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September 2018

Dear WCSD Community,

Welcome to the 2018–2019 school year. It is hard to believe that it was two months ago when you received the end of the 2017-2018 school year letter. Although it may appear that the summer went by very quickly, WCSD was busy with major capital improvement projects taking place throughout the district. We are pleased that all of the projects have met their timelines and have successfully been completed as planned. Easily monitor the progress of the work by visiting our [Facilities and Operations website](#).

It goes without saying that each summer many of our teachers work on local curriculum initiatives. As part of a new local initiative, our Kindergarten teachers worked during the summer to map out a curriculum that increases student play-centered experiences without compromising rigor. Bringing back the “play” in Kindergarten, while continuing to meet the Kindergarten New York State Standards, is important because young five-year-old students thrive in such an environment which is extremely conducive to learning.

The Wappingers Central School District has been diligently working to adapt curriculum and instruction to address the recently adopted New York State Science Learning Standards (NYSSLS). Representing a paradigm shift in science education, the NYSSLS promotes real-world, problem-solving experiences. This innovative learning model is geared toward enhancing all of our students’ ability to employ problem-solving skills by tasking students to study, test, and explain things observed in the natural world. This movement in science education directly relates to shifts in the other core areas, which are also progressing toward an inquiry-based approach. We are excited about and deem this work crucial because it furthers our mission to *Empower, Challenge, and Grow* every student in the Wappingers Central School District.

The Business Department is excited to begin offering Microsoft Office to students in 8th grade who have room in their schedule. This semester-long course will earn students a ½ credit on their transcript toward high school graduation. Microsoft Office is also one of the courses in our approved New York State CTE Pathway in Business. In addition, students who successfully complete a CTE Pathway earn a special endorsement on their high school diploma.

In English Language Arts, teachers spent two days learning the research behind vocabulary instruction prior to making the lists aligned to NYS Standards. The development of the WCSD Vocabulary Instruction guiding document will allow this work to be shared consistently across all of our Kindergarten classrooms.

In Math, our teachers examined the NYS Next Generation Standards in Mathematics to determine if any changes affected our curriculum. We adjusted our documents with units that are aligned with “Proficiency Scales” that provide teachers with expectations to measure a child’s level of learning in mathematics.

We have already met with executive members of the PTA Council to map out the school year. We have made modifications to the meeting format and look forward to providing parents with meaningful and relevant workshops which are related to the success of their children’s academic growth as well as their social and emotional wellbeing. Our goal is to continue to promote increased parental involvement and engagement while bridging relationships from the home to the school and vice versa.

As you can see we have been very busy over the past two months, ensuring that we continue to be innovative, student-focused and provide all of our students with meaningful, engaging, and relevant learning.

Our [Board of Education has also shared their values and goals for the 2018-2019 school year](#). Their support of our administration is appreciated and necessary in order to continue to provide our students and staff with a truly supportive environment. In the upcoming week, we plan to complete, publish, and post the Navigating Our Way (NOW) document to our website. NOW will highlight the district goals aligned with the values of our Board of Education, as well as provide information about our school district.

Your patience and flexibility were appreciated during the construction period over the summer months. Please be mindful and understanding during the beginning days of school in relation to transportation arrival and dismissal times, modified student

schedules, and/or other pertinent matters relevant to the start of the school year. Students who walk or ride their bikes should travel with a buddy and watch out for cars and trucks not only on the road but at every driveway and intersection on the way to and from school. Remember, safety is of utmost importance.

Lastly, we warmly welcome new members to our administrative, teaching, and support staff, as well as welcoming back all of our WCSD employees. And, we would like to welcome back all of our grade 1-12 students, with a very special warm welcome to our class of 2032. We have approximately 665 Kindergarten students that will be walking into one of our nine elementary school buildings on September 7, 2018. We are extremely excited for the 2018-2019 school year and look forward to working with your children.

Sincerely,  
José L. Carrión  
Superintendent of Schools