CNCS School Handbook
2012 - 2013

Baltimore City Public School #326
4301 Raspe Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21206-1913

telephone: 410.325.CNCS (2627)
fax: 410.325.CITY (2489)

acrosby@cityneighbors.org
mchalupa@cityneighbors.org
Dear City Neighbors Families,

Welcome to the 2012-2013 school year! The CNCS handbook is the City Neighbors way of communicating in one place everything about City Neighbors from the vision and mission of our school to the operational information that you as a family member should know. The handbook includes Information about parent and teacher conferences, annual school events, drop-off and pick-up locations, the importance of timeliness and attendance, and family involvement.

New this year is how our school community will measure the success of family engagement. Rather than meticulously counting up the minutes dedicated by parents to making a difference at City Neighbors Charter School the Accountability Committee has created a new family commitment compact.

We are asking that your family think about and describe in writing ways in which you would like to be involved; describe the talents that you would like to share; choose whether to serve on a committee; and imagine what your parent-teacher relationship will be for the coming year. The form “Our Family Commitment”, which was part of your summer packet, shifts the focus of volunteer investment and parent engagement from compliance to mission driven work. Your family’s partnership is what makes City Neighbors great!

I’ll end with a quote that readily applies to volunteering from Dr. Seuss,

“If you never did you should. These things are fun and fun is good.”

Have a great school year!

Sincerely,

Sue Fothergill

Sue Fothergill
President
City Neighbors Charter School
Dear City Neighbors Community,

Welcome to Year 8. Every year presents a new set of opportunities and challenges as we strive to create the ideal school together. Specific to this year, we participate in the charter renewal process, where Baltimore City Schools determines whether our contract is renewed and whether it is renewed for 3 years – or the maximum of five. This work of preparing for and participating in renewal will take the work and contribution from all of our families, students and teachers! And while we participate in that process, we continue the work of our school – developing great projects, caring for and nurturing children, building partnerships with each other, finding more ways to integrate the arts, creating more experiences (whether in our classrooms or in our world) for students to learn, grow and thrive, and always thinking about how to help our students thrive as readers, writers, mathematicians, scientists, learners, advocates, creators, artists, citizens, and as young people in our world.

As part of our work together, this handbook is a very important document. In it, you will find an overview of our educational beliefs and curricular practices. You will find information on our practices around building our strong and thriving student, parent and community culture. You will find all those policies and procedures that are so necessary for making sure we are following the same norms. And, you will find the Parent Participation catalogue which will help you to find your place as you partner with us in building a great school.

The handbook goes through a process that is reflective of our community – a very City Neighbors process, if I may say so. Over the year, we track feedback from parents, students and the community about the elements in this handbook. The staff reviews policies and procedures and makes recommendations. This feedback is then presented to the Governance Committee, made up of parents and educators. Then, the entire handbook is reviewed and approved by our elected Board. It is a long process – but such a valuable one to ensure that it is constructed in our sense of community.

With all that said, please read this handbook! It may not be the most poetic or compelling reading, but it is reading that will help each of us be fully part of City Neighbors.

I continue to be so honored and excited to be part of City Neighbors. Please know how much I care for this school of ours – and each of the children in it. Please know that my door (or my phone, or my e-mail) has been and always will be open.

Here’s to a great year eight. Thank you all for being part of it with me.

All the best,

Mike Chalupa, Principal
Dear City Neighbors,

Thank you for joining in on the quest of creating City Neighbors! At the start of every new school year, I like to reflect back on when we first designed our school. We began with the question, “If you could have the best school you can imagine, what would it be?” and then we went to work imagining together. Today, entering into our 8th year, it’s possible to see and feel the impact of putting our imaginations to work together. That’s how we know when our school is functioning at its best.

Here is what it looks like when City Neighbors is functioning at its best: for the students they come in every morning to a place where they are known, loved, and supported academically. They are asked to create together the City Neighbors Way. They are engaged in projects, in building skills, in developing their voice, and in realizing their own power to change the world for the better. They are building relationships, and working collaboratively, and given the room to grow.

You know City Neighbors is functioning at its best when you see our teachers engaged in creating curriculum and assessment that is authentic and meaningful. They are empowered to create with each other and the students on long term projects of inquiry. Our teachers are in relationship with each other, with our students, building a culture where each person is important.

You know City Neighbors is functioning at its best when you see parents engaged in meaningful work. The more we participate in the life of our school, the more our school works the way it was designed to work. Through meaningful work together, we create partnerships and relationships that give us the opportunity to imagine City Neighbors together. This is why our Board and our committee structure is important. In fact, being on a committee is one of the pathways for becoming involved. Let us know who you are, and why you are drawn to City Neighbors. Join a committee, or make one that we need. Look for your place in creating our school together. We need you.

I look forward to this year. This is an exciting time. City Neighbors Charter School has become a model for urban progressive education, and is up for renewal for the second time. City Neighbors Hamilton, in its 4th year, is welcoming a new school leader, and City Neighbors High School adds another 100 students (serving 9th, 10th and 11th grades). We are a young, strong organization. We are known for our grassroots story of coming together to create the best school we can imagine. And -- with your help -- we are imagining City Neighbors. Let’s keep going!

With love,
Bobbi Macdonald

Bobbi R. Macdonald

Executive Director
The City Neighbors Foundation
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WHAT WE DO: DEFINING STATEMENTS

CITY NEIGHBORS CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION

The mission of City Neighbors Charter School is to provide an extraordinary public school education with high academic achievement for all students. Our ultimate goal for our school is that through Project Based Learning, arts integration, parental involvement and community outreach, the students leave enlivened, with deep awareness of themselves, their families and the outside community, and with the capacity to be good citizens.

CITY NEIGHBORS CHARTER SCHOOL VISION

At CNCS our classrooms serve as individual model communities where issues are discussed, differences in perspectives are welcomed and children work cooperatively, rather than competitively. The CNCS governance model - including parents, business and community leaders, teachers, students and the principal - reflect our commitment to cooperative governance, based on the principles of human dignity, consensus, and freedom. Our belief and experience is that when given a strong structure to support generative thinking as well as meaningful activities to perform, all children and adults strive for excellence. Because of this focus, CNCS' impact on the lives of students and families and the community will be powerful, positive and long lasting.

CITY NEIGHBORS CHARTER SCHOOL STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

Diversity is essential to who we are!

In this spirit, City Neighbors embraces the diversity within our school, community and world. We endeavor to create an environment that values all people of any ability, age, family structure, gender, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

We strive to create this environment through our curriculum, interactions, staffing, policies and procedures.

As the families, staff, and students of City Neighbors, we accept the responsibility to help every member of our school feel safe, respected and valued.
THE CITY NEIGHBORS WAY

Starting in 2009-2010, we introduced a set of norms that would help guide our way of being together --- and guide our way in how we work. These norms were developed in an on-going process, including staff and parents. These norms serve as the foundation of our community expectations. We are labeling it “The City Neighbors Way”.

PERFORMANCE VALUES

COLLABORATION
When I work in a group, team or partnership I work with and learn from others.

WORK ETHIC
When I am working on a task that is hard, I first try my best and then ask for help.

PREPARATION
I come to class on time and ready to work.

OPEN-MINDEDNESS
I am open to trying new things and exploring new ideas.

PERSEVERANCE
I keep working until a task is done well, even if it takes several tries.

HONEST REFLECTION
I try to know my strengths and weaknesses. I look back to see how I was successful and how I could do better.

SOCIAL VALUES

COMPASSION AND CARE
When someone wants or needs help, I help them.

RESOLVING CONFLICT
When I get mad or frustrated I manage my anger and then solve the problem calmly, using only appropriate language and tone.

SHARING SPACES
I respect shared spaces. I am quiet and calm in the hallways. I do not disrupt the learning of others. I leave my environment clean and orderly.

EMBRACING DIVERSITY
I know that we are different in many ways. I do my part to create a community that welcomes and values all people.

SHOWING RESPECT
I speak and act appropriately with adults, peers and those younger than me.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY
I can’t control the words or actions of others, but I can control my own. I am responsible for the choices I make.

SAFETY
Everyone has the right to feel safe in their personal space. I keep my hands and feet to myself and I take or use only what belongs to me.
The staff of CNCS is a very dedicated group of people and professionals. They are experienced educators who have chosen to participate in the charter school movement. They are leaders and innovators and form the heart of teaching and learning at our school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Teacher</td>
<td>Carolyn Burlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Assistant</td>
<td>Kiley Wampler</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Grade Teacher</td>
<td>Monica O’Gara</td>
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<td>1st Grade Assistant</td>
<td>Sharon Jackson</td>
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<td>2nd Grade Teacher</td>
<td>Vicki Almon</td>
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<td>3rd Grade Teacher</td>
<td>Tracy Pendred</td>
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<td>2nd / 3rd Grade Assistant</td>
<td>Rachel Haley</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Grade Teacher (4/5 Math and SS)</td>
<td>Joan Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Grade Teacher (4/5 Reading and Writing)</td>
<td>Jessica DiLorenzo</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th / 5th Grade Assistant</td>
<td>Megan Dash</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Grade Special Education Assistant</td>
<td>Taheerah Hendricks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School Math/6th Language Arts</td>
<td>Sajida Davis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School Math/8th Science</td>
<td>David FitzSimons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Language Arts/6-8 Social Studies</td>
<td>Peter French</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/7 Science</td>
<td>Peter Redgrave</td>
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<td>Trinisa Brown</td>
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<td>Middle School Special Education Assistant</td>
<td>Malik Wilson</td>
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<td>Rhonda Bullock</td>
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<td>Steve Barber</td>
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<td>K-8 Paraprofessional/Utility Player</td>
<td>Shardonay Wright</td>
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<td>Atelierista</td>
<td>Susan Brightman</td>
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<td>Shakia Paylor</td>
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<td>Giti Jabaily</td>
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<td>Biz Manning</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapist</td>
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<td>Anne Derocher</td>
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<td>Kate Seidl</td>
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<td>Coleen Ferguson</td>
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<td>Rochelle Rice</td>
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<td>Bertha Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day Porter</td>
<td>Terry Bowser</td>
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<td>Evening Porter</td>
<td>Cheryl Ross</td>
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<td>Office Coordinator</td>
<td>April Crosby</td>
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<td>Principal</td>
<td>Mike Chalupa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Bobbi Macdonald</td>
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The Board of Directors at City Neighbors Charter School consists of a passionate and committed group of parents and community members. The main responsibilities of the CNCS Board include ensuring the fiscal and legal health of the school, protecting the mission and vision expressed by the school charter and supporting and evaluating the school principal. All work by the Board is ultimately designed to support the staff who, in turn, support our students. These are the current members of the Board of Directors. You can e-mail the Board at CNCS-board@cityneighbors.org.

President .......................... Sue Fothergill
Vice President .................... Annastasia Kezar
Secretary .......................... Kamesha Stokes
Treasurer ........................... Rob Noble
Dir. of Accountability .............. Liz Zogby
Dir. of Community Relations ...... Trinisa Brown
Dir. of Resource Development .... Amanda Gursky
Director of Facilities ............... Robyne Lyles
Director of Family Relations ...... Tanya Engram
Principal ........................... Mike Chalupa
Teacher Representative ............ Elected by teachers
Student Representative ............ Elected by students
VOLUNTEERING AT CITY NEIGHBORS

One of the requirements for being a part of our school is to contribute at least 40 hours of volunteer service to City Neighbors.

We know this isn’t easy. We ask this of you, because it is in our charter, because we believe in you, and because we know what it means for our children to have us all working together toward the success of City Neighbors.

This year we are instituting a new process. Here’s how it works:

1. Your family’s summer packet will include a form called Our Family Commitment to help you plan how you will co-create CNCS this school year. Will you run an enrichment club? Attend building work days? Help out at recess? All of the above? Make a plan for how you will meet your family’s 40-hour commitment.
2. Our Family Commitment also asks you to think about what committee you will join and what talents, skills, interests, or other aspects of yourself you might be willing to share with the City Neighbors community.
3. At the end of each trimester, we’ll return a copy of your Family Commitment to you and ask that you estimate the number of hours you contributed in the trimester. It’s a great time to reflect on how you meeting your commitment.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Parents have a strong voice at City Neighbors and there are many ways to use that voice in responsible and respectful ways. Participating in the committees or fulfilling the obligation of volunteer service are some of the ways we take ownership of our school. There are many other times and places to have your voice heard. These include working with the Organized Parent Group, attending Board meetings, attending parent workshops and town hall meetings, attending monthly meetings held by the principal, or responsibly using the principal’s open door policy.
The Arch is the visual image of our governance model. Every board position is designed to support the Principal, who then supports the faculty, who are in direct contact with our children every day. Always, with every decision we ask, "What is best for the students of City Neighbors?"

The Structure of the School
City Neighbors Charter School is managed by City Neighbors Charter School, Inc., a certified 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The business and affairs of City Neighbors Charter School, Inc. are managed under the direction of its Board of Directors. All powers of the Corporation may be exercised by or under the authority of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors keeps minutes of its meetings and full and fair accounts of its transactions.

The Board of Directors is made up of an elected body of volunteers. These individuals are a combination of parents in the school and members of our community. Directors are elected for their ability to perform specific duties. Elections are held every year. Please see our bylaws in the Governance binder located in the Parent Room.

Every family of a CNCS student is a member of the corporation. You have a say at CNCS, please use your power and get involved!
THE CITY NEIGHBORS FOUNDATION: THE KEYSSTONE BRIDGE

City Neighbors’ unique governance model, using the keystone arch to define our relationships, has grown and developed over the years. Recently, when we decided to open two new schools, our governance committee set about creating the Keystone Bridge - a model that would maintain the autonomy of each school, while uniting the schools with a foundation, The City Neighbors Foundation, strengthens our connections and vision for City Neighbors.

**The City Neighbors Keystone Bridge**

![The City Neighbors Keystone Bridge](image)

The idea of the City Neighbors Foundation is that running underneath each City Neighbors school is a strong foundation supporting the balance and design of the entire structure.

With the development of **The City Neighbors Foundation**, the Board has taken actions to support the ongoing financial, legal, and educational success of City Neighbors, while maintaining the strength of the keystone arch as the integral design of school governance.

**How does it work?**
The City Neighbors Foundation has a Board Council made up of board members from each City Neighbors school. These members include teachers, Principals, parents, and community members. The Board Council meets approximately 4 times a year, and will unite and support all the separate arches. The City Neighbors Foundation hires an Executive Director (Bobbi Macdonald) and an Academic Director (Mike Chalupa), as well as a paid Accountant (Rob Noble). These hired staff members are dedicated to supporting all three schools, the Boards, the Faculty, the growth and health of our organization.
THE CORE OF OUR WORK:
ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH
We share the goal that every parent has for their child: to learn and be successful in school and in life. The educational approach at City Neighbors — with project-based learning, arts integration, and the inspiration of Reggio Emilia at its core - focuses on teaching for thinking and understanding and for creating students who are engaged, inspired, and confident learners.

WHAT IS PROJECT-BASED LEARNING?
A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic. There are three phases to project-based learning. These three phases include:
1. The development of guiding questions through some combination of teacher and student input.
2. The collection of data and information and the representation of their findings
3. The sharing of work with families, peers or school community members
Project-based learning is often driven by student interest; it can also be informed by the Voluntary State Curriculum or overall school themes. Through project-based learning, students have the opportunity to learn in more real-world ways, develop skills of collaboration, discussion and exploration, learn how to effectively explore and present information on any topic, and discover what it’s like to plunge beneath the surface of a topic.

WHAT IS ARTS INTEGRATION?
Arts integration means using the arts to access skill and content development and express learning in other content areas. Ideally, arts integration is simultaneously measuring a student’s growth in the content area and in the art area.
Educational research supports arts integration. The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached. The arts reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached. The arts connect students to themselves and each other. The arts transform the environment for learning. The arts provide learning opportunities for the adults in the lives of young people. The arts provide new challenges for those students already considered successful. The arts connect learning experiences to the world of real work.
Arts integration is not just teaching arts for their own sake. Arts integration is not about artist residencies or occasional arts projects that connect to other curricular subjects. Arts integration is about nurturing the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies of each student and enriching and supporting their learning and growth in every area of their development.

WHAT IS REGGIO EMILIA?
City Neighbors is inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia. Reggio Emilia is the name given to a teaching style that has evolved in the Northern Italian municipality of Reggio Emilia. Fundamental to this educational philosophy is the perception of children as being strong, intellectually rich and possessing great potential. In this educational model, the teacher works with children to stimulate and deepen critical thought in a research partnership. In Reggio Emilia, knowledge is seen as something that is socially constructed and should be based on ideas and experiences that are real and meaningful to the child.
CNCS takes its inspiration from Reggio Emilia in the following ways:
• Teachers’ on-going commitment to closely observing children, enhancing their understanding of children, and documenting student work
• The organization of the physical environment that creates community and connection
• Long-term projects as vehicles for learning
• Nurturing the “hundred languages of children” — encouraging them to express their understanding and learning in many different ways.
Parental and community support for all children in the community.
WHAT IS INCLUSION?

An “inclusive school” rests on the belief that all students, no matter their ability and as much as possible, should be educated in general classrooms. City Neighbors is an inclusive school. For the most part, all students have their educational needs met in their home classroom. With the support of classroom assistants and our Inclusion Team of our Special Education teachers, our Social Worker and our Literacy Specialist, educational and social needs are attended to as students work in large groups in the classroom as well as smaller groups that can work in a quieter part of the room or in other rooms. The goal, based on the CNCS Mission, is to educate all students together by making differences ordinary.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

READING

Teachers design the reading instruction at CNCS to offer multiple opportunities every day for students to read and discuss their reading. Generous amounts of time are dedicated to helping children grow in their abilities as readers, writers, spellers and communicators through a variety of interesting activities relevant to the children, their projects and studies, and their developmental stages.

Some examples of daily reading instruction are: reading or listening to high quality children’s literature and nonfiction read aloud for enjoyment, for information or for project research; teachers working with small groups guiding their acquisition of reading skills and strategies; children expanding upon their understandings of their readings in writing, discussion, drama, and visual art individually, in pairs, and in groups; using the school library and the library areas of the classroom regularly.

In our elementary grades, we have chosen to utilize the Guided Reading Program authored by G.S. Pinnell and published by Scholastic. This program uses authentic literature and children are matched with books that provide an appropriate amount of challenge. Teachers also teach literacy as the need arises while working on science, social studies and other content areas. Beginning in late elementary school through middle school, students engage in more literature based reading instruction, with many students reading at least 25 grade appropriate books each year. The goals for language and literacy instruction at CNCS are for children to become independent and productive readers who enjoy reading and who recognize its relevance in their lives.

MATHEMATICS

In grades K-3, we use Bridges to Math program out of the Math Learning Center, a non-profit dedicated to the effective teaching and learning of mathematics. Bridges Math Curriculum, developed by a non-profit (the Math Learning Center) with support from the National Science Foundation, has a strong blend of problem-solving and skill building, utilizes a workshop model approach, with a focus on visual models to create mathematical pictures, and integrates a project-approach. The program balances exploration and construction of meaning while providing explicit structures and models for math understanding. This program was developed and field tested by math educators with a strong focus on child development.

In grades 4-5, we utilize Everyday Mathematics out of the University of Chicago. Everyday Mathematics helps students measure up to the demand for greater mathematical competence and problem-solving agility. It is one of two elementary math programs highly recommended by the U.S. Department of Education.

In middle school, our daily math scope and sequence and activities are designed by teachers in direct relation to middle school state standards and in response to student needs. Starting in 2011-2012, students will be using the Khan Academy in a “math lab” environment for a good portion of their study. Khan Academy has interactive lessons and allows students to start and progress at their own pace. For students who need to step back and build some basic skills, they can begin there. For students who are ready to go beyond the grade level math curriculum, Khan Academy offers them that opportunity. All progress is monitored and supported by teachers. This can also be used and continued at home for on-going practice and development. This “Math Lab” will be in addition to small group grade-level math instruction and project/arts components during math time. Our approach prepares students for Algebra or Pre-Algebra in eighth grade.
SCIENCE
In Science, we strive to help our students “become scientists.” We want them to develop curiosity about the world, ask questions, and develop the skill and content knowledge to be able to find reasonable answers to their questions. We even challenge them to explore the “unreasonable answers” because it is within those explorations that innovation, invention and creativity reside. As a basis of our program, we utilize the Full Option Science System: FOSS. These modules begin with hands-on investigations, then move students toward abstract ideas related to those investigations using simulations, models and readings. In grades 6-8, we have a Science Specialist who creates on-going inquiry-based learning in science, focused on the scientific method and aligned with the content in the state standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
City Neighbors takes a multi-faceted approach to physical education. Students have formal physical education class one or two days per week. During this instructional time, they are taught the standard content of statewide physical education goals including physical fitness, sports, and cooperative and competitive games. Students often have the opportunity, at some point during the year to experience dance and other forms of arts movement. And, every student has the opportunity for at least thirty minutes of free play recess each day. At City Neighbors, our multi-faceted approach to physical education combines structure, expression, and fun.

THE ARTS
Inspired by the schools of Reggio Emilia, the arts are an essential component of our educational approach – not an add-on, but a connecting point to involve and challenge students in their entire academic and creative evolution. The arts permeate the CNCS community, where the halls are designed to showcase drawings, paintings, poems and constructions by students. Artistic achievement is admired, respected and honored. In addition to the arts integrated into everyday classroom learning, students at City Neighbors have courses in the visual arts, vocal music, theater, and other forms.

SOCIAL STUDIES: A PROJECT-BASED APPROACH
Each year, students at CNCS will explore at least three overarching project studies. These themes will serve as the primary focus in social studies, but will be integrated when possible into other areas of the CNCS curriculum. This project-based approach challenges students to look deeper into a topic, gain a more thorough understanding of a topic, and deal with the complexities of issues.

Projects are determined at the classroom level and are determined through a combination of state standards, student interest, or to relevancy to current events. These projects may last an entire trimester or there may be more than one project study in a trimester. Please contact your child’s classroom teacher to find out about the project studies for the year.

SPELLING and WORD STUDY
At City Neighbors, students at all grades are taught that spelling is part of clear communication. We believe that learning to spell is a developmental process and we differentiate our spelling instruction guided by frequent assessment of spelling skills. Spelling instruction begins with temporary spelling in the primary grades and transitions to conventional spelling in the intermediate grades. Throughout their school career, students grow increasingly able to apply their spelling and vocabulary to a variety of content areas. Teachers endeavor to help students understand that spelling is important in their writing and in the world outside school. Spelling instruction is integrated in reading and writing instruction. Our students are taught editing strategies as a fundamental piece of becoming an effective, accurate speller.

THE CITY NEIGHBORS MIDDLE SCHOOL
At City Neighbors Charter School, we have spent several years designing what we believe to be a program that strives for the ideal – it provides a new vision for Middle School in Baltimore City. Our program is rooted in building strong teacher-student relationships, allowing for individualization in instruction, and focusing on in-depth, integrated learning. Hallmarks of our program include:
• **Intensive Learning Periods**
  Starting each day, small groups of students will be given instruction targeting their learning needs. This embedded daily tutoring session will allow students to get the support they need or expand their learning as they wish.
• **Grade Level Projects**
Each year, students in our middle school will be expected (with the support of their advisor and parents) to create, develop, complete and present a year-long project of depth and meaning. Students will be asked to develop a proposal and present that proposal to the staff for approval. They will be asked to provide evidence of process along the way. And, they will be asked to present their final project in March to teachers and peers and again to the larger community at our annual Mind Fair. Students must complete their grade level project to move on to the next grade.

• **Advisory Programs**
Starting in sixth grade, students will be assigned an advisor. During twice-weekly meetings, advisors will be charged with supporting students through the high school selection and application process, providing on-going opportunities for social and emotional learning, and supporting students in the development and execution of their grade level project.

• **Electives**
Starting in middle school, students will begin to exercise control and responsibility over their education. Several days a week, students will be offered an elective block which will include further opportunities to explore the arts, the content areas, physical education, foreign language, technology or other interests.

• **Presentations of Learning**
Each year, at the end of the year, each student in middle school will be required to gather evidence of their learning, reflect on their year in writing, and present themselves, their work, and their reflections to teachers, parents, and invited guests.

These areas are all grounded on a program that already stresses academic rigor and are deeply rooted in our unique educational philosophy.

**HOMEWORK**
Well-designed homework, at the right time in a child’s development, can have significant impact on his/her learning. Homework can reinforce skills, inspire out-of-school exploration and learning, teach the basics of responsibility, and help to instill the discipline of learning. Therefore, we try to take a thoughtful and developmental approach to homework at CNCS.

In many cases, not completing homework will have an adverse impact on a child’s grades; it will most certainly have an impact on a child’s learning and progress. Therefore, it is important that homework be completed and returned.

We encourage families to support their child(ren)’s learning by providing them with a quiet and supportive atmosphere in which to complete homework. Some students, especially in the younger grades, may need more parental support with the understanding and completion of homework. As students get older, and certainly by middle school, we encourage parents to allow their students to be as independent as possible in managing and completing homework. If you work with your child on homework, please be sure it is truly their work that is being returned the next day.

At City Neighbors, we believe that homework in kindergarten and first grade should reflect what research tells us about how children in this age group learn best. Therefore, in general, students in these grades will receive less frequent homework and minimal “traditional” homework worksheets. Research points to improved skills or motivation as a result of other types of homework at this age. At times, you may be asked to read together or have your child read to you and discuss the story, to go for a walk and record what you see, or to pursue a specific activity related to project work in the classroom or your child’s interests. All these will be more valuable forms of home learning in kindergarten and first grade.

Starting in 2nd grade, students at City Neighbors will begin to receive more formal homework. We still encourage you to participate in all the family learning mentioned above, but at this point in a child’s development, most children are ready for homework that helps to reinforce content and skills, learn the basics of homework responsibility, and transfer knowledge from school to home. As students progress through our school, homework will, of course, become more demanding and more complex.

Finally, the value of family literacy and children reading independently at home cannot be underestimated. Though home reading expectations are specific to each grade level, it is every teacher’s hope that children will be encouraged to read books or hear books aloud daily.
STUDENT ASSESSMENT
In order to obtain a complete and multi-faceted view of a child's academic development, CNCS uses a variety of means to assess a student's skill level, progress, and performance. These include state-required standardized assessments, informal assessments, on-going diagnostics, examination of student work, portfolio development, and performance-based assessments.

REPORT CARDS AND PARENT CONFERENCES
City Neighbors follows a trimester schedule – the school year is divided into three sections of approximately thirteen weeks each. At the end of each trimester, students will receive a report card completed by their teachers. The report cards cover assessment areas such as personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, social studies, science, and the arts.

Starting this year, every student will receive a progress report at mid-trimester. The progress report will be a brief document and will look different at various grade levels, but they will give parents and students an indication of the kinds of progress students are making at that point. In middle school, the progress report will have a mid-trimester grade to help everyone monitor that progress.

We hold Parent/Teacher Conferences at mid-trimester. This year, Parent/Teacher Conferences will take place in October, January and April. This parent/teacher conference time will allow parents and teachers to discuss the child and how to support the child throughout the remainder of the trimester. It allows for more pro-active, collaborative parent/teacher partnership along the way.

Report cards will be distributed at the end of each trimester. Parents can, of course, request a meeting with teachers if they would like to review the report cards.

FIELD TRIPS
Field trips are an essential part of the CNCS program. They are a part of our program, not just an enrichment opportunity. Field trips bring learning to life, connect students to the larger world, and often help make the theoretical real. Parents will be asked to sign field trip permission slips for each trip. Notice is given before field trips, usually via the Monday Mailer.

Please let your child's teacher know in advance if your child will not be able to participate. If your child does not return a signed permission slip or if your child does not arrive on time, they will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. If your child does not participate in a field trip, he/she will be given appropriate work to do and be supervised by other staff.

Adult supervision is provided for all school-sponsored trips and parents are often needed to volunteer to chaperone on field trips. Parent chaperons are acting as agents of the school and responsible for the safety, behavior, and well-being of a group of children. A proper teacher/parent-student teacher ratio is needed for a field trip to occur.

The school lunch program packs a sack lunch for those who order a lunch in advance. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange a lunch.

AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT CLUBS
City Neighbors hosts a variety of afterschool enrichment opportunities. These clubs are often run by parents and staff of the school on a voluntary basis. All club leaders must submit a proposal for a club and agree to meet a set of expectations for effectively running a club, including ensuring content that is developmentally appropriate and connected to the core values of City Neighbors Charter School.
A COMMUNITY OF IDEALS: CREATING THE CNCS CULTURE

At City Neighbors Charter School, we strive to create a culture that evokes the ideals of community, partnership, and learning. We want every child, staff member, and parent to feel safe, respected, valued and nurtured. We want members of our community to celebrate their successes, take risks in the name of excellence, and feel free to admit mistakes. We want to encourage everyone to use the power within each of us to make a difference in our school, in the lives of our children, in our neighborhood, and in our world.

Creating an ideal school community is a difficult, though not impossible task. It requires agreement around clear rules and expectations. It requires that all adults interact with genuine respect and best intentions – even when we feel hurt or angry. It requires that we all believe that this ideal is possible.

To foster the development of this culture at CNCS, we present some core structures for communication and behavior. These do not, in themselves, create the ideal community. They only serve as the foundation from which we can work together to strive for that ideal.
OUR DISCIPLINE SYSTEM

City Neighbors Charter School is committed to creating a safe learning and growing environment for our students. To help create this environment, we believe it is necessary to have clear expectations. Therefore we want to empower our students to exert control over their own behaviors and to help better situations when they can. We plan to have on-going conversations and instructions with our students about what it means to be a member of a community and, more specifically, what it means to be a member of the City Neighbors school community. To ensure that everyone has this safe space to learn and grow, non-cooperative behavior concerning school expectations will be handled firmly and consistently.

As part of our discipline system, we often use a process of restorative practices. In the case of a student conflict or classroom issue, we will often first try to find a way to mediate the issue, give students the opportunity to work out the issue, gain understanding, and make commitments to future actions, and find resolution or make restorations. It is through this process of actually negotiating an issue, participating in difficult conversations, taking responsibility for feelings and actions, and willingly making commitments, that ultimately empowers students in their own behavior.

However, for students who fail to meet our behavior expectations, who egregiously violate our norms, or choose not to correct behaviors, City Neighbors Charter School has developed a system of formal reminders, behavior reviews and progressive consequences.

FORMAL REMINDERS

Formal Reminders are a mechanism for teachers to communicate with students when students have clearly violated one of our school norms. These formal reminders are a quick, but formal reminder of our expectations. No one formal reminder carries any consequence (unless determined so by the teacher). However, formal reminders allow students to stop and think for a moment and, over time, allow us to document and address the small behaviors before large ones may appear.

Disruptive Conduct in the Classroom, Hallway, or Bathroom
Talking too much, making unnecessary noise, distracting others, running within the school, or yelling.

Not Following Directions
Refusing to comply with an adult’s directions.

Damaging Property
Inflicting minor damage to school property and/or the property of others (if value of property is less than $25).

Possession of Electronic Devices or Cell Phones
No electronic or video devices including cell phones, games, Ipods, mp3s, or CD players are allowed in school. (Please see separate cell phone policy.)

Disrespect to an Adult
Speaking or otherwise interacting with an adult in a way perceived as disrespectful to the adult.

Inappropriate Interactions with Younger Students
Interacting with younger students in a way that is intimidating and not mindful of our responsibility to set a good example.
**Inappropriate Language**
Using inappropriate language, including swearing.

**Taunting or Teasing**
Speaking or interacting with another student in a way that is demeaning or hurtful.

**Physical Play**
Rough-housing, horse-play, or other play that includes physical contact.

**Taking Care of Space**
Leaving the classroom or school environment unclean or disorderly.

**Food and Toys**
Chewing gum, eating candy, or eating food in places other than Hightman Hall.

**Dress Code**
Violating the guidelines set by the dress code.

*Formal Reminders may be given for other behaviors that violate the City Neighbors Way but may not be listed above.*

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<tr>
<th>Formal Reminders</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Five Formal Reminders:</td>
<td>Parent Communication</td>
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<td>Ten Formal Reminders:</td>
<td>Student Meeting with Teachers with Parent Notification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifteen Formal Reminders:</td>
<td>Parent Conference with Principal and Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twenty Formal Reminders:</td>
<td>Formal Behavior Plan and Lunch/Recess Detention (until Behavior Plan is revoked) and Parent Conference</td>
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**BEHAVIOR REVIEWS**
Behavior reviews are used for more serious and significant behaviors that lay far outside the norms of City Neighbors…or of any community. The review is completed by the student and the teacher and encourages the child to formally process their behaviors. The completed form is then signed by the student and teacher and sent home to be signed by the parents and returned to school the following day. These behaviors have a hierarchy of consequences.

**LEVEL A BEHAVIOR REVIEW**

**Significant Behavioral Disruption**
Disruptive behaviors that continue after a warning and formal reminder have been given.

**Defying Authority**
Purposefully or aggressively refusing to follow an adult’s directions or yelling/screaming at a teacher.

**Damaging or Destroying Property.**
The destruction of books, articles of clothing, automobiles or other personal property of more than $25. This covers impulsive infliction of minor damage to property.

**Stealing**
Taking or attempting to take property from another person.

**Skipping Class**
Purposefully skipping a portion of or an entire class.

**Verbal Threats**
Verbally threatening to physically harm another person.
Vulgar or Derogatory Statements or Gestures, Including the Distribution of Obscene Material
The use of vulgarity or derogatory statements verbally, electronically, by written words, in photographs, drawings or with obscene gestures

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<th>CONSEQUENCES FOR LEVEL A</th>
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<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; consequence:</td>
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<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; consequence or more:</td>
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**LEVEL B BEHAVIOR REVIEW**

**Physical Violence**
Using violence (including but not limited to slapping, kicking, hitting, and biting) or force to disrupt the educational process and/or cause bodily harm.

**Discriminatory Language or Verbal Abuse**
Directing vulgarity or discriminatory language toward another person or a group. Discriminatory Language includes words, names, or language that demeans an individual or group of people based on ability, race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, family structure, or socioeconomic status.

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<th>CONSEQUENCES FOR LEVEL B</th>
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**LEVEL C BEHAVIOR REVIEW**

**Vandalizing, Damaging, Defacing, or Destroying School Property**
Premeditated and willful destruction or school property and/or impairing the use of school property (if resulting damages are greater than $500).

**Violent Behavior/Assault, Vicious Fighting**
Being in physical combat with another person, where blows are being delivered or exchanged.

**Threat to an Adult**
Verbal or physical threats made to any adult or any act intended to inflict harm including throwing objects, hitting, pushing, shoving, biting, and/or kicking.

**Possession, Distribution, or Use of Tobacco and Alcohol Products**

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<th>CONSEQUENCES FOR LEVEL C</th>
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<td>Three-day out of school suspension and a parent conference with the teacher and administrator.</td>
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**EXTENDED SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION**
The following infractions are grounds for extended suspension or expulsion according to the BCPS code of conduct. The proper authorities will be contacted.

- Possession of or dealing drugs
- Possession of weapons, firearms or explosives
- Attack on an adult
• Setting a fire
• Causing serious bodily injury (permanent injury)
• Sexual assault (grades 5-8)
• Attempting to harm another student with a weapon

**DRESS CODE**
At City Neighbors Charter School no one is required to wear a uniform. However, we do have a dress code which all students need to follow. The purpose of the following CNCS clothing guidelines is to promote a safe and respectful learning environment while still allowing all community members creativity and self-expression. A dress code can help ensure a focus on learning in the classroom.

In general, we ask that children wear clothing and shoes appropriate for the weather and for fully participating in school activities, such as our music, art and physical education programs. Please make sure your child’s clothing is comfortable. Be aware that because we are a hands-on, project-based school, clothes will often get dirty.

Please follow these guidelines:

• No logo wear that represents: hate images; hate speech, violence or exclusionary messages, contraband or sexually explicit messages or references (i.e., sexually explicit language or graphics, alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or weapons.)
• No see-through or revealing shirts or blouses. Shirts with shoulder straps must be at least 1” in width. No shirts that expose undergarments. (Sleeveless dresses, blouses or collared shirts are OK)
• No midriff or cropped shirts. (Shirts must cover navel and not expose midriff.)
• Pants must be worn above the hips. No sagging pants. No clothes with revealing rips.
• Shorts or skirts should be no shorter than just above the knee. Girls should avoid wearing skirts on physical education days, or wear shorts underneath.
• No key chains or metal fasteners worn with clothing.
• Head wear: no sweatshirt hoods, hats, caps or bandannas worn indoors during school hours. For items that have a hood the hood must be kept down. (If headwear is needed for any religious, personal or medical, please see the Principal.)
• No flip-flops, high-heel shoes or heelies (shoes with wheels) at school. Athletic shoes are required for P.E. classes.

If a child violates this code, we will contact the parent for appropriate and timely remedy.

**CELL PHONES**
Cell phones must remain in lockers, even at lunch and recess. Students may bring combination locks (only) for their lockers as long as the homeroom teacher has the combination.

Our general policy is, “If we see a cell phone, we take it.”

1st time: The cell phone is confiscated and can be retrieved by the student.
2nd time: The cell phone is confiscated, the student serves one week lunch/recess detention, and a parent/teacher meeting
3rd time: The cell phone is confiscated, and the student must store their cell in the school office for the remainder of the trimester.

**TOYS AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS**
As a school, we promote active and engaged play. At recess and during down times, we believe that children learn most by playing with each other, socializing, imagining, cooperating, competing, laughing and talking. Toys and electronic items can impede this valuable time and play. In addition, toys, electronic equipment, money and other items from home are often lost, damaged or cause other problems.
Please do not allow your child to bring these items to school when they are not part of the planned school activities or without prior teacher approval.

AFTER-HOUR EVENTS
Student and adult conduct at after-hour events has important effects for our school culture. First, it reinforces a sense of respect when inside the school—a tone that carries over into our daily work. Second, maintaining respectful and controlled conduct respects our shared space with Epiphany Lutheran Church. Therefore, the school's basic policies regarding student behavior: no running, shouting, climbing or going outdoors without an adult remain in effect.

However, staff members are off-duty after hours. Parents are responsible for supervising their children at all times. These include evening events, committee meetings, parent-teacher conferences and all activities at the school. In the event that a student's behavior becomes dangerous or distracting during an event, the parents will be asked to remove the child and reestablish order before returning to the event. All parents and students will be required to sign an After-hours "Behavior" Compact of Understanding that was designed by the Community Relations Committee. In circumstances of significant impact, the student code of conduct will apply to behaviors that happened at school-sanctioned events.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS AT CNCS
Over the course of a student's career at any school, disagreements will inevitably arise between the student and other students, between students and teachers, between parents and other parents, or between parents and teachers. Disagreements are not only healthy, but vital. It is through disagreement that change and growth can occur.

The healthiness and possibility of disagreement, however, is directly tied to how the participants handle that disagreement. How we, as adults, handle conflict will ultimately teach our children how they should manage the obstacles and conflicts in their lives.

We expect that all community members will approach conflict or disagreement in a respectful manner that assumes the best intentions of all parties.

If you have a concern or disagreement, we expect you to follow the Issue Concern Communication (ICC) process:

THE ICC PROCESS
The purpose of the Issue/Concern Communication (ICC) process is to have school community members resolve issues in-house in a respectful and fair manner. School community includes students, parents, guardians, teachers, applicant families, volunteers, advisors, community members, partners and collaborators. The following denotes the specific areas of responsibility where school matters are concerned:

Areas of Responsibility:
1. Classroom issues
   For an issue happening inside the classroom, whether instructional, recreational or behavioral, please discuss it with the teacher first. If the issue cannot be resolved, then contact the principal for assistance.

   If you have an issue with information provided to you by your Classroom Representative, please contact that person directly for clarification. If the rep cannot provide clarification, he/she will direct you to the person who can.

2. School-wide concerns
   For a concern that relates to a school-wide issue (for example, an All School Presentation), please send an email or make an appointment to speak to the Principal.
3. Governing Board

For issues that relate to the overall governing of the school or any school policy, please sign up for community comment at the monthly CNCS Board meetings.

When there is a question or concern about an issue at school, please follow these guidelines in seeking resolution:

1) Make an appointment with the person(s) directly involved, or the person whose area of responsibility the issue involves (see above for Areas of Responsibility).

2) If the meeting did not resolve the issue, make an appointment with the Principal. When appropriate, the Principal may request the teacher, staff member, or other party to take part in the meeting.

3) If after a reasonable amount of time (not more than three weeks), the issue has not been sufficiently addressed, you may submit in writing a statement to the Board of Directors and the Principal. The person against whom the complaint is made will be given a copy of the written statement. The Principal and the President of the Board will work with all parties to resolve the issue.

4) If the issue or complaint is against the Principal, bring the issue to the Principal’s attention. If after a reasonable amount of time (not more than three weeks), the issue has not been sufficiently addressed, you may submit in writing a statement to the Board of Directors for resolution.

5) If the issue is a Board of Directors matter, please submit the concern in writing to the Director of the Organized Parent Group, and he/she will bring it to the Board and the appropriate director. You may also attend a Board meeting and speak during Public Comment.
COMING AND GOING:
ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL AT CNCS

SCHOOL HOURS
School begins at 8:15 am. School ends at 3:15. Every Wednesday, school ends at 1:00 to allow for collaborative staff planning and development.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY
City Neighbors Charter School follows the Baltimore City School System’s Inclement Weather Policy. For information about school closings, delays, and early dismissals please check your local television and radio station.

ARRIVALS
Classes begin each day promptly at 8:15 am. To participate with the universal school breakfast program students should be dropped off between 7:45 and 7:55 am. If a student is not eating breakfast at the school, the students should be dropped off between 8:00 am and 8:10 or to their before-care program.

When dropping students off, pull up to one of two drop-off zones: in the parking lot or on Raspe Avenue ending with the forward section at the crosswalk.

Do not pull up on the left side (school side) of Raspe Avenue to drop off children. Stopping on the left side for drop-off is dangerous and may cause traffic to back up.

Children must cross Raspe Avenue at the crossing guard’s station when the crossing guard is present.

TARDINESS
It is imperative that students are here, in their classrooms and ready to learn by 8:15. A student’s tardiness impacts that student’s learning and day, the learning and day of the entire class, and the general and required respect for the ideals of responsibility and schooling.

Tardiness disrupts the classroom, does not allow students the necessary time to begin their day calmly, and can set a rushed or strained tone for their day. Children who arrive late miss important activities, making the transition into the school day less enjoyable.

Therefore, if a student is late:
• Parents must escort their children into the building and to their classroom. Students will not be allowed to go to class without a parent. (To support you in this, we will post a sign at the front gate. If it is yellow, it means that we highly suggest you walk your child in. If it is red, it means that your child is already late.)
• Even if a child makes it in the gate before 8:15, he/she may be marked late if he/she enters the classroom after 8:15. Tardiness will be tracked by each classroom teacher.
• Students who are late more than three times in a trimester will be required to speak with the principal to discuss intervention strategies.
• Middle school students who are late more than twice in a trimester will face a loss of recess for each subsequent late day. Middle school students, who are late more than 10 times in a trimester, will receive a five point deduction from their grades in all major subject areas.

If your child will be late due to a scheduled appointment, etc., please contact the office or send a note in advance. Children that arrive after 8:15 a.m. must be signed in by the school office and walked to class.
EARLY PICK-UP
If you will be picking your child up early from school, please give notice to the teacher and/or the school office. When you arrive at school, please stop at the school office; someone in the office will have your child sent down to meet you. You must sign your child out, providing explanation for the early pick-up.

ABSENTEEISM
Your child’s attendance at school is incredibly important. Especially given our project-based, arts integration, cooperative approach to learning, your child will miss crucial work that can’t necessarily be made up. If your child is absent, please inform the school office. When your child returns, please send a note detailing the reason for the absence.

DISMISALS
At dismissal, teachers lead their students to the courtyard or the fenced lot (or Hightman Hall in the case of inclement weather) for dismissal. Class is in session until that time. Please wait in the courtyard until the children are brought outside. If you arrive early, please do not interrupt class.

Curb-side pick-up is not available. Do not pull up on Raspe Avenue. Parents may park within the parking lot or in available on-street parking spots and then walk to the school. Children must use crosswalks to cross Raspe Avenue at all times.

If your child is going home with someone not listed on your Emergency Information card, please send a note with your child. To make pick-up smoother, please also send a note to your child’s teacher if a non-regular (even if listed on the Emergency Information Card) person will be picking up your child.

LATE PICK UP
Children must be picked up at dismissal time. It is imperative that your child be picked up no later than 15 minutes past the dismissal time.

If your child is not picked up by 3:30 (or 1:15 on Wednesday) more than once in a trimester, you will be required to register your child for Aftercare, your child will be sent to Aftercare and you will be required to pay the drop-off fee.

GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY
Our school shares space with Epiphany Lutheran Church and is located in a residential neighborhood. Let's be good neighbors. Please drive slowly on Raspe Ave. Avoid blocking the road or private driveways.
THE HUB:
The School Office at CNCS

CONTACT US
If you ever have questions, concerns, or need help, please contact us at the school office. Office Hours are from 8:00 until 3:30 pm each day. We can be contacted:

Phone: 410-325-2627 Fax: 410-325-2489 E-mail: acrosby@cityneighbors.org

CONTACTING YOU
It is very important that we have up-to-date contact information for you in our files. Please be sure that you complete an Emergency Card at the start of the school year. If your contact information changes, please let us know immediately.

MS. APRIL’S DESK
Our office coordinator performs professional and confidential duties in her role. Therefore, we ask that no one sit at or behind Ms. April’s desk. Similarly, we ask that no one remove anything from Ms. April’s desk; supplies can be provided upon request.

CONTACTING CNCS STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS
Messages for school personnel and board members may be left in their office mailbox. Phone messages will be forwarded to them.

SCHOOL TELEPHONES
School telephones must remain available for teacher and administrator work. Therefore, students and parents are not permitted to make or receive telephone calls, except in emergencies or at the discretion of a staff member.

VISITORS
All visitors, volunteers, and parents must first sign in with the office and receive a visitor’s pass. If you are visiting a classroom, please check in with the office. A member of the office staff will call up to the classroom. This is to protect children from unauthorized visitors and to avoid unnecessary interruptions to classes.

We deeply value parents’ engagement in their children’s learning. There are many opportunities for you to visit the classroom and the school – events, art celebrations, classroom activities, parent-teacher conferences. Yet, we also value the intense work and fragile working cultures of classrooms. Therefore, please do not visit classrooms unannounced. If you would like to visit your child’s classroom, we ask that you contact your child’s teacher to make mutually agreeable arrangements.
KEEPING UP WITH CNCS:  
SCHOOL-PARENT COMMUNICATION

A strong partnership between parents and the school ultimately benefits the child. Therefore, we will make every effort to communicate news, upcoming events, and what is happening at school. As part of our dynamic school and curriculum, a lot happens on a daily and weekly basis. Therefore, we ask you to make every effort to stay informed about your child’s school and education.

MONDAY MAILERS
Our main form of communication between school and home is the Monday Mailer. Monday Mailers will contain a weekly newsletter with important information and events, important notices, and communications from the larger CNCS community. Teachers also often send work, classroom newsletters, permission slips or other classroom specific information through the Monday Mailer. In the mailer there may be time sensitive and valuable information regarding your child, the school, and the community.

We also have a Digital Monday Mailer. You will receive a form in your summer packet asking whether you would prefer to receive a paper copy. Otherwise, all Monday Mailers will be sent digitally. If you do not receive a Monday Mailer, please let the school office know.

Read the Monday Mailer, respond to any requests for signing or returning forms, and if you have any questions please contact the school office. We will assume that all information communicated through the Monday Mailer has been read and understood by you.

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS
Teachers are accessible throughout the school year; however, it is important to arrange a time that is mutually convenient rather than consulting the teacher spontaneously or during class time. Please contact teachers by phone, e-mail, or by note in the teacher mailbox to set up that convenient time. Teachers may also feel the need to meet with you; please make yourself available.

THE CNCS WEBSITE
The City Neighbors website often has updated information or general school literature (like this handbook!). The website can be found at www.cityneighbors.org.
HEALTHY IN BODY AND MIND:
HEALTH PROCEDURES AT CNCS

ILLNESS
fever, thick nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhea, or heavy coughing, or have a communicable disease such as chicken pox, ringworm or head lice.

If your child becomes ill while at school, the school nurse will notify you. If you are not reachable then we will contact one of the people on your emergency contact list. Please be sure to update your emergency contact list periodically.

ABSENCES
If your child must be absent, please contact the office. Your child must return with a note for his/her teacher stating the date(s) and reason for the absence. All absences unaccompanied by a note will be marked as unexcused.

Regular attendance is vital to your child’s school experience. Frequent absences threaten a child’s sense of connection in the community, disrupt the consistency of a student’s learning, or forces the child to simultaneously catch up on missed material while learning new material. When a child is excessively absent or tardy the school will contact the family to discuss ways to improve attendance.

MEDICATIONS
If your child requires daily or intermittent medication (prescription or over-the-counter) during school hours, a Baltimore City Health Department "Request to Administer Medication in School" form must be completed and signed by both the parent/guardian and the ordering physician. A separate form is necessary for every medication your child needs. NO medication, prescription or over the counter, can be held or dispensed by the school without a signed physician’s order. Students are not authorized to carry an inhaler or Epi-pen unless the physician has indicated this on the Medication form. These forms are available in the Health Suite. Once the order is on file, please do not send in more than a one month’s supply of medication at a time. Discontinued medications must be picked up by the parent or guardian immediately. Expired and discontinued medication or medication not picked up by the last day of school will be destroyed.

Medications the child needs on hand during school hours must be stored in the Health Suite (see above for Medication Administration Procedures). If your child is attending a field trip, the health suite attendant will prepare the medication and sign it out to a staff member for administration at the appropriate time.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS
If your child has a chronic condition such as asthma, headaches, seizures, or diabetes, please make sure this information is on file with the emergency card in the office. Include a list of medications the child takes regularly and any warning signs or emergency procedures. If your child's condition requires him/her to miss school on a regular basis, please inform the School Nurse. In an extended absence your child may be referred to programs offered by the Baltimore City Public Schools so that he/she can minimize the loss of instruction and school work.

RESTRICTIONS FROM ACTIVITIES
If your child needs to be restricted from certain activities, please provide the School Nurse with a note from your child's physician describing the situation, restrictions and expected duration.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE
The Maryland Penal Code requires all "child care custodians" (teachers, teacher’s assistants, the school nurse, coaches, administrators and staff members) to report known or suspected incidents of child abuse. As required, any report of suspected abuse will be reported to a child protective services agency immediately.
GOOD EATS: BREAKFAST AND LUNCH AT CNCS

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM
A tentative monthly menu is distributed in the Monday Mailer and posted on the web at www.cityneighbors.org. Daily fare includes a hot or cold entree, 2-3 side items and a half pint of milk. Children are offered these items and must take at least 3 items (entree sometimes counts as more than one food item). Special dietary requests, such as vegetarian, non-dairy, etc. can be accommodated in a limited fashion, but require a written note from a physician to be on file in the office. If your child has forgotten his/her lunch we are able to provide cereal and milk at no charge.

SCHOOL SALAD BAR
Maryland participates in a national "farm to school network" and is the only state to have every school system take part in some way in buying local produce and putting it in school cafeterias. At City Neighbors our students have advocated for healthy lunches. Their efforts have taken them to visit other schools, to present to the City School Board, be part of documentary on healthy lunches, and even to testify to the United States Congress. We are so proud of their work!

In support, we have taken the initiative to put a salad bar in our cafeteria, and now our students have access to salad as often as possible. When the salad bar is open students can fill a big bowl of fresh salad and vegetables as their main meal, or they can get the hot lunch and fill a small bowl as a side dish.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM
All students are eligible for a free morning breakfast. Breakfast begins at 7:45 each morning and ends promptly at 8:00 am. If you would like to take advantage of this program please have your child arrive early so your child may begin the day on time. Children who are late will not be provided with breakfast.

ODDS AND ENDS

ENROLLMENT AND TRANSFERS
Please check the website or call the school for current information. Siblings of enrolled students have preference in the admissions process, but must submit an application to be considered.

If you decide to permanently leave CNCS, please notify the Principal in writing so that we have time to prepare the necessary paperwork. Please provide us with your child's last day of attendance, name of the new school and your new address and/or temporary contact.

LOST AND FOUND
Please mark your child's clothing, backpack and lunch box with his or her name. This helps to reduce the potential of lost items. On the last day of every month items will be donated.

LIBRARY GUIDELINES
Students at City Neighbors are encouraged to use the school library frequently. In addition to class library and storytelling, children are invited to check out books from 8:00-8:15 am and each afternoon (except Wednesday) between 3:15 and 4:30 pm. All children have individual accounts and computer records of what has been checked out and are kept. K-2 students check out one book at a time; 3rd and 4th grade students check out two books; 5th through 8th grade students check out up to three books at a time.
Books are due for return or renewal two weeks after checkout. If any books are overdue at the end of each trimester, parents will be informed. Families will be charged for the cost of replacing lost and severely damaged books. Help your child build a lifelong love of books and responsibility by using the CNCS library.

**LOST BOOKS**
If your child loses a school book or other school item, it is the family’s responsibility to compensate the school for the lost item.

**CELEBRATIONS**

*Birthdays*
Birthdays are special occasions for young children. Please check with your child’s teacher if you would like to bring in a special snack to share with the class.

If you plan on distributing invitations to a celebration, please make sure that everyone receives an invitation. If you are planning to distribute invitations selectively, please do so outside of school grounds – through the mail, e-mail, etc…

Please consider donating a book to the CNCS library in celebration of your child’s birthday. How it works: 1) A list of books is available each year for you to select to buy in honor of your child; 2) A special nameplate is placed on the inside cover of the library book acknowledging your child’s birthday donation; 3) your child is the first person to check out the book!

*Holidays*
City Neighbors does not generally celebrate holidays in any formal way, although discussion of special cultural and family traditions in class is encouraged. Some classes may share in celebration activities, but each teacher makes these decisions independently. Check with your child’s teacher.
Date: August, 2012

TO: Parents, Teachers, and Employees

FROM: Robyne Lyles, Director of Facilities

RE: AVAILABILITY OF ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner.

These regulations assign schools many new responsibilities. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our Asbestos Management Plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post-response actions activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress.

You can review our Asbestos Management Plan at the School Office during normal business hours without cost or restriction.

If you have any questions about reviewing our Asbestos Management Plan, please contact:

   Jenkins Environmental, LEA (Local Education Agency) designated person for City Neighbors at 410-828-9888.  
   Or Mike Chalupa, Principal at 410-325-2627 or mchalupa@cityneighbors.org
FAMILY PARTICIPATION CATALOG

“We chose to have a working team in the school, where collaboration and collegiality are seen as quality features of the school's identity. The distribution of jobs, as well, is not only a functional choice but is devised so that every person, despite their different roles, can feel that they are included as an active participant in the realization of the experience.”

Family Participation Catalogue

Table of Contents
1. How does it work?
2. On-Site Volunteer Activities
3. School Committees
4. Off-site & After-Hours Activities
5. In the Community
6. Frequently Asked Questions

1. HOW DOES IT WORK?
Our school is founded on the belief that our school is alive when parents and teachers work together – assuming the best of intentions of each other. Our motto is: Inspired to Create! So, let’s get to it.

2. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES
All volunteers are required to sign in at the school office and receive a visitor’s pass. All volunteers who work with a child or children unsupervised by staff will be required to get a background check before beginning service with the school. Please check with our Principal for more information.

MORNING GREETERS (7:45 A.M. - 8:15 A.M.)
Choose a day or days to greet students arriving by car or on foot. Assist them safely out of cars and direct them to the crossing guard. Note questionable behavior by students or drivers and report these to the Principal. It is important that greeters commit to a regular schedule so that all shifts are covered -- if possible, try to match up with other parents who can cover the times that you cannot.

AFTERNOON PARKING LOT SUPPORT (3:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.)
Choose a day or days to help keep our children safe in the parking lot in the afternoon. Help them cross to their cars. Help keep the flow of traffic moving, ensure all cars are driving slowly and carefully, and ensure that all cars are safely and appropriately parked. It is important that greeters commit to a regular schedule so that all shifts are covered -- if possible, try to match up with other parents who can cover the times that you cannot.

CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE
Teachers have various needs for assistance. If you would like to help in a classroom, check with any teacher (not just your own child’s teacher) to make arrangements in advance for a time to volunteer. Some tasks might include:
• help with ongoing project work
• take chairs off of tables, sharpen pencils, lay out class projects, etc.
• assist younger children to get coats, lunch boxes, etc., neatly into their cubbies

FIELD TRIP CHAPERONE
Parents (or other adult family members) are needed to chaperone field trips. Chaperones help reduce student/teacher ratio on field trips and maximize the value of learning exercises. As a chaperone you will be acting as an agent of our school and responsible for ensuring the supervision and safety of the students assigned to you. NOTE: Volunteer hours are counted at a maximum of 8 hours per day for overnight trips.
CLASSROOM REPRESENTATIVE
This is a special role for two parents in each grade, and it is also a critical part of our school communication system. Teachers may call on the two Classroom Representatives to assist with planning and coordinating classroom activities, projects, supply needs, field trips, etc. This job requires the ability to work closely with the teacher, maintain a contact list of phone numbers and emails for each class family, and help organize the parent volunteers for the class. The Classroom Representative is automatically a member of the Organized Parent Group (OPG) and is required to regularly attend the OPG meetings.

The Classroom Representative will also serve as the liaison to the Director of the OPG. In this capacity, the Classroom Representative will periodically receive important information about school-wide policies and events from the Director of the OPG. The Classroom Representatives will help communicate this information to the other classroom families and encourage attendance at significant events and meetings.

Persons in this role should plan to give several weeks notice if they need to leave this position and, if necessary, make every effort to help locate their replacement.

SPECIAL SKILLS VOLUNTEERS
CNCS welcomes the skills of family and friends to bring diverse experiences to our students. You may have a special skill or talent (e.g. music, crafts, sewing, gardening, building, poetry, etc.), or even access to materials that would enhance a study. Please discuss your ideas with the Principal or your child's teacher, and see if there is a way for you to share your skill/talent in our classrooms.

BREAKFAST (7:45 A.M.-8:15 A.M.) & LUNCH SERVICE ASSISTANTS (11:00-1:00)
Volunteers are needed to assist with making sure each child has a lunch, and cleaning up daily between the hours of 10:45 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. You can choose to perform this task on a particular day(s) of the week, or periodically with advanced notice. To volunteer as a Lunch Service Assistant, please contact the Office Coordinator. This position is directly supervised by the CNCS Staff.

PLAYGROUND ASSISTANTS (10:30-12:30)
Parents are needed to help staff with playground supervision during the lunch recess: to facilitate organized games, observe free-play activities for safety, and report and assist with any injuries. This position is directly supervised by the CNCS Staff.

MONDAY MAILER ASSISTANTS (11:00 AM – 2:30 PM, MONDAYS)
Several parents are needed to help copy, organize, collate, and distribute Monday mailers each Monday. This is a vital position to support school-parent communication and one that requires dependability and consistency. Copying will take place in the main office. All organization, collating, and distribution will be done in the Parent room or other available locations.

SPECIAL PROJECTS ASSISTANT FOR THE MAIN OFFICE
Parents are needed to be on-call for special office projects. Please sign up with the Office Coordinator, and we will contact you as needed.

LIBRARY ASSISTANTS
Volunteers are needed to collect, catalog, and organize books for the school library as well as to assist children in how to search for books on topics of interest. These hours can be weekly, monthly, or periodically. The hours for shelving, cataloging, etc. can be flexible for parents who need to participate outside of the regular school day.

During the school day help is also needed. You may be asked to assist your child's class for just 1/2 hour a week. Here you may find yourself asking the students, "What kind of things are you interested in reading about?" Those interested in this activity should check with Kate Seidl, our Reading Specialist.
RESOURCE ASSISTANTS
Volunteers are needed to work with our Resource teachers. Please don’t forget to offer your assistance to the Music Teacher, the Atelierista, PE Teacher and Student Support Services.

SCHOOL TOUR GUIDES
Guides are needed to represent the school on tours with prospective new families and promote interest in the school’s philosophy and unique qualities. These tours occur during the enrollment period. Please check with the Principal if you are interested.

ENRICHMENT AND CLUBS
We have ongoing need for volunteers to sponsor special activities for both upper and lower grades. We need talent and ideas for ways to bring enrichment into our program. Please contact the Principal if you have an idea or skill to offer, and look for updates in your Monday Mailer.

BUILDING COMMITTEE SPONSORED WORK DAYS - KEEPING OUR SCHOOL BEAUTIFUL
(2nd Saturday of each month. 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM)
All school parents, kids and extended family and friends are invited to come over and lend a helping hand. Volunteer hours accumulate for each person who attends so the more the merrier. These Saturdays will include any ongoing facility or furniture maintenance and repair, painting, moving, cleaning or hauling unused items to the City Dump. Check the parent board and Monday Mailer for details.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT
If you have IT support expertise and would like to contribute to our technology infrastructure, contact David FitzSimmons, CNCS middle school math teacher.
3. SCHOOL COMMITTEES

The City Neighbors Charter School committees are an opportunity to be a part of the ongoing creation of our school. Please find a committee that feels right to you, and join in the fun!

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
Chair: Kamesha Stokes
Contact info: kstokes@cityneighbors.org
Meeting Place: CNCS
Meeting Time: TBD
Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events: The Communications Committee is responsible for facilitating the communication of the school and Board with the families of CNCS. This includes the school website as well as print and digital communications.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE
Chair: Amanda Gursky
Contact info: agursky@cityneighbors.org or aegursky@msn.com
Meeting Place: CNCS
Meeting Day: TBD
Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events: This committee assists in coordinating efforts to raise money to meet the school’s commitment to providing a rich program for our students. Our fundraising goal for this year is $18,000. The money raised is used for many of the programs that make CNCS so inspirational to our students and teachers. Fundraising helps with the school field trips all over Baltimore, the USA, and even Germany, IT support, teaching supplies, our school basketball team, and many other enrichment clubs we provide, as well as the professional development for our teachers.

Please come join in the fun!

THE ORGANIZED PARENT GROUP
Chair: Tanya Engram
Contact info: tengram@cityneighbors.org
Meeting Place: CNCS
Meeting Time: 1st Thursday
Meeting Time: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm (OPG 6:30 - 7:00, Parent Information Nights 7 - 8:30)
Brief Description of Responsibilities and/or Events: The OPG is another avenue for parents to participate in the life of the school. Classroom Representatives are automatically on this committee. All parents are welcome to attend meetings. The OPG hosts monthly Parent Information Nights revolving around school curriculum, school life, child development or other broader parenting topics. (If you have a great idea for a Parent Information Night topic, contact the Director of the OPG) OPG also hosts and co-hosts events such as Movie Night, Game Night, and the End-of-Year Picnic, assists other committees, and participates in school functions, such as the Holiday Lunch and Teacher Appreciation Week activities.

This year we also will strive to focus on creating an even greater culture of communication and appreciation between our faculty/staff and parents.
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Chair: Trinisa Brown
Contact info: tbrown@cityneighbors.org
Meeting Place: CNCS
Meeting Day: 2nd Thursday; additional meetings before events
Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events: This committee works to build and strengthen our relationships with both the outside community and the internal school community through social events. The International Potluck Dinner is an example of one of our annual events.

This year the committee will continue focusing on the cultural diversity at City Neighbors and fostering relationships with our neighbors. Come join!

BUILDING COMMITTEE
Chair: Robyne Lyles
Contact info: cell: 410-627-1844 (cell); robyne@cityneighbors.org OR robyne@freedomserv.com
Meeting Place: CNCS
Meeting Day: school year: 2nd Saturday
Meeting Time: school year: 8AM - 12PM
Summer Hours: July-August (usually weekends - exact time TBA via email and/or phone)
Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events: The Building Committee participates in the planning and upkeep of CNCS which focus on the cleaning and upkeep of the building. Members assist and support the Principal in creating a well maintained learning environment for students and teachers. Students are encouraged to participate and their hours count also. The Building Committee assists the CNCS Board and Faculty in planning for future facility needs of the school, expediting refurbishing or renovation projects and monitoring of facility systems.

This committee saves the school thousands of dollars through our efforts. Please come and join us!

GREENING COMMITTEE (Subcommittee of the Building Committee)
Chair: (Open)
Meeting Place: CNCS
Meeting Day/Time: TBD
Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events: The Greening Committee sponsors a variety of events and workshops focused on recycling, environmental awareness, and sustainability. In past years the committee succeeded in getting Green School Certification for CNCS.

DIVERSITY and INCLUSION COMMITTEE
Chair: Annastasia Kezar
Maximum number of people: none
Contact info: Annykezar@gmail.com
Meeting Place: CNCS
Meeting Time: Morning
Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events: The Diversity Committee seeks out resources and venues to facilitate meaningful interactions that both explicitly grapple with diversity in our school, community and world, allow opportunities for individuals to connect and grow with all fellow CNCS community members. Our job is to proactively promote, support, and celebrate our wonderful diversity at City Neighbors. We have participated and supported many initiatives including Families United, Humanities Council, and our Community Conversations.
NOTE: Because the following committee’s require specific expertise and a high level of confidentiality, the committee members are appointed by the Board. **Please submit your name to the Chair if you are interested in the committee.**

**Governance Committee**
Chair: Sue Fothergill  
Maximum number of people: 8  
Contact info: sfothergill@cityneighbors.org  
Meeting Place: CNCS or Bobbi’s house  
Meeting Day: 1st Tuesday (as needed)  
Meeting Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm  
**Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events:** The Governance Committee makes recommendations for the ongoing successful governance of the school, including reviewing policies and the school handbook. Governance oversees elections each year, fosters governance-related communication with the CNCS community, and conducts an ongoing review of the CNCS bylaws. The Governance Committee assesses the needs of the Board of Directors and is also charged with making suggestions for electing community board members.

**Finance Committee**  
Chair: Rob Noble  
Maximum number of people: 10  
Contact info: Rob Noble via CNCS web site  
Meeting Place: CNCS  
**Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events:** This committee is charged with the development and approval of the CNCS annual budget and a review of financial results during the year.

What other public school gives parents and teachers the opportunity to be part of the process to create and approve the budget? We need your input!

**Accountability Committee**  
Chair: Liz Zogby  
Maximum number of people: 6  
Contact info: katzogby@verizon.net  
Meeting Place: CNCS  
Meeting Day: TBA  
Meeting Time: TBA  
**Brief Description of Responsibilities and Events:** The Accountability Committee oversees enrollment and registration (done by the school office), and facilitates the development of the CNCS Annual Accountability Plan with input from all involved parties.

The Accountability Committee oversees that the volunteer hours are met by each family as required by the CNCS charter and handbook.

**AD HOC COMMITTEES**  
From time to time the Board of Directors may create a committee or task force to organize a specific one-time or exploratory project that may require special skills or connections in the broader community. The formation of ad hoc committees will be announced in the Monday Mailer or the News From the Board.
4. OFF-SITE & AFTER-HOURS ACTIVITIES

CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS
We love to celebrate at City Neighbors! Every school-wide event is an opportunity to be involved with our school, support our students, and earn volunteer hours. Please watch for upcoming events in the Monday Mailers and see you there!

TASKS FROM HOME
There are a large variety of jobs that can be done at home. If your schedule makes it difficult to fulfill your participatory obligations during school hours and you need some suggestions, talk to your committee chair, classroom representative, teachers, the Principal, and Board members about possible tasks you can perform from home. Please check with the Director of Accountability, Liz Zogby, for more information.

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS AND SCHOOL THROUGH ADVOCACY
Speaking up or showing up on behalf of the students of City Neighbors and all Baltimore City schools is an activity that is essential for our school community! There may be times when the Baltimore City School Board, the Maryland State Department of Education, or our State Government in Annapolis will need to hear from us regarding laws or policies that have a direct effect on our students’ education such as funding and governance.

City Neighbors Charter School is a member of both the Baltimore City Charter School Coalition and the Baltimore Education Coalition. As a school community we participate in lobby days in Annapolis, we rally in the streets of Annapolis and in front of City Hall, and we call and write to our elected officials about the issues that are important to us. Parents and family members will be supported by City Neighbors if they have a desire to attend these legislative hearings, offer testimonials regarding important educational issues, or would otherwise like to participate in the process. To become involved with the advocacy work please contact Sue Fothergill, Board President, for more information. Being an advocate is an important way to contribute to City Neighbors and our wider community!

OTHER IDEAS?
We know we haven’t thought of everything. If you know of an opportunity that you believe would be appropriate for fulfilling your volunteer hours, please contact the Director of The Organized Parent Group for approval.

5. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why aren’t we logging hours the way we used to?
We want the focus on our volunteer service policy to be on the work and not on compliance. Rather than spending a lot of time logging hours, counting hours, processing data – we want to spend time figuring out how to make sure every family is an integral part of creating our school.

What is this “Our Family Commitment” form?
It is a way to help you plan how you will contribute to creating City Neighbors this year. Will you be an active member of a school committee? Committee meetings and events are important work for our school – and are a way to contribute hours. Do you plan on hosting an after-school club for our students? These opportunities are critical to our students – and another way to contribute hours. Maybe you always attend Coffee with Mike to share ideas or Parent Information Nights to learn more about our school’s curriculum. However you plan on contributing, build a plan that adds up to at least 40 hours of service. Then check in your progress after each trimester and see how you’re doing.
**Could you show me an example of how I might meet my hours?**

There are many occasions to fulfill CNCS hours. Here is an *example* of a typical yearly schedule that would lead to the fulfillment of the hourly expectation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer building work</td>
<td>2 HRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back to School Night</td>
<td>2 HRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Committee Meeting</td>
<td>2 HRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 hrs a month X 10 months)</td>
<td>20 HRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Arts Celebration</td>
<td>2 HRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building work day</td>
<td>4 HRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks from home</td>
<td>2 HRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help set up the Gala</td>
<td>2 HRS</td>
</tr>
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Friday before the last week of School - 8th Grade Graduation