



WPS Update

October 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:



On behalf of the Board of Education, we'd like to thank all of our staff, students, and parents for their patience during the long period while we rebuilt our computer network. The malware attacks of June and September were widespread and severe. They impacted all facets of our operations from the classroom to the school office, central office, business office, and cafeterias. During the six weeks of repair work, our local information technology staff worked long hours and weekends alongside outside contractors and experts making the necessary repairs and rebuilds.

Teachers have displayed high levels of professionalism and flexibility during this time. Many teachers lost years of saved lesson plans and assessments. During the outage, teachers and students who'd become accustomed to technology-rich lessons showed creativity and patience as they reformatted these lessons in the absence of Chromebooks and projectors. School secretaries found new, inventive, and accurate ways to ensure that attendance was correct and that internal and external communications were happening as much as possible. Cafeteria staff kept accurate records of meal choice and later entered these into our new Solana system once it was up and ready. School administrators kept information flowing in the absence of email. While it was a painful and trying experience, I'm happy to report that our staff rose to the challenge and that meaningful learning continued in all of our classrooms.

We are nearly done rebuilding our system and still working out smaller issues each day. This unfortunate occurrence has given us the chance to build our systems more securely and robustly. While it is scary to know that another attack cannot be fully stopped and could happen at any time, we are in a better position to respond and limit the potential damage if another such attack does occur.

In appreciation,
Tony Gasper

Assistant Superintendent:

The month of October signifies the start of the district's comprehensive professional development calendar. Teachers and administrators are engaging in a wide-variety of learning activities to further develop their knowledge of best instructional practices. The goal of the professional learning plan is to promote continuous district and school improvement by building the collective capacity of all personnel to enhance and support the learning needs of students now and in the future. Below please find a sample of the activities taking place in October:

Marge Polter from EAST CONN is working with science teachers on the integration of the Next Generation Science Standards into the district's curriculum and classroom lessons in grades 3, 4, & 11.

Dina Secchiaroli from ACES is working with social studies, math, and ELA teachers to facilitate writing and implementation of the district's curriculum and classroom lessons.

Sue Palma from EdAdvance is working with math teachers at the middle and high school levels to facilitate writing and implementation of the district's curriculum and the alignment of the math curriculum from grades 8 to 9.



District and School-wide data team meetings are successfully underway.

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



Alcott School:

On Friday, September 27th Alcott School held its annual Fall Festival. The event included bounce houses, hay rides, arts & crafts, contests, and delicious treats. Each class also decorated a wreath to be raffled off at the festival. We were “wowed” by teachers, students, and parents who showed their amazing talents and creativity. Thank you to our PTO and volunteers who worked hard to make the event a success!

I am happy to report, On Friday, October 18th, we celebrated our student’s accomplishment of 100% participation in Governor’s Summer Reading Challenge for the 8th year in a row! Because of this great accomplishment, every student in the school (and staff member) participated in a dance party that was “*out of this world*.” The theme this year is “A Universe of Stories” hence the theme of our party. We are proud of this accomplishment and take pride in our student’s commitment to reading!



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

Frisbie School:



Frisbie students were rewarded on September 24th for reaching our goal of 100% participation goal in the Governor's Reading Challenge. Mobile Productions brought a portable, inflatable planetarium to Frisbie School to dazzle our budding astronomers as they were taken on a tour of the solar system which coincided with the summer reading theme Universe of Stories. Students entered the planetarium and were introduced to a "star filled sky." The presenter used a digital planetarium projector and a laser pointer, to guide students through the stars of the Northern Hemisphere exactly as they appear on the day of the presentation. Students learned how to identify every planet in our solar system in dramatic "flights" towards each world. They were also introduced to Greek mythological characters and saw how these heroes of the past can be found in the stars. It was a great experience for everyone. Great job reading this summer!

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

Wakelee School:



The Wakelee community held an assembly to kick off our week-long campaign to raise awareness for the Alzheimer's Walk in September. We raised \$1,495.11. The Wakelee students were asked to cut the ribbon and start the walk.

Thank you to the entire Wakelee community. On Friday, September 27th we held our annual reading celebration. I had challenged the students last June to



participate in the Governor's reading challenge over the summer and return their logs. If we reached 100% of the logs returned I agreed to complete a challenge of the students choosing. We came close to our goal with 95% of the logs returned. I was impressed with how close we were so I prepared a challenge for the teachers and me. We participated in Beanboozled. It is a jelly bean

challenge that combines some of the popular jelly bean flavors with unpopular ones, for example, the cream-colored jelly bean could be coconut or spoiled milk. Unfortunately, the odds were against me and I had quite a few of the off flavored jelly beans, but I am excited to say that all my teachers had accepted the challenge to the delight of all the students. We also raffled off gift certificates for our next Scholastic book fair. We ended the day with ice cream and time with our book buddies. I would like to thank the PTO for supporting this event.



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

Tyrrell Middle School:

The numbers have been tallied, and I am pleased to share with you that 99.6% of Tyrrell students completed their summer reading over the break! Tyrrell has been recognized by Governor Lamont's office as a top performing school as it relates to the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge. Top readers will be recognized at an upcoming ceremony with the Governor at the State Library.



Our most recent One School, One Book initiative centered on the book: *Shouting at The Rain* by Lynda Mulally Hunt. In preparation for the author's visit, Tyrrell had a *Shouting at The Rain* thematic day in which all classes incorporated aspects of the book into their own content area. Grade 6 and Grade 7 Granite team designed open-air multidisciplinary integrated activities which afforded students an opportunity to work in teams to produce real world tasks and products related to the books. This included Trip Advisor reviews, science topics related to beach ecosystems, and plotting and locating coordinates.

Award winning author Lynda Mulally Hunt recently visited Tyrrell Middle School and hosted assemblies for each grade level. At each of the assemblies, Ms. Hunt delivered a message that incorporates a theme of overcoming obstacles and the importance of perseverance in life, as well as, in the writing process. She also shared what she views as the most important components to the writing process. Ms. Hunt was very complimentary of our school and our students. She communicated that she has visited hundreds of schools as a visiting author and that Tyrrell ranks among the top three schools she has visited. She was so impressed that she informed us that in her next novel, she intends on naming one of the characters "Tyrrell" after her positive experience visiting our school.



Our fall sports are wrapping up their seasons. I am pleased to share that our cross country, boys soccer, and girls volleyball have all had positive experiences throughout this season and have represented TMS and Wolcott well. As for clubs, the most popular thus far are the construction and engineering, as well as, the coding clubs with close to forty students signing up for each club respectively. I would like to thank the Board for your support in approving the addition of the coding club and peer tutorial club this year.



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

Wolcott High School:

The WHS School Counseling department hosted a successful College Fair event where students were given the opportunity to learn about a plethora of college options to help plan for their future. Parents were also invited to attend a Financial Planning seminar during this event where they were guided through their various college financing options.



The Preliminary SAT Test (PSAT) was given to all students in Grades 9, 10, and 11 on October 16, 2019. This was a practice test for the SAT and it provided entry for all juniors into the National Merit Scholarship Program. The day ran very smoothly and scores will be disseminated in December.

Julia Hynek and Vincent Zheng have been named Commended Students in the 2020 National Merit Scholarship Program. A Letter of Commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, was presented by Mr. Drewry to these scholastically talented seniors. Congratulations to Julia and Vincent!



The cross-country team had a very successful performance at NVLs this past Friday! Sophomore Veranika Hryn was 12th place finisher/all-Iron with a time of 21:50 and Junior Nick Bendtsen was the 1st place finisher/all-NVL/most outstanding male runner with a time of 15:59. Senior Kathryn Rodrigues was the 1st place finisher/all-NVL/most outstanding female runner as well as the winner of the outstanding senior award/outstanding meet performer with a time of 18:27. This was also a new course record!



CASA, in collaboration with WHS and the Wolcott PD, hosted a few fun and informative events throughout September. Their Annual Car Show on September 14 and their Hidden in Plain Sight event during Back to School night both had great turnouts and families learned many tips for having important conversations with their children about substance abuse.



Spirit Week is coming up at the school at the end of the month. Many exciting activities are planned to keep students motivated and to celebrate school spirit!

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

Student Services:

Red Ribbon Week was held from October 21-31st at each of Wolcott's elementary schools. This was a successful opportunity for



students, parents, and teachers to come together and to take a stand against drugs by making a personal commitment to a drug-free lifestyle. The National Family Partnership, which coordinates Red Ribbon activities nationally, estimates that over 80 million Americans participate in Red Ribbon events.



In Wolcott, students from grades three, four and five took a Red Ribbon Pledge and received a ribbon, along with a commemorative "10 Reasons Why I'm Drug Free" bookmark. In addition to receiving the ribbons and bookmarks, students were also provided with a Red Ribbon Pledge to review at home. Parents were encouraged to recite and sign-off on the pledge with their children. Red ribbon week activities included a classroom discussion encompassing a drug-free and healthy lifestyle and making healthy positive choices.

The Student Services Department would like to thank Mr. Tony Cianchetti, School Social Worker and Amanda Roman, School Social Worker intern from Sacred Heart University for their hard work in coordinating this important activity. Please check out some of the website links below for some great resources which may assist you with fostering a conversation with your child regarding drugs and alcohol:



Wolcott's Citizens Against Substance Abuse: <https://www.wolcottcasa.org/>

Time to Talk: <http://www.timetotalk.org/ParentTalkKit/>

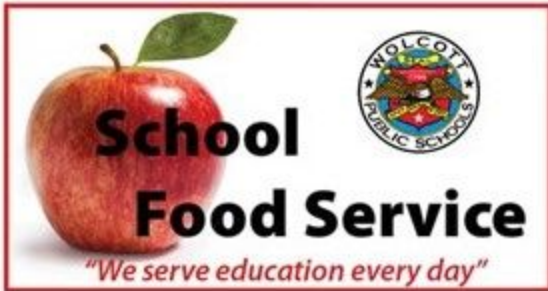
Talking to Kids about Drugs: http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/talk_about_drugs.html

Talking to Kids about Alcohol: <http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/alcohol.html>*

Red Ribbon Campaign Parent Activities: <http://redribbon.org/activities/Parents/index.html>

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

Business & Operations:



Nicole Maxellon, Food Service Director

Hello all!

I would like to introduce myself, I am the new Director of Nutrition Services for Wolcott Public Schools. I am joining the Wolcott district after five years in the school nutrition industry. I found my love for the school nutrition industry after interning in a school district while obtaining my Bachelor's degree from the University of New Haven. From there I worked as a manager in Windsor Public Schools and as the Assistant Director of Avon, Canton, Litchfield, Region #10 Public Schools. I recently just finished my Master of Science degree with an emphasis in Child Nutrition Program from the University of Southern Mississippi. To keep busy and up to date in the industry, I am an active member of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut on the Public Policy and Legislation Committee. Coming to work each new day is an adventure. Not only do I get to work on what I am passionate about, I love that we are able to make a difference in each child's life on a daily basis. Every day we fill their bellies with nutritious and healthy meals that will ultimately help them to succeed inside and outside the classroom. If you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to reach out either by phone or by email.

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