call the school office: 209-874-1119 or 800-808-9895

English Language Arts Department

Welcome back to school!

One of the areas that many parents and students struggle with is writing. It's the area that can, at times, bring tears of frustration as your child sits and stares at the blank piece of paper in front of them. Unfortunately, there are no magic tricks to make write simple and easy. Writing, like many things, comes back to the simple "practice makes perfect" strategy. That being said, there are some things that you can do to make writing less stressful for your child.

- Write every day. Yes, every day. If it's something that you do everyday, then it's nothing to be afraid of.
- Have them write simple things, like the directions for making a sandwich, following every step.
- Have them describe something they see every day, like their room or their favorite toy. Then, have them look at what they described, and help them pull out the details (all of those lovely adjectives that make writing come alive!). Add those details back into their writing.
- Use My Access. This program is a fabulous self-help tool for your child. Ask your ES for tips to help your child use this amazing tool. (The first [My Access Parent/Student workshop](#) is coming up in September! [Please join us](#) to learn to harness the power of this great program!)
- Use Moby Max: This is a **free** program available to K-8 students. Moby Max has writing units starting in third grade. Use these to help you develop your child into a strong academic writer! ([Moby Max](#), username:districtID#cwcs, Password:districtID#)

Guidance Department

We are available in person by phone or online anytime, to schedule an appointment call 209-874-1119 x344 or email guidance1@cwcharter.org.

Melissa Cripe
Guidance Counselor/CTE Coordinator

Mary Halter
Guidance Director

Brie Schuckman
Guidance Assistant

Christine Trejo
Guidance Counselor

Samantha White
Guidance Counselor/Community College Liaison

PSAT/NMSQT

Save the Date! On Wednesday, October 11, 2023, we plan to administer the PSAT/NMSQT test for 10-11th graders at both our CV and CWEB Resource Centers

PSAT/ NMSQT:

- Who: 10th and 11th graders
- Where: CV Resource Center (Modesto) and CWEB Resource Center (Union City)
- When: Wednesday, October 11, 2023. Time: 8:30 am -1pm (approximately)

- Scholarships: Scores are used by scholarship programs, including the National Merit® Scholarship Program, to look for eligible students.

For more information: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10>

Attention all 7th and 8th Grade Students!

CJSF is accepting applications for students for the 2020-21 school year

The purpose of CJSF is a club designed to recognize students who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement. CJSF emphasizes high standards of scholarship, and community service for California junior high school students. CJSF encourages service to the school and the community while fostering pride in academic scholastic achievement. CJSF Membership is based on scholarship and is gained after qualifying grades are earned each semester. In order to become a member, the student must submit an application each semester the student is eligible.

CJSF Application DUE by September 15th! Click here to submit the application online [CJSF Application](#)

Academic Clubs for High School Students.....

Did you know that CWCS has a CSF and NHS Club? CWEB Club information will be coming soon! Applications, due September 15th, Use these links to apply: [CSF Application](#) ; [NHS Application](#)

Class of 2024

College, Financial Aid, Awards at Graduation Information

- School Secondary Reports and Transcripts for Colleges and Scholarships:
 - Private Colleges ask for a School Report and Letter of Recommendation from your School's Guidance Department. Connecting Waters Guidance Department provides this for you but please give at least 3 weeks notice. Contact Guidance at guidance1@cwcharter.org.
 - Transcript Requests: If you need an official or unofficial transcript sent, please allow 5-7 business days. Contact transcripts@cwcharter.org or call 209-874-1119 ext. 6 to request a transcript.
- College Applications and Scholarships
 - **Private Universities** right away start researching private colleges for application deadlines, career schools for information, look for scholarships, do you need to take the SAT or ACT? If you need help, contact Guidance at guidance1@cwcharter.org
 - **CSU and UC Application Deadline is November 30th** –apply for CSU (calstate.edu/apply) and UC (admission.universityofcalifornia.edu)
 - **SAT or ACT by December** – several colleges have made the SAT or ACT optional, check with your college of interest for the admissions policies. For most colleges, December is the last month to take SAT (www.collegeboard.org) or ACT (www.actstudent.org). Make sure to use our school code **CW use 053706, CWEB use 050352, CWCV use 053963** when you take the test.
 - Check out our Scholarship Information page at your school's website, then go to "High School", then "Guidance", then "Scholarship Information"
- Financial Aid Information
 - WE send in the CalGrant for you.
 - YOU apply for FAFSA
 - by March 2nd www.studentaid.gov
 - What is the FAFSA?
 - The FAFSA www.studentaid.gov is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and is the application used for all types of federal financial aid – for junior colleges, trade schools, colleges and universities! Apply online between October 1st and March 2nd
 - Who should apply?
 - All graduating students planning to attend a junior college, trade school, UC, CSU, private

- college/university, or out of state college/university.
- What is Cal Grant?
 - These are grants from California given to all students who are eligible based on income. They ask for your GPA Information which is submitted automatically for all 12th graders by Connecting Waters unless you have opted out – option to opt out was on your Master Agreement and Acknowledgement of Responsibilities Form you signed with your ES.
- Why apply?
 - Don't assume you or your family makes too much money to get financial aid. You should still file the FAFSA! Many factors affect your financial need such as the number of children in your household in college and the age of your oldest parent. What's more, a number of colleges require their students to submit a FAFSA before considering them for institution-based financial aid. Also, the FAFSA is where you apply for loans.
- Online Workshops (offered by CWCS Guidance Department)
 - **Senior Class Meeting – September 15, 2023 11am**– Online via Google Meets, email guidance1@cwcharter.org for the meeting link.
 - **Financial Aid and Scholarships Workshop - October 20, 2023 11am**– Online via Google Meets, email guidance1@cwcharter.org for the meeting link.

Class of 2024 Awards at Graduation!

Awards are given to graduates who meet the following criteria (Only graduates who participate in the graduation ceremony will receive the awards):

- **CSF Life Membership Awards** – graduates are honored with a gold cord for being an active CSF member for four (4) semesters. Applications due by September 15th. To apply, go to your school's website page then Students then Clubs and Activities. Or email guidance1@cwcharter.org for help.
- **NHS Awards** – graduates are honored with a blue cord for maintaining at least a 3.00 GPA and high standards of service. Applications due by September 15th. To apply, go to your school's website page then Students then Clubs and Activities. Or email guidance1@cwcharter.org for help.
- **Community Service Award** - graduates who meet the service requirement will receive a green cord to wear. To apply, go to your schools website page, then High School, then High School Guidance, then Community Service Hours Survey, application due by March 1. Email guidance1@cwcharter.org for help.
- **Career Technical Education (CTE) Completers** - Students completing any of the CTE 2 year sequences of classes will receive a red cord at graduation. They will also have this noted on their transcript.
- **State Seal of Biliteracy Award** - The State Seal of Biliteracy is a recognition by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for graduating high school students who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. The State Seal of Biliteracy is marked by a gold seal affixed to the diploma or transcript for students who meet the requirement. Email guidance1@cwcharter.org for more information on how to qualify.
- **Golden State Seal Merit Diploma** - The Golden State Seal Merit Diploma (GSSMD) insignia is affixed to the diploma or transcripts for students who have demonstrated mastery of the high school curriculum in at least six subject area. For more information email guidance1@cwcharter.org

How can a student earn a 4.25 GPA? Here's an explanation of our "weighted GPA" policy

Students who take UC transferable courses at Community College courses will earn weighted honors GPA calculation for the course. Students who take UC Approved Advanced Placement (AP) courses will also earn the weighted honors GPA calculation. The honors GPA is calculated as follows: grades earned in UC approved Community College or AP courses will earn 5.00 GPA points for an A, 4.00 GPA points for a B, and a 3.00 GPA points for a C (D's and F's do not qualify for honors GPA). Connecting Waters offers AP English Language/Composition and AP English Literature/Composition. Questions? Contact Guidance at guidance1@cwcharter.org

All 11th grade students...UC Local Guarantee Eligibility in the Local Context Program

Connecting Waters participates in University of California's Eligibility in the Local Context program for 11th grade students. To find out if your student will qualify for participation, see [Local Guarantee \(ELC\)](#). Students with an academically rigorous course load will be considered, criteria for consideration include: a-g course pattern completion (11 a-g courses completed by end of Junior year), a combination of Community College and a-g courses, 11th graders who have general courses but have completed at least geometry will be considered, students with above average SAT and/or ACT scores will be considered.

What are "a-g" College Preparation Courses?

a-g College Prep Courses defined: "a-g" is the course code that indicates the student followed the approved University of California and California State University course description and used the approved text(s). Course descriptions and their textbooks are posted on the school's web page under the Guidance Department. Students must use approved texts and course descriptions for a-g college prep credit on the transcript. Additionally, the course must be taught by an Effective Education (or "EE") who is properly credentialed to teach the subject according to CA credentialing standards. Talk to your ES if you need to find an EE for a subject! For course outlines, go to your school's website then High School then a-g Information.

Who should take a-g College Prep Courses? They are for students who wish to attend a California State University or University of California directly out of high school. "a-g" courses are highly recommended for students wanting to attend a private college or university directly out of high school. Students who are planning to attend a community college should discuss this option with his/her ES. Students who have not completed the a-g college prep sequence may be able to qualify for admission through alternative paths and should talk to the college or university directly. Any student wanting to return to their regular high school to graduate should be taking a-g coursework, especially in English and History.

Is my child ready for a-g College Prep Coursework? In general, a-g College Prep coursework is designed for students who read at the 7th grade, although students who read at lower grade levels may be ready for the rigor of the coursework depending on the student's goals and aspirations. Your ES can help you to determine the best placement for your child. All incoming 9th graders are required to take a math placement test to determine their math class.

Students must earn grades of C- or better in all "a-g" courses to meet minimum college entrance requirements.

GPA: GPA is calculated using only "a-g" courses taken after the 9th grade. Although grades from 9th grade are not factored into the eligibility GPA, grades lower than a C in a 9th grade "a-g" course will not count toward satisfying the "a-g" college eligibility requirements (and in most cases, will need to be repeated).

- Minimum GPA for UC eligibility = 3.00
- CSU GPA Calculator <https://www.calstate.edu/apply/gpa-calculator>

Honors points: UC and CSU will award up to 8 extra grade points for AP courses and UC transferable community college courses

For UC only, the freshman admission requirements are:

1. Complete 15 UC-required college-preparatory ("a-g") courses, with 11 of those done prior to the start of 12th grade
2. Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better (weighted by honors/AP bonus points) in these courses
3. OPTIONAL: Take the ACT With Writing or SAT Reasoning Test

"A-G" SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS. The University of California and the California State University

require the following for admittance:

Area	Subject	Required Year(S)	Recommended YEar(s)
a.	History/Social Sciences	2	2
b.	English	5	4
c.	Mathematics	3	4
d.	Laboratory Science	2	3
e.	Language other than English	2	3
f.	Visual and Performing Arts	1	1
g.	Elective	1	1
Total Required Subjects 15			

Community college courses can be used to complete “a-g” subject area requirements as long as the course is a UC/CSU transferable course.

College and Career Resources

Looking for resources? Visit the Guidance website then High School then High School Guidance . You will find the High School Catalog, Career Resources, Scholarship and Grant information, Grad Requirements information, and more!!!!

