



WPS Update

June 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:

At the last Board of Education meeting the Board accepted the resignation of our Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Frank Purcaro. Mr. Purcaro is pursuing his professional aspirations in a position at Newtown Public Schools. Over his six years with our school system, Mr. Purcaro has provided effective, ethical, and dedicated service to educators and children of Wolcott. He will be missed by all of the teachers and administrators. Thank you, Mr. Purcaro, for your service.

On the Wednesday and Thursday after school ended, the superintendent and administrators conducted their annual retreat. We'd like to thank all of the administrators for their deep thinking and dedication to this work. All of the activities were specifically designed to consider current and future leadership practices that will continue to bring the Board's Vision of the Graduate to fruition.

Despite a system-wide computer virus on the last day of school, our school year came to a smooth end. Teachers, support staff, and administrators all played an important role in this work. Custodians and maintenance staff are busy getting our schools ready for next school year.

The Wolcott Summer School Program is underway and, as usual, is extremely popular with our community. Over 600 students are enrolled in 80 classes being instructed by 36 staff members. Included in these numbers, are 85 students in ELA and 65 students in Math who were identified by their teachers last year as needed an extra boost to get them ready for the coming year. Thank you to the Board for continuing to support this academic portion of the summer program.

In partnership,

Lori Delbuono Bartlett, Board of Education Chairman

Tony Gasper, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools



Assistant Superintendent:

The month of June signifies the completion of the district's annual, comprehensive professional development plan. Throughout the year, teachers and administrators engaged 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 that took place this year:

- Elke Blanchard from Literacy How worked with teachers in grades K-2 on foundational reading strategies with an acute focus on vocabulary development.
- Dr. Stacey Williams-Watson from EastConn worked with science teachers in grades 5-10 on the integration of the Next Generation Science Standards into the district's curriculum and classroom lessons.
- Wolcott High School Staff worked closely with representatives from NEASC, as they finalized their reporting requirements following their recent NEASC accreditation visit.
- Dina Secchiaroli from ACES worked with Wolcott High School and Middle School Staff on the vertical alignment of the ELA and social studies curricula and the implementation of inquiry-based instructional strategies.
- Susan Palma from EdAdvance worked with middle school math teachers on lesson development that would promote higher-order instruction.
- Middle and high school staff completed five cross-building after-school collaborations to share practices related to curriculum and instruction.
- Eight district-wide and ten school-wide data team meetings were successfully completed.



Contact Frank Purcaro, Assistant Superintendent of Schools: fpurcaro@wolcottps.org

Alcott School:

As we come to the close of the 2018-2019 school year, I wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for making this school year a great success. Our Families, teachers, staff, and, of course, our students make Alcott the wonderful place that it is. It is a team effort, and I am grateful to be part of such an amazing team!

Once again, we will be participating in the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge. The theme this year is *A Universe of Books*. We hope to get 100% participation for the 8th consecutive year. Please read with your child(ren) throughout the summer, and be sure to record what has been read on their summer reading logs. When we return we hope to have a party that is out of this world!

We also ask you to please encourage and support math practice with your child(ren) this summer. We are strongly encouraging the use of digital options for math practice throughout the summer:

Digital suggestions include:

- The Quantile Summer Math Challenge! Go to <http://www.quantiles.com/summer-math> to enroll your child.
- Alcott students may continue to use their Reflex accounts at www.reflexmath.com
- Many students already use XtraMath <http://xtramath.org> to improve fact fluency.
- Encouraging your student to complete a game board at www.gregtangmath.com

Again, thank you for all your support in making Alcott the best that it can be. I hope that you all have a relaxing, happy, and safe summer! I will post updates periodically throughout the summer on our Twitter feed handles: @Mr.Simpson_runs & @AlcottAllStars .



See you in August!
Shawn Simpson

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

Frisbie School:

As our academic year draws to a close, we have so much to celebrate. I want to thank the parents for the endless hours of volunteering, reading with your child, chaperoning, and making your child's education a priority. A special thank you to the PTO who went above and beyond the call of duty to provide educational opportunities and resources to add to the already rich school experience. Our Amazing Art assembly featuring speed painter Rob Surette was an awesome treat.

Our students have had a fabulous year here at Frisbie. They have excelled in so many areas that it is hard to list them all. Frisbie students have made tremendous gains on the i-Ready math assessment as a result of the hard work and dedication of the students and staff. Our emphasis this year was on implementing 3 Act Math Tasks to facilitate deep mathematical thinking while students persevere and reason mathematically through the task. Another area of growth has been their improvement in word meaning and vocabulary. Students are being exposed to prefixes, suffixes, Greek and Latin roots as it is an important part of building better readers.

As the end of the year comes to a close, I want to congratulate all students on a successful school year. To those of you leaving for new places and adventures, we wish you all the best. Congratulations to our fifth grade students as they continue their academic career in middle school. We wish you all a very safe and enjoyable summer.



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

Wakelee School:

Wakelee School staff and students are now reflecting on the 2018-2019 school year. We had many successes and achievements to be proud of. I would like to thank the teachers, staff, and families for all you have done to help make Wakelee School a great place for your children to learn and grow!



We finished off the school year with many school wide assemblies and opportunities to come together as a community of learners. Our third grade students held their recorder concert and the fourth and fifth grade band held their spring concert. I am proud of how far the students have come in their learning of instrumental music.



The kindergarten students performed It's A Hit! Before the student body during the day and families in the evening. The students did an amazing job and delighted the large audience of family members.

The students and staff came together on the last day of school for a Flag Day Ceremony planned and led by our student council. I would like to thank all the community members that were able to attend.



We also held our summer reading kickoff. We challenged all students to participate in this year's Governor's Reading Challenge A Universe of Stories. Last year we were just a few reading logs short of 100%, but I am confident that we can reach our goal of 100% participation this summer, so let's get reading!

I would also like to remind families that I shared a list of digital resources students can access this summer to keep current with math skills. We strongly suggest having your child access these resources to help bridge the summer vacation.



I wish the Wakelee School community a safe and relaxing summer! Best wishes to our fifth graders moving on to Tyrrell Middle School. I look forward to seeing everyone at the start of the 2019-2020 school year!

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

Tyrrell Middle School:

On behalf of the Tyrrell Middle School faculty and staff, we would like to thank you for an outstanding academic year! Parental support and collaboration with school faculty and staff was instrumental in our students having such a wonderful year. Thank you for your continued support of your children and our school!

On the evening of Monday, June 3rd, Tyrrell Middle School students Elizabeth Francisco and Nicholas Sconziano were honored at Connecticut Association of School's Middle Level Scholar Leader awards dinner which was held at the Aqua Turf in Southington. Elizabeth and Nicholas received this recognition for a variety of reasons including effort and high achievement in all academic areas, as well as, demonstration of outstanding character traits including leadership throughout their years at Tyrrell Middle School. This recognition is one of the highest a middle school student can earn. Congratulations Nick and Lizzie!



Grade 6 Platinum Team students recently completed an ELA unit focused on effective argument writing. Students researched the homeless issue in America. Students read a variety of text and watched excerpts from documentaries that provided examples of varied degrees of how individuals can respond to the needs of others. Students worked collaboratively in groups to discuss what issues they believed had the greatest impact on their community and created plans to address those issues. As part of the unit, a number of students participated in the United Way Upstarters Campaign and raised \$1700 that will be used in the greater Waterbury area to assist homeless individuals and families. In addition to making positive contributions to the community, students wrote excellent essays to convince the reader to help end homelessness in the



greater Waterbury area.

The Granite Team conducted an "Open Air" classroom activity which focused on the topic of artificial intelligence. The activity was interdisciplinary incorporating math, science, social studies, and language arts skills. Students began by working on team building activities to generate interest in how artificial intelligence works. Students built models of neurotransmitters and formulated how a computer develops an algorithm that would consistently beat humans in a game called Hexapawn. As students gained knowledge and conducted research, they chose from a menu of presentation and product options that afforded students an opportunity to demonstrate new learning in a way that would best demonstrate mastery of learning goals.

Congratulations to our eighth grade students on their middle school promotion to the high school level. Graduation was held on June 14th, and as a faculty, staff and administration, we are confident our students have been well prepared for success at the high school level. Best of luck to our eighth graders as they begin the next chapter of their educational journey!

Tyrrell Middle School will once again be participating in the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge. The theme this year is *A Universe of Books*. We are hopeful that all of our students will participate, by logging the books read over the summer on the recording sheet that has been provided. This summer's One School, One Book for Tyrrell Middle School is *Shouting at The Rain* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt. The book's author Ms. Hunt will be visiting Tyrrell to conduct assemblies and have a luncheon with our top readers on Friday, September 13th. We also ask you to please encourage and support math practice with your child(ren) this summer. Hard copies of math packets were distributed the last week of school and digital versions can be accessed on the Tyrrell Middle School website.



On behalf of the Tyrrell Middle School faculty and staff, we wish Tyrrell families a healthy, restful, and relaxing summer break. We are confident that the 2019-2020 academic year will provide our students and families with another outstanding middle school experience!

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

Wolcott High School:

As we move into June, our students will be busy taking final exams, marking the beginning of the end of a busy and successful school year. The last few weeks of the year were filled with celebrations and ceremonies. Our students worked hard all year and earned this recognition for their efforts.



The celebrations culminated on Friday, June 14, 2019 at the Commencement Exercises for the class of 2019. We are excited for the opportunities our graduates will have in the coming months and years. We feel they are prepared to participate in a competitive environment whether they are moving on to further education, the military or work. Best of luck to all of our graduating students. We wish you much success in all of your future endeavors.

Next year will mark some significant changes for our returning students. We will be operating under a new Vision focusing on the six C's of Critical thinking, Collaboration, Communication, Commitment to growth, Creativity and Citizenship. We will be promoting these skills in newly developed curriculum and assessed by new school wide rubrics designed to promote the acquisition of these critical skills.



Students will start the new school year adapting to a new eight period block schedule featuring a daily 35-minute flex period designed to provide extra help and enrichment. They will be supported by a renewed commitment of our staff to collaborate within departmental evidence teams to improve our planning, instruction and assessment.



We hope that all in our learning community has a restful and enjoyable summer and that we return invigorated for what will be another busy school year in 2019-2020.

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

Student Services:

The Student Services Department has recently concluded its selection process for Paraeducator of the year. We would like to extend our thanks to all those who volunteered their time in nominating paraeducators and those that served on the interview committee. We had a great overall response. We are pleased to recognize Tami Grasso as the 2020 Paraeducator of the Year for Wolcott. Tami has worked in the district for the past four years, two of those years at Alcott Elementary School in the prekindergarten program. Tami brings to the table many strengths, one of which is closely collaborating with the special education teacher in order to implement specific programs and behavior plans, thus ensuring student success. Tami is able to provide students with an individualized curriculum and is excellent with her collection of data. She often applies her knowledge to assist other students in their academic tasks.

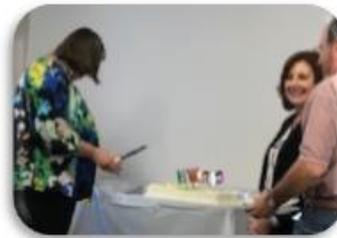
Tami has also been trained as a Behavior Technician to use principles of Applied Behavior Analysis to work more effectively with students. She has been described by staff as: detail oriented, dependable, professional, well organized, enthusiastic, eager to learn, energetic, a resource to other staff members, and compassionate and empathetic for students' and families. The district has submitted her name to the State of CT for consideration in the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award. We wish Tami the best of luck in that process!! Thank you Tami for all your hard work and dedication to the students of Wolcott!!



Pictured left to right: Cynthia Mancini, Vice Chairman of the Wolcott Board of Education, Tami Graso, Paraeducator of the Year and Dr. Anthony Gasper, Superintendent of Wolcott Schools.

The Student Services Department would like to wish all Wolcott families a safe and relaxing summer. We will see you next school year!
Contact Khollis@wolcottps.org

Business & Operations:



A Fond Farewell and Retirement Wishes:

Congratulations to Eileen Girgenti, our Food Service Director on her recent retirement!

Mrs. Girgenti has been a valued employee in our system for thirty-two years and has been the Director of Nutrition for the past sixteen years. She began working in an entry level cafeteria position and successfully worked her way up the ranks to the Director's position. Mrs. Girgenti, a Certified School Nutrition Specialist, has proven to be a wealth of knowledge and the quality of our school lunch program is a testament to countless hours of hard work and dedication. Over the years, Mrs. Girgenti collaborated with each of our five schools providing nutrition education to staff and students; as well as serving up healthy delicious meals!

Under Eileen's direction the school lunch program proudly supports area businesses and offers fresh fruit and vegetables from local growers promoting a "farm to table" experience for our students.

We all would like to thank Eileen for all her years of service and wish her a Happy, Healthy, Retirement!

Todd Bendtsen

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