

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Kate M. Carter
Superintendent of Schools
(860) 291-1205

Sheryl L. Mortensen
*Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction*
(860) 291-1210

Colin J. McNamara
*Assistant Superintendent
Personnel and Administration*
(860) 291-1215

Chris M. Chemerka
Director of Finance & Operations
(860) 291-1260

D R E A M . A C H I E V E . I N S P I R E .

October 4, 2016

A message to Wapping families...

As you are aware, Wapping School will be closing at the end of this school year. South Windsor Public Schools will consolidate elementary schools and will operate four schools instead of five. We have many families that are new to town who may not be as familiar with the rationale or the history of this decision. I have attached a letter that I wrote to Wapping families in 2013 that may provide some insight into the path that has led us to the closing of Wapping School. In 2013 I informed parents of our commitment to manage this change thoughtfully and respectfully. I remain fully committed to this approach. To that end, I am providing Wapping families with a timeline of activities designed to support the children and families of the Wapping community.

Redistricting Information To Be Mailed on October 7

We have spent the summer and early fall collaborating with our redistricting consultants, Milone & MacBroom. They have conducted extensive analysis of our enrollment projections and have worked closely with our transportation department to draw new school district boundary lines. Each family will receive a letter via US mail which will inform them of the elementary school that will be assigned to their current address. The letters will be mailed out to families on Friday, October 7.

Parent Information Session on October 17

We invite Wapping parents to attend an information session on Monday, October 17 at 6:30 p.m. at Wapping School. The purpose of the information session is three-fold: 1) review the redistricting process, 2) review the many activities and initiatives we have planned to support students and families, and 3) introduce parents to their new principal and provide an opportunity to meet other families who are moving to your child's new school.

The agenda will include an overview of the redistricting process and how the new boundaries were driven by enrollment projection data, school sizes at each of the four remaining sites, and transportation considerations. The process was quite complex. When analyzing future enrollment projections across the entire town, the consultants considered a wide variety of factors including demographic and housing data such as housing permit activity, home sales, home values, unemployment rates, births, and population projections. Mike Zuba, Director of Planning, and Pat Gallagher, Planner, from Milone & MacBroom, will provide an overview of their analysis.

After this whole group presentation, parents will gather in school-based cohorts. Parents will have an opportunity to meet their child's new principal and teacher representatives from each school. This is an informal opportunity to connect with families who will be a part of each new school community. The following locations are the meeting areas to which parents will go after the large whole group meeting in the gym:

- Families attending Orchard Hill: Cafeteria
- Families attending Philip R. Smith: Library and Room 36
- Families attending Eli Terry: Rooms 54 and 55
- Families attending Pleasant Valley: Remain in the Gym

Select Wapping staff will be in attendance and will circulate throughout all of these meet and greet areas. Light refreshments will be served. This event is for parents/guardians only.

Meet and Greet/Walking Tours of New Schools on November 3

On Thursday, November 3 each of our elementary principals will host a school-based meet and greet and lead a walking tour for parents/guardians new to each school. Teacher and staff representatives will be present as well. All meet and greets begin at 6:30 p.m. PTOs will also be present to assist with welcoming new families. Light refreshments will be served. This event is for parents/guardians only.

Support for Students

We are in the midst of planning a variety of initiatives that will support students through the transition. We will discuss these plans in further detail during the October 17th parent meeting. A committee comprised of all elementary principals as well as teacher and parent representatives from each school community will be meeting to brainstorm ideas. We are already planning for Wapping School students currently in grades K through 4 to visit their new grade level classmates through field trips to each of their new schools in early May. Principals are planning June picnics for families to come together. More specific details will follow, but we hope this demonstrates that we are making every effort to be proactive and putting a lot of thought into ensuring the transition is as smooth as possible for students and families. We are also making sure we strike a balance between being proactive and preparing students for the transition while avoiding over-preparing through initiatives that would be disruptive to their current learning environment at Wapping School. We welcome both teacher and parent feedback regarding how best to strike this balance.

Sincerely,



Kate Carter, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools