



WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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As your proud Superintendent, there are many great things happening that I want to share so please enjoy this *October Update*. Also, please take a few moments to review the attached letter from the CSDE on the topic of potential school threats and security.

K-3 Literacy Night: We feel our families need the opportunity to learn about our new literacy program and view the materials with which the learners are using, so we are hosting a *Literacy Learn with Me Community Night* for parents on Tuesday, November 12. Please mark your calendars and join us to explore, learn, and share your questions and thoughts with our administrative team.

Cafeteria Refresh! Jessica Hill, our new Food Services Director, is bringing several new ideas and tweaks to the program. Our Cafeteria now has sandwiches made to order instead of being pre-made...and another exciting new idea is a Mashed Potato Bowl! Last week administration helped serve lunch and it was a resounding success. Finally, due to free-lunch reimbursements during the Coronavirus, we were able to refresh the Cafeteria and it is simply amazing. It is a wooded wonderland with Timber the Owl proudly perched, greeting our hungry learners. Our previous Food Service Director, Jane Roddy, was deeply involved in this project as well, and everyone was completely amazed when returning to see the finished product this past Monday.

Tiffany Bucko, our new *STEAM* teacher, is already connecting with teachers and support staff, building a collaborative *STEAM* instructional scope and sequence. Our current technology teachers have a strong curriculum of experiences with coding, Google Suite navigation, and many aspects of digital citizenship, and our *STEAM* curriculum will dovetail and enrich several of these areas as the year progresses. Additionally, our *STEAM* teacher is helping support our TAG learners and learners in Pre-Algebra Mathematics in Grade 6.

Beecher Infrastructure Upgrade Building Committee: The architectural firm Antinozzi and Associates will be meeting next week with small groups of staff to obtain helpful information as to how the spaces in our building are currently used and what educational / space needs we have that require attention for inclusion in their Ed Specs study. At the same time, they will conduct a few community outreach sessions to listen and gather additional information. Design option drafts will be generated, refined, estimates formed and shared at a Tri-Board meeting (BoS/BoF/BoE) with a broad capital improvement plan and feasibility study results / options. I will work closely with Dr. Madonick, Chair of the Committee, to keep everyone apprised of important dates and information.

Achievement and Growth: At this past Monday's BoE meeting, BRS administration shared BRS's achievement and growth from last spring's state assessments (SBAC). We are proud to share our results and the presentation will be posted on our website this week. I credit these data points to the hard work of our staff with growing content and building relationships...and I credit the even harder work of our children. This success is also a direct result of the support of our families to their children and their commitment to our budget, which our Board of Education ensures is deeply focused on learning and growth. As a long time educator and parent of two grown adults, I also want to share that these summative data points are just one snapshot taken at one point in one year. They cannot capture all that learning is for each individual child. Our learners are much more than these great scores. They are musicians, artists, creative problem-solvers, helpful community members, athletes and kind friends.

I asked our teachers during our August convocation to consider educational researcher John Hattie's statement that, "*There is no recipe, no professional development or set of worksheets, no new teaching method, and no band-aid remedy, that will impact learning...one of the biggest impacts is...(according to Hattie,) 'A Way of Thinking; 'My role, as a teacher (and employee), is to evaluate the effect I have on my students.' It is to 'know thy impact,' it is to understand this impact, and it is to act on this knowing and understanding.*" This year I challenged each staff member, not just teachers, to *Know Your Impact...to Study Your Impact...Grow Your Impact...Celebrate Your Impact*. Reflecting daily on our learner's progress or lack of it helps us to study, know, and grow our impact.

We are excited to celebrate our impact.

Vonda J. Tencza



STATE OF CONNECTICUT



October 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The safety and well-being of children and everyone in our schools is our top priority. Recently, there have been several threats against schools in Connecticut, which has understandably caused some concern as the school year begins — a time usually filled with excitement and hope.

When your child's school learns about potential threats, please know that superintendents and school staff are dedicated to sharing information with families and the school community as quickly as possible. However, there may be limits to what can be shared due to the sensitive nature of the information and the need to keep everyone safe. Local police and first responders are members of School Security and Safety Committees, are fully updated on any threats made, and work closely with school staff to handle any safety concerns.

All schools in Connecticut must have a School Security and Safety Plan, created with input from School Security and Safety Committees. Plans focus on five important areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Specifically, efforts go into prevention, which means stopping violence before it happens, keeping everyone prepared and safe, responding quickly during emergencies, and sharing information effectively. To maintain everyone's safety, schools do not publicly share specific details of their School Security and Safety Plans.

Safety and security begin at home, and we encourage parents and caregivers to help us with this. Here are some ways families can support safe schools:

- Be aware of your child's online activities and the social media and gaming platforms they use.
- Discuss with your child the seriousness of threats to schools, emphasizing that they are not harmless jokes. Such threats and false reports can cause fear and lead to serious legal consequences, including arrest.
- Don't allow your child to bring toy guns or other pretend weapons to school as they may be seen as real, frighten others, cause disruption of the school day, and lead to discipline for your child, including suspension and expulsion.
- Monitor the personal information your child shares online, as it can be misused by strangers on the internet and gaming platforms.
- Encourage your child to report any threats or threatening behavior they see to local police or the school.
- Set a good example on social media, as children learn from adults how to behave online. Don't repost threats that you see on social media; instead, notify the police.
- Connecticut law requires that, if you have guns in your home, they must be stored in locked containers so that children cannot access them.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we can help keep our students and school community safe.

Sincerely,

Ned Lamont
Governor
State of Connecticut

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner
CT State Department of Education

Ronnell A. Higgins
Commissioner
Department of Emergency Services
and Public Protection