

CMSD Fathers Walk 2025

August 18, 2025

Dear Educators,

As we continue to build strong partnerships between schools and families, the annual *Fathers Walk* provides an incredible opportunity to showcase the power of fatherhood and male role models in the lives of our scholars. On **Thursday, September 18, 2025**, we will celebrate the **20th Annual Fathers Walk** across Cuyahoga County and CMSD. On this day, thousands of fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, and mentors will walk hand-in-hand with students while also engaging in activities that strengthen connections to school and community.



But the Fathers Walk has always been more than a symbolic walk to school. It is a **transformative experience**—a reminder that when male role models are present, students attend more regularly, engage more deeply, and believe more fully in their potential. Think of it as **Father's Day during the school year**, a moment that honors fathers and father-figures in ways that are often missing in traditional school programming.

This year, as CMSD commits to *Leveling Up* and *Building Brighter Futures*, we invite schools to **reimagine the possibilities**. The Walk is not a one-day event, but a catalyst. Schools have already embraced this initiative through father-child reading circles, school-wide morning meetings, fatherhood brunches, community service projects, and even college-planning boot camps. These activities are models of what family engagement can become: **transformational, not transactional**. They open doors to year-long involvement, strengthen relationships, and create culturally responsive spaces where every child can see and feel the impact of positive male engagement.

The Fathers Walk is more than a symbolic event, it is an opportunity to engage families in ways that are **inclusive, individualized, integrated, and impactful**. Unlike our universal approaches to family engagement, this should be planned and executed as a **meaningful, targeted experience** that reflects the unique needs of your school community.

In the toolkit, we have provided a **CMSD Action Plan template** to help you get started. The activities outlined are **suggestions, not requirements**. Schools are encouraged to **mix and match** from the four sections – *Elementary, Middle, High School, and Multi-Grade* – or design their own experiences that best fit their families.

💡 *Depending on the activity selected, schools may also be eligible to use their federal Title I family engagement allocation to support the purchase of resources. Please check with your Family and Community Engagement Coordinator for guidance.*

To ensure the success of this year's Fathers Walk and related activities, consider the following:

- **Promotion:** Share details well in advance through newsletters, flyers, school apps, and social media.
- **Involvement:** Partner with Family Engagement Committees, parent groups, and community organizations to design and deliver activities.
- **Follow-Up:** Provide take-home resources or digital access for families who cannot attend in person.

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- **Documentation:** Capture the moment with photos and video. Use sign-in sheets or pre-registration to plan effectively for materials and refreshments.

Last year, over **208 schools** across Cuyahoga County participated, with more than **25,000 fathers and father figures walking** alongside children, including more than **85% of CMSD schools**. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary, we aim even higher, ensuring that every school community not only joins in the Walk but also uses it as a launchpad for deeper engagement throughout the year.

Just as important, these strategies should be viewed as **aligned supports** for your school's **Academic Achievement Plan (AAP)**. Whether reinforcing literacy and math goals through reading circles and STEM challenges, advancing family engagement priorities through collaborative projects, or preparing scholars for the college-career-workforce pipeline through mentoring and planning sessions, the Fathers Walk and its companion activities provide practical, measurable ways to connect family engagement to academic success.

Next Steps to Get Involved

✓ Confirm Your School's Participation

Complete the [[School Participation Registration](#)] form to officially record your school's involvement with the Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative Program.

✓ Access the Fathers Walk Support Toolkit

To assist with a unified districtwide communication strategy, share resources, and strengthen your event planning, the **CMSD Fathers Walk 2025 Toolkit** has been created. Inside you'll find:

- Suggested Activities, Resources, and AAP Alignment
- Targeted Action Plan
- Building Permit
- Agenda & Program Elements
- Suggested Community Exhibitors & Partners
- Event Collateral (flyers, pledge cards, etc.)
- Suggested Guest Speakers
- Supplemental Handouts

[Click Here: [CMSD Fathers Walk 2025 Toolkit](#)] (CMSD Email Access Only)

For additional tools, resources, and ongoing support, please visit:

clevelandmetroschools.org/cmsdfathersmatter.

Thank you for your commitment to making fathers matter in the lives of our students. With your leadership, we will continue to *Level Up* father engagement and build brighter futures for every child in CMSD.

Sincerely,
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