



# CHARLES H. WALSH SR. ACADEMY & CAREER TECH HIGH SCHOOL

## Walsh Academy

(847) 390-3020  
6935 W. Touhy Ave.  
Niles, IL 60714  
walshacademy.org



## Upcoming Events

Labor Day – No School  
9.4

CAAEL Starts  
Week of 9.8

Q1 Progress Reports Go Out  
9.19



## Welcome back to school!

Hello and welcome to the 2023-2024 school year!

Witnessing the excitement and energy as students and staff embark on a fresh start is truly heartwarming. Although we may not be in our new building just yet, let's make the most of this transitional phase and make every moment count. As we come together to create a positive and engaging learning environment, I have no doubt that this school year will be filled with remarkable achievements and memorable experiences.

It's fantastic to see how both students and staff are embracing the construction delays and maintaining their enthusiasm for the upcoming new building. It truly represents their resilience and dedication to fostering an exceptional learning environment. Despite these temporary challenges, the anticipation for the enhanced educational programming that awaits the students in the new building is driving the excitement. With their determination, I do not doubt they will continue to thrive academically and personally.

The move-in date for the new building has not been determined yet, but the plan is to provide parents and school districts with two weeks of notice as soon as we have a definitive date. The two-week notice will give everyone ample time to prepare and make the necessary arrangements for the move. Clear communication and advanced notice will help parents, staff, and school districts effectively manage the transition and ensure a smooth relocation process.

Meanwhile, check out our new website, [www.walshacademy.org](http://www.walshacademy.org), for updates regarding the move, Ribbon Cutting ceremony, and future Open House events. Let's embrace the journey ahead together and make it an extraordinary year for all!

Thank you and be safe!

Ann M. Craig  
Principal / Director of Educational Services



# Health Beat:

## Back to School Tips for Student Mental Health

By: Kristina Seidelman Nickels – Social Worker

Students are returning to school this fall which can trigger a variety of reactions, ranging from excitement, anxiety, or feeling a lack from freedom after summer break. Students may experience an increase in their overall stress and anxiety at the start of the new school year. According to the National Survey of Children's Mental Health, anxiety is the most common mental health concern for children ages 3-17. Some ways that families can prioritize mental well-being include:

- Keeping communication lines open to better understand how your student is feeling
- Getting the recommended amount of sleep on a regular basis so that students can better attend in class, manage their emotions and behaviors, and learn/remember academic lessons
- Staying organized and on a predictable schedule
- Building a support network of family or friends outside of school as well as a go-to adult in the school setting to assist as needed

If you notice that your student may be showing signs of depression or feeling alone, becomes easily agitated, engages in increasingly risky behaviors, is struggling with keeping healthy sleeping patterns, or is showing significant changes in their behavior, it is important to reach out to a mental health professional as well as your school counselor or social worker to identify resources to help support your student's mental well-being.

### Talking Tech

By: Stavros Kouriabalis – CTE Teacher

Hello everyone, we are glad to be back! We are very excited for our move to the new Walsh Academy building in Niles coming up. With the new building comes new equipment, and today we are excited to announce that we have new, interactive, touchscreen TVs being installed in every classroom. This takes hands-on learning to a whole new level. Students are able to share their work on a big screen and solve any problems right there on TV. We hope that this new feature added to the classrooms will catch their interest and make learning fun!



## Classroom Corner

By: Mark Trerotola - Teacher

A new school year is upon us even though the weather says it's still summer. Every day is a new adventure in Illinois weather, just like in our school. We began the school year as Walsh Academy on August 17, and our students seem eager to return to see what this year will bring, in addition to a new school building at some point this fall. Looking at a few of the classrooms at Walsh Academy, Ms. Lutz's class is reading *The Book Thief* and learning about the Great Depression in history. In their consumer math class, they're covering how to calculate total pay and overtime with hourly wages, which many of her students earn at their after-school jobs. In Ms. Parker's class, students are doing an 'All About Me' presentation and studying the history of the US Constitution. For their math class, the students are discovering how to find the midpoint of a line segment and managing a budget with fixed and variable expenses. Mr. Trerotola started the year by having his students reflect on heroes in their lives and what qualities make a hero. This became a pre-reading activity for their new book, *Freak the Mighty*. Still looking at heroes, Mr. T's students started reading in U.S. history about what led up to the Civil War and the roll out of the first confrontation. Their algebra class started off the year by identifying pertinent information to solve logic matrix word problems. That should clear out some of last year's cobwebs! And Mr. Justin's class is currently learning about the similarities and differences in physical and human geography between Canada and the U.S., learning how to solve for variables in equations in math, and doing a 3D printing project for fine arts. For just the first 2 weeks of school, it seems as though Walsh Academy is in full-tilt boogie mode.

# Welcome to Walsh Academy!

## New Staff Spotlight:

By: Donna Hoffman – School Psychologist

Walsh Academy is growing in more ways than just physical space. We started the new school year off with 9 new staff members who have brought incredible energy and enthusiasm to the school along with their expertise, knowledge, and varied backgrounds.

This summer we welcomed a new teacher, Mr. Justin (Scholler) to the freshman/sophomore class. Justin started right after he graduated with a degree in special education with a LBS1 from the University of Illinois. He enjoys watching and playing all sports as well as watching movies.



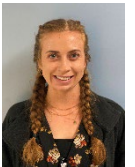
Mr. Anthony (Passi), school counselor, also started this past June. Mr. Anthony earned his bachelor's degree in hospitality and event management from the University of Central Florida before deciding to enter the school counseling program at Concordia University where he graduated this May. Mr. Anthony also enjoys watching and playing sports and working out.

Joining a junior/senior classroom is new teacher Ms. Parker (Kylie). Ms. Parker graduated in May from the University of Dayton with a degree in special education and a certification in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). She enjoys reading and is currently training for a half marathon.

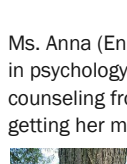


Another new teacher joined us this semester. Claire Lutz, aka Ms. L, graduated in May from the University of Alabama with a degree in collaborative special education and a minor in communicative disorders. Ms. L enjoys reading, knitting, walking her dog, and is currently enrolled in a sign language class.

Ms. Mackenzie (Smith), paraprofessional, graduated a couple of years ago with degrees in English and Sociology from Drake University. Before joining Walsh Academy, Ms. Mackenzie was a teaching assistant at Northwestern University. In her spare time, she enjoys painting, reading, and watching movies.



Our fourth and last new teacher is returning to the profession. Ms. Mary (McNeil) graduated from De Paul University with a degree in English Literature. She continued in school at Loras College earning her secondary education degree and then traveled the world (Russia, Japan, China) teaching English. Ms. Mary also earned her school counseling degree from Concordia University and has been working as a Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice.



Ms. Anna (Enright), school counselor also will answer to Ms. A and/or Ms. E. Anna majored in psychology at the University of Illinois Chicago and completed her degree in school counseling from Lewis University. Anna worked as a substitute teacher in D123 while getting her master's degree. Hobbies include baking and hanging out with her dog.



Ms. R (Katya Riccio) is currently assisting in the transition classroom while awaiting her new classroom assignment. Ms. R also graduated from Lewis University in May with a degree in school counseling and received her LPC (licensed professional counselor) endorsement. She enjoys crafting and using her Cricut machine.



Lastly, Angel Delgado, Jr., building manager, started working with Maryville in the maintenance department and will be the building manager for the new school in Niles. Angel comes to Walsh with extensive background in the trades. He has also been a club DJ for 27 years and a baseball coach for 25 years. Angel played minor league ball and one of his 4 sons (he also has 2 daughters) is following in his footsteps.



Veteran staff and new staff have enjoyed getting to know each other and this group of rookies is fitting right in as we start the new year strong as a Walsh Academy team!

## CAAEL

By: Dan Baffin – PE Teacher/Coach

If you happen to hear your student talk about CAAEL, he/she is referring to the Chicago Area Alternative Education League of which Walsh Academy is a proud member. CAAEL offers leagues and tournaments for chess, bowling, art, soccer, volleyball, softball, flag football, basketball, badminton, academic bowls, and spelling bees. Jen School participates in these activities against other alternative schools. The emphasis is not on winning or losing, but on sportsmanship and having fun!

CAAEL can be a positive motivator for our students as they have to be eligible each week to compete in events against other schools. Students are chosen based on their daily behavior and how well they follow school expectations and keep up with their academics each week. They are expected to display leadership and character at CAAEL events by interacting positively with peers, showing respect for authority figures, working as a team, demonstrating compassion and tolerance, winning and losing gracefully, making thoughtful decisions, and accepting both positive and negative consequences of their decisions and actions.

We are about to kick off this school year with flag football and bowling for the 2023 school year. Games will start the week of September 8<sup>th</sup>, and games are usually held on Fridays. Students have been practicing their football skills in PE while learning various routes, rules, and how to play together as a team. Sportsmanship is always our #1 goal on the field, win or lose. For more information on CAAEL visit their website at [www.caael.org](http://www.caael.org).

# CTE Program:

## New Year, New Achievements

By: Maysaloon Alkhafaji – Paraprofessional/Job Coach

How nice it is to see the fruits of what you have planted during a full year of work and perseverance. The beginning of a new academic year has begun here at Walsh Academy with a lot of activity in the CTE Extension program. Our dedicated students worked during CTE in the garden, starting from uprooting weeds to watering the plants daily during the hot summer days, until we reached the stage of harvesting our crops, and the result was wonderful! Our transition class was then able to use the harvested goods to hold our first Farmer's Market of the season Friday, September 1. Farmer's Markets will be on Thursdays going forward for as long as we have produce.

### Garden Harvest



The students are also working on creating a new keychain for Walsh Academy with the new logo while they wait with anticipation to move into the new building in Niles. Once the move is complete, students will have many more opportunities and sites to expand their employment skills and we wish them a new academic year full of successes and achievements!