



WPS Update

December 2019

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.

Contents:

From the Board Chairman & Superintendent:	1
Assistant Superintendent	2
Alcott School:	3
Frisbie School	4
Wakelee School:	5
Tyrrell Middle School:	6
Wolcott High School:	7
Student Services	8
Business and Operations	9
Citizens Against Substance Abuse	10

From the Board Chairman & Superintendent:

As we wrap up the 2019 calendar year, we'd like to wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. In this edition of the newsletter, you will read about a wide variety of activities that have occurred in our schools over the past month. Most important are the many ways in which our schools and students contribute to the Wolcott and broader communities. Our students and teachers frequently go beyond the call of duty and give meaningfully to charities and organizations within Wolcott and other communities. The Board of Education's Vision of the Graduate states that all students will "Engage in and contribute to their local community and beyond" and will "Demonstrate a true commitment to civic involvement and responsibility." We are very proud to see all of the ways that our school system brings these ideals to fruition.



As a practical note, we've already had a few cancellations due to inclement weather. Usually within 48 hours of a cancellation, the calendar on our website is updated with the new last day of school in June. Click on www.wolcottps.org, then "Calendar," then "2019-2020 District Calendar." Be sure to wait a day or two after the cancellation for the online calendar to be updated. Also, please remember that our School Messenger system is the best way to find out about school delays and closings. Please be sure that your contact information is up to date with your school's secretary.

Best wishes for a Joyous Holiday Season,

Cynthia Mancini, Board of Education Chairman
Tony Gasper, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Assistant Superintendent:

Student Learning & Teaching:

Spotlight on Instruction: Meet Content Coaches Kim Stein and Holly Schinkel! Last year the Wolcott Board of Education approved adding the positions of Math Content Coach (Mrs. Stein) and ELL Consultant and Content Coach (Mrs. Schinkel).



Mrs. Stein has been working with the Wolcott Public Schools as a Math Interventionist at Frisbie school for the past ten years and has been a teacher at Frisbie for the past eighteen years . In addition to her continued role as Math Interventionist at Frisbie, in her new role as district wide Math content coach Mrs. Stein's time is spent working on a variety of K-8 math topics. These include, but are certainly not limited to the following: integrating new instructional strategies with teachers, curriculum development and improvement, embedded coaching, data analysis in school-wide and instructional data teaming, and co-facilitating professional development with contracted consultants. In addition, Mrs. Stein is focusing in and on the schools, grade-levels, and classrooms that have been identified as being in the greatest need for growth and improvement.

Mrs. Stein also regularly meets with the high school math department chair and teaching staff to share the work being conducted in the K-8 spectrum and to learn more about the needs and concerns of math curriculum and instruction in grades 9-12.



Mrs. Schinkel has been working with the Wolcott Public Schools as a Reading interventionist at Tyrrell Middle School for the past nine years and prior to that was a fourth grade teacher at Wakelee School. Mrs. Schinkel has certification in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. (TESOL). In her role as English Language Learner (ELL) consultant and content coach, Mrs. Schinkel provides instruction to ensure that (ELL) students meet and exceed individualized learning targets using a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies . Mrs. Schinkel's time is also spent working on a variety of K-8 English Language Arts topics. These include, but are certainly not limited to the following: integrating new instructional strategies with teachers,

curriculum development and improvement, embedded coaching, data analysis in school-wide and instructional data teaming, and co-facilitating professional development with contracted consultants. In addition, Mrs. Schinkel is focusing in on the schools, grade-levels, and classrooms that have been identified as being in the greatest need for growth and improvement. Mrs. Schinkel also regularly meets with the high school english department chair and teaching staff to share the work being conducted in the K-8 spectrum and to learn more about the needs and concerns of ELA curriculum and instruction in grades 9-12.

Contact Shawn Simpson, Assistant Superintendent: ssimpson@wolcottps.org

Alcott School:

Alcott students were recognized for their participation in the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge – Alcott achieved its 8th consecutive year of having 100% of its students meet the participation requirements. Leading Alcott as its top readers were 1st grader Adrianna Albini and 5th grader Ava DiPietro. These two students accompanied Reading teacher Mrs. Sullivan on a visit to the state Capitol as they represented the school and accepted formal recognition from Governor Lamont.



The Alcott PTO held its annual holiday celebration for students and families on December 5th with its Cookies and Cocoa with Santa event. PTO members and student volunteers from Tyrell and Wolcott High collaborated to present families with an evening of fun. Holiday music played as families gathered to do some gift shopping and craft making, all while enjoying the sweet taste of cookies and cocoa. The night itself was made complete with Santa himself making an appearance! Students lined-up to sit on Santa's lap and share with him their secret holiday wishes.



Contact Matt Calabrese, Principal of Alcott School: mcabrese@wolcottps.org

Frisbie School:

We are continuing to participate in our One School One Book Project. Students have been creating their own Humphreys in art class. Students stuffed a sock and some even attempted to sew the seams of their creature but we had extra family members on hand for those students who needed assistance with the sewing part. They used felt to add feet and ears to their little creature. It was a great way to incorporate the arts into our reading project. Thank you to the many volunteers who made this project possible and to the Frisbie PTO and WEF for the funds to make this idea come alive.



On Thursday, December 5th, the Frisbie PTO held their annual Cookies with Santa. We had the largest turnout in the past couple of years with over 100 students. The PTO offered arts and crafts for the students along with sweet treat. Santa even made an appearance to wish the students a wonderful holiday. In the gymnasium, I read one of my favorites *The Gingerbread Baby* by Jan Brett. It was a great school community event to get everyone in the holiday spirit. Thank you to the PTO who provides our students with so many wonderful activities.

Contact Kim Murtaugh, Principal of Frisbie School: kmurtaugh1@wolcottps.org

Wakelee School:

Wakelee fourth and fifth grade students enjoyed a Thanksgiving lunch together on Wednesday, November 27th. I would like to thank all our special guests including Mayor Dunn, Chief Stephens, Dr. Gasper, and Board members Mrs. Cordone, Ms. Leonard, Mr. D'Angelo, and Mr. Gugliotti for attending. Our PTO did an amazing job decorating the cafe for the occasion and serving students the meal. The Wakelee Chorus sang two songs to kick off the event!

Wakelee students were recognized by the Wolcott Volunteer Fire Department for their submission to the Fire Prevention Poster contest. Students and families were invited to attend a small celebration reception. After receiving their award the students enjoyed a magic show and cookies.

On Friday, December 13th Wakelee students took part in PJ Day For The Kids to help support Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Donations and cards were collected and will be delivered to CCMC. I would like to thank all our families for their generosity.



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

Tyrrell Middle School:

The Junior NVL Leadership Conference was held on November 15th, 2019 at Long River Middle School. Ten student athletes from Tyrrell were invited to partake in team building activities, leadership exercises, and listen to guest speakers. The presenters included: area high school coaches, CASA (Citizens Against Substance Abuse), a successful business owner from the greater Waterbury area, and counselors from multiple middle schools in the region. The leadership conference was an excellent opportunity for student athletes at Tyrrell Middle School who exhibit respect, initiative, and sportsmanship to further develop these positive character traits.



Project Explore students just completed the first round of the Sigma Math challenge, and I am pleased to share that of the over 2,000 students that participated nationally, only 22 had perfect scores. Eight of the twenty-two students with perfect scores were from Tyrrell Middle School. We are very proud of our students success on this national math challenge.

In an effort to help address the student well being component of the Tyrrell Middle School Vision of the Graduate, we have invited a number of guest speakers to hold assemblies this year that focus on topics related to our students' social, emotional, and physical well being. Wolcott CASA has been collaborating with our counseling department to research middle school level appropriate topics and speakers that will encourage student well being. On the morning of November 25th, all Tyrrell students attended an assembly focused on the dangers associated with vaping and marijuana. This was an interactive presentation that used role play and student participation as a means to reinforce the message being delivered. The following week, we had Dr. Alicia Farrell, who is a Cognitive Psychologist present: *Healthy Brain, Healthy Body: Vaping and Marijuana* to our entire student



body. The purpose of this presentation was to educate and empower middle school students to make decisions that are good for their physical and mental health. Specifically, they learned about the addictive nature of nicotine and the unhealthy consequences of vaping. Woven into this presentation are messages related to making choices, accepting consequences and having the grit/resilience necessary to make choices with self-respect.



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

Wolcott High School:



Wolcott High School students took a trip to the state capital in Hartford to meet with State Representative Gail Mastrofancesco and State Senator Rob Sampson. The visit included a tour of the historic capital building and a question and answer session with Mrs. Mastrofancesco and Mr. Sampson. The trip to the capital was part of a civic action project that asked 10th grade students to research a current issue and communicate with their representatives about it. The trip gave students the unique experience to learn about the legislative process and to hear from their state representatives.



Additionally, U.S. Congressperson Jahana Hayes visited Wolcott High School to speak with students about her experiences as a member of Congress and to answer questions from students about issues of interest to students. Mrs. Hayes also met with a smaller group of students and answered additional questions.

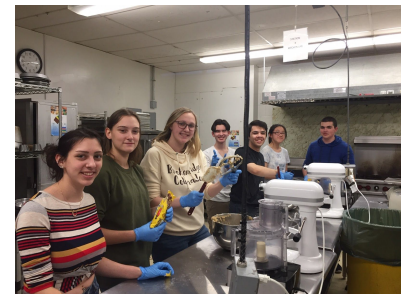


Our tenth grader civics students were invited to submit essays highlighting examples of their leadership within the school and community. This was part of a selection process to be invited to represent the school at the prestigious Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Conference in the Spring. This past week a panel of social studies teachers assessed essays and conducted interviews with students to select two students to attend this overnight leadership event being held at SCSU. I am proud to announce that Megan Prescott and Ivy Browne are this year's representatives. Congratulations to them both.

Through an exceptional effort coordinated by our FCCLA students we were able to donate 108 items for the CT Coats for Kids drive, including numerous handmade crocheted and knitted items from Ms. Nicol's Flex students. These will help many families this year and brings our two year total to 198 items! Great job, WHS community!



Our SkillsUSA students hosted many successful events this Fall, helping families throughout the community. First they hosted a free Electronics Recycling event, collecting 6,289 lbs of unwanted electronics to be recycled. Then they gathered canned foods for the Veterans Luminary celebration helping the Wolcott Food Pantry collect 678 items to distribute to the community. They also hosted an ARC Blood Drive and collected 30 pints of blood to help with the American Red Cross with their life saving efforts.



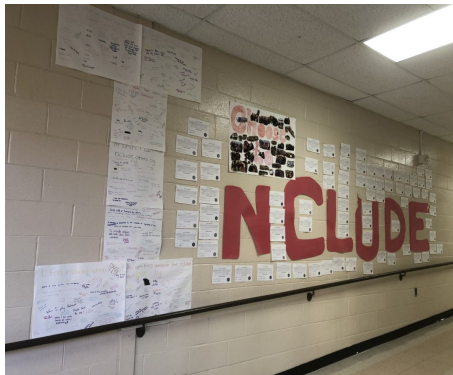
Mr. Tutalo's culinary students prepared and served a full Thanksgiving meal to dozens of senior citizens at the Wolcott Senior Center during Thanksgiving week. This annual event was a huge success. The Community Service Club also prepared 80 bags of chocolate cookies that were distributed with Thanksgiving Food from the Wolcott Food Pantry.

Our students have been busy generously donating their skills and time to help others in need during this Holiday season and we are very proud of them!

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

Student Services:

In an effort to promote inclusion within Wolcott High School and the community as a whole, the Unified Sports Class and Team have joined efforts to provide the building with various activities.



The Unified Sports class read the I#ChooseToInclude pledge after the recent Halloween contest. Students were asked to sign the inclusion pledge in order to promise to practice inclusion throughout their day. During the high school lunch waves throughout the second week of November, the Unified Sports Team sponsored I#ChooseToInclude awareness activities throughout all the lunch waves. Students were asked to spin the wheel, graciously provided by CASA, and answer questions about how they include others, how they feel when they are included, and how they can promote inclusion. Students then wrote their responses on posters to be hung throughout the building.

Those who participated were given a "Choose to Include" bracelet and were photographed with our Inclusion board that incorporated them into the word inclusion and had the signed pledges surrounding them. As a culminating activity, the Unified Sports class has placed Kindness Rocks around the outside and inside of the Wolcott High School building. The idea is to hopefully brighten someone's day provide some additional motivation. If a person finds a rock they can take it and rehide it for someone else to find (hopefully around the high school but hiding somewhere else in the community is also acceptable). This coincides with a Facebook page called Wolcott Rocks. Community members that find rocks they can take a picture of the rock and post to the page (if they have a Facebook account). This is a great way to spread some joy to students, staff and community members. It is our hope that through these efforts, students are more conscious of their decisions to include and accept those around them.



Contact Kevin Hollis, Director of Student Services: Khollis@wolcottps.org

Business & Operations:

Facilities & Grounds



Security upgrades at all the schools were completed over the summer and during the fall thanks in large part to a grant received from the State of Connecticut. The grant allowed the district to update our camera servers, which in turn, allowed us to install 56 new cameras. The grant also included funds so a security vestibule could be created at the high school's main entrance.



Also, all new LED lamps were installed at Wolcott High, Tyrrell Middle, and Frisbie Elementary School. Savings have already been realized, as energy costs for these schools are running noticeably lower this year when compared to last year.



Winter has come to Wolcott by way of 2 storms that made travel and cleanup difficult. I'm happy to report that all the snow removal equipment (and staff!) performed well with no major breakdowns. I am keeping my fingers crossed that these storms are few and far between this year.

Wayne Natzel
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Business Manager
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Citizens Against Substance Abuse:

CASA collaborated with Tyrrell Middle School hosted a vaping/e-cigarette awareness presentation for students on November 25, 2019. It was very informative and great to see the knowledge students already have around this topic and how much is still to be learned. It was interesting to see how many questions the students asked that were about e-cigarettes but also marijuana and other drugs. This sparked an idea to have a CASA question and answer once a month during announcements. This would give students the option to submit questions and have them answered or if there were no questions CASA would still read off drug facts for students each month. This is a possible collaboration and still working out the logistics. CASA is excited to be educating younger students on such important topics. Unfortunately due to weather our December coalition meeting and presentation from Dr. Alicia Farrell had to be rescheduled for January 21st, 2020, see flyer for more details.

CASA and the Wolcott PD are also hosting a CASA, Cops, and Carolers community event on Wednesday, December 18th at Nutmeg Farms. Hope to see you there!

Attend a Special Presentation with Dr. Alicia Farrell



Tuesday, January 21st
2:30-3:30 p.m.
@Wolcott High School

*How to Nurture and Empower
Young People's Grit,
Resilience and Self
Confidence.*



We've lost touch with what's important; connection, conviction and authenticity. It's time for a shift. As adults, we need to get back to basics by committing to our values, thinking for ourselves, and not taking the age-appropriate struggle out of children's lives.

For more information contact Haley Shoop, hshoop@wolcottps.org www.wolcottcasa.org



Wednesday, December 18th, 4:30-7:30 PM
@Nutmeg Farms (1520 Wolcott Rd)

Join us for our Holiday Event: Wolcott CASA, COPS (Wolcott Police Department) & CAROLERS (Wolcott High Cheerleaders)



Wolcott PD will be raffling off a Ring doorbell to one lucky Wolcott resident! Santa Claus will be escorted by the Wolcott Fire Department at 6 PM.



Check out our new website: www.wolcottcasa.org

Contact Haley Shoop, CASA Director: hshoop@wolcottps.org