



WPS Update

December 2018

The mission of the Wolcott Public Schools is to promote the academic, social, and emotional development of all students to become contributing members of the global community.

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From the Board Chairman & Superintendent:

Happy New Year, Wolcott Families and Staff:

As we move into the new calendar year and the second half of the school year, we'd like to take this opportunity to update you on important projects and issues in the 2018-2019 school year.

• Thanks to great collaboration from our school administrators, our additional levels of school security are going very well. Officer Mauriello has become an important part of the Tyrrell Middle School community. We appreciate the efforts of Chief Stephens to provide this additional School Resource Officer to the district this school year. Both Officer Mauriello and Officer Garguilo (WHS SRO) are available to work with our elementary schools as the need arises. The addition of our front door security staff is also going well at all of our schools K-8. These professionals are serving as the "face" of the schools when parents and others come to visit. Thank you to parents who have been very cooperative in our new procedures of sign-in/sign-out. These protocols help us better control who has access to our schools during the day.

• Thanks to the support of the Board of Education, we are making great strides with student technology. While TMS achieved a one-to-one student-to-Chromebook ratio last year, we've added a substantial number of these devices to WHS and are nearly at one-to-one this year. This means that any teacher can design technology-rich lessons at any time and almost never have trouble getting these resources into the classroom. As we finish this project, the need for our more traditional desktop computer labs will diminish. Additional student technology for our elementary schools will be part of this year's budget request to Town Council.

• In January, the Board of Education will begin the process of building its proposed budget for 2019-2020. This is the most important work that the Board does during each school year as it drives what resources and expectations will be found at the classroom level. Teachers, principals, district administrators, the Superintendent, and the Board all have a role to play in the budget process. If parents have an idea or suggestion, they are encouraged to call or email the Superintendent's office. This year, we are placing an extra emphasis on our district-wide Vision of the Graduate as a primary driver of budget decisions and strategic new projects.

We wish you health and prosperity in the new year!

In partnership,

Lori Delbuono Bartlett, Board of Education Chairman

Tony Gasper, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools



Alcott School:

Alcott School just completed a two week artist residency with musicians, Chuck and Mira Costa (The Sea The Sea). The two week program is called Where the Songs Come From. During the residency Chuck and Mira worked with each student in grade levels PK-5. They taught students how to write a song: You start with a blank page, have a theme, and then develop lyrics and a chorus around this theme. Students used the theme of kindness, friendship and home for their songs. These themes connect directly to our one book-one school reading initiative that we will start in March (shhh...the book is still a surprise for our students). Students shared their songs at our December town meeting performing them for friends and family members. They did a tremendous job!

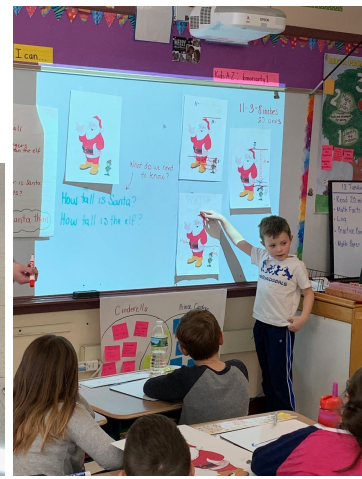
Also at our December town meeting, staff and students participated in our community giveback donating a dollar or more to wear pajamas to school to raise money for CCMC. Wearing pajamas is symbolic because it shows solidarity with patients at CCMC who often wear pajamas while they are in the hospital fighting and receiving treatment for cancer. I am happy to announce that through this giveback, the Alcott community raised over \$530.00 for CCMC. Great work!



Contact Shawn Simpson, Principal of Alcott School: ssimpson@wolcottps.org

Frisbie School:

Frisbie students are completing 3 Act Math Tasks to facilitate deep mathematical thinking. Students are shown a video on a new mathematical concept that engages and piques their curiosity. After the video, students are asked to share what they notice and wonder about how math plays a part in the video. The teacher guides the students to investigate a mathematical wondering. During Act 2, students are given some information after quality classroom discourse about what information might be needed to solve the problem. Students then work in groups to solve the problem and almost always students use different methods to arrive at the same solution. Act 3 is the reveal of the actual answer after students have shown their peers how they arrived at their solution. This reveal is the most exciting part of the task as students learn from their mistakes and that there are different ways to approach a problem. These 3 Act Math Tasks are getting students excited about everyday math while promoting a positive growth mindset.



Contact Kim Murtaugh, Principal of Frisbie School: kmurtaugh@wolcottps.org

Wakelee School:



The Wakelee Variety Show was a hit with all the student body. I would like to congratulate all the student acts for their preparation and willingness to perform before such a large audience. I would also like to thank the committee of teachers that worked together to run the show so seamlessly.

Wakelee students and staff were able to raise \$757 for CCMC PJ Day. The students were also treated to a visit from Adam Miller from KC 101, who stopped by the Wakelee assembly on his way to CCMC. We sent him with cards and student made snowflakes. He reached back out to Ms. Jenkins to let us know that the nursing staff was very appreciative of the gesture.

The Wakelee Chorus performed for the school on Thursday, December 13th. They worked very hard and it showed in the quality of their performance. I would like to thank Mr. Fontaine for all that he does to prepare the chorus.

American Legion Members Richard Merritt, Joe Vallencourt, Andy Oleanick, and Ferenc Osvald presented a new audio system that was donated by the American Legion. I want to thank the American Legion for their generous gift. We have already used the system multiple times in December.

Contact Deborah Osvald, Principal of Wakelee School: dosvald@wolcottps.org

Tyrrell Middle School:

The spirit of giving back to the community is alive and well at Tyrrell Middle School! Grade 8 students and teachers participated in the Holiday Bear Project by donating funds, shopping, wrapping, and then delivering gifts to Waterbury elementary school students in need. After receiving donated funds, teachers went shopping to purchase gifts for needy students. A number of Grade 8 students volunteered their time afterschool for multiple wrap sessions which were followed by teachers delivering the donated gifts to needy students at Bucks Hill Elementary School in Waterbury.

The music department has also been instrumental in integrating activities which enhanced the spirit of the season as well. On the evening of December 11th, Ms. Pytel and well over one hundred choral students treated an audience filled with family and friends to a holiday themed performance that incorporated songs of holiday celebration from cultures around the world. In addition to the evening performance, Ms. Pytel led students in caroling expeditions throughout the school in the weeks leading up to winter break.

On behalf of the students, faculty, and staff, I would like to thank the Tyrrell PTO for the nacho and ice cream holiday parties donated to students during their lunch waves. The students genuinely appreciated the treats! Your donations of food, supplies, and volunteers made these events possible and serves as one of the annual highlights for students.

Also in PTO news, I would like to remind parents that we are scheduled to have Detective Peter Morgan provide a parent workshop on the topic of internet and social media safety for young adolescents at January's PTO meeting. The presentation and accompanying meeting is scheduled to take place the evening of January 15th at 7pm in the Large Group Instruction Room. Detective Morgan's presentation will focus on providing parents with information and tools that are helpful in keeping middle school students safe when using popular applications and social media software.



Contact Joseph Norcross, Principal of Tyrrell Middle School: jnorcross@wolcottps.org

Wolcott High School:



On Tuesday, December 11th the National Honor Society held their annual Holiday Party during the school day. Students with special needs from Alcott and Wakelee Elementary School, Tyrrell Middle School, and the High School came together to celebrate the holidays with the members of NHS. After much preparation and decorating, the party was underway with many students working one-on-one with the students from the other schools, to help them feel welcomed and ensure they were having fun. There were many activities for everyone to participate in, including bingo, musical chairs, freeze dance, and holiday-related arts and crafts. There was a special visit from Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus to read the story 'Twas the Night Before Christmas and hand out gifts for all of the students at the party. Students also listened to

performances of holiday songs from the Wolcott High School jazz band and chorus classes to create a festive environment. Everyone involved helped to create a fun atmosphere that the students used to have an enjoyable party with new and old friends.

Contact Walter Drewry, Principal of Wolcott High School: wdrewry@wolcottps.org

Student Services:

On Thursday, December 13th the Wolcott High School Students attended a field trip and went to the Brass Mills Center Mall in Waterbury. The students from the 18-21 program, as well as the Life Skills Resource Room were placed in groups with peer helpers from Wolcott High School. The students were able to shop and stay within a budget. In addition, the students independently ordered and paid for their lunches at the mall's food court. Upon return to the High School the students wrapped the gifts which they purchased to bring home to share with family and friends. It was another successful trip for the students with a real world practical application. What a great way to support our local community businesses!

Also in December the Prekindergarten programs located at Alcott Elementary School celebrated the holiday season with a gathering that included many treats and fun activities. Parents and extended family members were welcomed in to Mrs. Shoemaker and Mrs. Curcio's classroom to celebrate the upcoming holidays and winter break.



Contact Kevin Hollis, Director of Student Services and Alternative Education: khollis@wolcottps.org

Assistant Superintendent:

Update on I-LEAP Projects: Last spring, teachers were invited to bring forth proposals for the first annual I-LEAP Projects. I-LEAP, the Incubator for Learning, Engagement, Assessment and Pedagogy, gives teachers an opportunity to pilot innovative, out-of-the-box projects that would have a significant and positive impact on instructional practice, student engagement and school culture. If successful, these projects could be expanded into other grade levels and schools. Four projects were selected for piloting this year. Two of the projects will be highlighted in this newsletter and the remaining two will be reported on in the spring.

At Tyrrell Middle School, the “Sweets and a Smile” I-LEAP project is well underway. The teachers leading this pilot are Bethany Stango and Avery Doyle along with students in their Life Skills class. Assisting in the project are Pam Conway and students in Project Explore. The mission of “Sweets and a Smile” is to assist in developing connections among students in the Life Skills program, their peers and Tyrrell Middle School staff. The teachers and students involved in this project created a coffee cart program to facilitate these connections in order to further support students’ communication and daily living skills. The students in the Life Skills program and their peer mentors are significantly benefiting from the collaborative efforts and the real-world experiences that this program offers.

In fourth grade classrooms throughout the district, teacher Nancy Warzecha is implementing a new coding curriculum as part of her I-LEAP project titled, “Cracking the Code.” Students are utilizing the code.org resources to learn text-based coding in their computer classes and the results thus far have been extremely positive, as students are engaging in innovative problem-solving activities in a highly collaborative environment.

The photos below show students at work on both the “Sweets and a Smile” and “Cracking the Code” I-LEAP projects:



Contact Frank Purcaro, Assistant Superintendent: fpurcaro@wolcottps.org

Business & Operations:



Winter is officially here! To prepare for the winter season, the Wolcott Public School's Safety and Wellness Committee has launched a campaign to help raise awareness and reduce accidents and injuries during the winter months.

With winter arriving, the Wolcott Public School Safety and Wellness Committee offer the following tips:

- Dress appropriately for outdoor activities, especially when waiting for the bus. Wear several thin layers to stay dry and warm, and don't forget warm boots, gloves/mittens, and a hat!
- Choose the right footwear. Soles that provide good traction are best for maneuvering on snow and ice. Avoid leather soles and shoes with high heels.
- Try to stay in designated walkways where our maintenance staff directs their snow and ice removal efforts.
- Watch out for black ice, particularly in parking lots.
- Use caution at entrances where snow is tracked in.
- Report icy conditions to district staff.

Have a safe winter and holiday season!

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