



Watchung Borough Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent

Barbara A. Resko, Ed.D.

August 31, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope that everyone had a relaxing summer with family and friends. The carefree days of summer are quickly coming to a close as the start of the 2017-18 school year arrives in less than a week.

A big thank you to everyone who re-registered their students. As a reminder, the deadline to re-register students is Wednesday, September 6th at 3:00 pm.

School opens for all students on Thursday, September 7th. It will be a full day of school for students in grades K-8. Bayberry School is hosting an Open House on September 6th from 2:00-3:00 pm for Preschoolers, Kindergarteners, and new K-4 students. All parents/guardians new to the district are invited to a "Welcome Coffee" sponsored by the PTO on Thursday, September 7th at 9:30 am in the All Purpose Room at Bayberry School.

Principals will be sending bus passes informing parents of their child's bus route, bus company, approximate pick-up time, and safety rules. School administrators met with bus drivers on August 29th to review policies and procedures as well as safety requirements and student code of conduct.

The district's 2017-18 Calendar/Handbook is online. Important events and dates may be found on the district homepage and school pages. All information is posted on the website at www.watchungschools.com.

Best Time will operate its childcare programs before and after school beginning September 7th. All program inquiries should be directed to Mrs. Barbara Andresen, Director, at 908-966-1480.

Once again, Best Time will provide emergency supervision for students participating in extra-curricular activities whose parents/guardians are unable to pick them up on time at the end of an activity. Forms and more detailed information will be sent home to parents/guardians the week of September 11th.

District goals for the school year include the following:

1. To develop standard protocols to monitor the effectiveness of our instructional programs by measuring student achievement against state and local standards and other pertinent data.
2. To continue our district participation in NJ Sustainable Schools and achieve bronze certification for each of our schools.

This year we welcome Mr. Bert Arifaj as the district's Business Administrator/Board Secretary. New staff members include:

- Juliana Anselmini, Special Education and Language Arts, Valley View School
- Melissa Bianca, Special Education Teacher, Bayberry School
- Erin Bradley, Speech Therapist, District
- Alexis D'Annunzio, Grade 1 Maternity Leave Replacement for Ashley Freitas, Bayberry School
- Tamela Dudley, Physical Therapist, District
- Kelly Feltman, Occupational Therapist, District
- Christine Getz, Preschool Instructor, Bayberry School
- Katherine Husted, Grade 5 Maternity Leave Replacement for Jenna Monfet, Valley View School
- Loren Kania, Grade 3, Bayberry School
- Alexis Lorenz, Special Education Teacher, Bayberry School
- Julie Novak, Speech Therapist, District
- Morgan Pestorius, Gifted and Talented Teacher, District
- Kristin Reid, Preschool Instructor, Bayberry School
- Caitlyn Riga, Grade 2 Maternity Leave Replacement for Kristen Stack, Bayberry School
- Carolyn Wells, Computer Literacy Teacher, Bayberry School
- Tiffany Witko, Grade 5 Teacher, Valley View School

Other noteworthy educational initiatives include the following:

- The computer lab at Bayberry School has been renovated into a STEM Lab.
- Fifth grade Spanish classes will be taught by Ms. Barreto and Mr. Schweitzer.
- STEM and Character Education classes, grades K-4, will replace Spanish instruction at Bayberry School.
- Narratives of Courage is scheduled for May 16, 2018 for students in grades 5-8.
- A new critical communication Public Address system has been installed at Valley View School.
- New Chromebooks will be issued to students in grades 5-8.
- Transportation software has been added to more efficiently map and track bus routes.
- Student Emergency Cards: Once again, the district will be utilizing a *PowerSchool Enhanced Parent Portal* feature. All parents/guardians will be able to review and update, if needed, over 40 items of information that were previously collected on a 5x8 notecard called the "Emergency Card." To use this feature, parents will need to have a PowerSchool parent account. Access IDs and Access Passwords needed to create a new parent account or to add a child to an existing parent account will be sent to parents by email by September 7th. A free PowerSchool for Parents app may be downloaded from the iTunes Store.
- The district will continue to utilize the *School Messenger Secure Document Delivery*. All report cards (K-8) will be emailed to parents/guardians. Report cards will be sent to the email addresses on file for students. A PowerSchool parent account is not required to receive a report card, only a valid email address is required.
- Apps for the district website are available for iPhone and Android users. Language Translation and Search boxes are standard features to the website.

The following curriculum areas were developed or revised:

- English Language Arts, grades K-8, September 2017
- Mathematics, grades K-8, September 2017
- Science, grades K-5, September 2017
- Gifted and Talented, grades 3-8, September 2017
- STEAM, grades 5-8, September 2017

As a reminder, Back to School Nights are scheduled on September 18th (Grades 5/6), September 19th (Grades 3/4), September 25th (Grades PreK-2), and September 26th (Grades 7/8). School will be closed in observance of Rosh Hashanah on September 21. School will also be closed on October 9th and 10th for In-service days.

I encourage you to become active in the Watchung Educational Foundation (WEF) and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). These organizations provide generous funding sources for innovative educational opportunities for the teachers and students.

I wish you and your families a happy and safe Labor Day weekend. I look forward to greeting the students on September 7th.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Resko

Barbara A. Resko, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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