

WPS Update

November 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.



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From the Board Chairman & Superintendent:

We have a lot for which to be thankful as we close out the Thanksgiving holiday.

Firstly, we'd like to thank the returning and new members of the Wolcott Board of Education. Serving on a board of education requires hundreds of hours per year of volunteer time. This is not a small undertaking and our Board members do so with a lot of dedication and thoughtfulness. Their decisions have a direct impact on the curriculum and policies that guide each child's learning.

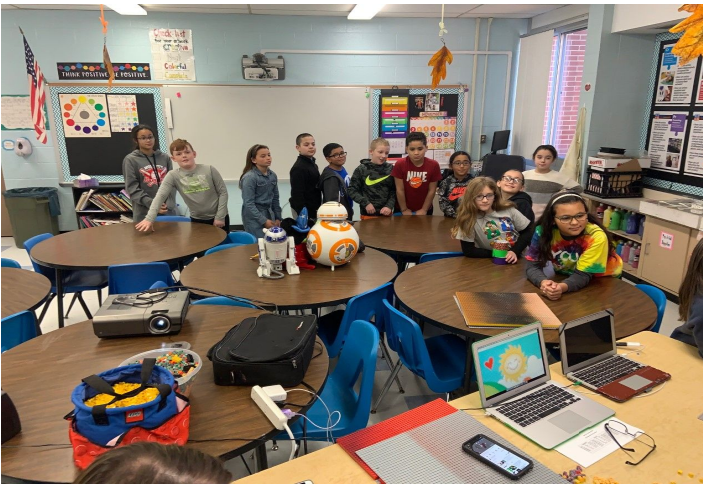
We are thankful for our staff that has weathered a challenging start to the 2019-2020 school year. The IT issues that we experienced earlier in the year provided an opportunity for everyone to demonstrate their dedication and professionalism. In adverse conditions, teaching, and learning continued in all classrooms. Our IT staff members have put in many, many extra hours throughout the restoration process that continues today.

We're also thankful for our community partners. The Mayor's office, Town Council, and the Wolcott Police Department all play a vital part in the Board of Education's role. Educating Wolcott's kids is not possible without partnership from a wide range of people and organizations. We'd also like to thank the residents and organizations such as the Wolcott Lions Club, who recently provided vision screenings to our pre-kindergarten students.

Thank you for your support of our school system,
Cindy Mancini & Tony Gasper

Assistant Superintendent:

Spotlight on Instruction: In order to promote the sharing of classroom instruction and to encourage a more collaborative learning environment within our schools, the district continues to support the practice of Learning Walks. The Learning Walk process consists of 10-15 minute classroom visits by small groups of administrators and teachers with a specific instructional focus in mind. The Learning Walk process is used to collect observable data associated with: student assessment, instructional grouping, and student engagement through high-order thinking. Each individual school also has a specific focus area that is tied directly to Wolcott Public Schools Vision of the Graduate. Some examples of these focus areas are: Students setting goals and implementing strategies to achieve them; Evidence of students persevering in the face of adversity; and Evidence of students having a respectful disagreement or debate. The evidence that was collected from this process is shared at district and school-wide data team meetings. The information is useful in identifying areas of instructional strengths and areas that are in need of more focused professional development and attention moving forward.



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

Alcott School:

Alcott School closed out the month of October with its annual Halloween parade. Led by Assistant Superintendent Simpson and Principal Calabrese, students in grades Pre-K – 2nd marched around the hallways proudly wearing their favorite Halloween attire. Students from grades 3-5, staff members, and families lined the hallways to show their support. The occasion was very well attended by family and friends.



On November 8th, Alcott school showed its gratitude by holding an assembly to honor our Veterans. With more than 20 local Veterans in attendance, students read facts about our military branches, sang patriotic songs, and presented Veterans with art projects and painted rocks with patriotic symbols. Along with the general student body, Boys and Girls Scouts presented our nation's colors, 5th grader and Little Marine Tyus Kelly, assisted with the presentation, and Daniel Pratt from Tyrrell School played "Taps" on his trumpet. Following the assembly, student council members participated in a "Meet and Greet" with veterans and enjoyed a breakfast sponsored by our PTO. To go along with the assembly, 6 boxes of coats, clothes, and toiletry items were collected and are to be donated to local Veterans.

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

Frisbie School:

Improving school climate through providing students opportunities to work on their communication and problem solving skills with their peers is an initiative this year at Frisbie School. Every student and staff member attended a field trip to Camp Sloper where they participated in a variety of activities that required students to work together to complete complex tasks. One of the favorite activities with the older students was the lower ropes course where they had to navigate through an obstacle course while trusting their peers. The younger students especially enjoyed working together to make words out of their bodies. We are hoping to have the opportunity to visit there again soon.



On Thursday, November 7th, Frisbie School came together for the annual Veterans Day assembly. Over forty veterans were escorted into the assembly by the Frisbie students that they are related to and were led by the boy/girl scout color guard. Our assembly began with the Pledge of Allegiance and was followed by the third grade singing the Star Spangled Banner. Then each grade level presented a song or reading recognizing the veterans who have given so much for their country. Our ceremony closed with a flag folding narrated by a veteran from the American Legion of Oakville who explained the symbolism of the 13 folds. Thank you to the Frisbie staff for making this event such a success. A special thank you to the veterans for their dedication to our country.

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

Wakelee School:

Our third graders participated in a Spooky Saga Young Writers contest. The students were asked to write a 100 word mini saga that had a spooky mood and incorporated all the reading and writing story elements. We are happy to report that a number of the Wakelee third graders' mini sagas have been chosen to be published in the Connecticut Spooky Sagas 2019.



Our student leaders led our Look for the Good Campaign assembly. Students were reminded to look for the positive attributes in social situations and others. Students have been writing thoughts or gratitude on post-it notes to add to our Gratitude Wall as part of the week long campaign. Students also wrote a letter of gratitude to a person of their choice. We will continue to "Look for the Good" in others as we carry the campaign throughout the year.

To honor our servicemen and women many Wakelee students wrote letters to veterans in honor of Veteran's Day. On behalf of the staff and students of Wakelee School, I would like to thank you all who have or are currently enlisted, for your service.

Joanne Riback, Jack Threlfall, and Emily Lanza represented Wakelee School at an awards ceremony at the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. Governor Lamont recognized Wakelee students for their outstanding performance in 2018 and 2019. Congratulations to all of our students for their commitment to summer reading!



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

Tyrrell Middle School:

Tyrrell Middle School hosted Unity Week, leading into National Unity Day on Wednesday, October 23rd. This day highlights National Bullying Prevention Month and students and faculty wore orange to stand together against bullying and be united for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Throughout the week, students and staff participated in a number of activities that were designed to foster positive culture, climate, and citizenship in our school community. Our school culture committee designed these activities in an effort to promote positivity, inclusion, and acceptance. Each day of the week, students were encouraged to participate in a theme of the day. On one day, students wore retro clothes from their favorite decade. Midweek, students were invited to find one, two, or more people to match or twin with, on October 23rd everyone was encouraged to wear orange to celebrate Unity Day, and the week ended with Tyrrell apparel day. The events were completely voluntary, and I am pleased to share that the majority of students and faculty alike participated in this positive school climate initiative.

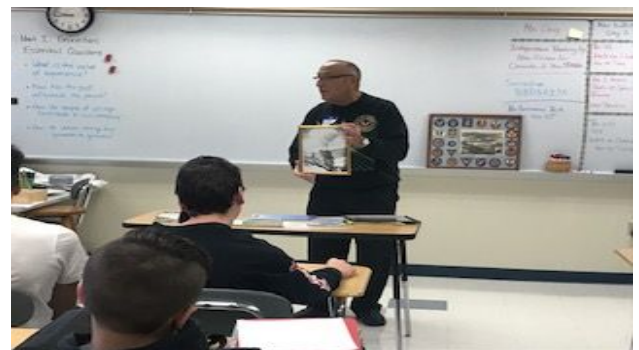
As a culminating activity to the Grade 6 immigration unit, students participated in an interdisciplinary open air activity. Students were heterogeneously grouped into “Old World” families, and were responsible for researching historical information as to why their family would want to leave their homeland, what preparation and the trip likely entailed, diseases, illnesses, and how weather patterns would impact the journey and then researched what entry through Ellis Island would be like. Students utilized a variety of resources including websites, videos, primary source materials

including journals from immigrants, teachers even prepared museum exhibits in the library for students to utilize. Each student was responsible for creating a narrative written piece that included information gathered from their research as if they had emigrated from Europe to Ellis Island.



items from their time of service to enhance their presentation to the students. Students in each homeroom participated in a question and answer session at the conclusion of each of the presentations. The Veteran's that joined us possessed diverse experiences in that their time of service ranged from WWII to present, and all branches of the military were represented. This Tyrrell tradition affords our students an opportunity to hear primary source oral histories that brings service and recent history to life. I would like to thank Mr. Fortier for spearheading this initiative, and Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Krug in assisting in the planning and carrying out of this event.

On Friday, November 8th, Tyrrell held our annual Veteran's Day program. The day began with a breakfast for the 28 Veteran's who joined us for our program. This was followed by a short video and brief Veteran's Day speech given by me on announcements. Then the Veteran's were escorted to the different homerooms to share their personal experiences and perspectives as it relates to serving our country. Many Veteran's brought



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

Wolcott High School:

Wolcott High School and Tyrrell Middle school students attended the STEM/Advanced Manufacturing & Technology Expo at Naugatuck Valley Community College on November 1st. The students interacted with manufacturers from greater Waterbury to learn about the variety of excellent job and career opportunities in the industry. There was a tour of the advanced manufacturing machine lab as well as hands on activities for students.



In sports news, the Girls' Soccer team celebrated breast cancer awareness month with a Pink Night honoring a local woman who is fighting breast cancer. The Torrington girls' soccer team also took part in the ceremony presenting flowers to the family. The girls hoped to raise awareness of the disease and the importance of regular screenings.

Senior Rachel Bracco & sophomore Elizabeth D'Ettore were named to the NVL - All Iron Team for Girls' Volleyball.



Kathryn Rodrigues made the CHSCA all-state team by finishing 1st in class SS at the State meet and attended the all-state banquet at the Aqua Turf. She finished 7th at the State Open meet, and 33rd at New England Championships. Kathryn also made the CHSCA academic all-state team due to her excellent academic status as a senior student-athlete.

Nick Bendtsen also made the CHSCA all-state team by finishing 3rd in class M at the State meet and attended the all-state banquet. He finished 4th at the State Open meet and 19th at New England Championships.

Eagle of the Month is a new initiative we have created this school year to promote the core values. Each month, departments submit one nomination per grade level, as well as a teacher nomination of someone in the building who demonstrates one or more core value. At each month's faculty advisory meeting, staff vote from the nominations to select one Eagle of the Month for each grade and one staff member. Winners are awarded a certificate and T-shirt and will be invited to attend an end of the year celebration.



In the spirit of community service and citizenship ten WHS students signed up to do their community service at the Alcott Preschool during after school hours. Students are creating lessons that will be conducted during site visits. The lessons will give our WHS students hands-on experience with preschool students as a pathway for future careers.

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

Student Services:

Both Pre-kindergarten classes located at Alcott Elementary School have been implementing the Jesse Lewis Choose Love program. The Choose Love program teaches the foundational concepts and skills of social and emotional learning (SEL), and is informed by current brain research and neuroscience. The comprehensive, evidence-based enrichment program was created by educators for educators and is aligned with Common Core State

Standards and American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success, and CASEL's five core SEL competencies. This unique program is easy to implement and adaptable to varying schedules, environments, and uses. The goal of the Choose Love Enrichment Program is to provide children with the knowledge, attitude, and skills they need to choose love in any situation. These abilities include:



Understanding and managing emotions (self-awareness and self-management), setting and achieving positive goals, feeling and showing empathy and compassion for others (social awareness), establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions.

Pre kindergarten teachers Brittany Leonard and Andrea Curcio provide these social emotional curriculum lessons which are done on a weekly basis. In addition, the staff use breathing techniques on a daily basis. The Gratitude Breath involves students putting their hand on their hearts and on their belly. As students do this they also breathe in with their eyes closed

and think about things that they are thankful for. The Brave Breath involves students putting their hands on stomachs and breathing in with an awareness of the air moving in and out of the body. Both of these types of breaths are done approximately five times through the course of the 2.5 hour day.

To-date, Choose Love Enrichment Program has been downloaded in all 50 states and Washington DC and in more than 80 different countries more than 41,000 times by more than 17,000 educators. The conservative estimates show that these educators collectively reach about 1,700,000 students. The district has collaborated with community preschools through the school readiness council to facilitate consistency in teaching our youngest learners universal language with regard to self regulation and other social emotional skills.



More information can be found at : <https://www.jesselewischooselove.org/>

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

Business & Operations: The Wolcott Latchkey Program



The latchkey team looks forward to celebrating the holiday season with all our students!



Thanksgiving Day Party – On Tuesday, November 26, 2019, we had our Thanksgiving Day party. We had different activities and played a variety of games. The children enjoyed Thanksgiving Day bingo, freeze dance, holiday crafts, holiday cartoons and much more! Our latchkey team members had a fun filled day with the children.



Seasonal Holiday Party – On Wednesday December 18, 2019, we will be having our latchkey seasonal holiday party. We will enjoy holiday crafting, serve snacks, and play seasonal themed games. All students that attend morning and afternoon will all participate in these cheerful festivities.

Late Openings/Early Dismissals – Please be aware on late openings, the Wolcott Latchkey Program will open at 8:00am and the children go to class at 10:30am. If there is an early dismissal, the Latchkey Program is open from 1:15- 6:00pm. The Wolcott Latchkey Program is closed if the Wolcott Public Schools are closed.

Wolcott Public Schools Calendar Change



December 20, 2019 - Friday is now an official half day. If your child will be attending latchkey for the scheduled half day, please sign your children up by December 6, 2019.

Have a very safe and fun holiday season.

Sincerely,

Tracey Fitzmorris, Latchkey Director

&

Wolcott Latchkey Team

Tracey Fitzmorris, Latchkey Director

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Todd Bendtsen, Business Manager

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Citizens Against Substance Abuse:

After many months of preparation CASA is excited to announce the launch of our new website! Our coalition in collaboration with a marketing company has been working diligently to enhance our website, social media platforms, and newsletter contacts. In addition to reaching community members online we continue to raise awareness of youth substance abuse and overall wellness at school and community events.



Recently several of our coalition members and staff passed out banners, stress balls, and played a PSA at a WHS Football Game with the message of preventing underage drinking/drug use.

On November 13th, CASA staff and sector leaders held a mental health/substance abuse forum to bring together key community leaders in efforts to address local concerns and increase access to resources and services.



Similar to communities across the country CASA continues to focus and put a lot of time and effort into preventing and reducing youth vaping/e-cigarette use. We are continuing to promote #TheChoicesYours Vaping Awareness Campaign highlighting the negative and addictive properties of these devices. CASA has been working with both the middle and high schools to bring in presenters to speak

to staff and students about this issue. CASA will continue to work with the community at large to raise awareness about vaping/e-cigarette use and to debunk the myths that this is a “safer” product than conventional cigarettes.



For more information about vaping/e-cigarette use: www.stillblowingsmoke.org

Check out our new website: www.wolcottcasa.org

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