



Welcome Back – Summer Updates

Dear Cushman Community,

The Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, administration and I warmly welcome you to the 2018-2019 school year! This has been very busy summer with all kinds of wonderful renovations and projects being completed throughout the campus and the execution of steps related to Play to Learn. More importantly, my entire team has been preparing for your children, as they are always our top priority!

Many faculty and staff attended and presented at a variety of local, state, and national conferences, workshops and webinars. Additionally, grade level meetings brought critical discussions to light regarding curriculum design and the teaching and learning process. There were required book and article readings for all per division, as well as periodic grade level team meetings in preparation for the new school year. Some of the books read are the following: Primary School; ***The Self-Driven Child: The Science and Sense of Giving Your Kids More Control Over Their Lives*** by William Stixrud PhD and Ned Johnson, Elementary School; ***Students at the Center: Personalized Learning with Habits of Mind***, Laura Cushman Academy; ***Kids Deserve It*** by Todd Nesloney and Adam Welcome, Middle School; ***Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum*** by Arthur Costa and Bena Kallik and High School; ***Tribe*** by Sebastian Junger. The administrative team read ***When*** by Daniel Pink. All of the information from the variety of sources enables us to apply principles of the best practices toward all of our students' personalized educational journeys.

This year's theme, ***A Mindful Journey...It's All About the People***, will remind us that we are in the 'people business' and that is something we take extremely seriously. Firstly, to adhere to Dr. Cushman's philosophy and Cushman's mission demands excellence. Excellence necessitates the continued investment in your children through acquiring the finest educators and personnel, and in providing outstanding programming in a facility that supports its growth. Having a unique culture where the people matter most, *beginning with each of your children*, has led us to fulfill a mission and enliven a philosophy that is now 94 years old. The importance of being *mindful* and responsible in all we reflect and act upon *for you children*, and helping your children to step back and reflect prior to executing a decision are becoming ever more important in this hurried world. But it takes *time* to do that, so time must be valued more deeply. I will be speaking to this topic during my address on Parents' Nights. *Please join me.*

Please read the summer updates below. A lot has transpired, but each of us looks forward to welcoming you and your children very soon!

Capital Projects

Play to Learn: Board Chair, Sara Colombo, Basilio Alvarez (Capital Projects Manager), Sheryl Rudnick, (Facilities Director), members of BDI Construction, members of the CMC Construction group and I have spent the summer resolving the issue with the watermain line, and gratefully we did!

The requirements needed and completed that enable us to obtain our final permit are the following:

- 1.) Watermain Extension: Work along Laura Cushman Circle and Biscayne Blvd. (*in process*)
- 2.) Demolition and removal of the music trailer **(complete)**
- 3.) FPL & ATT: Relocation of power lines (*in process*)
- 4.) Tree removal and relocation (*in process*)

Primary School Renovations: Jill Sevilla, Primary School Director, and Dr. Tracy Ross, Laura Cushman Director, redesigned space to ensure we have a fully inclusive Primary School. This enables the Laura Cushman Academy kindergarten students and teachers to be housed in the Primary School buildings, allowing for inclusive projects and time amongst students to occur.

Elementary School Renovations: Cheryl Rogers, Principal, and Dr. Tracy Ross, carefully reviewed all of the space to ensure the execution of needed renovations. From the replacement of carpeting, to the addition of new desks, to the general upkeep of flooring and painting, the Elementary School is ready for our students.

Middle School Renovations and Expansion: Jennifer Geimer, Middle School Director, and her team redesigned and added classroom spaces to accommodate the learning needs of its students while addressing increasing interest in enrollment. While we remain selective in ensuring all students and their families believe in and adhere to Cushman's culture, we welcome many new students this year. The addition of two full classrooms and the renovation of another provide students with additional space.

Cushman High School: Cushman High has doubled its enrollment from last year! Word of mouth and advertising is informing the Greater Miami Area and afar that our program is unique because it's relevant and seeks to personalize programming while preparing students for college and beyond. With nearly 80 students enrolled, Caroline Lewis, High School Director, and our highly skilled faculty and staff have worked to strengthen current and design new programs so your teens become fully engaged students who become *agents of change*. Under the leadership and design of Stuart and Doris Kalb, our high school students will enjoy an additional two floors of renovated space at 4700 Biscayne Blvd. From flexible walls to flexible seating, our students will adapt to hybrid learning spaces that will complement the goals in mind! Additionally, from the renovated

and now beautiful entry center, new parking lots and elevators, to the addition of 20 classroom and office spaces, Cushman High is ready for its second year on its campus.

New Business and Finance Center (located on the corner of 61st and 5th Ave): The Business and Finance Office has moved. As part of the Master Property Plan, the School purchased the parcel of land (home) that sits on the corner of 61st Street and 5th Ave, and it was renovated this summer. In this office you will find Diana Ray (Chief Financial Officer), Fredi Milberg (Accounts Payable), Elizabeth Kern (Accounts Receivable and Clubs Coordinator), Cindy Schneider (Human Resources) and Kitty Phanthavong (Business and Data Base Manager).

Campus Security:

-New High-Resolution Security Cameras: In the upcoming weeks, the installation of 14 new high-resolution security cameras which will continue to allow our security team and us, to monitor all activity during school and after-school hours will occur.

-114 Hytera Two-Way Radios for ALL Classrooms: 114 Hytera two-way radios were purchased from Reliable Two Way. All classrooms, and most offices in the Historic Campus and the High School, are equipped with radios which will allow our faculty and staff to have immediate access to our police officers, security guards, administration and nurse. These push-to-talk radios also serve as a means of mass communication throughout our campuses, should the need arise.

-Innovative Emergency Warning System—by ITContingency: Pending installation in **55 rooms** throughout the Historic Campus is an innovative Emergency Warning System developed by ITContingency. Each room will be equipped with a tablet computer with interactive visual and audio components, an LED lighting strip, which will illuminate in the event of a lockdown or other emergency, and a classroom camera, which will automatically begin recording when the system is engaged. This system will allow each class to “check in” with the touch of a button; police and security will know exactly where a potential problem may be and will allow them to respond in a matter of seconds.

We have been very satisfied with **U.S. Security Associates** and will continue with their relationship around the clock to ensure the safety of all constituents.

Your child’s safety is of the utmost importance. Please be sure to 1.) adhere to the ‘sign in’ policy as well as 2.) complete, print, sign and submit your child’s Emergency Contact Form to the Main Office Friday, August 31st. Students will not be permitted to enter the classroom if this form is not turned in.

Classroom/Office Location Changes:

- LCA Kindergarten from the first floor of the Middle School **TO** the Primary School building
- Remediation spaces from the first floor of the Middle School to the 2nd floor of the 6000 building

- PE from the 6000 Building **TO** the upper offices in the Annex building (between the Innovation Center and the 6000 building)
- Music from the music trailers **TO** the Innovation Center
- Innovation from the Innovation Center **TO** the first floor of the 6000 building
- The Advancement Office has moved from the 6000 building **TO** the 2nd floor of the white apartment building across from the Elementary School.

Professional Development: This summer, our faculty, staff and administrators attended a wide variety of local, state and national conferences targeted at improving the consistency of programming and learning about new educational innovations and issues to address. Topics included the following:

- *Diversity*
- *The Effect of Trauma on Learning and How it Can Be Addressed*
- *Orton-Gillingham Intensive Training*
- *Cuisenaire Rods*
- *Safe Schools* (Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure, Health Emergencies: Choking and the Heimlich Maneuver, Youth Suicide: Awareness and Prevention, Sudden Cardiac Arrest in Athletes, Americans with Disabilities Act Overview)
- *Working with Children and Families Who Struggle with Social, Emotional, Behavioral and/or Academic Difficulties*
- *Front Desk Safety*
- *Aspiring Heads*
- *Head Leadership*
- *Advancing the School Using Veracross Management System*
- *Facebook Marketing Unleashed*

All my best,

Arvi Balseiro

Head of School