Darien Public Schools

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Dear Darien Community,

We are back! It is wonderful to have the students back in school. I have thoroughly enjoyed visiting schools and classrooms each day this week and welcoming students back to school - I even rode Bus #3 to Ox Ridge yesterday morning! There is tons of excitement, energy and positivity across Darien. So much has happened in our schools since students left for summer break back in June and I would like to recognize our custodial, technology, and facilities departments for their extraordinary efforts in preparing us for the start of school, with a special note of thanks to the crews at Hindley, Holmes, and Royle, who navigated major construction this summer.

For anyone who is new to the DPS community, each Friday I send a community update with lots of information about the happenings in the school and community. My style is to be generous with information and keep the community informed about all the amazing things happening in the Darien Schools - and there is no shortage of wonderful things to share!

Convocation
Each year, faculty and staff open the school year with Convocation. Held last Friday at Darien High School, we brought a different format to the program. Nine students from DHS and MMS participated in a panel discussion sharing their wisdom and ideas with a packed auditorium of educators. I urge you to watch the discussion and hear what our amazing students had to share. I found their comments to be incredibly powerful. Click here to view the convocation video.

Safety - Diver Safety & Ebikes and Escooters
With school back in session, our local roads are much busier with buses, cars, students on bicycles, scooters and walkers. A newer phenomenon is the dramatic increase of e-bikes and e-scooters on the roads. We need all drivers to be mindful on the roads and to drive carefully, build in extra travel time, and stay alert around school zones and crosswalks. Parents, please take a moment to review this e-bike and e-scooter informational brochure from the Darien Police Department with your children. Most importantly, please remind students to keep their eyes up, phones tucked away, and attention focused on their surroundings whenever crossing the street. Let's keep our students safe together!

Communication
As mentioned in the community letter sent a few weeks ago, the district is migrating to ParentSquare from School Messenger. This two-way communication platform will make district-wide communication more efficient and effective, as well as on individual school levels with more streamlined communication from principals, teachers, and staff members. If you have not set up your account yet, please do, as we do not want you to miss crucial information such as welcome letters, emergency alerts, and other important updates from your child(ren)'s school(s) without an activated account. If you still need to activate your account, please go to https://www.parentsquare.com/signin and input the email address that is on file with your child(ren)'s school(s) in the "Register" box. If you run into any issues while activating your account, please

contact Caitlin Wardlow, Director of Communications, at cwardlow@darienps.org. Please note, while we make this transition, messaging may be sent via both Aspen and ParentSquare, resulting in duplicate communications. We appreciate your patience and understanding!

BOE Meeting

Did you miss the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, August 25? District administrators gave a fantastic recap highlighting our progress over the summer in curriculum, staff development, facilities, special education, and human resources. In addition, the Board of Education adopted goals for the school year and adopted a new five year strategic plan. I hope you take a moment to watch the presentation here.

Financial Assistance for Darien Residents

The Community Fund of Darien is here to help Darien families in need. While their biggest grants are given to local nonprofits to support the needs of Darien, Norwalk and Stamford residents, they also help cover individual costs including rent, utility payments, medical expenses, childcare costs, and other bills. They grant this funding in partnership with the Town of Darien's Human Services department, which determines the need and makes the grant request to the Community Fund of Darien. Payments go directly to the provider. Since 2006, the Touch-A-Life Fund has provided $121,000 in emergency assistance for Darien residents, with local partners like Darien Human Services, P2P, the YMCA and the Board of Education. If you are struggling financially or in the midst of a financial hardship, please reach out to school administrators, school counselors or directly to the Town via Ali Ramsteck to see if you qualify for services and support. Touch-A-Life is here to help.

2026-2027 Calendar

Here is the 2026-2027 Calendar, which was approved by the Board of Education in June. The calendar has significant shifts at the elementary level that we believe will be helpful to all. We encourage you to review it carefully, as it highlights key dates. The calendar accounts for high school professional learning communities, elementary parent conferences and districtwide professional learning. We have also built potential snow days into the school calendar for the 2026-2027 school year.

Blue Wave Spirit Day - Every Friday

Between athletic contests, performances, and special events, there is so much to look forward to this school year. Let's make every Friday a town-wide Blue Spirit Day! Students, faculty, staff, and community members are all invited to wear our school colors or spirit wear to show support. On Fridays, I'll be swapping my standard suit and tie for Darien swag, and I hope you will join me. Let's fill our town with Blue Wave spirit!

Athletic Schedule

Each week, we will be sharing the weekend varsity game schedule for our Darien Blue Wave athletic teams. Stay tuned for your first schedule roundup in future updates once the athletic season gets underway in September - but mark your calendars as Friday Night Lights return on Friday, September 11th - a wonderful way for our entire community to come together.

Enjoy the weekend!

Sincerely,



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