



The Connection

WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FALL/WINTER 2022

Bringing the accomplishments and initiatives of the Waterford Public Schools to the Town, Community and beyond to create a **Connection** that will reinforce a strong commitment to coming together to educate the whole child.

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Update from the Waterford Board of Education

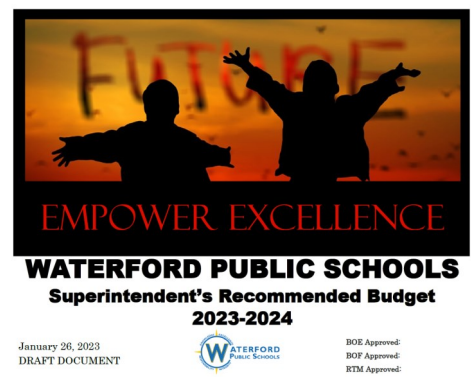
The Waterford Board of Education was honored to recognize five Clark Lane Middle School staff members at the December 8, 2022 Board of Education meeting. The staff members, Principal James Sachs, Physical Education Teacher Taylor Shannon, School Nurses Maria Kostopoulos and Erica McCaffrey, and UCFS Clinician Debra Abbey were recognized for their heroic efforts in an emergency situation that occurred on October 20, 2022. They were commended for their quick and decisive action in an emergency situation with a student and for going above and beyond the call of their duties. We are proud of our entire CLMS team and many district personnel for stepping up and working together during this time of crisis.



Pictured left to right - Principal, James Sachs; Teacher, Taylor Shannon; Nurse, Maria Kostopoulos; Nurse, Erica McCaffrey; UCFS Clinician, Debra Abbey

FY24 Budget Information

To assist with the budget development for FY24, the Board of Education Finance Committee and District Administration have scheduled three (3) Finance Committee meetings to analyze line items prior to the Special Budget meetings and to promote earnest discussion on the budget on an earlier timeline. The Board of Education Finance Committee meetings are scheduled for December 8th, January 10th and January 19th at 5:00 PM in the Board of Education Conference Room. All BOE Finance Committee Meetings will also be livestreamed on the BOE YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7hhqBh6eoFpZjYCToSxsTA/videos>.



The Waterford Board of Education is committed to ensuring a budget that focuses on both our commitment to maintain a high quality education for our students and our responsibility of careful consideration of fiscal resources. Superintendent Giard will present the recommended budget to the board and the community at two budget workshops on February 2nd and 9th. The budget will go for final approval by the Board at the February 23, 2023 regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting.

Report Card Revisions - Grades K-5

In support of our mission of “ensuring every student acquires the skills and knowledge necessary to be a responsible citizen, prepared to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing world”, the Waterford Public Schools continues to work hand in hand with families in educating our students and making each year one of substantial accomplishments for all. As parents/guardians are a valuable partner in the education process, we wanted to ensure that student progress was communicated to families in an accurate and comprehensible format. Through the work of a district committee, we have revised and streamlined the elementary report card, to ensure that student progress, strengths, and challenges will be conveyed in a format that ensures consistency and collaboration between the district, school, and families.

The elementary report card includes information about student’s progress toward end-of-the-year grade level standards. Each report card includes teacher comments that describe specific strengths and growth goals for each student. Teachers may provide additional information and samples of your student’s work during parent/teacher conferences.

We have also prepared an Elementary Report Card Handbook to be a guide for families as we transition to the new report card system. The handbook can be found at https://www.waterfordschools.org/parents_family/policies_procedures/report_card_handbook.

For additional information or specific questions on student report cards, parents/guardians are asked to contact their child’s teacher or school principal.



Waterford Public Schools Elementary Report Card Handbook

Guide for Parents and Guardians
Grade K-5

Return to Traditional Meal Price Program

Beginning January 2, 2023 the traditional free/reduced and paid meal price program will resume in Waterford Public Schools. The SMART fund free meals for all students will expire on December 23, 2022. Parents are encouraged to complete the Application for Free/Reduced Price School Meals and/or upload money to student meal accounts to prepare for this change.

Beginning on January 2, 2023, school meal prices will be as follows:

Grade Level	Breakfast Price	Lunch Price
K-5	\$2.25	\$3.25
CLMS	\$2.50	\$3.50
WHS	\$2.75	\$3.75

Families are encouraged to submit an [application for Free/Reduced Price School Meals](#) to seek meal price benefits and avoid possible future unpaid meal charges.

Visit <https://vimeo.com/777367788> for a video from the CSDE on [How to Fill out the Application for Free and Reduced-price Meals or Free Milk](#).

WPS Student Device Protection Program

The Waterford Public Schools IT Department would like to remind families to enroll in the WPS Student Device Protection Program using [MyPaymentsPlus](#) before December 31st. All parents are encouraged to create a FREE [MyPaymentsPlus](#) account in order to:

- View details of the [WPS Student Device Protection Program](#).
- Opt-in to purchase device insurance and make easy payments online.
- Enjoy the ease of using the same site Waterford uses for meal pay.

Device Protection Program Cost

Chromebook Protection cost:
⇒ \$20.00 to be paid annually.

Maximum Protection Plan cost for family living together
⇒ \$60.00 per year.

Students new to WPS after January 1 may choose to purchase a protection plan at \$10.00 which will cover 1 claim only.

The insurance fee is waived for families approved for Free/Reduced meals but families must still register in MyPaymentsPlus.

SCAN TO GET STARTED!



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 staff:

- ◇ 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

School Messenger Contact Information Reminder - As winter weather will soon be upon us, we would like to remind families of our procedures for delayed openings and school closings. We will continue to publish any school delays and cancellations on all the major media outlets, district Twitter ([@WPS_CT](#)), our website (www.waterfordschools.org), as well as our mass communication system, School Messenger. Using School Messenger, we will continue to issue texts, emails, and phone calls with our plans. We would like to remind parents/guardians and staff that in order to receive the text messages, you must opt-in to the School Messenger system by sending a text message from your cell phone of "Y" or "Yes" to the district's short code number of 67587. Please contact your child's school office with any changes to your contact information for School Messenger.

Hour of Code

“We are so lucky that our district supports the benefits of coding, robotics and technology and allows for all our elementary students to participate in this global event each year! I was able to witness almost 900 students in one week using computational thinking, collaborating, persevering, and having a blast at the same time! I am truly lucky to be able to work with students in this capacity and to witness the excitement at these events.”

Laura McCue

Elementary
Technology Specialist

Students grades K-5 in Waterford recently participated in the 2022 Hour of Code event which was held at each elementary school during the week of December 5th-11th. 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 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 a 3-D printer!

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>. *Article contributed by Laura McCue, Technology Specialist*



School-Based Health Centers FAQs

Did you know that the UCFS School-based Health Centers housed at Waterford High School and Clark Lane Middle School are open to ALL Waterford Public School students. This year alone they have provided sports physicals, immunizations for new students to Waterford, behavioral health services, as well as acute and chronic care appointments. See the table to the right for year to date totals:

	YTD Totals
CLMS Behavioral	225
CLMS Medical	133
WHS Behavioral	152
WHS Medical	46

UCFS has put together a list of FAQ's to assist families in understanding the services provided and the process for enrollment.

- WHAT:** UCFS School-based Health Centers are like a doctor's office inside of your child's school. Services are provided by an APRN/PA and a licensed behavioral health clinician who are experts in adolescent health and are employed by UCFS .
- WHERE:** Waterford High School and Clark Lane Middle School (but open to elementary students as well).
- WHY:** To provide services to students during the school day instead of having to leave campus. To improve students' academic achievement by taking care of medical and behavioral health needs that can make learning difficult. To remove barriers to care such as lack of transportation or insurance and to support school staff through wellness and educational events.
- WHO:** Open to ALL Waterford Public School students. There has been a misconception that it is only for students who are eligible for F/R meals. This is incorrect - ALL Waterford Public School Students (PK - 12) can be seen at the School-based Health Centers.
- HOW:** [Enrollment forms](#) are available on both the UCFS and Waterford Public Schools website as well as in the main office of all Waterford Public Schools. It is not mandatory to sign your child up for the UCFS SBHC, but you must sign up and give consent for your child to be seen and treated at the SBHC.
- WHEN:** The SBHCs operate during school hours. An APRN/PA will be available Monday, Wednesday & Fridays from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm with a shared schedule between Waterford High School and Clark Lane Middle School. A full time Behavioral Health Clinician will be on site Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm at Waterford High School and Clark Lane Middle School.

For a complete list of FAQ's visit https://www.waterfordschools.org/parents_family/for_students/school-based_health_center



WHS Exhibit - "Architecture of Murder: The Auschwitz-Birkenau Blueprints"

WHS staff Brian Ash, Jenny Peluso, and Matthew Cadorette have worked with the Jewish Federation of Eastern CT for many years and most recently joined forces with the American Society for Yad Vashem to bring an exhibit called "Architecture of Murder: The Auschwitz-Birkenau Blueprints" to Waterford High School. This shocking and powerful exhibit examined the details that went into planning and building the Auschwitz camp complex, providing "documentation of the manner in which a major building operation served as a central tool of Nazi extermination policy". The Jewish Federation praise WHS for its willingness to host these types of programs on Holocaust education, Civil Rights, and anti-hate topics. More information on the Architecture of Murder: The Auschwitz-Birkenau Blueprints can be found at <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/through-the-lens/auschwitz-blueprints.asp>

Lancers in the news again - Lady Lance Sets off to Cross the Atlantic Again



The WHS Early College Experience ECE Marine Biology class under the leadership of Science Teacher Michael O'Connor has built another boat, the Lady Lance, which is the sister ship to the Lancer that traveled to Ireland in 2016. The following information is an excerpt from the Lady Lance website that details the experience and also provides tracking and interesting facts about the voyage.

"Students at Waterford High School in Mr. O'Connor's ECE Marine Science class took on the task of building the boat and preparing a new Student Drifter from GOMLF/NOAANFSC. They did this back in 2016 (see above) and wanted to replicate the research to learn more about wind and currents in the ocean. The decoration of the sail and boat was done in partnership

with Quaker Hill Elementary School, who helped assemble the drifter in 2016. It is great to see long term connections loop back around to extend the learning opportunities!"

For more information on the project as well as tracking and voyage details of the Lady Lance and Lancer, check out the following links:

Lady Lance - <https://educationalpassages.org/boats/ladylance/>

Lancer - <https://educationalpassages.org/boats/lancer/>

Going with the Flow - <https://sites.google.com/waterfordschools.org/goingwiththeflow/home>

The Day - [Waterford High boat set to cross the Atlantic again](#)

WFSB Channel 3 - [Great Kids: Marine Biology Students set sail with legacy boat kit project](#)

Music News

Congratulations to the following WHS music students who auditioned and were selected to perform in the 2023 Connecticut Eastern Region Honor Ensemble Festival to be held at the University of Connecticut in January.

- ◆ Band - Lauren Gerboth, Michelle Liu, Caleb Nichols
- ◆ Choir - Sofia Fioravanti, Madison Seifert, Suhana Sharma, Zaya Hagland
- ◆ Orchestra - Valerie Cheng, Emma Grimsey, Maple Siu, Sara Dombroski, Cole Kempke, Luke Bartlett, Alex Seltzer, Vincent Antonelli



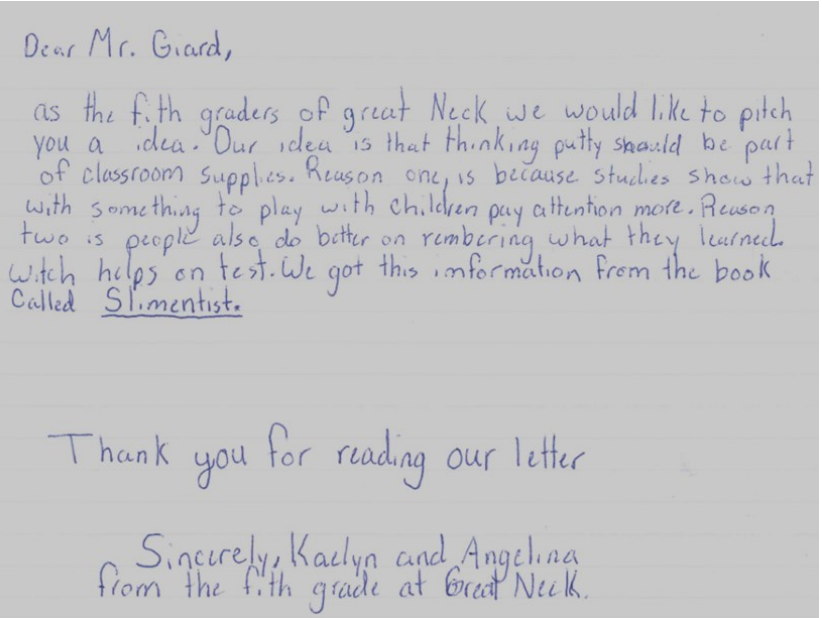
Region Choir
(L-R) Suhana Sharma, Zaya Haglund, Sofia Fioravanti, Madison Seifert



Region Band
(L-R) Michelle Liu, Caleb Nichols, Lauren Gerboth

**WHS Music Dept
December Concert
2022**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar6U7oZKL78>



Great Neck Elementary School Fifth grade students Kaelyn McDonald and Angelina Rowe took it upon themselves to write a letter to Superintendent Giard persuading him to add thinking putty to the list of classroom supplies offered to students. In their persuasive letter, they noted the reasons why thinking putty would be beneficial to students. Superintendent Giard and Principal Shea met with Kaelyn and Angelina to listen to their ideas and discuss possible options for their request. Thanks to Kaelyn and Angelina, the fifth grade class will now pilot the use of thinking putty in the classroom as a tool to increase attention and a technique to retain lessons.

We are proud of Kaelyn and Angelina for their perseverance and confidence in advocating for and working towards something that they believed in.

Veterans Day Celebrations

All Schools in Waterford recognized our Veterans with special ceremonies throughout the community. Clark Lane Middle School honored seventy veterans in a beautiful celebration on November 10th. In preparation for the event, students were educated on each branch of the military. Highlights of the celebration included students presenting the Colors, members of the Coast Guard band and CLMS students playing the military medley, a Zoom from Japan with a member of the Space Force, and students presenting honorary tokens to their Veteran family members.



Click the following link to view the CLMS Veterans Day event that was highlighted on WTNH.



<https://www.wtnh.com/news/students-honor-family-members-in-veterans-day-ceremony-in-waterford/>



HONORING VETERANS



Veterans Day Celebrations

Honoring the Veterans in our WPS families and the Waterford Community has been a long standing tradition at the elementary schools in Waterford. This year all elementary schools went above and beyond to plan celebrations to honor these important men and women who served and continue to serve our country.



- ⇒ Oswegatchie Elementary School hosted a Veterans breakfast on November 10th. Veterans were introduced and announced to the OSW community followed by a speech from Principal Macrino and several songs from the OSW students.
- ⇒ Quaker Hill Elementary School participated in a Veterans Day parade and ceremony. The school community and veterans paraded down to the town green, sang songs and then walked back to the school for a ceremony. Quaker Hill invited local veterans and active duty service members to participate.
- ⇒ The Great Neck Elementary School Chorus performed Veterans Day Songs at the Veterans Day Breakfast at Filomena's and the Senior Services Veterans Day Luncheon at the Community Center. Click on the photos below to view the videos from the Veterans Day Events.



PowerSchool Update

It has been reported that the PowerSchool Parent/Student app is not functioning properly for some families. After researching the problem, it is an issue that happened when the district upgraded PowerSchool to version 22.11.0. For families affected by this issue, please log out of the PowerSchool App and log back in. If that does not fix the problem, families can also try deleting the version of the app on their mobile device and download the latest version.



Waterford Public Schools

Pat Fedor, Board of Education Chairperson

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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.

Stay Connected...

- ◆ **WPS Website - Visit** 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](#)**