



## *SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE for October 2017*

Dear Families,

It is hard to believe that October is upon us and the weather is changing! The school year is well underway and seems to be passing quickly. I have a few updates and reminders for our school community:

### **Budget**

We are still in a challenging place in terms of the 2017-2018 budget. Given that we are now under the Governor's Executive Order, you may hear of worrisome scenarios in Connecticut districts heavily reliant on state funding. Some of these districts are discussing mid-year layoffs, school closings, and payroll shortages due to the reduction or elimination of Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding. I want to stress that this is not the case in Fairfield. We have been preparing since last spring for this challenging year and are not in the same predicament as some of our colleagues across the state.

FPS is primarily locally funded, so the reduction in state aid does not impact us in the same manner. Certainly, the state budget puts enormous pressure on our local community finances. As a reminder, FPS has frozen approximately \$2.3 million in our current budget to address unforeseen challenges. We have held off on carpet, flooring, paint, and basic maintenance projects, which can be done later this year should the situation improve. Additionally, we have reduced professional development and supply funds, and have frozen an administrative position at Central Office. We are doing everything within our power to be proactive and conservative, while simultaneously taking care of our great school system.

### **Facility Projects**

Our Tomlinson Middle School gym floor is almost complete! The floor looks beautiful, and the bleachers are installed. The gym is slated to reopen this week. On the same campus, the TMS turf field replacement is also nearly complete. The new turf looks fantastic and will be ready for use within a few weeks.

The Sherman Elementary School grass field will be closed throughout the winter, while it gets revitalized and reconstructed. The field is scheduled to re-open in spring 2018.

## **Student Enrollment**

This year FPS has 9,916 students in our seats! Overall, enrollment has decreased by 68 students when compared to last year's October 1 enrollment count. Other comparative information:

- Elementary (PK-5) shows 178 *fewer* students due to the shift of the large 5<sup>th</sup> grade class to middle school.
- Conversely, middle school (6-8) shows an *increase* of 103 students, due to the influx of the large 6<sup>th</sup> grade class from elementary school. This was not unexpected.
- High school enrollment remains steady and shows an increase of seven students.

We have contracted with Milone and MacBroom to prepare updated 10-Year Enrollment Projections, which should be available by early November. We will post this information to the website as soon as it is received. Please keep in mind that Connecticut's southern region projections are not in line with a recent report on the state as a whole, showing a 14% decline in future enrollment.

## **Community Committee**

The Board of Education voted unanimously to form the *Adhoc Committee on Operational Effectiveness*, to explore and research efficiencies. Given the challenging financial circumstances, the committee will work to collect ideas from the broader public, staff, and families to explore possibilities for cost savings. The term "structural change" has been used in a variety of public meetings and is interpreted differently by many individuals and groups. To clarify, the adhoc committee is charged with collating factual information to inform and assist the Board with decision making. The Board is unwavering in its commitment to provide outstanding educational opportunities, even as the state reduces funding.

## **Weather Alerts**

As a reminder, be sure that you have updated your phone numbers and registered for emergency alerts in IC – this will ensure accurate delivery of IC messages. Additionally, FPS has a new Facebook page where school closing information will be posted. Facebook and Twitter will instantly communicate school closing information. It won't be long before snow arrives and we will be shoveling driveways!

Have a wonderful October and enjoy the beautiful fall foliage!



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