



WPS Update

January 2020

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:

February and March are some of the most important weeks of work for the Board and Superintendent. It is during this time that we will work together to formulate the budget proposal that will go forward to the Wolcott Town Council. The budget is the most important document created in any year. It is the budget that lets us try to bring the Board's goals and priorities to life for Wolcott's kids. All resources, programming, staffing, academics, arts, and athletics are supported in one way or many via the budget. The Board works very hard over multiple evening meetings to hear from the superintendent and administrators about the needs of the school system and prioritizes these needs to the best of their ability within our given resources.



In the coming weeks, you will hear more about the budget and about your opportunities to hear from and speak with the Superintendent. Each year, he makes public presentations of the budget as it is being designed; typically at PTO, PAC, and/or CPEC meetings. We encourage you to attend one or more of these meetings. After the proposed budget is adopted by the Board, it then moves to be deliberated by the Wolcott Town Council. This is another important opportunity for you to be active in this process.

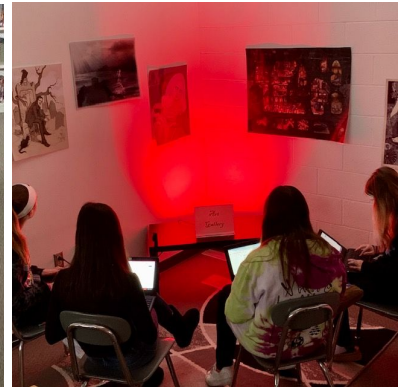
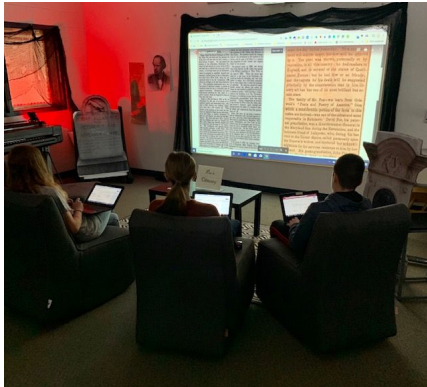
Thanks in advance for your interest and participation.

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

Assistant Superintendent:

Spotlight on Technology:

The district continues to promote and expand the use of technology as a way to make learning fun and engaging for students. This is very evident if you have a chance on any given day to visit the media center at Tyrrell Middle School. Teachers regularly collaborate with Library Media Specialist, Sheila DiStasio and Para Educator, Andrea Krug to bring their lessons to life. Some of the technologies that students are able to use to conduct their research include Chromebooks, interactive projectors, virtual reality goggles, the Google Suite of Apps, Google mini's, and several web-based platforms to name a few. Mrs. DiStasio and Mrs. Krug also do a great job setting the scene in the library. When visiting the TMS media center you may enter and see a digital fireplace, as you hear the blazing wood crackling, or perhaps hear Phife and drums playing in the background as you see digital images of our forefathers throughout the library, while you research colonial times. Whatever the theme may be, it is evident that the use of these technologies and the collaboration of teachers and the media center staff result in fun, engaging, and meaningful learning for our students. The pictures below show students at Tyrrell Middle School in the media center studying Edgar Allan Poe.



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

Alcott School:

Alcott unveiled its much anticipated Lego Mosaic by artist Rob Surette. Prior to the unveiling, students and staff members assisted in the project by placing Lego pieces onto the board, all while under the direction and watchful eyes of Surette. The theme of the mosaic, as you can see from the photo, encourages everyone to Look for the Good. The mosaic is being displayed outside the Alcott library for all to see.

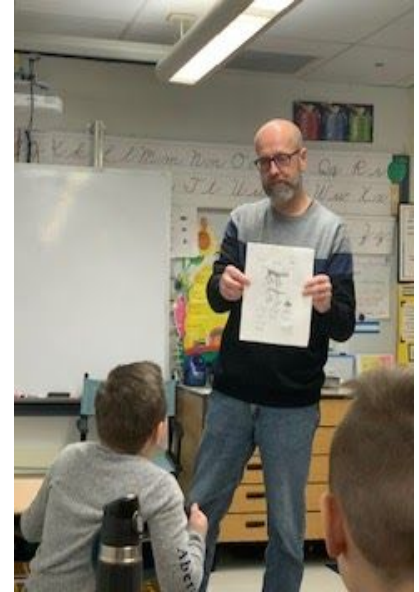
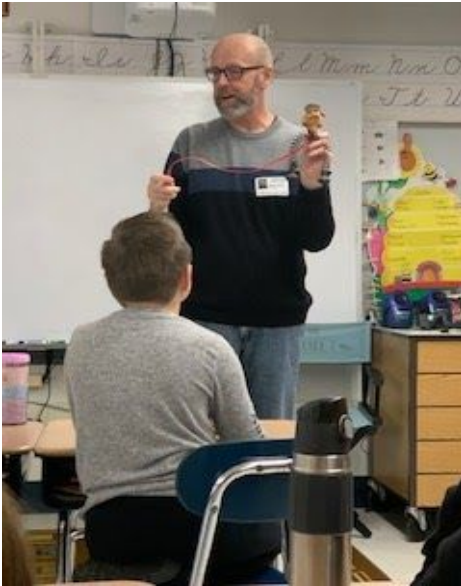


i-Ready Mid-Year testing is underway. All students in grades K – 5 are being tested in ELA and Math to view the academic progress that has been made. Scores from the beginning of the year, which created each student's baseline, will be compared with these middle of the year results. This information will provide teachers valuable data in regards to student academic growth and in determining intervention support.

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

Frisbie School:

Patrick Smith from CT State Historical Museum visited Frisbie School on Friday, January 3rd to build upon the student knowledge on inventions. Fourth grade students have begun to work on creating their inventions for the annual CT Invention Convention. Patrick Smith informed students about patents, along with showing them various CT inventions. One of their favorites was a child's toy from 1954 that now resembles Slinky Dog from Toy Story.



Frisbie students have completed the winter reading and math diagnostic online i-Ready test. At our instructional data team meetings, teachers met to review the data that informs their instructional practice and groupings. While analyzing the reports, each grade level chose a reading standard to continue to review with students along with designing a center activity so students can practice demonstrating their knowledge on the concept.

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

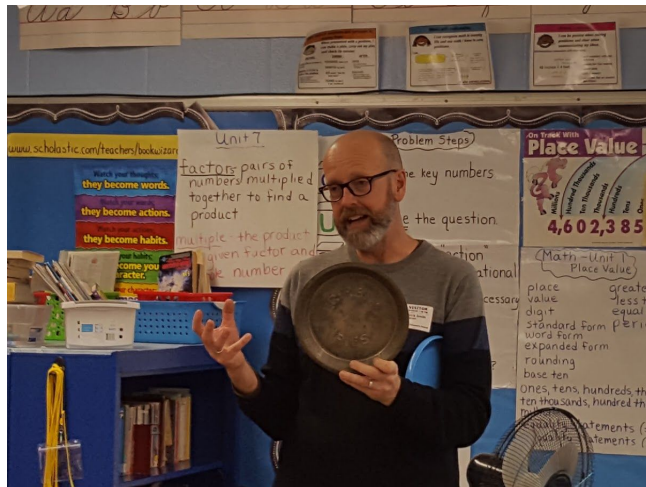
Wakelee School:

All students were assessed using our online platform iReady in both ELA and math during the month of January. Teachers are currently reviewing the data and looking at individuals as well as trend growth for students. During grade level meetings teachers will be discussing groupings and determining intervention groups.



Wakelee School student leaders enjoyed a day of interactive workshops at the Connecticut Association of School's Elementary Leadership Conference recently at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Six of our fourth and fifth grade Student Council members practiced their communication and collaboration skills which included the acceptance of others' ideas, taking risks as well as mindfulness techniques.

Patrick Smith, from the Museum of Connecticut History, spoke to each of the fourth grade classes about CT inventions. He brought many artifacts to show the children, including early Frisbie pie pans, wiffle balls, and a child's walking toy poodle. The children were fascinated by his presentations and received inspiration for their current CT Invention Convention projects.



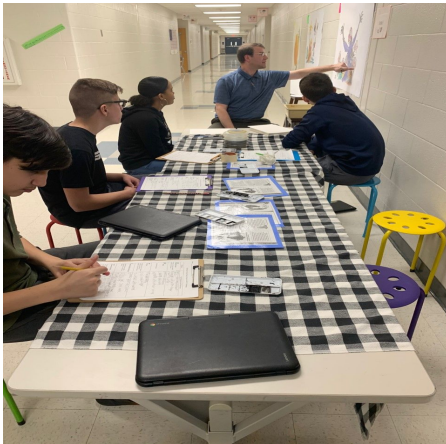
Contact Deborah Osvald, Principal of Wakelee School: dosvald@wolcottps.org

Tyrrell Middle School:

Onyx Team students are currently studying the life and works of Edgar Allan Poe as part of their unit on authors' craft. To guide students to the realization that Poe's life and work are inseparable, they were asked to complete five Poe-related learning stations in our media center. Here, students engaged in a number of different activities, including analyzing artwork, gathering biographical information from multimodal sources, and examining possible causes of Poe's mysterious death. They



also read primary sources in the form of two obituaries which they evaluated in terms of objectivity and accuracy. Students thoroughly enjoyed this learning activity. Special thanks go out to Mrs. Distasio and Mrs. Krug of our media center who did an outstanding job of transforming the space into a dark and mysterious environment, perfect for our study of Poe!



While Onyx Team students have been studying the works of Poe, Pearl Team students are studying the author's craft with a focus on irony, foreshadowing, imagery, tone, and other literary devices. Students moved through 5 stations to study Dahl's life including a virtual reality tour through his writing hut, they watched and analyzed clips from some of his most famous works, read passages from his children's books, and studied his artistic craft through his illustrator Quentin Blake. Students explored, recreated art, and genuinely

seemed to enjoy learning about the darkness and magic of his works.

Seventh grade students spent several days in Tyrrell's Media Center exploring life in ancient Egypt. They worked in flexible groups of students from both teams and immersed themselves in stations presenting various tasks and experiences. Students took a virtual reality tour of Queen Nefertiti's tomb, played a modern recreation of a classic Egyptian game, Senet, and analyzed ancient artifacts through the use of augmented reality. They were challenged to reflect on what they had learned by

comparing ancient Egyptian lives to their own.



Spanish and French students participated in a variety of student created learning centers to teach their peers about the history, traditions and vocabulary surrounding Three Kings Day. Some of the activities developed by Project Explore students were a Webquest, Flippity Scavenger Hunt, Pear Deck, Create Your Own Adventure, etc. On Monday, students rotated to various locations to take part in these activities. On Tuesday, students met in the cafeteria to sample student made traditional Spanish and French breads (Rosca de Reyes and Galette des Rois). They also made origami crowns with a video tutorial recorded by a 7th grade student.

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

Wolcott High School:



January 4th was a big day for our WHS Robotics Team. Over 40 teams and hundreds of students, mentors, and parents attended the FIRST Robotics Competition Kick Off at WHS. Infinite Recharge is the title of this year's season, and it will feature a fun Star Wars theme. Over the next 6 weeks our team will be working diligently making a robot to meet the challenge.

For the past month, Wolcott High School's Criminology students have had the experience of having a Wolcott police officer, a retired defense attorney, and a Lieutenant at a Connecticut Corrections facility come in and teach them about their careers. The high school's Criminology class is a career pathway class and these individuals were able to teach the students about their careers and help them better understand our criminal justice

system.

Members of the Community Service Club volunteered at the Bread for Life soup kitchen in Southington on January 8th to sort food, prepare meals, and serve lunch.



On January 27, 2019, eleven new members were inducted into the WHS EXCEL Club. Julia Hynek was sworn in as President of the club and Youseff Macary was sworn in as Treasurer. The EXCEL Club is a group of students dedicated to improving the school and making a positive difference in our community through volunteerism. EXCEL Club is now 39 members strong.

The CASA (Citizens Against Substance Abuse) Coalition was honored to bring Dr. Alicia Farrell as a guest speaker for their January 21st coalition meeting here at Wolcott High School. Dr. Farrell presented on the importance of building resilience and setting healthy boundaries with young adults. This meeting was well attended by school staff and the community at large.



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

Student Services:

On Tuesday December 10, 2019 at Wolcott High School, the National Honor Society hosted its annual Life Skills Holiday party for all of the district's Life Skills students. This holiday party in the Resource Center consisted of playing games, constructing arts and crafts, listening to holiday stories and enjoying pizza for lunch. Santa also made an appearance and gave stuffed animals to each of the students! All National Honor Society students were assigned one student to provide mentoring and guide the students through the many fun festive activities.

They demonstrated the necessary skills such as following directions, waiting turns, learning rules and getting along with peers. The Student Services Department would like to thank the WHS Jazz Band, WHS Chorus, the National Honor Society, special education teachers and paraprofessionals for their hard work and dedication in making this party such a great success.



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

Business & Operations:

The Wolcott Public Schools Food Service Department is happy to announce a new menu as of the first of the year! The new menu has many new choices for students to choose from, including new main entrees and alternate meals. All items served still remain to be whole grain, low fat with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Moving forward, each month will be based around a five-week cycle menu with special meals that pertain to monthly holidays. Our first holiday meal will be for Valentine's Day – Sweetheart Nuggets, Friendship Fries, and Be Mine Broccoli or Orange Cutie Wedges. All meals served that day come with a Cupid Sugar Cookie!



The new menu also features the item's carb counts, as well as designates which items are gluten free and contain egg. If there are questions on items pertaining to other allergies, please contact the Food Service Director.



Have you ever wondered how to keep ahead of your child's lunch account balance?

For student account information, including balance inquiries, you can set up a free account on the My Payments Plus website.

Through the point of sale software's website, you can add money to your child's account, block a la carte charges, and set up low balance alerts. If you have questions regarding how to set up an account or if you need your child's pin number, please contact the Food Service Director.



Nicole Maxellon, MS

Director of Nutrition Services

nicole.maxellon@wolcottps.org

Todd Bendtsen

Business Manager

tbendtsen@wolcottps.org

Citizens Against Substance Abuse:



In the past couple of months CASA has focused its efforts on important issues such as e-cigarette use, how trauma impacts our youth, anxiety, depression, and building resilience in young people. CASA has been working on a few exciting initiatives. As of January 16th every Thursday at WHS mindfulness is now offered for at least 10-15 minutes for students serving a detention afterschool. Students attend their detention and are given the choice if they would like to try mindfulness in the CASA office and return to serving their detention afterwards. Our first session we had 7 students attend mindfulness and 2 stay back because of work loads. Mindfulness is a useful tool to help teach a person how to respond to situations thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively. Through research it has been shown to be especially beneficial for teenagers who are often impulsive and some who might face high-pressure expectations, emotional break-ups, arguments with friends/family, stressful social situations, and emerging mental health conditions. Feedback from students was that

it was “very relaxing and calming” and some even asked what app we were using and downloaded it on their phones afterwards. The first session was offered in the Zen Den which also gave students who had never been there the opportunity to check it out. In addition to offering mindfulness during detention CASA in collaboration with the RTC Youth Leadership Group will explore other ways to offer mindfulness to the rest of the student body. During January we also brought in Tricia Dahl from Yale to speak to WHS students about the negative effects of vaping/e-cigarette use. We received great feedback from students and teachers about how informative her presentation was. CASA continues to raise awareness about this issue and offer resources to teens/adults especially information on how to quit.

Our January coalition meeting was well attended and with a special presentation from Dr. Alicia Farrell on how to build resilience in young people. She gave great insight on how to support and build boundaries with young people. Dr. Farrell speaks on a variety of topics and we are looking to bring her back at a

separate date to speak to teachers. In addition to several things we have implemented, there are a lot of exciting things being planned for the spring. Our newly formed Check In Committee is working on a Rise Up/Check In Event at WHS that will help raise awareness about mental health. This event will bring in interactive booths, music, food, and fun to reduce stigma and build coping skills. CASA will also participate in National Drug Facts Week and

start planning for National Prevention Week later this year. We look forward to our next coalition meeting February 4th, check out the flyer for more details.

Check out our new website: www.wolcottcasa.org

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



YOU Can Help Build A Healthy Wolcott!

**Join us Tuesday, February 4th
6:30 p.m. @Tyrrell Middle School
in the Large Instruction Room**

**We all play a part in bettering the
community we work and live in.**

