

Welcome Back to School



Columbia Elementary School - August 2025



Welcome to Columbia School 2025-2026.pdf

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Mark Your Calendar

- **July 31st, Thursday, 5:00-6:30pm** - Columbia Open House - Come with your student to meet their teacher, see their classroom, and drop off school supplies.
- **July 31st, Thursday 5:00-6:30pm** - Columbia Resource Fair - will be *during our open house* in the gym - stop in for information on setting your child up for success, qualifying for assistance, filling needs in your family, local daycare options, and much more!!
- **August 5th, Tuesday** - First Day of School - **Kindergarten and First Grade** Doors open at 7:30am, students may go to the gym or breakfast. At 7:50am students may go to their classroom and are marked tardy at 8:15am. **All Day Preschool** Doors open at 8:30am, students are marked tardy at 8:45am.
- **August 12th, Tuesday, 6:00-7:00pm** - 1/2 Day Preschool Open House - Come with your student and meet their teacher, Mrs. Hannah.
- **August 15th, Friday** - Kindergarten color day - red
- **August 18th, Monday** - First day of school - **PM Preschool Class**
- **August 19th, Tuesday** - First day of school - **AM Preschool Class**
- **August 22nd, Friday** - Kindergarten color day - orange
- **August 29th, Friday** - Kindergarten color day - yellow

Theme for the Year: Every Student, Every Day!

Showing up every day sets students up for success—academically, socially, and emotionally. Here's why it matters:

✓ Missed Lessons = Missed Opportunities

Even one day out can mean falling behind on key lessons, activities, and class discussions.

📖 School Today, Success Tomorrow

Consistent attendance is one of the strongest predictors of academic progress—and opens doors to future opportunities.

🧘 Resilience in Action

Being present every day builds habits of responsibility, perseverance, and grit.

👫 Stronger Friendships

Daily attendance helps students form strong social bonds and feel more connected at school.

🧘 Healthier Habits

A consistent routine supports mental and physical wellness—for kids and families.

Need support getting your child to school?

We're here to help. If your child is hesitant to come to school, reach out to Mrs. McClain at brenda.mcclain@zebras.net or call her directly at 574-223-2501 x2005.

Let's make 2025–2026 a year of growth, connection, and daily learning—for *every student, every day*.



Understanding Absences RCSC 2025.pdf

RCSC Attendance Policy - updated 2025

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250.0 KB

- Please be patient with our transportation team in regard to pickup and drop off times in this first week. They are ironing out the schedule. Thank you in advance for your understanding.
- Any change of transportation needs to be communicated with the office. You can send a note with your student or call us, 574-223-2501, before 1:00pm. Ms. Melisa Lahman or Mrs. Natalie Leslie will be more than happy to let you know if a change can be made for that day. We DO NOT allow bus passes and bus route changes take require 48 hours.
- Make sure your student wears tennis shoes on their gym day!



[Download the school calendar here!](#)

Stick on fridge!

Little Zebbie's Diner 

Little Zebbie's Diner welcomes everyone back to an exciting 2025-2026 school year. We hope to see your students come in daily and enjoy our school breakfast and school lunch.

Breakfast is served Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday from 7:30-8:10am and on Wednesday's 7:45-8:40am. Prices for breakfast are: paid students \$2.00, reduced students \$.30, free students are free, and adults/visiting guests are \$2.50.

Lunch is served every day, times depend on class schedules. Prices for lunch are: paid students \$3.00, reduced students \$.40, free students are free, and adults/visiting guests are \$4.60.



We encourage everyone to fill out a free/reduced form even if you don't think you will qualify. Free/reduced forms may be filled out anytime from July 1 through the last day of school. Please turn them in ASAP so we can process them to see if your student(s) qualify. If your family qualified last year for the free/reduced program you will need to have a new free/reduced form for the 25-26 school year filled out before September 2025 to keep your status from going to paid status until a new qualifying form is processed.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me,
Dena Lahman, Columbia Food Service Manager
Available 7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
574-223-2501 ext. 2009
Dena.lahman@zebras.net
We hope everyone has a good year!

August Breakfast and Lunch Menus

We're excited to welcome Leigh Barts MSN, RN to Columbia!

A Note From Nurse Leigh

I have been a nurse for over 11 years with varied experience caring for patients across the lifespan. I have lived in Rochester most of my life. My husband, Clint, and I have two beautiful girls and two dogs. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, swimming, and reading! I am so excited to spend time getting to know your students and to be a part of the Columbia Family. Together we will make this a safe and healthy year!
If you have questions or concerns regarding the health of your student, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at leigh.barts@zebras.net or 574-223-2501 x2010.

Just a friendly reminder that every child residing in Indiana who is enrolled in an accredited school must be immunized as determined by the Indiana State Department of Health (SEA 461). These immunizations are required by the first day of school for the Academic year of 2025-2026 and by not being in compliance, may put your child at risk for exclusion.

Parents/guardians must bring in ALL medications and complete a Permission to Administer Medication Form. Medication's must be in the original bottle/container along with the pharmacy label or doctor's order with the child's name, name of medication, the correct dosage and the instructions for administration. Students may NOT transport medication to school, this includes OTC (Over The Counter) medications such as cough drops & etc.

Counselor's Corner 😊

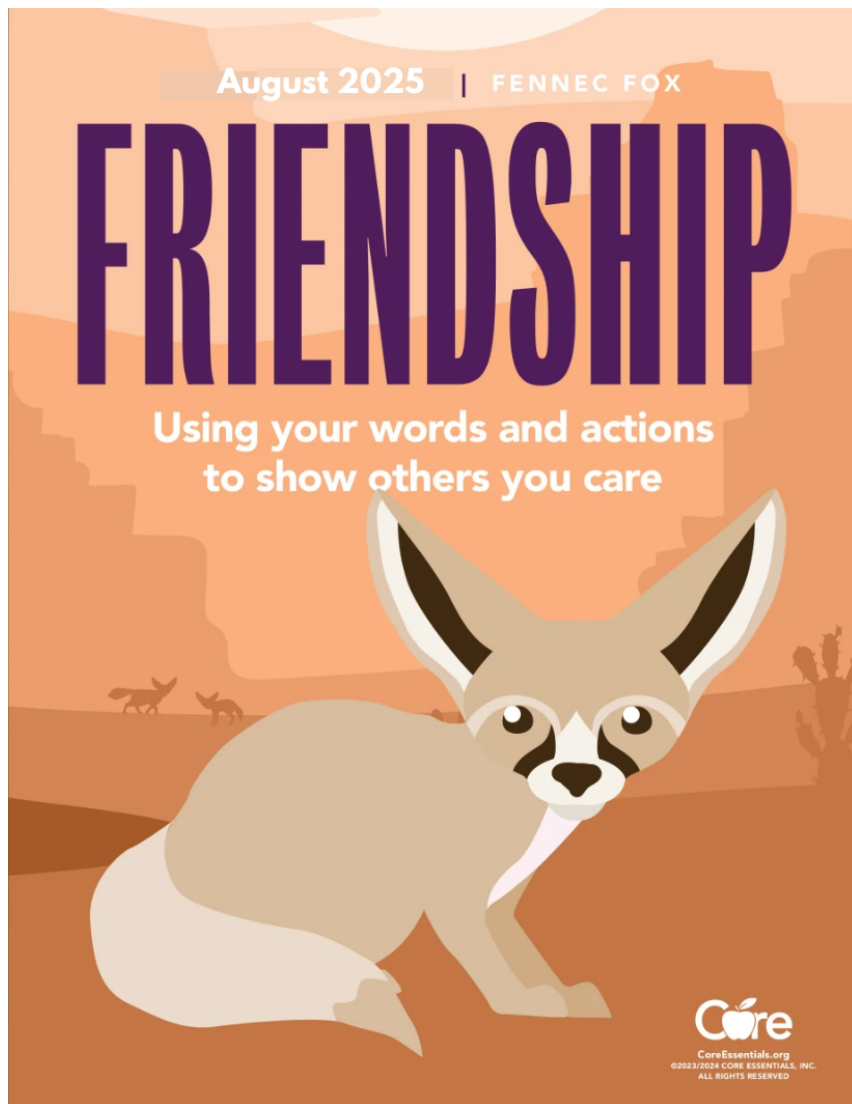
Hi friends! My name is Mrs. McClain and I am the school counselor here at Columbia Elementary. In my role I typically visit each classroom 2x a month and teach lessons on safety using the Safer Smarter Kids curriculum as well as our monthly "Big Idea" using the Core Essentials curriculum. In addition to bi-weekly classroom lessons I am available to work with students individually and in small groups (with parent permission), assist during times of emotional need, work with teachers and staff to monitor student progress, link families with community resources and serve as the building High Ability coordinator. I look forward to getting to know each of our students and families and working together to make this an awesome year!

Steps to Decreasing First Day of School Anxiety

The beginning years of school often come with a mixture of emotions and transitioning from a flexible schedule into a more structured schedule can be difficult for students and parents alike. Edutopia posted an article providing tips on helping to make the transition to school a bit easier. While a few of those tips are listed below, we encourage you to read the full article at:

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/4-steps-to-easing-kindergarten-jitters-michele-borba>

1. Practice saying goodbye- Try creating a special handshake or hug to use each morning
2. Learn the lay of the land- Visit your child's classroom on open house night to become familiar with the classroom location, meet the teacher and classmates. For Columbia this is Wednesday July 31st from 5:00-6:30pm.
3. Address your child's concerns directly- It is normal to have worries; reassure your child it is normal to have some jitters and other students are feeling the same way. Brainstorm solutions together.
4. Establish a goodbye ritual- The first goodbyes can be tough for children **and** parents; children will take cues from their parents. Even though it can be difficult and your child may be emotional, it is important to not draw out the goodbye as this can increase anxiety. This is the perfect time to insert a special goodbye suggested in step 1. Hold back your tears till you are out of sight. Know our staff will help your child through the transition with kindness and love.



Childcare at Columbia

Columbia offers child care options for working parents. These programs are offered to students PK thru 6th grade.

Before school program: drop off 6:30am-7:45am. Fee is \$15 per student with discounts for additional students. Drop off is in the front of the school at **door E-16** (this is south of the main entrance, halfway down the building).



After school program: pick up is 3:15pm-5:30pm. Fee is \$25 per student with discounts for additional students. Pickup is inside the main entrance.

Break/Intersession Care: 6:30am-5:30pm. Weekly fee \$85 per student and a discount is offered for additional students. This would include breakfast, lunch and a snack. *If your student attends intersession, fees would be reduced.*

For more information, please contact Brooke Towell, brooke.towell@zebras.net.

Pay Preschool Tuition

Columbia Elementary School

The Littlest Zebras In The Herd

Email: natalie.leslie@zebras.net

Website: <https://www.zebras.net/columbia-home>

Location: 1502 Elm Street, Rochester, IN 46975

Phone: 574-223-2501

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Columbia-Elementary-School-100057030237096/>



Natalie Leslie

Natalie is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters