



# North Haven Public Schools

North Haven, Connecticut 06473

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June 2017

Dear Colleagues, Parents and Guardians,

The success of a school district depends upon the hard work of many people and the work is never truly "done." Instead, we simply prepare to move onto the next undertaking, always with the goal of improving. That can be both good and bad. Good because we're always looking for ways to improve and strengthen the instruction, programs, and services to help all students achieve. Bad because we don't take the time to step back and recognize the people who make success possible. As the school year draws to a close, I'd like to use the June edition of News from Our Schools to thank a number of people for their contributions.

The Board of Education has once again worked tirelessly on behalf of all students. These nine volunteers give selflessly of their time, sharing their experience and expertise with us, all in the name of trying to improve the system. We can be assured they base their decisions on what they believe to be in the best interest of all students. They devote many hours to building and promoting a responsible education budget, one that unfortunately never allows them to accomplish everything they'd like, but one that meets the needs of students, while at the same time, controlling costs for North Haven citizens who this year provided us with a beautiful new middle school, for which we are extremely grateful.

The Assistant Superintendent continued to work with the district's program coordinators designing, implementing, and monitoring our curriculum. There are signs that their work is resulting in positive changes. This year's SAT scores for our 11<sup>th</sup> graders showed a 19 point gain over last year, and though we haven't yet received our SBAC scores for the 2016-2017 school year, our work in 2015-2016 showed marked improvement over the previous year. Clearly, one year does not yet mark a pattern of improvement, and we anxiously await the results of this year's administration of the state assessment.

The district has continued its affiliation with Columbia University's Teachers' College to introduce a strong writing program into all of our elementary grades, K-5. To expand on this, Susan Bass, the district's K-12 Language Arts Program Coordinator, applied some of the same ideas learned through our work with Columbia to create and introduce a structured writing program for sixth graders. This way students will continue applying what they learned in elementary school from our work with Columbia as they transition into the middle school. We were also able to introduce a number of new electives at the middle school offering students with greater choice and more opportunities.

The district's Department of Special Services has continued to meet the needs of students with special needs with distinction. From our NAEYC accredited pre-school program through our in-district Transition Program for students between the ages of 18 and 21 making the transition from school to the

world of work and greater independence, members of the department do their very best to see each student as an individual and to address their needs accordingly.

The Director of Finance and Operations makes certain as many of our resources as possible make their way into classrooms through the purchase of updated textbooks, curriculum materials, new technology and, whenever possible, new personnel. Under her guidance and direction, we try to equitably distribute resources to all six schools so that everyone is getting what they need to the greatest extent possible. Her philosophy has always been to maximize the use of resources in service to students.

District Administrators continue to promote and model our Values and Core Beliefs concerning the continuous improvement of student achievement, maintaining a standard of excellence for everyone, adults and students alike, settling for nothing less than highly effective instruction daily by making certain that what is being taught is relevant, engaging, and challenging. They do all of this while managing the day-to-day operations of running a school or department.

It's our teachers and other certified staff who define us as a school district. Teaching is the heart of the school district's work and, more importantly, responsible for student learning. Our teachers' commitment to their students and student success is what sets North Haven Public Schools apart from others. Through their careful planning, strong understanding of good instructional practices, and their own willingness to continue to learn and grow as educators, they are responsible for keeping this district on a path of continuous improvement. Our student outcomes reflect their dedication and hard work. We see this in our high school graduation rates, the number of students accepted into two and four year colleges and universities, and for those not going on to further their education, their readiness and preparedness to enter the world of work.

None of our accomplishments would be possible without the ongoing support of our administrative assistants, paraprofessionals, cafeteria personnel, bus drivers, and custodians. These are the "unsung" heroes who work behind the scenes to make certain everything else is in place so teachers and administrators can focus all of their attention on teaching.

Finally, we wish happiness and good health to those retiring at the end of this year, and thank them for all of their work on behalf of students. Marge Dolan (41 years), Nancy McHugh (36years), Susan McNamara (29 years), Tracey Carter (26 years), Christine Schwartz (17 years), Bert Bahls (13 years), Maureen O'Brien (16 years), Judy Thibault (16 years), and Thomasina Lindsay (11 years), have touched the lives of countless students over the years making their educational experience better and doing remarkable work daily.

There are many who come together daily and work collaboratively on behalf of students. I witness that happening across the North Haven Public Schools. They are committed to the district's mission of assisting all students to acquire the skills necessary to meet the demands of the twenty-first century and work hard to make that statement come alive. Thank you all for a very good year, and I look forward to picking up where we've left off when we return in August. Have an enjoyable and safe summer.

Sincerely,

*Robert D. Cronin, Ph.D.*

Superintendent of Schools

