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October 31, 2025

Dear Darien Community,

Happy Halloween! Historically, Halloween is always one of the most exciting days of the school year. While it may not be the optimal day for academic learning, it certainly is fun. That being said, our October edition of The Darien Difference will drop on Monday so that we can include some photos from Halloween festivities. Please keep an eye on your inbox on Monday as we highlight Holmes Elementary School. Next up will be Middlesex Middle School for the November edition.

Field Hockey

Congratulations to Varsity Field Hockey on winning the FCIAC Championship game on Wednesday versus Staples HS after a penalty shootout following overtime. The team will now prepare for the State title - Go Blue Wave!

Visit to ABC House

On Monday evening, I was a dinner guest at ABC House. A Better Chance (ABC) is a long-standing program in Darien that provides high-achieving young women of color the opportunity to live in Darien and attend Darien High School. I enjoyed getting to know the students and learning about all of the activities they participate in at DHS and in town. It is a very impressive program. If you wish to learn more about ABC House, please visit the [website](#).

MTSS

Educators like me are really good at creating acronyms and using tons of eduspeak. One acronym that may be new to some in the community is MTSS. Thanks to my administrative colleagues in the District, we have a clear description of MTSS that I believe will be helpful to the community. The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a framework designed to ensure that every student in Darien Public Schools receives the support they need to learn, grow, and thrive. Across our schools, our staff work together and keep a close eye on how all students are doing with academic, behavior, social and personal learning skills and work habits. The goal is to ensure each child gets what they need to be successful.

MTSS is organized in 3 Tiers to make sure all students get the right level of help at the right time.

Darien Public Schools

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- **Tier 1 - All students** across the district get strong, high quality instruction and support in their classrooms.
- **Tier 2 - Some students** might need a bit of extra help in certain areas like reading, math, social skills, and we provide additional small group instruction and extra practice.
- **Tier 3- A few students** may need more individualized support.

Our staff (teachers, school psychologists, administrators, literacy and math specialists, etc.) meet regularly to review student progress, consider what is working, and adjust our support for students as needed. This work is one part of the amazing and essential work our staff do when they meet altogether. MTSS helps us make sure that every child can reach their full potential.

Tanner Clark at MMS November 3 @ 7:00 pm

We invite all parents and students to an important evening focused on well-being and meaningful connection. Join us in the MMS Auditorium on Tuesday, November 3, at 7:00 pm to hear from international motivational speaker Tanner Clark. Clark's signature message, "One Second of Strength," teaches teenagers that tiny, powerful decisions can help them overcome digital distraction, manage social media anxiety, and break the cycle of comparison. He stresses that true happiness comes from fostering strong, human-to-human friendships, not from digital scrolling. We anticipate an informative and highly engaging presentation! Thank you to our wonderful sponsors for their support in bringing this vital resource to our community. [Register here.](#)

November 4, 2025

Please note that Tuesday, November 4, is a Professional Learning Day for staff. Students in Early Learning Program (ELP) through Grade 8 will not have school that day. Darien High School (DHS) students, however, will have an early release day to make up for the school closure that occurred on September 16. Please click [here](#) for the detailed DHS schedule.

UCBC Art Opening

The DPS visual art department's 11th annual K-12 Art Show will be installed at Upper Crust Bakery and Café located at 980 Post Rd. All are invited to an opening reception on Thursday, November 6 from 4-6 pm. There will be over 100 pieces on display through mid-January. If you can't make the reception, we encourage you to stop by, grab a coffee and bagel, and enjoy some creative work made by our K-12 students. I look forward to seeing some amazing student work.

Tenor and Bass Showcase

Mark your calendars for the 3rd Annual Tenor and Bass Showcase on Thursday, November 6 at 7:00 pm in the MMS auditorium, where singers from Darien Schools will celebrate tenor and bass music and feature a special performance by the Yale Spizzwinks. Any student interested in singing tenor or bass parts, including all boys in Grades 4-12, is invited to perform a final song with the Spizzwinks, provided they attend the

rehearsal and free pizza dinner on Wednesday, November 5; please click [here](#) for full details. Tickets may be purchased [here](#).

Fireside Chat

We're excited to invite you to participate in an engaging Fireside Chat On November 12 at 7:00 pm at Holmes Elementary School with me, focused on the three C's of our Vision of a Graduate: Communication, Creativity, and Curiosity. This is your opportunity as a valued member of our community—parents, students, staff, and residents—to submit questions in advance that will be addressed during the chat. Please submit questions via this [form](#).

Around Town


Cheer for Change: Darien vs. New Canaan Food Drive! Darien Junior Cheerleading League and New Canaan Junior Cheerleading are joining forces with our communities for a friendly food drive competition leading up to the Turkey Bowl. From November 1 through November 22, they are collecting unexpired canned goods and pantry items to benefit Filling in the Blanks, an organization dedicated to fighting childhood hunger—especially during the holiday season. Drop-Off Locations include the Darien YMCA Lobby and on Nov 1st DJFL Day at the Darien High School Stadium. A collection table will be set up at DJFL Day Game so please bring items there. Every item counts as we rally together in this friendly rivalry — because when our towns come together, everyone wins!

Weekend DHS Sports

Get ready for another big wave of exciting athletic action this weekend! We're incredibly proud of our athletes as they head into postseason play. It all kicks off this afternoon. Both Varsity Soccer teams start their CIAC LL Playoff journey with First Round matches at Darien High School at 3:15 pm. On Saturday, November 1, be sure to cheer on our Varsity Football team as they host Trumbull for a crucial home game at 1:30 pm, right here at Darien High School. Capping off a packed weekend, our Varsity Girls Swimming team will be diving into the FCIAC Swim Finals at Greenwich High School at 2:30 pm. Come out and show your Blue Wave spirit as our teams compete!

Have a wonderful weekend. Happy Halloween!

Sincerely,



Eric A. Byrne, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools