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Dear Darien Community,

Yesterday I had the pleasure of attending the “How to Make a Friend” story share with first graders and kindergartners at Royle. It was inspiring to see our Vision of the Graduate come to life through their eyes. In their original writing, students touched on **Integrity** (being yourself), **Communication** (speaking openly), and **Creativity** (finding fun ways to connect). They also demonstrated **Independence** in making their own connections, **Empathy** for those who are less outgoing, and a natural **Curiosity** about the world and people around them. Many thanks to Ms. McNamee and Ms. Keating for inviting me to join the celebration.

FY27 BOE Budget

The budget process is off to a great start as we move through the different departments and priorities. Dr. Fedigan presented the Curriculum & Instruction and Schools budget on Tuesday. If you are interested in viewing it, please follow this [link](#). The budget presentation begins at 8:32. The FY27 Budget process will continue with Special Education and Athletics presentations and discussion at next week’s Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, January 20 and the Operations budget presentation and discussion on Tuesday, January 27. The FY27 Budget public hearing will be on Tuesday, February 3 and the Board of Education FY27 Budget vote will take place on Thursday, February 5.

Byrne’s Book Club

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined me at the Darien Library this past Wednesday for our inaugural Book Club. It was a privilege to connect with so many of you and dive into such a timely discussion on Jennifer Breheny Wallace’s *Never Enough*. Your openness and thoughtful insights into the pressures of achievement culture made the evening a resounding success. I’m already looking forward to our next selection! Special thanks to the Darien Library team for hosting us and creating such an inviting space for our conversation.

What Our Kids Are Saying: Inside the Darien Youth Survey

Please join Thriving Youth Darien on Wednesday, January 21 at 7:00 pm via Zoom for What Our Kids Are Saying: Inside the Darien Youth Survey. This virtual program will combine an overview of major findings from the 2025 Darien Youth Survey with a skills-focused workshop led by Amanda Craig, PhD, LMFT, nationally recognized therapist and author, and Rebecca Campbell, LCSW, Director Therapy Services at Sasco River

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Center. Parents will leave with concrete strategies for talking with their children about mental health, substance use, and other sensitive topics. Registration is free, please sign up here: [Thriving Youth Programs and Events](#)

Parent University

Our second [Parent University](#) is scheduled for Thursday, January 22 at 6:30 pm in the Middlesex Middle School media center. This event is designed to help parents navigate the rapidly evolving world of Artificial Intelligence. Please [pre-register](#) if you are interested in attending..

The World Famous Harlem Wizards are coming back to Darien on Sunday, January 25th!!

The Blue Wave Booster Club is excited to announce the return of this three-time sell-out event taking place at DHS on Sunday, January 25 at 2:00 pm! Come out for an afternoon of hilarious, great fun as The Harlem Wizards are taking on the Blue Wave Home Team! The lineup features our very own talented Darien teachers, administrators, and—yes—even me! Please don't tell the Wizards that I can't hit a shot to save my life! My childhood nickname on the court was Brick. This basketball extravaganza is loaded with laugh-out-loud audience participation. Never in the history of sport will the losing team have so much fun! We do expect this event to sell out quickly yet again. Click [HERE](#) to buy tickets now!

DHS Sports

It is another busy weekend ahead for our Blue Wave athletes, with several key matchups and invites across the region. Today our boys varsity indoor track & field and girls varsity indoor track & field teams travel to the NYC Armory for the Steve Borbet Invite at 4:50 pm, while boys junior varsity hockey heads to the New Canaan Winter Club for a 6:00 pm puck drop. The action continues tomorrow starting at 10:00 am with girls varsity indoor track & field at the SCC Coaches Meet and boys freshman basketball hosting Bassick at home. Later tomorrow morning, girls junior varsity basketball travels to Bassick at 11:00 am, followed by boys junior varsity basketball at home at 11:30 am. At noon, both boys varsity indoor track & field and girls varsity indoor track & field compete in a multi-school meet at Wilton High School. Tomorrow afternoon features girls varsity basketball at Bassick (12:30 pm), boys varsity basketball hosting Bassick (1:00 pm), and girls varsity gymnastics taking on Fairfield Warde and Ludlowe at the Darien YMCA (2:30 pm). Rounding out the day, boys varsity hockey hosts Notre Dame-West Haven at 4:30 pm at the Darien Ice House. Finally, on Monday, January 19, boys junior varsity hockey travels to Iona Prep at 1:30 pm, while boys varsity hockey plays at home against Xavier at 1:50 pm. Roll Wave!

Please note that there will be no school this Monday, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a day to honor Dr. King's life and reflect on his message of service and character.

Sincerely,



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