



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 21, 2025  
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## **Caledonia Community Schools Celebrates Grand Opening of New Dutton Elementary**

**Caledonia, Mich.** – Caledonia Community Schools (CCS) celebrated the grand opening of the new Dutton Elementary on August 20, 2025, with families, students, staff, and community leaders in attendance.

The celebration included remarks from Superintendent Dirk Weeldreyer and Principal Shawn Veitch, along with a ceremonial ribbon cutting and tours of the new facility. State Senator Thomas Albert also attended and presented a legislative tribute recognizing the significance of the new school for Caledonia students, families, and the broader community. Caledonia High School senior Kaedence Herr shared how Dutton staff go above and beyond to build lasting connections, motivating students to succeed and encouraging them to never give up.

The new school was made possible through community support of the 2020 and 2023 bond measures and features modern classrooms, collaborative learning spaces, and an inclusive playground funded in part through a donation from Amazon, with thanks to project partners The Christman Company, TowerPinkster, and Plante Moran Cresa for their work on this project.

"This building represents years of dreaming, planning, and hard work. It is more than a beautiful new school; it is a lasting investment in our children and in the future of this community," said Superintendent Dirk Weeldreyer. "The former Dutton Elementary served students well for 70 years, and now this facility will stand for decades as a place where every child is safe, inspired, and included. Its true legacy will be written by the students who learn here, the staff who guide them, and the community that continues to support them."

"As part of the Dutton Family, I feel incredibly blessed to lead a school that has been a cornerstone of pride, principles, and tradition in Caledonia," said Principal Shawn Veitch. "This new building brings excitement to staff and students because it is more than walls and classrooms; it is a place for connection, belonging, and growth. What warms my heart most is knowing that our playground was built so every child, regardless of ability, can be independent and experience the joy of play alongside their peers."

On behalf of the Board of Education, President Tim Morris shared written remarks reflecting on the project's significance. "This grand opening is a proud moment for Caledonia because it represents what can be achieved when a community works together for its schools," Morris said. "The Board of Education is honored to have supported this journey, and tonight we celebrate not only a new building but the opportunities it will provide for students in the years ahead."

"We are proud to support Caledonia Community Schools in creating a space where every child can learn, play, and belong," said Ian Conyers, Community Engagement, Amazon. "The new playground reflects our commitment to accessibility and inclusion, and we are honored to partner with the Dutton community on this meaningful project."

The ribbon cutting was attended by members of the Board of Education, district leadership, and project partners The Christman Company, TowerPinkster, and Plante Moran Cresa. A great turnout from the Caledonia community made the celebration especially meaningful. Following the ceremony, families toured the building and connected with staff.