Update from the Waterford Board of Education

At the November 14th Board of Education meeting, members Miriam Furey-Wagner and Jody Nazarchyk were recognized for their years of service on the Waterford Board of Education. Through the years, these two board members have been a critical part of the Board providing valuable insight into the policies and decisions for the district. We are extremely grateful for their years of dedicated service and for their commitment to the board and the students of Waterford Public Schools.

- **Jody Nazarchyk**  
  Served November 1994 through November 2019

- **Miriam Furey-Wagner**  
  Served June 2016 through November 2019

Congratulations to the newly elected Waterford Board of Education members:

- **Michele Devine**  
  Term 2019-2023

- **Pat Fedor**  
  Term 2019-2023

Marcia Benvenuti, Amanda Gates-Lamothe and Craig Merriman were also reelected to the Board of Education to serve for the 2019-2023 term and Mr. Merriman was elected as the Board of Education Chairperson at the November 14th meeting.

The Waterford Board of Education is now using a live video platform to stream meetings. Meetings can now be viewed in real-time via the Waterford Public Schools website [https://www.waterfordschools.org/board_members/meetings/meeting_videos](https://www.waterfordschools.org/board_members/meetings/meeting_videos) or YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7hhqBh6eoFpZjYctoSxsTA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7hhqBh6eoFpZjYctoSxsTA).

Test Scores Continue to Rise in Waterford

Each spring, every Connecticut district administers the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) standardized assessments to students in grades 3 – 8. This annual assessment started in the 2014-2015 school year after Connecticut discontinued the use of the Connecticut Mastery Test. Over the five administrations of this assessment, Waterford has shown outstanding gains in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

With the spring of 2019 SBAC administration, Waterford achieved the highest scores in district history in both English/Language Arts and in Mathematics. 70.1% of our students met or exceeded goal in English Language Arts. This is in an increase of about 5% in the last five years. In Mathematics, 65.2% of our students met or exceeded goal which is an increase of about 15% in the last five years. Our students are achieving at higher levels than ever before.

This is due in part to our parent(s) continued support of their child(ren) and their education. That support takes many forms throughout the course of the year. We have an extremely dedicated team combined with a district strategic plan and school growth plans with defined goals and objectives that keep us focused on helping each individual child continue his/her academic growth. A full report on our district’s progress and performance on SBAC is on our website at the November 2019 Board of Education meeting.
New Director of School Dining and Nutrition Services

On November 4, 2019 Ms. Dianne Houlihan started her new role as the Director of School Dining and Nutrition Services at Waterford Public Schools.

Ms. Houlihan brings a multitude of professional experiences in the food service industry to this new position in Waterford. She holds a Culinary Arts Degree from Johnson and Wales University, numerous certificates from the National Food Service Management Institute at the University of Mississippi and is on the Executive Board of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut.

Previously serving as the Head Cook at Great Neck Elementary School, Ms. Houlihan has been an integral part of the Waterford team for over 20 years. Prior to coming to Waterford, Ms. Houlihan was a successful restauranteur and pastry chef, as well as a finalist on the Food Network’s show “Chopped” in 2011.

Throughout the hiring process, Ms. Houlihan’s knowledge of PK-12 food service, her knowledge of our district’s operation and her involvement at the state level association was evident. Colleagues remarked that Ms. Houlihan is a “respected leader in our profession” … “she is on trend with what is new and interesting in the culinary market” … “she is always seeking new ways to enhance the program at her school” … “the training she has attended and her experience in the field will allow her to build a strong financially stable program”.

We are confident that Ms. Houlihan will be a great addition to the Waterford team in this new role. We look forward to the new ideas and creativity that she will bring to the Food Service Program and the Waterford Community.

See pg. 8 for “What’s New in Food Services”

Senior Services Tour at WHS

Seniors from the Waterford Community had the opportunity recently to “go back to school”! The Waterford Senior Services in conjunction with Waterford Public Schools organized a Senior Day Tour of Waterford High School on October 22nd. Community members received a first hand look at what makes up a high school students day in 2019. Seniors toured the library, computer labs, music rooms, technology education department, and classrooms to view the exciting initiatives and opportunities available to our Waterford students. We look forward to hosting an annual Senior Services Tour highlighting one of the five schools in Waterford each year.

“I wanted to extend a big “thank you” from the seniors for today’s tour of Waterford High school. They all came back with such positive comments about the school and how well they were treated on the tour. They said they felt like “celebrities” and were treated so kindly.”

Kathleen Pierce, Assistant Director Waterford Senior Services

On December 4, 2019, twenty six Clark Lane female student scientists attended the STEMfem convention sponsored by the Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame. The convention was held at BioCT in Groton next to Pfizer. Girls from Clark Lane Middle School, The Williams School, Ledyard Middle School, Haddam-Killingworth Middle School, and Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet School attended the full day science convention. The girls participated in three of the four STEM labs offered which focused on lung surgery, buoyancy, rocket design, and drug development.

Employees from companies such as Pfizer, EBAD, and Medtronics volunteered to administer the labs while at the same time inspire future female scientists of Connecticut.
Robotics Team @ CL

The Clark Lane Robotics Team, The Lego Lancers, competed in the First Lego League regional qualifying event on Saturday November 23rd. The theme of the event was called City Shapers. The teams were tasked to complete an innovation project where they find a problem and design a solution to a real world problem that cities face. They also designed and built a robot to complete specific missions on the competition table. This was the Lego Lancers first ever competition! The team won the Judges Award for the Best Innovation Project. Congratulations to all of the team members, coaches and mentors who helped the Lego Lancers achieve this award. The team members included: Adam Balfour, Ian Balfour, Hunter Heikkinen, Ryan Kostopoulos, Adelaide Lanz, Colton Murch, Sam Pennington, Elizabeth Price, Alex Seltzer, Thomas Tattersall, Ed Torres (coach), Robin Shine (coach) and David Balfour (mentor).

Hour of Code at WPS

Students, grades K-5, in Waterford recently participated in the 2019 Hour of Code event which was held December 9th-15th. This event takes place every year during Computer Science Education Week. It is a global movement introducing tens of millions of students worldwide to computer science, inspiring kids to learn more, breaking stereotypes, and leaving them feeling empowered. This event makes a statement that Waterford is ready to teach essential 21st century skills. We know that whatever field our students choose to go into as adults, their ability to succeed will increasingly depend on understanding how technology works.

Coding requires discipline, attention to detail, perseverance, the ability to predict an outcome and problem solving skills. These are skills we want all of our students in Waterford to fully develop. Students collaborated and worked independently on many different age appropriate coding activities. They used desktop computers and Chromebooks to visit online coding sites, they used iPad coding apps, and even coded and ran programs to have various robots move, make sounds, light up and more. Some students even created designs to be printed on 3-D printers!

It was exciting that our students got a chance to be involved in such an important global initiative. If you are interested in reading more about it and the benefits of coding, visit http://hourofcode.com/us.
Superintendent’s Scoop on Snow Days

I often get asked what goes into a decision on an inclement weather morning. These are not easy decisions and it is not something I take lightly. We all share a common goal of making sure our kids are safe. These mornings include extensive communication with many area superintendents as we have dozens of students who attend a school outside Waterford so coordinating with them is important as well.

The morning typically starts around 3:45-4:00 a.m. on an inclement weather morning. The call to delay or cancel needs to be made by 5:00 a.m. so it requires an early start. I consult with a variety of people in order to make the most informed decision possible.

♦ 3:45 AM  Get up and turn on local news/weather. Check current and forecasted conditions from NOAA and other weather sources.

♦ 4:00 AM  Call our Director of Facilities for information on the condition of Waterford roads and school grounds.

♦ 4:10 AM  Call Waterford Police Department for road conditions as well as accident information. Start conversations with other area superintendents. This communication continues throughout the next hour.

♦ 4:20 AM  Call Waterford’s Department of Public Works on road conditions. Review CT State Department of Transportation and CT State Police information on road conditions.

♦ 4:40 AM  Conference call with a meteorologist which includes many other school districts as well. This call will include specifics to southeastern CT weather as weather varies around the state.

♦ 4:50 AM  Typically a second call with Waterford Police Department. I may also call our own bus company on conditions and input, such as whether or not bus drivers can make it in. One last call is made to our Director of Facilities.

♦ 5:00 AM  Make the final decision to delay, cancel, or attend on time.

If we delay or cancel school, I call the following folks:

♦ Director of Facilities – Coordinates snow removal and road treatments on school grounds

♦ Director of Finance and Operations – Coordinate buses

♦ Assistant Superintendent – Coordinates notification to parents and staff

♦ My Administrative Assistant – Coordinates notifications to social media, television, and website
During the holiday season, students and staff at Waterford Public Schools worked together to give back to the community and make the holidays memorable for many families in Waterford.

**WYFSB "Adopt A Family"** - All schools collected gifts and food to help several families in need for the Holidays through the Waterford Youth and Family Services "Adopt A Family" program.

“**It was heartwarming to see the outpouring of kindness from students and their families during this busy holiday season. Working together to donate and wrap gifts for others provided a wonderful opportunity for students to actively participate in an authentic community service effort.**”

*Lisa Mellon, Grade 6 Teacher at Clark Lane Middle School*

**Safe Futures** - Shelter that provides support to families affected by domestic violence & abuse

- WHS 12 days of giving collected gifts and personal care items.
- OSW collected “Shoebox Santa” boxes that included small toys, games, personal care items, hats & mittens

The WHS Spanish Honor Society collected $121 for Heifer International, an organization that “works with communities to end hunger and poverty ... providing appropriate livestock, training and related services to communities of small-scale farmers worldwide.”

**Bella’s Buddies**

OSW 5th grade student Bella Broughton led a campaign to supply children with stuffed toys when encountering first responders during emergencies to comfort them.
Waterford Staff and Student Achievements

Congratulations to 10 students who were inducted into the Tri-M Music Honor Society at Waterford High School on November 13th.

Kayleigh Adams, Cooper Alloway, Sean Corman, Zachary Gamble, Erin Gerboth, Avital Goldberg-Curran, Quinlin Haglund, Nicole Li, Wyatt Lon, and Owen Seltzer.

During the 2018–19 school year, along with other accomplished music students across the United States and overseas in military base schools, Jenna Milukas a Senior at Waterford High School practiced with dedication to gain a part in the Connecticut All-state Choir.

Recently Jenna joined the “best of the best” for the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) 2019 All-National Honor Ensembles on November 7–10, 2019, at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. The All-National Honor Ensembles performers represented collaboration and creativity in its highest musical form. Students were chosen through an audition process. The concert band and symphony orchestras each had 119 and 121 instrumentalists respectively, the jazz ensemble 20 instrumentalists, the mixed choir 240 vocalists, the guitar ensemble 41 instrumentalists, and the modern band 16 performers. Selected choir students rehearsed a challenging repertoire in preparation for performing under the direction of Tesfa Wondemagegnehu. All conductors received top honors in their field and spent several days rehearsing with students before the concert. We are very proud of Jenna and how she represented Waterford at such a prestigious national event.

CL Math Teacher Receives PAEMST Award

Mr. Jay Gionet, grade 6 and 7 Math teacher at Clark Lane Middle School was recognized recently at the Associated Teachers of Mathematics in Connecticut (ATOMIC) conference as one of 3 state finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The PAEMST Award is the highest honor a math teacher can receive, and if selected, he will be invited to the White House for a special reception. Mr. Gionet received a proclamation from the Governor at the ATOMIC Conference in front of many Math colleagues from around the state.
Congratulations to the Waterford High School Volleyball and Football programs for their exceptional showing at the State playoffs this fall. The WHS Volleyball team, with a record of 21-5, were ECC Champions and Class M State Championship Finalists. WHS Football gained their first playoff victory in school history with a 10-6 win over Granby/Canton in the quarterfinal game, moving on to the Class M State Semi-finals. The team also was the ECC Division 2 Champions and finished the season with a record of 10-2. For more athletics award information, team and individual, visit https://whs.waterfordschools.org/athletics/news/whs_athletic_award_recipients/.

November 13th was the first official day for Senior Student-Athletes to officially commit to a Division 1 or 2 program by signing a commitment letter to their chosen institution. On that day Waterford High School celebrated four talented Waterford Student-Athletes who signed their commitment letters.

Waterford High School Unified teammates, Shannon Carter, Peter Hynek, and Madison Nott along with Unified coach, Colleen Lineburgh, attended the CIAC Unified Sports Youth Leadership Summit where they were presenters for two different breakout sessions. They presented a slideshow on how to get both the high school as well as the local community involved in unified sports. The breakout sessions were driven by the students with the coach providing supplemental information. The students did an absolutely fantastic job and represented the Waterford community very well.
What’s New in Food Services?

Menus have been enhanced to reflect exciting options for breakfast and lunch including menus choices such as Asian Rice Bowl and Build Your Own Burger to name a few. These options have been added to not only give students a balanced, nutritious meal but also provide variety and enjoyment to the dining experience. Menus can be viewed on the Waterford Public Schools website at [https://www.waterfordschools.org/parents_family/food_services/menu_prices](https://www.waterfordschools.org/parents_family/food_services/menu_prices).

Did you know that parents can add funds to students’ accounts, see purchase history, or set up a low balance email notification directly on [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com). Students can also setup login information to view their accounts at www.mypaymentsplus.com. Please note that student accounts will be tied to the parent accounts with access to payment information. Please contact the Food Services office at 860-444-5862 for more information.

New Signage at Schools

In an effort to continue our commitment to enhanced security for our students and staff, new signage will adorn the entrance ways to all schools outlining the visitor entrance procedures. We ask that all visitors refrain from holding the door for anyone else to enter the buildings. All persons must follow the same procedure separately.

Thank you for helping to make the safety of our students and staff a top priority in Waterford Public Schools.

Stay Connected…

- **WPS Website** - Visit [www.waterfordschools.org](http://www.waterfordschools.org) for up to date BOE, school and event information.
- **BOE meetings** are held on the 4th Thursday of each month. For the complete schedule of meetings, go to the BOE section of the WPS Website.
- **Download the WPS App** to ‘stay abreast’ of all the happenings at our schools.
- **Follow us on Twitter**: @WPS_CT and @WaterfordSuper

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**Waterford Public Schools**

**Craig R. Merriman, Board of Education Chairperson**

**Thomas W. Giard III, Superintendent**

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**Welcome to Waterford Public Schools**

One Team, One Purpose – Putting Our Students First

Please do not hold the door for anyone else to enter the building

Thank you for helping to keep our schools safe!

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**Waterford Public Schools is a community of learners that fosters and supports high aspirations, ensuring every student acquires the skills and knowledge necessary to be a responsible citizen, prepared to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing world.**