

Fall 2017

Dear Families and Staff,

We are excited to present the first District Newsletter of the 2017-2018 school year. This issue contains information about what's happening in our schools and departments. Our hope is that this newsletter will give you a quick snapshot into some highlights from each building, and into what staff and students are engaged in.

A priority for us this year is to effectively communicate what is happening in our schools, and to collaborate with parents and community members as partners to provide the best education possible for our students. Please also consider attending monthly Superintendent's Forum meetings held before the first BOE Meeting of every month from 6:00-7:00.p.m. This forum provides an opportunity for participants to provide input and feedback regarding the district, and allows for conversation among stakeholders.

I wish you all the best for a joyous holiday season!

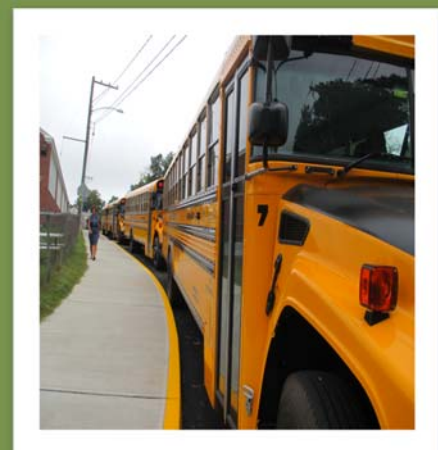
Best,
Sherri Turner



Photo of the Week:
LIS Cardboard Challenge

Litchfield Public
Schools
35 Plumb Hill Rd
Litchfield, CT
06759
860-567-7500

Welcome
Staff
&
Students



Center School

On Thursday, November 9, 2017, Center School students and staff welcomed and honored over 60 veterans during Center School's annual Veteran's Day assembly. Before the assembly, veterans enjoyed the opportunity to connect with each other and be treated to a continental breakfast donated by the Center School staff. Our heroes then enjoyed performances honoring their service performed by students from preschool to third grade. Students also presented their honorary guest with gifts made by Center School students.



On Tuesday, November 14, 2017, the Litchfield PTO sponsored Center School's annual Book Fair Story Time evening event. Students enjoyed milk donated from Arethusa Farm and cookies donated from Stop and Shop. Children had the opportunity to shop for new books and enjoyed stories read by many Center School teachers and staff members.

Center School has been hopping with excitement and activities this fall. On October 13, 2017, Center School students and staff participated in Fire Prevention Day. Students from preschool to third grade participated in activities related to fire prevention and safety facilitated by our local firefighters. Here is a picture of Litchfield Firefighters and Center School parents Brian Mongeau and Frank VanOrmer talking fire safety with our preschoolers.

Throughout the fall, Center School Gym Teacher Andy Parker has created engaging and fun activities during grade level recesses. One of these activities included a maze. Here is a picture of Center School staff member Lori Shuhi guiding second graders through the maze during second grade recess.

Events



Find more news and events at www.litchfieldschools.org

Intermediate School

As the first marking period comes to a close at Litchfield Intermediate School it has been an action packed start to the year. The students and staff have been actively involved in a wide range of activities.

Student Council

Under the guidance of Mrs. Stull, the Intermediate School Student Council has been revitalized. Students in grades 4-6 applied for a spot on the council. The group is made up of 20 members and has spent the last few months raising awareness focusing on such campaigns as Breast Cancer, Pancreatic Cancer, Red, White and Blue Day and Diabetes Awareness Month.



The Cardboard Challenge

Every student in grades 4-6 took part in the creation of a cardboard project as a member of a collaborative group. Students worked together to plan and build their project. On October 25, the items were on display for the entire student body and parent community to view.

Wonder Field Trip

On Tuesday, November 21 the entire student body and staff will be seeing a special presentation of the recently released movie *Wonder*. The trip will help spread our theme of kindness and accepting differences in others. The movie is based on the best-selling book written by R.J. Palacio.

Events



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Middle School

Eighth grade ELA students have just finished their first whole class novel, S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. In December they will begin the next novel, *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson. In Science, students are wrapping up the forces in motion unit and in December will work on a large project related to simple machines in Colonial America; energy is the next area of study. Math classes are working on expressions, equations, and linear relationships. Spanish classes are researching the culture of Guatemala, shopping, and expressing their preferences. Social Studies students created their own podcasts about explorers and are reading primary sources related to Colonial times.

In seventh grade, Social Studies students are studying the culture of Ancient Mesopotamia and in the upcoming weeks, for both Social Studies and English, students will start writing their first five paragraph essays of the year. Science classes are studying body systems such as the digestive and nervous systems. Weather is the current topic in Spanish and in Math classes students are learning proportions, geometry, and angles.

Students in both grades are excited to get their prizes from the annual fundraiser that raises money for the students to participate in academic field trips. In addition, our student-athletes just finished up their fall seasons for soccer, cross country, and field hockey, but this doesn't mean that they would just have to sit at home! Our Student Council alongside the Booster Club hosted two Fun Nights – a jailbreak tournament and breakout room activities such as pumpkin decorating, *Just Dance*, and karaoke. Middle school students also had a blast at our recent annual Autumn Fest!



Events



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High School

Litchfield High School Students Globe-trot to Spain

This February, 8 to 15 students will have the unforgettable experience of travelling abroad to Spain. Accompanied by World Language Department Coordinator Amy Bainbridge-Jordan, our students will tour Madrid, Segovia, and Seville during a nine-day, all-inclusive tour of some of the most beautiful cities in Europe. While immersed in real-life experiences reading, listening and speaking in Spanish, our students will explore "a region rich in history and the source of many iconic elements of Spanish culture, such as bullfighting, flamenco dancing, and Moorish architecture." This cultural inclusion experience will complement our Spanish program, which aligns closely with the American Council on Teachers of Foreign language standards that challenge students to engage in various forms of speaking, writing, listening and reading in the target language.

The itinerary is organized by a popular travel company based in New Hampshire, which specializes in small group tours that can customize generalized itineraries to individual preferences. Students will begin their tour in Madrid at the Museo del Prado, one of the most visited sites in the world and renowned for its comprehensive collection of works by Francisco Goya. They will also visit the Estadio Bernabeu, home of the Real Madrid soccer team. In Segovia, they will experience the vast influence of the Roman Empire, which reaches back as far as 200 BC, by walking along the remains of a Roman aqueduct. While touring the Alcazar of Segovia, they will learn about the various influences of the Moors on architecture, government, and daily living. Concluding in Seville, students will tour Italica, the birthplace of the Roman Emperor Trajan, as well as the Alcazar of Seville, where several episodes of *The Game of Thrones* were filmed.

Trip to Spain



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News from Pupil Services

Mindfulness: Another tool to increase academic achievement and student success across all domains

Earlier this year, Litchfield Public Schools in partnership with Greenwoods and the Litchfield Prevention Council sponsored a forum for parents and the larger community on the practice of mindfulness and its overall benefits. Mindfulness, sometimes defined as “being present with one’s attention focused on the moment,” is a proven healthy approach for anyone navigating the daily challenges in life. Currently a large body of research exists suggesting that students who participate in an evidence-based

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum that includes mindfulness techniques demonstrate significant gains in academic achievement as compared to students who do not have the access to these types of programs. Particularly, students who demonstrate the use of these techniques show improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, better attitudes about themselves, others, and school. One study specifically reports statistically significant associations between early elementary social competence and future young adult outcomes in the domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance abuse and mental health.

So what does this all mean to the Litchfield Public Schools?

With the support of the Litchfield Prevention Council, staff will attend a mindfulness training conference on December 1st as an initial step to implementing the use of mindfulness practices throughout the school environment. Later this year, groups of students will learn ways to directly implement mindfulness techniques into their day so that they are better able to understand emotions, thoughts and signals from their body. Our youngest students in grades kindergarten through sixth will experience the direct teaching of some of these techniques through their physical education classes and students in grades seven through twelve will have the option of learning more about mindfulness through an extracurricular club or through the intervention model. We are excited to further extend the use of this helpful technique into the school community! If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact Julie Haggard, Director of Pupil Services, at haggardj@litchfieldschools.org.

Board of Education

This year we welcome two new members to the Board of Education. John Morosani and Matt Terzian were recently elected to the Board, and Lynn Stone was elected to continue as a member after serving for one year. We appreciate their willingness to serve in this important role, and look forward to their support as we continue to work together to provide the best education for the students of Litchfield.



We also bid farewell to two longtime Board members, Betsy Fabbri and John Bongiorno. Betsy and John have dedicated countless hours over the last several years to ensure that all Litchfield students receive a quality education. They have been members of numerous sub-committees, and have also served as volunteers in our schools and in other community organizations. They have served the students of Litchfield well, and we will miss their passion and insight.

