

Message from Board President Lori Jiava

Happy New Year & Welcome Back!

I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays with family and friends and are well rested. There is so much to look forward to during the remainder of this school year.

Here we are in a new year with new resolutions. What is a new year without a resolution? Did you ever wonder why this tradition of a resolution took hold or better yet where did it originate from?

According to research, it is believed that the Babylonians were the first to make New Year's resolutions. Since then, people all over the world have been making them. In some cultures and religions, they believed that the first day of a New Year should be spent reflecting on past mistakes and resolving to improve oneself in the New Year.

Making resolutions may be a historic tradition but for some it is a time in their lives where they feel it is a new beginning. Let's face it, everyone has their own beliefs. It is all about culture and tradition. Our community is filled with such diversity and filled with an array of cultures. It is amazing to learn about other countries and their beliefs. Holidays are a great time to teach our children about other cultures, traditions and celebrations. Moments like these are opportunities for us to educate our children in areas of tolerance, diversity and acceptance. Just because someone celebrates or practices something different than another, doesn't mean it is wrong, it just means there is an opportunity to learn. I am proud of our staff for the way they implement other cultures in their teachings. At the elementary level, my son learned about Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and Eid al-Fitr. In some fashion, I find that each tradition demonstrates a sense of rebirth.

Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah. They celebrate with a lit menorah, dreidel's, ethnic foods and gifts for 8 days. However, the history of the holiday teaches us of it's origin. Hanukkah became a holiday as part of the celebration due to the victories that Jewish people triumphed over religious persecution.

For Christians it is generally a Christmas tree with songs, special foods and presents for kids. The basis of Christmas was derived from the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

After Ramadan, it is Eid aL-Fitr, where the celebration begins by 'breaking the fast' and traditions of helping the less fortunate, helping the community while wearing fine clothing and eating cultural foods with family. During the month of Ramadan, Muslim people fast during the day and eat their meal in the evening. It is said that this month is devoted for the Muslim world to reflect and be reminded of the poor and suffering. To the Muslims this is a form of spiritual devotion and a reminder of those less fortunate.

Although not considered a religious holiday, Kwanzaa, known as a winter holiday is about rejoicing with family and delving into the principles of Kwanzaa. It is celebrated for six days and it is devoted to family, community and culture. Out of all the celebrations, this one is the youngest. It was started in the 1960's and it was believed to be a time where the first harvest is broken and the family comes together as a whole.

As one can see, traditions are amongst us all. We are all proud of our cultures and our traditions. I find that out of all of the winter traditions, New Years is the most diverse, pretty much celebrated by all. For the most part you hear everyone talking about their resolutions and their good intentions.

I sincerely hope that everyone welcomed the New Year in with a positive feeling and a new look for 2012.

Our district welcomes all of your traditions and resolutions. We are a community, one that works together to deliver a promise to our children. For our students we want to offer it all., a 'new day', a 'fresh start, or a 'new you'.

My New Year's Resolution is twofold. One, for Wappingers to continue putting our students first, while maintaining its excellence and acknowledging the ones that make it all happen for our children...., all of our employees make it happen. Without the dedication of everyone in this district, we would not be able to achieve what we do! Our district has much to be proud of ! Secondly, to work together with administration and craft a budget that will keep our educationally sound programs in tact and keep our children safe, all while shaping our future leaders !

After all, what is there not to be happy about? A new year, a fresh start, a new promise and most of all..... The Class of 2012 !!

Best of luck, health and happiness to ALL !!

Few Reminders:

Our next board meeting is January 9 at 7:30pm (or soon after) at Wapp Jr. High auditorium., There will be a presentation from the Grade Configuration committee.

The following meeting; January 23 at 7:30pm at Wapp. Jr High auditorium

Snow Delays, Cancellations & Early Dismissals Tips:

- ❖ Please make use of your child's schools Google groups. They are a great way to find out about delays, cancellations and early dismissal.
- ❖ Please make sure your emergency contact numbers are up to date and your instruction for your child is accurate in case of an emergency or an early dismissal. Your children's safety is our priority.
- ❖ Listen to local radio stations for closing or delays.
- ❖ Access www.cancellations.com

- ❖ Call your child's school and push the prompt for school updates.

An informed parent, is key when it involves the safety of students.