



## Yorktown Central School District



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Dear Yorktown School Community,

One of my favorite quotes during Thanksgiving reads, "Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it." I have shared this quote with you in the past, but I thought it more appropriate than ever to share it again. In reflecting on the first three months of school, I have much to be grateful and thankful for within our district. With Thanksgiving upon us, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank members of our school community for their tireless efforts and commitment to the children of Yorktown. Our administrators, faculty, and staff have all committed to providing our students with a learning environment that is safe, nurturing, and supportive. Every single employee of the District has such an integral role in our operations, and they all have my appreciation and gratitude today, and always. I commend my colleagues for their profound efforts, and am deeply appreciative for all that they do each day to support our students.

I also want to acknowledge and commend our students. They have been extraordinarily flexible, positive, and optimistic in the face of very challenging circumstances. Several mornings each week, I visit our schools during arrival so I may greet our students. Some mornings are rainy, some are windy, and others are just outright cold. However, when our students arrive on our campuses, the warmth of the sun always seems to shine. Our students are so happy to be on our campuses and we are equally happy to welcome them to school. Our students always make me so proud, and the joy that they display each day is my greatest source of inspiration.

While this Thanksgiving will look and feel different, my profound appreciation for our board of education, faculty, staff, students, and the incredible Yorktown community only grows stronger. Thank you, today. Thank you, always. I look forward, with great optimism, to the better days that are ahead.

November Updates

Congratulations to our High School Drama Club Students

Our Yorktown High School Drama Club put on a production of *Clue* this past weekend. Our students, in different cohorts, put on two spectacular performances. In the most difficult of times for theatrical productions, our students, under the terrific direction of Ms. Stock, came together virtually to deliver a brilliant performance that will be remembered for years to come. Our students worked extraordinarily hard to bring this production to fruition, and their efforts truly showed.

For our seniors who participated in the performance, I want to share how especially proud of you I am. You took this very difficult situation in stride and delivered a performance for the ages. Anyone wishing to view the productions, and I hope that you take a moment to do so, may visit the Yorktown High School homepage for the links to the performances.

#### Congratulations to Our Fall Student-Athletes

The Yorktown Central School District athletics program continues its tradition of excellence. Our students, across all sports, have demonstrated extraordinary resilience this season, more so than in any athletic season that I can recall over my career. Our student-athletes and their coaches took incredible safety precautions throughout the season, they played with minimal or no fans in the audience, and they showed a level of determination that will stay with them always. Regardless of the win-loss records--and our teams all performed extraordinarily well this fall--the most important part of the season is that our students strengthened their inner resilience while forging lifelong friendships with their teammates. In a recent conversation with a student-athlete, the student made a profound statement: "I'm so happy we got to play. I am so happy. I will never take another moment for granted." I was moved by this very brief conversation, and it will remain with me for all of my days. For our senior student-athletes, you have my deepest admiration as you took a difficult situation and transformed it into a magical fall season. I am proud of you!

#### YHS Blue Ribbon Award

It feels like ages ago, but one year ago this month, Mr. DeGennaro, Mrs. O'Shea, and I traveled to Washington DC to accept our award as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. This is probably one of the highest national recognitions of academic excellence that a school can achieve; however, in light of the pandemic, we held off on raising the Blue Ribbon flag outside of the high school. Recently, we proudly raised the flag along with a beautiful sign at the main entrance of the high school. This is a terrific honor for our high school and our entire Yorktown Central School District Community. Mr. DeGennaro, the YHS faculty, staff, and students have done extraordinary work, and I am delighted that their work is recognized with this prestigious honor. A picture of the flag and the sign are included on the final page of this newsletter.

#### Mildred E. Strang Re-Dedication

This past school year marked the 50th anniversary of the opening of Mildred E. Strang Middle School. Mrs. Horowitz and the faculty and staff re-dedicated the building to Ms.

Strang. A beautiful sign was installed just outside the main entrance of the middle school this week. A picture of the sign has been included below.

#### Congratulations Mildred E. Strang Middle School

Earlier this school year, we were notified that Mildred E. Strang Middle School was re-designated as a National School of Character. This is a very fitting recognition of the work of the faculty, staff, and students of the MESMS school community. I offer my congratulations and commendation to Mrs. Horowitz and the staff and students at Mildred E. Strang Middle School for this very meaningful acknowledgement of their excellent work. One of the many examples that demonstrate why Mildred E. Strang Middle School was designated a National School of Character was evident in a recent partnership with the Yorktown Lions where many turkeys were donated to families in the community, and the MESMS faculty and staff generously provided supplemental dishes to accompany the turkeys.

#### Elementary Schools are Building Kindness and Community

Brookside, Crompond, and Mohansic elementary schools are truly demonstrating the foundational principles of kindness and empathy this holiday season. In each of our elementary schools there are generous donation drives in process. Each project is enormously inspirational, and will undoubtedly have a profound impact on all involved.

At Brookside, the annual Toys for Tots fundraiser is underway. As I visited Brookside Monday morning, I observed students proudly placing their toy donation on a beautifully assembled table in the main lobby. The hundreds of toys that adorned the festively decorated table was a strong reminder of why the Brookside toy drive is often one of the top Toys for Tots collection drives in Westchester County. I offer my thanks and appreciation to Mrs. Amerling, Mrs. Santosusso, and the terrific Brookside faculty, staff, and students for their support of this effort.

At Crompond, the faculty, staff, and students will be participating in a mittens and gloves donation drive in advance of the frigid winter temperatures. The mittens and gloves will be displayed throughout the school, and all of the items collected will be sent to children and families in need. As I think about families in need of essential items this winter season, I am so heartened to know that Crompond is engaged in this very meaningful donation drive. I thank Dr. Roberts and the outstanding Crompond faculty, staff, and students for their commitment to this work.

At Mohansic School, the students, faculty, and staff will be participating in their annual hats, mittens, and gloves collection in the coming weeks. Items collected during this drive will be sent to the Community Center of Northern Westchester in Katonah. This is yet another example of our students and staff engaging in meaningful work that will have a profound positive impact on others. I thank Mrs. Berry and the wonderful faculty, staff, and students of Mohansic for this selfless effort to bring essential supplies to children across our region.

### Important Information Regarding Thanksgiving Travel

Under the New York State Travel Advisory, any travel outside of New York State for more than 24 hours to any state (other than New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Vermont) requires a 14-day mandatory quarantine upon return. There is also a test out option for the 14-day travel quarantine upon return. More information about the travel advisory and test out option can be found by visiting: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>. Individuals who are awaiting results from a COVID test must remain home from school until the results are returned and the result is negative. Please contact the health office of your child's school for additional information.

In closing, we continue to ask that you take the necessary safety precautions this Thanksgiving to prevent further spread of COVID. Our school community would like our schools to remain open for in-person learning, and only a collective commitment to this effort can make this possible.

I wish you and your family a happy and healthy Thanksgiving filled with joy and happiness. Our next update will be at the end of the week.

With my profound appreciation,



Dr. Hattar





