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Dear Darien Community,

This week's update is chock full with school and community events. We have so many exciting events happening across Darien and we look forward to the many opportunities for our students to showcase their effort, talent, and accomplishments.

### **National School Nurse Day**

This Wednesday, May 6, we proudly celebrate National School Nurse Day to recognize the essential role our nursing staff plays in our educational community. Far beyond simple first aid, our school nurses are highly skilled professionals who manage complex chronic conditions, navigate public health challenges and provide a steady hand in moments of crisis. They ensure that our students are healthy, safe and ready to learn. Please join us in sending a heartfelt thank you to these dedicated healthcare heroes for their unwavering commitment to the well-being of every child in our district. They are:

- Emily Merrit, Darien Public Schools Director of Nursing Services
- Colleen Plank, Christina Fay and Kim Healey, Darien High School
- Valerie Maroney and Diane Ryan, Middlesex Middle School
- Lisa Grant, Hindley Elementary School
- Beth Horan, Holmes Elementary School
- Donna Asaro, Stacy Aloï and Yvonne Dempsey, Ox Ridge Elementary School
- Robin Boccanfuso, Royle Elementary School
- Kim Martini, Tokeneke Elementary School

### **Teacher Appreciation Week**

Next week marks the arrival of Teacher Appreciation Week, a special time for us to honor the incredible educators who pour their hearts into our classrooms every single day. Our teachers are the primary architects of our Vision of the Graduate, working tirelessly to instill the core values of empathy and integrity in every student they mentor. Through their guidance, they foster the independence and curiosity necessary for lifelong learning while providing the space for creativity and communication to flourish. We invite our entire community to join us in celebrating their hard work and profound impact, as we share our deepest gratitude for the dedication they show toward shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

### **CHSCA Hall of Fame Recognition**

We are incredibly proud to announce that Darien's own Maureen Minicus will be inducted into the Connecticut High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame on Thursday, May 7, in Southington. Joining a prestigious group of only ten other honorees this year, Coach Minicus is being recognized for a storied career defined by excellence and a profound impact on Connecticut athletics. Since beginning her journey in Darien in 2000, she has led our field hockey program to a staggering

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431 wins, capturing 15 FCIAC Championships and 10 State Titles along the way. With an overall career record of 498 wins, she has consistently steered her teams to the top of the rankings while personifying the dedication we hope to see in all our student-athletes. Please join us in congratulating Coach Minicus on this well-deserved honor as she enters her 27th season of coaching, leaving an indelible mark on the Darien legacy.

### School Climate Survey

Last week, principals shared the School Climate Survey with their families. Staff and students in grades 3–12 are also completing the survey over the next couple of weeks. The survey will remain open until Tuesday, May 5. Your feedback plays an important role in informing our school climate improvement plans in the areas of safety, relationships, teaching and learning, communication, and the overall school environment. We appreciate your partnership and value your voice.

### Byrne's Book Club

Don't miss our final book club meeting of the year! Join us as we discuss *Dream School* by Jeffrey Selingo, a must-read for anyone navigating the complexities of the modern college search. Ms. Cathy Ostar (Director of School Counseling) and I will be leading the discussion on finding a college "fit" that truly nurtures a student's growth. We hope to see you in the MMS Library this Tuesday, May 5, at 7:00 PM for this timely conversation.

### Senior Pre-Prom

The Depot Youth Center is excited to once again host Darien's townwide Senior Pre-Prom celebration on Saturday, May 16 at Weed Beach. This inclusive, substance-free event provides a welcoming space for all Darien High School seniors, their parents, and their dates to gather for photos, light bites, and time together before heading to prom. Transportation from Weed Beach directly to the prom venue is included for all students, helping ensure a safe and seamless experience for the evening. Created by DHS students and designed to reduce the social pressures often associated with private pre-prom parties, the event has quickly become a meaningful community tradition that promotes connection and ensures every student has a place to celebrate this milestone. Last year, the vast majority of the senior class participated, and we look forward to another special evening. **Families can learn more and register here: [Register for Pre-Prom](#). (Click [HERE](#) to apply for a need-based fee waiver)**

### Around Town

It's shaping up to be a busy and historic spring in Darien with several community events perfect for families and students. Tomorrow, May 2, the town travels back in time for Experience the Revolution, a free, immersive event featuring soldier drills and George Washington across the [Museum of Darien](#), [Mather Homestead](#), and Highland Farm. At the Highland Farm walking path, look for the debut of "A Walk Through History," an America 250 project featuring 250 signs sharing U.S. and Darien history. This initiative was started by Paige Dewbrey (DHS Class of 2025), and DHS students Sloane Hardy, Sonnet Hegarty, Caroline Baldwin, and Lizzy Sullivan have been instrumental in its completion; all are welcome to view the display through June 25. Also on Saturday, the DCA hosts its ["Son Plus One" Fun Day](#) at Town Hall fields with laser tag and bounce houses, while middle schoolers can head to The Depot for [Bike & Scooter Safety Courses](#) (also offered May 31). Looking ahead to Memorial Day, be sure to save the date for the Post 53 Food Fair at Tilley Pond Park from 11:00 AM–2:00 PM; enjoy food trucks and games, and don't miss your chance to enter the \$60,000 Boat Raffle at [givebutter.com/post53boat](https://givebutter.com/post53boat) to support our local EMTs. For registration and specific event times, please visit the community links above.

### DHS Sports

The Blue Wave is gearing up for another massive stretch of competition! From high-stakes rivalry games on the diamond and the turf to prestigious invitationals across the region, our student-athletes have an incredible lineup of matchups ahead. Whether you're heading to New Canaan for the lacrosse showdown or staying local to catch baseball at home,

come out and show your support!

Please see the schedule of weekend games:

#### Friday's Schedule:

- 4:00 PM: Girls Varsity Softball vs. Bridgeport Central (Away at Bridgeport Central)
- 4:00 PM: Boys Freshman Baseball vs. Bethel (Away at Bethel)
- 5:00 PM: Boys Freshman Lacrosse vs. Daniel Hand (Away at Daniel Hand)
- 5:00 PM: Boys Varsity Track @ Track Night NYC (Away at NYC)
- 6:30 PM: Boys Varsity Rugby vs. Ridgefield (Away at Ridgefield High School)
- 7:30 PM: Boys JV Rugby vs. Ridgefield (Away at Ridgefield High School)

#### Saturday's Schedule:

- 9:00 AM: Coed Varsity Sailing @ President & TERK (Away)
- 10:00 AM: Boys Varsity Volleyball vs. Greenwich (Away at Greenwich High School)
- 11:15 AM: Boys JV Volleyball vs. Greenwich (Away at Greenwich High School)
- 2:30 PM: Boys Freshman Lacrosse @ Connor Corish Tournament (Away at Chatham High School)
- 3:30 PM: Boys Varsity Lacrosse vs. New Canaan (Away at New Canaan High School)
- 5:30 PM: Boys JV Lacrosse vs. New Canaan (Away at New Canaan High School)
- 6:00 PM: Boys Varsity Track @ Fast Times (Away)

#### Sunday Schedule:

- 9:00 AM: Coed Varsity Sailing @ the President & TERK (Newport, RI)

Have a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,



Eric A. Byrne, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools