



Dimon Magnet Academy's Back-to-School Bash Summary Report

Date: Tuesday, July 28, 2026

Time: 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Location: Dimon Magnet Academy

Purpose of the Event

The 2026 Back-to-School Bash at Dimon Magnet Academy celebrated the successful inaugural year of Columbus State University's Professional Development Lab School (PDLS) while welcoming students, families, and community partners to the 2026-27 school year, the PDLS introduced the expanded initiatives, partnerships, and opportunities planned for Year 2.

Highlights

Preparing for a New School Year: More than 300 students and family members and 100 community partners participated in the 2026 Back-to-School Bash. Dimon faculty, staff, and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) welcomed families, assisted with registration and enrollment verification for the 2026–27 school year, and helped ensure students were ready for a successful first day of school.

Celebrating Partnerships: Columbus State University, Columbus Technical College, Georgia Power, the Columbus Public Library, The Food Mill, and numerous community organizations connected families with educational, workforce, literacy, health, and wellness resources while showcasing the strength of the PDLS partnership.

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Celebrating Community Impact: A Dimon parent and recent Columbus Technical College graduate shared how participating in Family Literacy Nights and adult education coursework transformed her family's educational journey and professional growth, illustrating the lasting impact of the PDLS partnership.

Investing in the Future: Community partners contributed more than \$2,000 in door prizes, while the Miracle Riders presented a \$10,000 donation to expand resources and supports for students with visual impairments, demonstrating the community's continued investment in Dimon students and families.

Building Community Through Celebration: Interactive games, first responder demonstrations, live entertainment, complimentary refreshments, and family activities created an engaging environment where students, families, educators, and community partners connected while celebrating the beginning of a new school year.

2026-27 Priorities, Health & Wellness and Family & Community Engagement

As part of the Back-to-School Bash, the PDLS gathered feedback from Dimon families to better understand their priorities for the coming year. The insights below will help guide Year 2 programming, ensuring that new and expanded initiatives are responsive to the needs, interests, and aspirations of the families we serve.

➤ Health & Wellness

To better understand the needs of Dimon students and families, the Professional Development Lab School conducted a School-Based Health & Wellness Survey. While some families reported having access to healthcare, the survey revealed that access does not always translate into timely or convenient care. Families continue to face barriers such as transportation, scheduling conflicts, appointment availability, cost, and uncertainty about where to access specialized services—obstacles that often result in delayed care and missed instructional time. The findings also demonstrated strong support for expanding school-based health services.

Families identified the greatest interest in:

- Behavioral and mental health counseling
- Immunizations
- Sick visits
- Sports physicals
- Well-child visits
- Vision screenings

Beyond medical care, families expressed a strong desire for expanded behavioral health supports, including counseling, anxiety and stress management, parenting resources, family support services, grief support, and connections to community resources.

These findings reinforce an important reality: families are asking for healthcare that is accessible, timely, and integrated into the place their children already spend the majority of their day. As the Professional Development Lab School enters Year 2, these data provide a roadmap for expanding health and wellness

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partnerships that reduce barriers, strengthen family well-being, and ensure students are healthy, present, and ready to learn.

➤ **Family & Community Engagement**

To ensure Year 2 programming reflects the interests and aspirations of Dimon families, the Professional Development Lab School and Columbus Technical College invited families to share their interest in future family engagement opportunities and adult education pathways during the Back-to-School Bash.

Families expressed strong interest in continuing Family Literacy Nights and new family events (e.g., Family Math Night, Health & Wellness Clinic). Families also indicated interest in adult education programs that lead to workforce credentials and career advancement, with the greatest interest in Air Conditioning Technology, Automotive Technology, Criminal Justice, Cybersecurity, Dental Hygiene, Early Childhood Education, GED Preparation, and Medical Assisting.

These findings highlight families' desire for opportunities that strengthen both their children's educational success and their own personal and professional growth. Columbus Technical College and Columbus State University will use these findings to expand family engagement opportunities and workforce development pathways that promote lifelong learning, career advancement, and stronger outcomes for families.

Guiding Year 2: Family Priorities and Program Planning

As the Professional Development Lab School enters Year 2, it will continue the high-impact programs that defined its successful inaugural year while strategically expanding family engagement, health and wellness, adult education, and student support initiatives. Informed by family feedback and strengthened through collaborative partnerships, the PDLS will continue creating meaningful opportunities that help students succeed, families thrive, and future professionals develop through authentic, community-centered experiences.



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