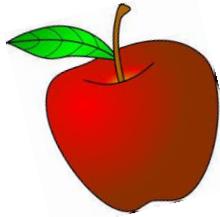


# Thompson Public Schools

2019 Newsletter



— WELCOME —  
BACK TO SCHOOL

## Superintendent's Welcome Back Message

Happy Summer! On behalf of the Members of the Thompson Board of Education, I welcome students and families to the start of a great school year. I do hope everyone has had time to rest and enjoy the great weather we are having this summer.

As Superintendent of Thompson Public Schools, I am honored and proud to lead such an amazing school district! I am committed to providing Thompson students with the best educational experiences in a supportive learning environment. Let's all work together to promote our schools and establish a campaign that highlights that we are all **"Proud to Support Thompson Public Schools!"**

This summer has certainly been a challenging one. The Members of the Board of Education and I have had to reduce the school department's budget due to three failed referendum votes. The reductions being discussed include teaching positions, supplies, field trips funds, after school bus transportation and other athletic and enrichment programs that will directly impact students. We are doing our best to make cuts that will not directly affect students; however, we are running out of options. It is important for all parents and guardians to stay informed regarding the funding of our school department. I will do my best to provide you with this information within the parameters of my position.

This District Newsletter is packed with information to bring everyone up to date with a variety of topics as students get ready to begin school. Please take a few moments to read through all of the enclosed documents. Do not hesitate to call your child's school if you have any questions or concerns. All school offices are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm until Friday August 23, 2019. Regular school hours will begin on Monday August 26, 2019. ~Melinda Smith

## Community Back to School Celebration

Faculty, Staff, Parents, Relatives and Friends are invited to join me to welcome our students back to school on the first day of classes. Feel free to gather in the Dollar Store parking lot, along the road adjacent to Dunkin Donuts or up Thatcher Road with signs and chants welcoming our students back to school.

TMS and TMHS revelers should begin to gather at **7:00 am on August 28<sup>th</sup>** at one of the chosen gathering sites. Folks cheering on MRFES students should gather at **8:00 am**.

Don't forget we must do a repeat on **August 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 am** to welcome grades ten through twelve back to school.

Bring a sign, your voice or any noise maker you wish to cheer on students as the buses and cars roll by!

School	First Day of School	Start Time	Dismissal	Office Contact
Tourtellotte Memorial High School	Wednesday August 28, 2019 <b>Grade 9 Only</b>	7:25 am	2:05 pm	Donna O'Connell 860-923-9303
Thompson Middle School	Wednesday August 28, 2019 Grades 5 to 8	7:25 am	2:05 pm	Laurie Bernier or Tina Rekowski 860-923-9380
Mary R Fisher Elementary School	Wednesday August 28, 2019 Grades K to 5	8:30 am	3:03 pm	Jane Romprey or Deb Cunha 860-923-9142
Tourtellotte Memorial High School	Thursday August 29, 2019 Grades 10 to 12	7:25 am	2:05 pm	Donna O'Connell 860-923-9303

## Transportation Update



Dattco School Bus Co. will be providing transportation service for all Thompson students again this year. At the start of every school year there are bus service issues that must be ironed out. I expect typical route or stop corrections to be made during the first few weeks of school. We ask for your patience during this time.

Please note that students must have a consistent pick up and drop off stop that cannot fluctuate or change daily. If your child has a schedule which requires a different pick up or drop off, they must be scheduled at the start of the school year and remain the same for each week. Please notify your child's school secretary in writing of your child's bus schedule. We will not accommodate daily bus stop changes. All schools require a forty-eight (48) hour notice to arrange a change in your child's transportation schedule.

If your child will be picked up or dropped off at a childcare provider, it is important that you contact your child's school prior to August 28, 2019. Please do not leave it up to the childcare facility to secure transportation for your child.

The 2019/2020 Bus Schedule will be posted on the Thompson Public Schools Website on **Monday August 19, 2019**. You may also locate your child's bus stop and estimated pick up time by logging onto to Dattco's site, [www.dattco.com](http://www.dattco.com).

Parents may also monitor the location of your child's bus due to a secure GPS navigation system called Safe Stop. Please refer to the enclosed information sheet to learn how to download the APP and search for your child's bus information.

## Residency Verification

Residency checks are conducted on an annual basis. Last year the district completed a comprehensive check of all registrations. If your child was enrolled in the district last school year, please provide an up-to-date copy of your utility bill by **Monday September 16, 2019**. You will not be required to submit any other documents.

Parents who registered their child/children after June 13, 2019 must submit all the required residency documents along with birth and health records to be enrolled in Thompson Public Schools and start school.

## Theater Program

The Thompson Theater Program had a successful revival last year with the production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Thank you to everyone who supported our students! It was a great experience and a wonderful tribute to former Principal Mary Fisher.

Theater Directors, Adam and Jessica van der Swaagh along with our own TPS musical directors Kate Anderson, Justin Leclerc, and Carol Rossetti, are in the process of securing rights to the Disney Musical, *Beauty and the Beast*. Once the rights have been obtained, we will send out information regarding tryouts and rehearsal dates. Once again, we would like to include students from across the district to participate.

## School Meal Programs

### **Breakfast:**

Students must start each school day ready to learn. Thompson Public Schools provides **free breakfast** to all students Grades Prek-12.

Research supports students who eat breakfast daily will help improve their academic performance and allow them to better manage appropriate school behavior. We encourage all families to take advantage of the free breakfast program.

### **Lunch:**

A free or reduced lunch application is included with this newsletter. All families are urged to complete the enclosed form and submit it to your child's school to determine eligibility for a free or reduced cost lunch.

High School/Middle School Lunch - \$3.00

## Milltown Mondays

Thompson Public Schools and Milltown Grille have established a partnership that will provide much needed funds to school organizations. Each month, a different organization will be selected to receive 10% of the sales at Milltown Grille. Patrons simply must inform their server or cashier at the restaurant that they are participating in the Thompson program.

The program got off to a slow start at the end of last year and we hope to increase participation. School organizations will be contacted this summer so we can create a calendar to let you know what organizations will benefit from the sales each month. A special thank you is extended to the proprietors of Milltown Grille for their generosity!



## Free Lunch Pilot at Mary R. Fisher Elementary School



The district is piloting a free lunch program for the 19/20 school year for all students attending MRFES – only. If the pilot is successful this year, the district may extend free lunches to both TMS and TMHS for the next school year. The district will be monitoring federal reimbursements for all lunches served at MRFES to determine if the program will continue and be expanded. The goal is to ensure all students receive a well-balanced mid-day meal for optimal learning opportunities.

Families **MUST** complete the enclosed lunch form and return it by the first day of school for their child to receive a lunch **free of charge**. Parents/guardians will be charged for school lunches if the required form is not submitted. Once the form is handed in, your child will automatically be eligible to receive a lunch at no charge.



Please note that your child is welcome to bring their own lunch to school and not take a school lunch at any time.

## Concessions Are Back!

The concession stand at TPS athletic fields will open for the fall season. Thanks to the hard work of TMHS Business Teacher Patricia Tupaj and her students a plan has been developed to open the stand for home games.

Over the summer our own maintenance staff transformed a section of the field house to accommodate the sale of snacks and beverages for visitors to enjoy while watching a game. More to come once the concession stand opening day has been announced.

## *New Student Information System & Parent Portal*

The district is converting to a new Student Information System (SIS) to replace Rediker. A SIS conversion is a huge undertaking for the district, and it will take most of the year to iron out possible issues that typically occur when transitioning data from one system to another. We appreciate your patience during this period.

A district committee was formed early last year to research various SIS platforms. The group selected Tyler Technologies as a good match for Thompson Public Schools, because it had the needed technology applications and was the most cost efficient. A SIS system holds all student data that must be accessible by the CT State Department of Education. This data must be up to date and accurate as it impacts the Town's state aid for education and assists the district to comply with state and federal data requirements.

In addition, the SIS platform maintains grades, class assignments, email, call and text system that uses real time data. The district made the choice to change to an upgraded system due to the many issues and increased costs we were experiencing with the old program.

**Due to the change of SIS the Rediker Parent Portal is longer in operation.** You will be given instructions how to access the Parent Portal in Tyler once the school year begins. Teachers will be receiving training prior to the start of school to enter their grades and assignments.

### Staff Changes

The district has made some teaching assignment changes for the upcoming school year. Several assignment changes were made at Thompson Middle School in grade five and six. The district is restoring both a Technology Educator and Library Media Specialist position at TMS. Both positions were made possible by reducing staff in other areas. The teachers in the new positions are:

Daniel Ten Eyck	Technology Education Teacher
Keri Procko	Library/Media Specialist

New staff that were hired to replace open positions due to resignations or transfers:

Andrew Burns	Health Teacher	TMS
Nathan Phillips	Math Teacher	TMHS
TBD	ELA Teacher	TMHS
TBD	Social Studies Teacher	TMHS



### School Open House Dates

**Thompson Middle School**  
**9/3/2019 @ 6:00pm**

**Mary R. Fisher Elementary School**  
**9/4/2019 @ 6:00pm**

**Tourtellotte Memorial High School**  
**9/26/2019 @ 5:30pm**

### Chromebook Distribution

Students in grades five through twelve will be issued a Chromebook at the start of school. Classroom teachers will be distributing the Chromebooks to the students. Parents must review, sign, and return the Chromebook care guidelines.

If you have any questions regarding the Chromebooks, please contact your child's teacher or principal. If you have technical questions about the device you may contact the Director of Technology, Heather Burns, at [Hburns@thompsonpublicschools.org](mailto:Hburns@thompsonpublicschools.org) or by calling 860 923 9581.

# TPS Grants Highlights

## **Safety & Security Grant Update:**

The district is in the process of completing the grant project awarded last year which included updated campus maps, labeling of the buildings, and bollard installation at key entrance areas.

The new grant project which was recently approved by Thompson voters will be phased in over the next twelve months.

In addition to grant funded projects, the district is removing approximately thirty dead trees around the campus which are creating a safety hazard. We experienced several fallen trees and limbs last year during high wind storms which caused damage. Out of an abundance of caution, the trees are being removed.



## **Fuel Up to Play 60 & New England Dairy Council Grant:**

Jonathan Fontaine, PE Teacher at MRFES, was awarded a \$3400 grant to start a walking club and nutrition program for elementary school students.

Fuel Up to Play 60 and the New England Dairy Council have been very generous to Thompson Public Schools over the last few years providing funds district wide for our breakfast programs. PE Teacher, Tim Cooper received a similar grant last year to supplement his PE program at TMS.

Our food service department recently received notice that they were given funds to add hot chocolate milk dispensers at TMS once the weather turns cold. Last year, TMHS received the dispensers funded by both organizations. Now students at both the high and middle schools will enjoy a warm beverage during the winter months. A special thanks to Fuel Up to Play 60 and New England Dairy!



## **Farm to School Grant:**

Thompson Public Schools applied for and was awarded a \$81,848 Farm to School Grant to bring aquaponics farming to the district. In partnership with Trifecta Ecosystems and Putnam Public Schools, teachers and students across both districts will collaborate and install a farm at each school site. The grant provides the funding for equipment, professional development and field trips. Produce raised from the farm will be used in the school lunch programs!

## **School Improvement Funding:**

Thanks to the support of Thompson's State Representatives, the district will receive additional funds of \$204,000 to improve overall student academic performance. Senator Mae Flexer has been working for over a year advocating to provide Thompson Public Schools with the much-needed funds.

The district will develop a plan of action to improve academic performance K-12 and the funds are used to support the plan. Once the funds are received and the action plan is approved by the BOE, we will post the plan on the district website.

## District-Wide Program Highlights

- This summer, TMS and MRFES teachers are working with a math consultant to revise the K-8 math curriculum. The district is working toward improving math outcomes and reduce learning gaps.
- Preschool and Kindergarten teachers will implement the Tools of the Mind Curriculum at MRFES. Teachers will be participating in professional development this summer and will continue throughout the school year to better implement and assess learning standards through a playful environment.
- AP classes are expanding at TMHS. The school will add AP Computer Science and AP Chemistry to the program of studies this school year. Teachers are engaged in professional development activities this summer as they prepare to teach the new classes.
- The new Tech Ed Class at TMS will include a host of motivating and hands on learning experiences for middle school students. Mr. Ten Eyck is working with Michael Joyce this summer to align curricula between the middle and high school. Mr. Ten Eyck will also focus on teaching technical literacy skills as part of the curriculum.
- A new teacher evaluation assessment will be piloted this school year. A joint committee consisting of teachers and administrators developed the new plan to enhance learning opportunities for Thompson students.
- The district will continue the implementation of the RULER Social and Emotional Program developed by Dr. Marc Brackett at Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Last year a team of administrators and teachers attended extensive professional training to facilitate the implementation of the program which teaches both students and adults how to recognize their feelings and emotions to be "their best selves". You will be seeing the Mood Meter throughout the district which is a great visual to help regulate emotions.



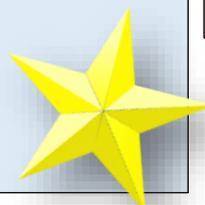
## Special Education Update

As you may know, the district hired a new Pupil Service Director last year. Christopher Jones began his tenure in Thompson mid-February. He has been working with faculty, staff, students and families to improve special education programming in the district. This summer he has been working on:

- Bradley Hospital Partnership: Bradley Hospital will facilitate an elementary, middle and high school program in each school to better support students with emotional disabilities directly on-site. While the program is still considered an outplacement, students will have the opportunity to integrate with their peers while being supported by a therapeutic staff and program.
- Unified Sports: Mr. Jones is working with TPS Athletic Director Deb Spinelli to establish a Unified Sports Program at TPS this school year. Thompson is one of the few high schools that does not have a sports program that brings students with or without disabilities to play a common sport.



*More to come on the details of the program as it develops.*



## School Based Diversion Initiative

Thompson Public Schools was selected to participate in the School Based Diversion Initiative for the 2019/2020 school year from Child Health & Development Institute of CT. This program will provide TMS and TMHS teachers with professional development and resources to better support students with social and emotional concerns. The program aims to reduce out of school suspensions due to student's inappropriate behaviors and create a more restorative approach to managing challenging behaviors.

**Have a safe and successful  
2019-2020 school year!**