

# CRAIG HIGH SCHOOL

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*Home of the Panthers!*

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## April School Board Report

It's been just a few weeks since my last report, but we have been packing the weeks. The Craig High School chapter of the National Honor Society had its induction ceremony on April 2. Six new students were inducted: Sabrina Nelson, Adam Vickers, Liam Andrews, Sara Steffen, Kailee Stock, and Lorna Fithian. These students are the ones who hold themselves to the highest standards, both academically and socially and CHS is proud to have them as part of our student body. Congratulations to the new inductees.

Whalefest saw more involvement by the CHS Science Department, led by Stephen DeHart. During the multi-day event, CHS Ornithology had a student-led bird walk, Marine Biology presented on the invasive green crab and trapping techniques, and also hosted an evening science Trivia Night. Thank you to Mr. DeHart and our CHS science students for your participation in this growing community event!

CHS conducted AK Star State Testing over the week of April 12. Thank you Nicole Nelson, Chrissy Kensinger, and Stephen DeHart for taking the class time necessary to complete testing. Thank you to Robert Jeffrey for competing makeup testing. Thank you Christy House for providing organized testing supplies. Thanks PTSA for the testing snacks. And thank you to the rest of the CHS staff for your flexibility as we made sure our 9th and 10th graders completed this state requirement.

It's not a CHS-specific item, but the budget workshop Superintendent Hanson conducted on April 15 warrants mentioning. I have seen many many CCSD budgets over the years. Historical district budgets shared an impenetrability and opaque nature that rendered them extremely difficult to use. The budget developed by Ms. Hanson and Ms. Bass is a budget that makes sense! It is crafted based upon actual expenditures and predicted costs rather than taking the existing budget and rolling the status quo forward. I commend Superintendent Hanson and Ms Bass on their hard work and the excellent document they put forward.

In the world of educational consultants, James Nottingham is a major-league hitter. I found it inspiring to have Mr. Nottingham addressing our small staff via zoom during our April inservice. Tons of Kudos to Superintendent for sponsoring an educational leader of this caliber. His presentation was rich with real-world classroom applications that were applicable to all grade levels and across all contents. It is rare to have professional development that doesn't leave anyone feeling left out. Feedback was excellent and staff is excited about the possibility of hosting him in person soon.

CHS students performed well during our Spring Concert event. The band and choir are showing improvement every time they take the stage! Congratulations to Ms. Rachael Balcom for her excellent preparation and a very enjoyable evening of music. Both the band and choir recently returned from the regional music festival - we had three perform in the solo and ensemble portion and all three received Superior ratings! Congratulations Payton (clarinet), Maddy (vocal), and Kailee (vocal)! The CHS choir has also been asked to sing the national anthem for the Little League opening ceremony and an armed forces medley to honor our veterans at the marathon opening ceremony. It's great to see CHS representing in public! Thank you Ms Balcom!

The office would not run without our Administrative Assistant, Liz Thomsen. April 22 was Administrative Professional's Day - thank you Liz for the support you give to our students and the time you put in helping to keep things run smoothly! We really appreciate you!

Six CHS artists left with Mr. Fairbanks for Art Festival in Haines on Thursday, April 23. Haines puts on a fantastic festival — in addition to the workshops put on by the regional art instructor, they pull deep from the many artists that community. Our students will learn a lot over this four-day event!

The CHS track season is under way with the team having traveled to Ketchikan for the first meet on April 24. Our track interest has been growing every year — this year we have almost 20 athletes participating in the program. As it grows, we are looking for opportunities for our athletes to expand their skills - Earl and the welding shop created our first 39" high hurdle! We are currently exploring the possibility of adding a jump pit to the campus.

Dr. Bjørn Wolter will be on site April 28 and 29 to conduct monitoring of our current CTE offerings (welding). He will conduct interviews with administration, teaching staff, and students. This visit is less of an audit of the program than it is an opportunity for the State to provide feedback about our current structure. The timing is unfortunate as we only have a single CTE offering this year. Next year we will be able to add woods and construction to our list.

CHS is always looking for ways to increase our students exposure to post-graduation opportunities. Jess Dean, representing UAS Juneau, will be at CHS this Thursday, April 30, to speak with Juniors and Seniors about opportunities and programs available at UAS.

May is prom season! CHS is hosting an Island-wide High School Prom on Saturday, May 2! This year's prom theme is Hey Barbie! so if you like pink, swing by the CHS commons to get your fill of the glamor!

It has proven challenging to fill our HS science opening. I review our AERRC applicants daily. Of the 33 current application clicks, 29 applicants require J1 visas, 2 are under contract for the coming school year, 1 is not AK certified, and 1 is currently employed at Kayhi and still considering Craig as an option. With the KGBSD eliminating over 50 positions in the coming year, I am hoping to see additional applications. I have reached out to both Kayhi and Shoobar MS to be sure they know we have a HS position open.

Liz, Jared, and I have been working to implement Parchment for CHS. This service will allow former graduates to order and print transcripts without staff having to track them down and mail them. It's a bit of front loading and has taken a bit more time than we anticipated, but we are well on the way to having a good portion of our historical classes posted. The Parchment link is available on the CHS main page and via the counselor's corner page.

I am happy to be able to send our ELA teacher, Chrissy Kensinger, to Anchorage next week to participate in the Science of Reading Seminar that will be taking place. Thank you Superintendent Hanson for dedicating grant funding to this professional development opportunity.

We have tried to offer WorkKeys testing in the past but have run in to challenges. With help from Ms. Peavey, we were able to successfully register and conduct WorkKeys testing for a student. This testing is sometimes required by vocational schools and programs as it establishes basic, workplace-necessary competencies in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students who successfully complete the WorkKeys assessment then will earn a National Career Readiness Certificate. This can be used to demonstrate basic competencies to potential employers. We now can offer this free test to all CHS students who require it.

Following up on the success of her first student trip to Europe, Ms. Beck recently began the process of organizing another European travel experience over spring break 2027. Fifteen students have signed on this trip - a 50% increase to last year's group size! Parents and students alike are excited for this opportunity. Thank you Ms Beck for offering this opportunity to our students!

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CHS has been involved with the POW Youth Suicide Prevention coalition that is being championed by the Hydaburg School District. Superintendent Hanson has attended the organizational meetings and has shared information with me. CHS is scheduled for NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) training Tuesday, May 5. Through discussions with the presenter, we will be having an all-school assembly. Due to the nature of the training, parental permission will be requested for all participant. Jared Casey, a youth mental health speaker from Vancouver, BC, and his partner, Emerson Murray, both former NCAA Division I basketball players, will be at CHS on Thursday, May 9. They will be leading a morning, all-school assembly with a message of positive mental health and self-compassion. They will both work with students in our two PE classes. I was able to meet with Mr. Casey and am excited that his message aligns well with the mental health advocacy we have been pushing this year. I am looking forward to him meeting our students.

Twenty years ago, CCSD explored, and ultimately implemented, a grant to institute 1:1 learning in our schools. Grant funds have long since gone away, but ubiquitous computing has become a fundamental reality in our schools. When AASB encouraged us to sign on to the original grant, they said that in ten years being a 1:1 school would not be point of discussion - what would be was if *we were not a 1:1 school*. I have often reflected on this comment. Today's technological landscape is vastly different than it was 20 years ago when we first adopted laptops. The rapid development of AI, our developing understanding of the impact of screen time, and the social impact of social media provide topics of discussion that could serve to provide an answer to the question, "how will we explain why we are not a 1:1 school?" The goal of public school remains to transfer knowledge and skills to the students in our charge. The challenges of working around AI, social media, and screen time have created additional loads for the classroom teacher, rather than reducing it. At the same time, they have reduced the intellectual demands on our students. I believe we have arrived at a point where an honest and critical cost/benefit analysis as to the impact of ubiquitous computing should be conducted with the understanding that a recommendation of walking away from our 1:1 program may be warranted. Moving away from screens in the classroom is becoming a trend nationally. I have attached several current links for your additional consideration.

<https://fortune.com/2026/04/10/america-schools-public-schools-edtech-google-chromebooks-education/>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/education/los-angeles-school-district-require-screen-time-limits-rcna332173>

<https://www.the74million.org/article/parents-schools-clash-over-movement-to-abolish-screens/>

Finally, I will be asking board members to sign this year's CHS diplomas at this meeting. Our CHS diplomas have lines for each member so I'm hoping that everyone will be there! Thank you!