



WPS Update

May 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:

We'd like to take this opportunity to clear up some misconceptions that occurred during recent budget hearings. On Tuesday, June 5th, the Town Council approved a budget that reduced the Board of Education's request by \$200,000. As we've mentioned to you in prior communications, this will unfortunately have an impact on resources and services for the classroom. At its next meeting, the Board will work to address the cuts received from the Council and will strive to cut where the least negative impact will occur for students.

Over the past ten years, the Board of Education has made substantial cuts in efforts to control costs. Administrators have been cut. Teachers have been cut. Resources have been reduced. We've turned over every proverbial rock to find efficiencies in facilities, energy, and operating costs. In fact, the 2018-2019 budget proposes to spend \$200,000 less on operational costs than we did five years ago. These efficiencies are due to ongoing efforts by our district leaders who take seriously their commitment to Wolcott's children and taxpayers. As an example, our school system has been recognized with Energy Star certification for all five of our buildings and conservation efforts have netted \$2,000,000 in savings over a five-year period.

At Tuesday's Town Council meeting, a statement was made that the schools can deliver all of the current programming with a \$300,000 cut. This statement is factually inaccurate. On March 14, 2018, the Finance Committees of the Board and Council held a joint meeting. At this meeting, the full Board budget was presented. Council members had an opportunity to scrutinize every line item and all questions were answered with facts about the Board's expenses. It was thoroughly explained to the Council members at this meeting and also at our presentation to the full council that costs we could not control were going up: special education and medical benefits among others. If all that the Board and Superintendent did was propose a continuation of the 2017-2018 services, our requested increase would have been 4.2%. This is connected to increases in special education, energy, benefits, and contracted salaries. But, the Board and Superintendent worked together to delay projects and purchases that lowered this request from 4.2% to 3.03%. The Board and the Superintendent work

hard over a three-month period to create a budget that represents the needs of the students; nothing more, nothing less. There is no “padding” to fall back on.

Also, there was mention during the Council meeting of a forensic financial audit of the Board. All residents should take comfort in the fact that Connecticut law requires an independent audit by external accountants of every board of education once per year. The Wolcott Board of Education has had perfectly clean audits for more than ten years with no “findings” that would indicate any type of impropriety or faulty accounting procedures.

In closing, we’d like to assure you that the Board and Superintendent will continue to collaborate in their quest to provide the best education possible for the children of Wolcott within the funds that are apportioned to us by the Town Council. We’d like to thank the members of the community who have been active during the budget process. We appreciate your support.

In partnership,

Lori Delbuono Bartlett, Board of Education Chairman

Tony Gasper, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools



Alcott School:

Grade 4 students recently read a science article in *Time for Kids*, entitled “*The Science of Summer Fun*”. The article was about the physics of water slides and the technology behind how they work. Students took the lead in their learning, asking if they could take a virtual field trip to a water park using our Virtual Reality Kits. After some research online students found a *YoutubeVR* trip in which students could take a virtual 3 minute ride on a waterslide. Everyone had a blast on our virtual field trip and we did not even have to bring our bathing suits! Next week students will have a culminating S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) activity in which they use paper towel rolls, foil, cups, straws, and tape to create and test their own water slides.



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

Frisbie School:

Physical fitness is booming at Frisbie Elementary School. On May 2nd, the entire school participated in ACES Day. ACES stands for all children exercise simultaneously. Students walked around the back field for over half an hour tracking their laps. Staff and PTO volunteers were stationed around the field to stamp their sheet after every completed lap. Many of our students walked over a mile while enjoying the spring weather. Thank you for to the PTO for coordinating this event and the walk-a-thon spirit sticks.

Our marathon students finished up their final mile on Saturday, May 12th at the Cheshire High School track. These thirty-nine students have been running laps in the gymnasium before school and at home to promote proper health and fitness habits. Congratulations on a great milestone!



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

Wakelee School:

Wakelee students are actively engaged in science. First grade students studied the life cycle of a butterfly. Students recorded their observations at the four stages of development, from the egg stage through the butterflies emerging from the chrysalis. As the culminating activity the students released the butterflies. Third grade students have been studying rocks and the many characteristics they possess. The students looked closely at the rocks with a magnifying glass and recorded their findings. The students worked in groups to discuss what they observed and identified similarities and differences.



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

Tyrrell Middle School:

Tyrrell Middle School has been abuzz with a variety of positive curricular and extracurricular activities over the last several weeks. Grade 6 language arts classes, students in Ms. Tedeschi and Mrs. Wilson's classes have been focusing on effective argument writing by researching "homelessness in America". Throughout the unit, students read a variety of texts and watched video clips that provided examples of varied degrees of how individuals respond to the needs

of others. The goal was for students to understand and appreciate multiple perspectives and develop a meaningful, coherent written argument using evidence from credible sources.

As an extension, students collaborated with our social worker Mr.

Cianchetti and also Mrs. Conway to learn about community resources available to those that may be in need within our town. A trip to the Wolcott Food Pantry afforded students an opportunity to participate in a source of support for those in need right here in the Wolcott community. Students toured the pantry, learned about its function in town and helped organize some of the donations that were collected at Tyrrell.

Throughout this unit, students were focused on increasing knowledge and skill development aligned to language arts standards, while also reinforcing respect, empathy, and citizenship.

On a different note, the Tyrrell Middle School baseball team had a 9-1 season and won the Junior NVL Conference by beating Long River Middle School of Prospect in the championship game. The Tyrrell softball team had a strong season as well going 7-1, and have made it to the conference championship where they will be playing Seymour Middle School for the Junior NVL crown.

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



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Wolcott High School:



On May 17, 2018 Wolcott High School had their annual Luau to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. Students enjoyed time outside participating in fun events including sports, races, field day games, obstacle courses, and inflatable games. Students also enjoyed treats such as snow cones and cotton candy. The students and staff raised over \$1300!

A successful Junior Prom was held at the Aqua Turf on May 5th and a fantastic Senior Prom was held on May 19th. Students had a wonderful time and were complimented on their behavior and attitudes by the staff at the venue.



We had a Zumba class run by Miss McCarthy for donations for the Relay for Life team. Teachers and students joined together to work on fitness goals. A fantastic time was had by all as funds were raised for a great cause!

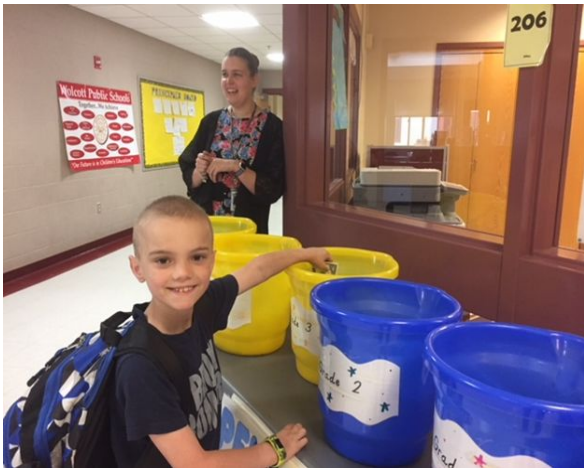
The month of May has been filled with many banquets and awards nights to honor our students for all of their accomplishments throughout the year. These events have included our Super Senior Banquet, Book Awards, Senior Awards Night, and our Music Awards Banquet. We are proud of all of the effort our students put in each day to deserve these honors!

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

Student Services:

The Special Education Department at Frisbie conducted its annual fundraiser to raise money for the Wolcott Special Games which are held every year in the month of May. The entire student body participated in a Penny War to show their support for all of the Wolcott special athletes and families attending the popular event.

In addition, the Frisbie Special Education students helped make the posters for each of the stations at the games, signs to advertise the Penny Wars within the school, and two the Frisbie students read a short speech before presenting the check with the raised money to the coordinators of the Special Games. The school was proud to have raised \$511 dollars this year to help contribute to the success of this community building event!!



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

Student Learning & Teaching:

Spotlight on Math Instruction. Teachers and students in grades K-8 are concluding their second successful year using the new district-wide math program titled, *enVision Math 2.0*. Utilizing cutting-edge adaptive technology, *enVision Math 2.0* helps students build a stronger conceptual understanding of math while providing more opportunities for problem-based learning. Students and teachers have enjoyed the personalized math practice and homework features, as well as the online, step-by-step tutorials available through the MathXL and “My Practice Buddy” components of the program. In the month of May alone, district usage reports show 400 teacher logins and approximately 850 student logins to the online portal for lessons and support. The district is also using the *enVision 2.0* resource to support Algebra I instruction at the high school and is planning on expanding into Geometry and Algebra II classes over the next two years. Please visit the site below to learn more about the features included with *enVision Math 2.0*.

<https://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PS2xlm&acornRdt=1&acornRef=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Epearsonschool%2Ecom%3A80%2FenVisionmath2>

Contact Frank Purcaro, Director of Student Learning and Teaching: fpurcaro@wolcottps.org



Business & Operations:

Facilities:



Thank You from Dave Stankus & Welcome Aboard Wayne Natzel.

A short six years ago I had the good fortune of being hired as an energy manager for our school district and this turned into a full time position as your Facility Director. I quickly realized how hard everyone works to make Wolcott a great school system. The dedication, energy and work ethic of everyone in our school system has been remarkable to say the least.

While I look forward to enjoying my retirement, I will very much miss being part of our school district. Thank you for the wonderful opportunity afforded to me and I sincerely appreciate the support provided.

Moving forward, I would like to let everyone know that Mr. Wayne Natzel will be the new Facility Director starting on June 18th and I will be working with him until the end of this school year. Mr. Natzel has served on the Board of National School Plant Management Association and has been a member in good standing of the Connecticut Schools Building and Grounds Association. Mr. Natzel has 25 years of experience in this field and his education and knowledge will certainly help our district to continue to be successful.