November 16, 2022

Dear Worthington Community Members,

Happy Autumn! As the trees grow bare, the low sun lights up the last remaining poplar leaves on the morning bus rides, and we join our friends and family indoors for Thanksgiving celebrations, we are so grateful to be able to gather. It has been wonderful to return this fall to having full community involvement at Conwell. The school has invited families and community members to events including the kick-off potluck in August, regular family breakfasts and family lunches, all-school meetings, and the recent Harvest Festival. Huge thanks to the PTO for planning the Halloween parade and harvest day fun, and for providing the Conwell students and staff with a fabulous harvest feast.

And, perhaps less celebratory but still satisfying, the school committee has returned to in-person meetings. It has felt good to see *people* instead of Zoom boxes! In case you haven't had the pleasure of joining us, the school committee would like to share with you an update on our recent activities. (You can also now find meeting minutes and agendas on the RH Conwell website home page: https://www.rhconwell.org )

In the spring of 2022, we completed our biannual evaluation of the superintendent, Gretchen Morse-Dobosz. This is the opportunity for the committee to exercise its formal oversight responsibilities, assessing the superintendent's performance on goals she and the committee agreed upon, and on standards determined by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). You can see the final evaluation here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LDjyFwEc3tvYylUFEmmdvQRawZw0Sp3m/view?usp=share_link

Then, in June, the committee and Morse-Dobosz started a new cycle of goals and evaluation. We spent the summer developing new goals for the next two years using input we received from a survey of the Conwell community inquiring about what aspects of Conwell people most value and what changes they most want to see. We used the responses to direct our goals. For this cycle the goals are focused on continuing to build community connections and community involvement post-pandemic, continuing to build outdoor learning opportunities in all grades, integrating some new curricula, and seeking ways to enhance the arts learning opportunities at Conwell. Follow this link to view the current Superintendent and District Goals: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C7TfPqElpAkidEUCjwDCM5qhgMjY-M_SnTrSTGb-Vy4/edit?usp=share_link

One of the school committee's current goals is to begin some longer-range planning for budgeting. As the district emerges, post-pandemic, we are thinking about what the next 5+ years should look like: how do we recover, academically and emotionally, from the impact of the pandemic and foster Conwell students' growth as resilient and confident citizens? Where are we headed? What does the community envision for Conwell for the future? We will work with the Selectboard to anticipate and plan for future building repairs, and to explore possibilities for

solar power at Conwell. We'd like to develop a 5-year plan to budget for future staff professional development and for funding new student learning enrichment opportunities. We would love to hear your ideas for what you would like to see grow at Conwell over the next 5 years. Foreign language lessons? Musical instrument lessons? Tutoring and homework help? Something else? Stay tuned for an announcement for a survey and listening session to hear your ideas. And of course, please come join us at our meetings, the second Thursday of every month at 6:30 in the Conwell cafeteria. We'll be starting our budget discussions in earnest in December.

I'll end with a refrain of gratitude. Thank you to the Conwell faculty for your hard work and dedication. You make it all happen. There are several new staff members who have joined Conwell's amazing collaborative team this year: Alexis King (counselor), Jonas Cain (Music), Greta Facchetti (PE), Katie Dahill (Paraprofessional), Meg Breymann (Nurse). We are lucky to have you all.
For family members and community members who are curious about what students are learning at Conwell, you can find the MA learning standards for each grade on the Conwell website home page, and we really encourage you to stop in and visit the school: you can join the students for their Friday all-school meetings that happen monthly Fridays at 9am (watch Gretchen's newsletter for announcements), join a class in a project or lesson, or come share your own skills and knowledge with a classroom. You can contact Gretchen at the school to arrange your visit: 413-238-5856.

Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

Warmly,
Alison Todd, Chair
On behalf of the Worthington School Committee