# JOURNEYS IN ELD

AT THE CHARTER SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Fall 2026

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## WELCOME FROM MR. FORTIN

Hello!, नमस्ते!, Halo!, !مرحبًا, Прuвim!, Habari!, Slav!,မင်္ဂလာပါ!,...



*Mr. Fortin*

My name is Christopher Fortin, and I am the Director of Pupil Services at the Charter School of Excellence (CSE). I have been a proud member of the CSE community since 2005 and oversee our English Language Development (ELD) Program. On behalf of all CSE teachers and staff, I would like to warmly welcome the parents and guardians of our English Language Learners (ELLs) to our school community!

We are excited to begin the 2026-27 school year and look forward to another successful year of learning, growth, and partnership. This Fall Newsletter highlights some of the exciting things happening at CSE, including our Back-to-School celebrations held in August, our upcoming Celebration of Unity on November 9th in conjunction with Parent Conference Day, and several other events designed to encourage meaningful parent participation and involvement.

If you have questions or would like additional information that is not included in this newsletter, please contact your child's school or reach out to me directly at (814) 480-5908. We look forward to working together to support the success of all of our students and families!

## MS. LISEK JOINS THE SKILLS CENTER



*Ms. Lisek*

Hello! My name is Jennie Lisek, and I am excited to have made the transition to Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) teacher this year at the Skills Center! I received my B.A. in English at Mercyhurst University and her M.Ed at Slippery Rock University. I have been teaching English Language Arts (ELA) since 2016 having taught in North Carolina, Florida, and Pennsylvania. I have been teaching at CSE since 2022 and received the Teacher of the Year Award at the Leadership Center for the 2023-2024 school year.

I am honored to be teaching and working with such amazing students who inspire me in more ways than one. Throughout the school year thus far, I am extremely proud of the progress each student has been making both inside and outside of the classroom. Their growth as individuals does not go unnoticed. I have already learned a lot about the many cultures my students come from, and in turn, it has strengthened our teacher-student relationships and am looking forward to the several ways they will showcase how their family and cultural traditions bring meaning to their lives.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my daughter, husband, and dog, especially having movie nights on the weekends with snacks and cozy blankets. I love to write during school breaks and cooking/baking for my family is one of my favorite pastimes. I also enjoy doing anything creative, taking long drives, and fresh flowers to put on display throughout my home.

CHARTER SCHOOL OF
# EXCELLENCE
# Discovery Center



## LIVESCHOOL REWARDS

LiveSchool is an innovative platform designed to help recognize and reward positive behavior, enhance student engagement, and foster a culture of growth and accountability. Through LiveSchool, students earn points for demonstrating traits such as respect, responsibility, and teamwork. Discovery awards points with high monthly with fieldtrips. In September, students who were point eligible were able to attend an afternoon at Picnicanna Park to do outdoor activities and competitive sports. In November, students who are among the highest point total earners will head to Edinboro to the Buffalo Farm for a fun-filled afternoon in corn mazes, pumpkin decorating, and many other fun-filled activities.



## THERAPY DOGS

The Discovery Center is proud to announce that we are providing Therapy Dog service to our students for the 2026-2027 school year. The Therapy Dogs help to alleviate stress, elevate mood, and even help facilitate student success via motivation and focus. Their presence helps create a calm and relaxing environment where students feel comfortable.





## SANDY HOOK PROMISE: START WITH HELLO

This year, the CSE's "School Implementation Team" (SIT) has adopted the Sandy Hook Promise. Based in Newtown, Connecticut, the intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning our tragedy into a moment of transformation. By empowering youth to "know the signs," we can unite everyone who values protecting children. Together, we can take action in schools, homes, and communities. This will help prevent gun violence and stop the tragic loss of life. Discovery Center has kicked off this initiative each year with the "Start with Hello" week. We have identified the week of Oct 12 as the "Start with Hello" week. Discovery Center is committed to providing a safe, inclusive environment that is bullying and violence free.

## CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSITY

Our students at Discovery Center are very diverse. With over a dozen different languages represented here and numerous other dialects, we strive to make each student welcome. Our academic transitions are carefully constructed to assist students in learning English. Our dedicated staff is highly qualified to help make your student feel confident in language acquisition.



*Together We Learn • Grow • Achieve*

# SKILLS CENTER AND LEADERSHIP CENTER VISIT THE HIGHMARK CARING PLACE







Ms. Khadka and Ms. Jackie took students from the Skills Center and the Leadership Center to the Highmark Caring Place for their annual Summit. Students learned about their programming, which supports Erie area youth in times of grief. The death of a loved one is devastating to every child. There are many times the child may need more support than the family can provide and that is where the Caring Place comes in. They have various programs to help children move through the stages of grief in a healthy manner.

Our students from the Skills Center and Leadership Center did an amazing job at the summit and came out with a lot of good information. CSE has collaborated with the Caring Place for many years and our counselors utilize their services when unfortunate tragedy falls upon our students. If you think this programming is something that can benefit your child, please feel free to reach out to our mental health therapists for more information.

## FUN & SAFE FALL ACTIVITIES FOR TEENS

1. Visit a pumpkin patch or corn maze
2. Go apple picking
3. Explore nature
4. Have a fall craft or baking day
5. Decorate pumpkins
6. Attend school and community events
7. Give back to the community



## FUN & SAFE WINTER ACTIVITIES FOR TEENS

1. Go ice skating
2. Go sled riding
3. Bake and cook together
4. Plan an indoor game or movie night
5. Get creative
6. Help others and learn something new
7. Build a snowman



# CELEBRATE CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT OUR CELEBRATION OF UNITY!

This fall, our school will once again celebrate the rich cultural diversity that makes our school community special! Join us on November 9, 2026, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Discovery Center and Skills Center for an afternoon of learning, exploration, and celebration.

Students and families are encouraged to attend teacher conferences and then embark on a cultural journey.

Explore engaging activities, interactive displays, and student-created projects that highlight the many cultures and traditions represented in our school community. Along the way, you'll discover how our differences bring us together and celebrate the things that unite us. You'll also have the opportunity to sample a variety of delicious foods from different cultures!
Everyone is welcome to join in the fun and celebrate the diversity that makes our school community unique. We look forward to seeing you there!



# THE WIDA MODEL

At CSE, we are dedicated to helping every student achieve academic excellence. For our multilingual learners, this means providing targeted language support that evolves as they grow. To ensure our instruction meets our students' needs, we will utilize the WIDA MODEL assessment throughout the school year.

The WIDA MODEL is an assessment that measures a student's English language proficiency. It is designed specifically for students who are learning English as an additional language. The assessment checks your child's skills in the areas of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. It allows the teachers to see a clear snapshot of the student's English language development. Because the test delivers immediate scores, our teachers do not have to wait months for results. They can instantly see where a student is thriving and where they might need a bit of extra help.

The WIDA MODEL is one of the most effective tools we have to make sure our curriculum adapts to our ELL students, rather than making them adapt to the curriculum. This school year, all ELL students will be taking the WIDA MODEL test in the fall and spring. With the use of the WIDA MODEL, we will be able to access placement of our students, adapt learning in the classrooms, and set success goals for our students on the state assessments.

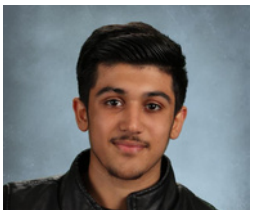
# SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS



- Maria Al darkazanli: During my time in high school, I enjoyed studying and reading books. The class that I enjoyed the most were Mrs. Lisek's class and Dr. Soltis's class because solving math problems and learning English are some of my favorite things to learn. Staff members who have had an impact on me were Ms. Vona, Dr. Soltis, and Mrs. Lisek because they all helped me learn new skills. My favorite memory of mine is doing fun activities. I'll always remember that my time during high school was good. I liked the food! After high school, I plan on attending college. In the future, I hope to visit Paris and the Maldives. My advice to younger students is to be strong – you can do it. Focus on studying and getting your credits.



- Irlanda Ruch Samayoa: During my time in high school, I enjoyed talking with my friends…just laughing and being with them. My favorite memory is the moment when I started to feel more comfortable speaking. I remember when I started school at CSE, I felt weird in a new school, but now I'm happy to be here. The class I enjoyed the most was math because I like working with numbers. An important teacher that meant a lot to me was Ms. Panko. She helped me to learn English and believe in myself. I am proud of how much English I've learned. After high school, I plan to go to college. After I graduate from college, my dream is to open a clinic in Guatemala and help my parents. My advice to younger students is to enjoy their time in high school and that time flies. Enjoy every moment.



- Mohammad Al shrif: During my time in high school, my favorite memories are the moments filled with laughter and good conversations. I worked hard to succeed. After graduation, I plan to attend college. In the future, I hope to have safety and peace of mind. My advice for younger students is success is essential for your future.

- Nariman Svanidze: During high school, my favorite memory is starting at our school. I remember seeing how welcoming everyone was. I most enjoyed workforce and liked it because I got to gain experience and get paid. Ms. Panko is a teacher who is important to me because she always pushed me to try my best. At school, I enjoyed the love. I liked everyone's appreciation. In high school, I learned to be diligent. I am proud of my ability to be quiet. After high school, I plan to work with my cousin and want to be a good partner. My dream is to own my own company. My advice to younger students is to do their work and to listen.



- Saurb Chhetri: During high school, my favorite memory is making friends. I remember making new friends and learning. An important teacher was Ms. Napolitan because she helped me with my work and taught me how to play the piano. In high school, I learned a lot. I am proud of my grades because I worked hard to get where I am. After high school, I plan to take a break. I want to become a real estate agent. In the future, I hope to become wealthy and healthy. My advice to younger students would be to be yourself and to keep out of trouble and do their work.



- Keven Delgado: During high school, I remember my 9th grade year – we were able to be on our phones and go outside to play basketball. I enjoyed cooking because I was able to talk to friends while making what I wanted. An important staff member is Ms. Panko because she helped me be a better person and become more confident. At school, I enjoyed it when we used to get to the courtyard. At school, I learned that you must overcome your fears. This is important because I feared high school. I am proud that I've gotten better at focusing. After high school, I plan to go to college. I want to play basketball and one day become a barber. In the future, I hope to travel the world. My dream is to see every part of the world and to be rich. My advice to younger students is to stay focused and not be a follower.

# FUN SEASONAL RECIPES TO MAKE AT HOME (REQUIRE NO BAKING)

## Apple Nachos

### INGREDIENTS

2 apples, washed and sliced
2 tablespoons peanut butter or sunflower seed butter
2 tablespoons caramel sauce (optional)
2 tablespoons mini chocolate chips/chocolate candies (optional)
2 tablespoons of shredded coconut (optional)
2 tablespoons granola
A sprinkle of cinnamon



### DIRECTIONS

- Wash and slice the apples.
- Arrange the sliced apples on a platter.
- Drizzle the sauces of your choice.
- Add toppings of your choice.

## Pumpkin Spice Dip



### INGREDIENTS

1 cup pumpkin purée (not pumpkin pie filling)
1 cup whipped topping, thawed
2 tablespoons vanilla instant pudding mix
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

- In a large bowl, mix the pumpkin puree, whipped topping, vanilla instant pudding and pumpkin pie spice.
- Drizzle your sauce of choice and add a topping of your choice.

# FUN SEASONAL RECIPES (Continued)

## Snowy Winter Trail Mix

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup mini pretzels
½ cup popcorn (already popped)
¼ cup mini marshmallows
¼ cup white chocolate chips
¼ cup dried cranberries or raisins (optional)
Blue and white candies (optional)



### DIRECTIONS

- In a large bowl, add all dry ingredients.
- Mix.
- Enjoy!

# HELPFUL LANGUAGE LEARNING APPS

**The following online programs are available to help your students improve their English language skills.**

**TALKPAL**
**https://talkpal.ai/**
Your personal AI language tutor.

**Duolingo**
**https://www.duolingo.com/courses**
Fun, free app for learning 40+ languages through quick, bite-sized lessons.

**Mango**
**https://www.mangolanguages.com/**
An online platform that offers conversational courses in over 70 languages.

**Memrise**
**https://www.memrise.com/**
An app to learn vocabulary for a new-to-you language, study science flashcards, review math problems, or review content.

**Lingodeer**
**https://www.lingodeer.com/**
Online app platform that provides simple and engaging exercises that drills grammar and vocabulary.

# A FEW IMPORTANT SEASONAL SAFETY REMINDERS

Dress for the weather: Wear layers, warm coats, gloves, hats, and appropriate footwear.

Stay visible: During shorter fall and winter days, wear reflective clothing when walking or biking near roads.

Make a plan: Tell a trusted adult where you are going, who you will be with, and when you expect to return.

Choose safe locations: Use designated sledding hills, supervised skating rinks, marked hiking trails, and approved recreational areas.

Be careful around ice: Never walk or play on frozen lakes, ponds, or rivers unless authorities have confirmed the ice is safe.

Stay connected: Go with a friend or trusted adult when appropriate, keep a charged phone available, and follow family rules.

# IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

**Mon., Nov. 9.....Celebration of Unity/Parent Teacher Conference Day**

**Weds., Nov.25.....Early Dismissal Day**

**Thur., Nov. 26-Mon.,Nov. 30...Thanksgiving Break (No School)**

**Tues., Dec. 22.....Early Dismissal**

**Weds., Dec. 23 -Fri., Jan. 1.....Winter Break (No School)**

**Fri., Jan. 15.....End of 2nd Quarter**

**Mon., Jan. 18.....Martin Luther King Holiday (No School)**

**Tues., Jan. 19.....Teacher Inservice Day (No School)**

**Fri., Feb. 12.....Early Dismissal**

**Mon., Feb. 15.....Parent/Teacher Conference Day**

**Fri., Mar. 5.....Early Dismissal**

**Fri., Mar.19.....Early Dismissal**

**Mon., Mar.22-Fri., Mar. 26.....Spring Break (No School)**

## COMMENTS, FEEDBACK, SUGGESTIONS?

**Contact Jenifer Dildine at 814-651-9082 or email at jdildine@phcse.org.**