

CMSD Fathers Walk 2025

20th Annual Fathers Walk – CMSD Recap

On **Thursday, September 18, 2025**, CMSD proudly joined schools across Cuyahoga County for the **20th Annual Fathers Walk**, a tradition that continues to grow as a **transformative experience** for scholars and families across all grade levels.



This year's Walk was visible at nearly every CMSD school, from elementary to high school, with men walking hand-in-hand with scholars and participating in creative activities like father-child reading circles, Chat & Chew sessions, and even high school brunches and college-planning boot camps. Councilman Richard Starr reminded fathers that showing up even **once a month** to connect with schools makes a world of difference, while Dr. Warren Morgan emphasized that fathers' presence **defies the false narrative** that they don't show up for their children. "When fathers and male mentors show up, our scholars show up — in attendance, in attitude, and in achievement," Morgan said, linking the event to CMSD's strong academic growth and the need to tackle chronic absenteeism.

At **Anton Grdina School**, the Walk coincided with the opening of a new MetroHealth school-based health clinic. This partnership underscored the connection between **health and education**, ensuring that families can access care directly at school. MetroHealth leaders described the clinic as part of a long-term commitment to reduce barriers and serve students, families, and staff with compassionate, comprehensive care.

The **Fathers Walk Pledge** was once again a powerful moment, with men affirming their responsibility for their child's education, their commitment to work with teachers, and their promise to model the value of learning and family.

Why it matters for CMSD:

- Fathers Walk is directly tied to CMSD's **Strategic Priorities** of Student Outcomes and Family Engagement, and the **Core Values** of Collaboration and Equity.
- Students with engaged fathers are more likely to attend school regularly, succeed academically, and develop strong social-emotional skills.
- By creating a moment during the school year that honors dads, CMSD ensures that all scholars — whether with a father, grandfather, uncle, mentor, or a man *standing in the gap* — experience the visible support of caring adults.

CMSD Fathers Walk 2025

Countywide, the Walk saw participation from more than **200 schools and over 25,000 fathers and male figures**, but CMSD's leadership stood out: **over 85% of schools participated**, showing remarkable growth and commitment.

 Photos of CMSD schools celebrating Fathers Walk are available at

clevelandmetroschools.org/cmsdfathersmatter.

Schools are encouraged to continue submitting their images and highlights.

Looking Ahead: Fathers Matter Engagement Opportunities

The CMSD FACE Office looks forward to building on the momentum of the Fathers Walk with additional engagement opportunities in partnership with the **Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative, Black Child Development Institute – Ohio and the National Black Child Development Institute, the CMSD MOCHA Network (Men of Color Shaping Academics), and Profound Gentlemen Ohio.**

CMSD Fathers Matter: Level Up Sessions

 *This isn't just a talk. It's a movement.*

Formerly known as the Fatherhood Table Talks, the CMSD Fathers Matter: Level Up Sessions are back and bolder. These curated gatherings are for fathers, male role models, educators, and community partners who are ready to show up, speak up, and level up — for our children, our schools, and our communities.

Whether you're a dad, grandfather, uncle, mentor, or a male educator — **you have a seat at the table.**

 Registration for these sessions will be available at:

clevelandmetroschools.org/cmsdfathersmatter

Anthony H. Brown, M.Ed.

Program Manager, Family and Community Engagement

Cleveland Metropolitan School District

linktr.ee/cmsd.familyengagement

Anthony.H.Brown@clevelandmetroschools.org

216-304-8473