

Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District



Albert G. Ganem, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools
aganem@hwrdsd.org

621 Main Street
Wilbraham, MA 01095
Phone: (413)596-3884
FAX: (413)599-1328

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Dear HWRSD Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 School Year! As I begin my fourth year as your Superintendent of Schools and reflect on my time here, a famous quote comes to mind: *"Be the change you wish to see in the world."*

Education is ever changing and we in the HWRSD strive to make positive changes so we can reap the rewards now and in the future. Below are highlights of just some of the many "investments" in the District. In our new monthly newsletters we will focus on these and other happenings in the HWRSD so you can better understand the work we do toward *being the change we wish to see!*

Districtwide:

- Technology
 - Continued the integration of 1:1 Chromebooks to include students in Grades 3-7.
 - Expanded use of Google tools such as Google Classroom and Google Drive, and online tools like Edulastic.
 - Focused on digital citizenship lessons to ensure online safety, security, and professionalism.
- Professional Learning
 - Continued support from literacy coaches for our elementary teachers and students.
 - Provided ongoing assistance from math interventionists/coaches at each K-5 location with small group instruction for students and job-embedded coaching for teachers.
- Health & Safety
 - Concluded the School Climate Transformations and Drug Free Communities federal grants but will continue to see sustained impacts through continued implementation of positive classroom and schoolwide supports for our students, staff professional learning and leadership and opportunities for community involvement and partnerships in such efforts as the Hampden-Wilbraham Partners for Youth Coalition.
 - Awarded three new grants focused on student wellness, behavioral health and school safety infrastructure that will provide additional resources in support of safer and healthier learning environments for all students.

High School Level:

- Introduced Freshman Foundations, a college preparatory course that involves reading, writing, researching and presentation skills. Students engage in group work, class discussion and self-reflection while practicing these valuable skills.
- Reconfigured course levels for the new school year. Course levels, which have typically been Level 2, Level 1, Honors and Advanced Placement, will now be College Prep, Honors and Advanced Placement. As a result, there will be more high-level classes available, with some being accessible to incoming 9th grade students.
- Scheduled a pilot Civics in Action course for seniors to encourage and educate our young adolescents on how to be an active part of their communities. Minnechaug graduates will continue to be civic-minded and positively contribute to our communities.

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Middle School Level:

- Completed a successful first year at Wilbraham Middle with the new Middle School Model, which is a way of creating smaller groupings of students and staff to provide better supports across the content areas. Teachers have time to meet and collaboratively plan, as well as discuss student needs and how each team can meet the needs of all students.
- Incorporated the K-8 grade configuration at Green Meadows which encouraged mentorships and “family time” among older and younger students and promoted a positive sense of community.
- Introduced Civics Class for 8th Grade to teach students to show they can “use the political process to communicate with elected officials” and “plan strategically for change.”

Elementary School Level:

- Implemented math interventionists and coaches in each elementary school for direct student support and job-embedded coaching for teachers. All math interventionists use the Bridges Intervention instructional resources and communicate with one another for consistency across all buildings.
- Supported reading interventionists in each elementary building to assist students with decoding, comprehension, and fluency to support the growth of their literacy skills.
- Continued Readers' and Math Workshop across all K-5 classrooms in which the teacher begins with modeling a new strategy or skill and then gives the students a chance to practice with support. Students have the opportunity to independently practice strategies in reading, in writing and in math work that is appropriate for them. Additional teacher support is offered during independent work time. The class reviews the day's learning and how they applied it in their work.
- Aligned the K-5 District curriculum with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and designed our standards-based report card to provide families with information on student strengths and areas for growth.

I want to personally thank administrators, teachers and staff of the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District for all their efforts each and every day to provide a safe, caring, high-quality education for our students.

This year, as every year, we commit ourselves to providing the very best educational experience. Our focus is on continuous improvement and ongoing communication. We will update you often through our newsletters and social media, as well as in schools and community meetings. Please make it a habit to visit the District and schools' websites on a regular basis.

We all look forward to welcoming students back to school on Thursday, August 29th. In the meantime, enjoy the remainder of the summer and mark your calendar for the Back-to-School Block Party on Sunday, September 8th, from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. on the Minnechaug Campus. This event for all ages has been organized by families for families. For more information you can contact hwback2school@gmail.com.

Sincerely,



Albert G. Ganem, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

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