



Welcome to the 2021-2022 School Year

We are so excited to have ALL of our students back to school for full days, five days per week of instruction. Over the last year and a half, all of us have had to make sacrifices adjusting on the fly to changes in health guidelines and the impact of the pandemic on every facet of life. Thank you to the entire Westhill community for your continued support and commitment to making the health and safety of our students, staff and community a priority.

In late August, we were able to get our entire staff together in the high school auditorium as part of our first Staff Development Day to start the school year. It was the first time in two years that the entire district was together. It was awesome! We had the talented students from our high school band perform to kick-off the day and set the tone for the year with their energy and enthusiasm.

As the new Superintendent I want to share five overarching philosophies and beliefs with all of you that I shared with Westhill staff. These drive how I do things and they encompass how we should approach things as a district and community:

The Power of WE. There is a solution to every challenge. If WE collaborate and work together, we can accomplish anything. Nobody should be working in isolation and we should strive to bring people together to be a partner in the important work that we are all doing.

Before we make decisions we are going to ask: What Is Best For Kids? There will be difficult decisions that we have to make each and every day. Sometimes adults may not like the decisions. Sometimes parents may not like the decisions. Sometimes I won't like the decisions. That's ok. If we are making decisions based on what is best for kids, we are going to be just fine.

We value everyone. We want everyone who comes into our school buildings or shows up at any of our facilities or events to feel welcomed, safe, supported and that they belong. If that isn't the case, we have some work to do and we need to improve.

Kaizen. Kaizen is Japanese for 'continuous improvement.' We do a lot of things really well and we have a lot to be proud of at Westhill, but we can get better. Embracing continuous improvement isn't a weakness, it's actually a strength knowing that we can improve. If WE are willing to evolve, grow and improve as a district and community, the sky's the limit in terms of what we can achieve.

Have FUN. Never underestimate the importance of having fun! Fun is a key to vitality, which gives us energy, strength and hope. I'd argue that if you aren't making the time to have fun each day, you're probably never going to reach your full potential.

Those beliefs drive how we do things. Our theme for the year is "Refocus." Covid is still here and it continues to impact our lives, but we can't let it dominate all of our time and energy. We need to refocus and get back to what really matters in education, building relationships and educating kids. The work we have to do is simply too important to not focus on those two essentials.

Throughout the pandemic, we have all been reminded of the importance of community and on placing value on what is most important in life. We greatly appreciate your ongoing support of our students and staff, and we are looking forward to an amazing 2021-2022 school year. Be well and stay healthy. Go Warriors!

Continued Success,

Steve Dunham

Walberta Park & Cherry Road Schools

First Grade Beginning of School Fun

First grade students are enjoying making new friends, learning routines and setting goals for our year. We have enjoyed reading stories including, Our Class is a Family, The Name Jar and The Magical Yet. We are looking forward to learning together this year!



Kindergarten Rocks

Mrs. Byrne's class thinks kindergarten rocks! Students made hats on the first day that said, "We rocked the first day of kindergarten".



Summer Camp

This summer, students had fun at the Walberta Park School summer camp. Kindergarten had 63 students, first grade had 85 students and second grade had 71 students. Thank you Walberta Park staff for putting together such a spectacular summer program, and thank you Walberta Park families for providing us with such great participants!



First Day Excitement at CRS

Cherry Road was excited to welcome our students back this fall. Pictured is Ms. Tooley's class on the first day!



Cherry Road & Onondaga Hill Middle Schools

Curious Third Graders

Third graders in Mrs. Jackson's class exercised their Positivity Project Character Strength of Curiosity while taking an observation walk on a beautiful, sunny afternoon! The students took notice and wondered about various things while walking and taking notes in their P2 Journals, such as, "I wonder what that construction vehicle is used for?" and "I wonder what breed that dog is?" Stay curious, everyone!



Character Strengths

Cherry Road students were exploring the different character strengths described by the Positivity Project. Each student chose a strength they thought was their strongest and created a small postcard to describe why. It is fun to see all the different strengths throughout the building.



Second Grade Dreams

Second grade students read a story about the dreams that Mae Jemison (the first black female astronaut in space) had growing up. After that, they wrote their own hopes and dreams for second grade on their arms to show that they're "reaching for the moon" to achieve their goals.



The Kindness Rock Project

As part of our daily Positivity Project activities, Mrs. Derrenbacher's science 8 students painted rocks with inspirational messages as part of the Kindness Rock Project. These rocks will be added to a garden near our koi pond, which we hope to continue growing in the years to come. It is our hope that these messages will inspire, uplift and bring positivity everyday. For more information on how you and your family can participate, go to www.thekindnessrockproject.com and join the Onondaga Hill Middle School group.



Onondaga Hill Middle School

OHMS Welcomes New Students Whales for a Cause

OHMS has welcomed 23 new students to the district so far! Recently, counselors, Mrs. Pisegna and Miss Caporizzo, had lunch with the new students to help ease their transition. They all received an "OHMS Survival Kit" which included a stress ball, notebook and other fun items. Each student also got a new Westhill t-shirt to promote school pride. They will be officially ready for the first pep rally of the year!



OHMS students and staff have been busy coloring whales this fall! Vineyard Vines has partnered with Simon & Schuster and First Book this back-to-school season to help get books to those in need. For every whale colored and posted to #whalesforacause2021, one book will be donated to First Book. Since 1992, the organization First Book has distributed more than 200 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income communities nationwide. Our new Superintendent, Steve Dunham, and Assistant Superintendent, Darcy Woodcock, joined in on the fun and you can too! Help us in reaching our goal of one hundred whales=one hundred books. Go to this link: <https://bit.ly/3nIhNhV> or search Whales for a Cause 2021.



News From the Art Room

OHMS art students are kicking the year off with projects that explore the elements of art; LINE, a basic element of art, is the super star of our projects. Students are getting back into the swing of drawing. Check out the progress we are making with our 6th grade dragon eyes. Nice lines!



Are You a Teen Zone Saver?

Teen Zone Savers are those students who save their money through our school's Teen Zone in-school banking program. The Teen Zone in-school banking program helps our students learn about the importance of saving, teaches them how to be money-wise and guides them to be smart money managers. Here's how it works....

- Every other week on its designated day, as students arrive for school, their Teen Zone deposit is collected by a teacher, secure lock box or Empower Federal Credit Union representative (all dependent on Covid protocol and guidelines). The Teen Zone deposit is made into the child's account and a receipt of their deposit plus a special reward is mailed directly to home.

Are you a Dollar Dog Saver? Please contact Lauri Hoover at 315.728.3474 or lhoover@empowerfcu.com to join.

Membership eligibility required. Empower Federal Credit Union is federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration. If your child was a Dollar Dog Saver in elementary school, they are automatically a Teen Zone Saver at the Middle School.

Westhill High School

We're Off to a Fantastic Start



The 2021-2022 school year is off to a fantastic start for Westhill High School students and staff! The WHS Sunshine Committee (Mrs. Lowe and Mrs. Casper) brightened up the Staff Development Days by bringing snacks to all in the building from the "Sunshine Cart". Students in Mrs. Pounder's Earth Science class are working hard at learning metric measurements, seniors are enjoying the nice weather eating lunch in the courtyard and Mr. Maimone's Science Selfie Icebreaker Activity took place on the first day of school!



NYSSMA Conference All-State

The Westhill music department is thrilled to announce that four of our student-musicians have been selected for New York State School Music Association All-State Performing Ensembles or as Alternates. Congratulations to seniors, Will Bradley - All State Symphonic Orchestra (Trumpet), Alexandra Dubaniewicz - All State Chorus Alternate (Soprano 2), Jill Eckert - All State Symphonic Band Alternate (Piccolo) and Brady Mannion - All State Chorus Alternate (Tenor 2). Selection to the Conference All State Performance Ensembles Roster is the highest musical honor attained by student musicians in New York State. From December 2-5, All-State musicians will perform with the New York State School Music Association Conference All State Ensembles as a part of the NYSSMA Winter Conference held at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. We are so proud of you!



Library Orientation

Freshmen were introduced to the Library Media Center and all of the services and resources that are available to them. Mrs. Fenner led students through several activities including a book walk highlighting new and popular books and a scavenger hunt to help students navigate the library media center space. Students learned how to access a variety of electronic and print resources that they will use during their high school career.



Athletic Field Upgrades

Over the summer, several upgrades and renovations were made to the athletic fields at the high school. Most notably are the new bleacher system, press box, softball dugouts, scoreboards and fencing for both the softball and baseball fields.



District News

1:1 Chromebook Program

A 1:1 Chromebook program is finally here and off to a great start at the middle school and the high school. Over the past few years, we have done a lot of professional development with teachers around using Google Classroom and some other really neat online tools to engage students. Now that we are 1:1, teachers and students can use these tools every single day!

Students are easily able to stay engaged in classroom material wherever they are, even outside of school, with Classroom and other tools like Peardeck. They can collaborate easily on projects with Google tools like Slides and Docs. Other tools like Slides and Canva allow them to use their creativity when creating presentations. Teachers can assign paperless assignments that automatically save so students always have access.



We are so proud of the teachers and students for jumping right in and using the technology to create a state of the art environment for students that will prepare them for their future.

Important Announcement

**Annual Emergency Release Drill
Early Dismissal
Tuesday, November 23, 2021**

K-12 students will be released from school fifteen minutes prior to the normal dismissal time.



Please mark your calendar!

Free and Reduced Meal Program

Based on recent news from the United States Department of Agriculture, Westhill CSD students can receive meals at no cost throughout the school year. However, it is still important for families that may need some assistance with the cost of lunch to complete the free and reduced application for the 2021-22 school year. Having accurate information regarding the economic need in our community opens the door for additional funding opportunities for programs for all of our students.

The Westhill Food Service Department would like to bring attention to our Free and Reduced Meal Program by making parents aware that any student who qualifies for free or reduced lunch also qualifies for free or reduced breakfast.

National studies have found that a healthy breakfast is an important key to learning. Every morning our cafeterias offer a variety of whole grain products, fresh fruit and low fat milk. When children eat a well-balanced breakfast, they enjoy the benefits of improved attentiveness and have more energy. Let us help your child start the morning right! If you have any questions about the school breakfast and lunch program, or how to complete the Free and Reduced Meal Program application, please feel free to call Rich or Mark at 426-3153.

Welcome New Staff Members



Emily Abert
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Jeremie Auge
CRS
Principal



Sophia Avella
WPS
Kindergarten



Diane Behnke
WPS
Food Service Helper I



Julia Catalano
WPS
Special Education



Justin Conley
WHS
Custodial Worker I



Kelly Costello
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Lynda Croft
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Mary Curry
CRS
Teacher Aide/Health



Jenelle D'Agostino
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Christopher DeJohn
WHS
Custodial Worker I



Kathryn DeStefano
WPS
Kindergarten Long-Term Sub

Welcome New Staff Members



Patrick Dobo
WHS
Teaching Assistant



Kari Donegan
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Marc DuBois
OHMS
Social Studies



Shelby Dusart
CRS
Special Education



Emily Erlendson
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Ashley Gardner
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Cody Green
WHS
Special Education



Lindsay Grome
OHMS/WHS
Social Studies



Shannon Hall
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Lauren Hallman
OHMS
English



Kevin Hoag
WPS/CRS
Physical Education



Kathleen Hunt
OHMS
Teaching Assistant

Welcome New Staff Members



Molly Jackson
OHMS
AIS Long-Term Sub



Gary Jones
OHMS
Teacher Aide/Computer



Sarah Kurro
WHS
Special Education



Stefanie Mangovski
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Karen McNary
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Isabelle McPeak
OHMS
Grade 6 Long-Term Sub



Ryan McVey
WHS
Teaching Assistant



Kaylee Moreau
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Kayley Papa
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Sarah Peer
WPS
Teaching Assistant



Rachel Pentasuglio
WHS
Teacher Aide/Computer



Roger Radigan
CRS
Custodial Worker I

Welcome New Staff Members



Danielle Saylor
WHS
Physical Education



Michael Speziale
WHS
Special Education



Kathryn Ta
OHMS
Assistant Principal



Heather Tittus
WPS/CRS
Art



Kelly Underwood
CRS
Teaching Assistant



Jill West
CRS
Grade 4 Long-Term Sub



Anthony Zaia
WHS
Special Education

Substitutes Needed

- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- Nurses
- School Bus Drivers
- School Bus Attendants

Applications can be found on our website,
www.westhillschools.org, under the District Tab.

Please submit application to:
Personnel Office
Westhill Central School District
400 Walberta Road
Syracuse, NY 13219

District News

I. Introduction

Providing an orderly plan for dealing with an emergency is part of the responsibility of Westhill Central School District officials. Emergency situations range from man-made problems such as power outages, fires, and bomb threats, to nature-made situations like windstorms, ice/snow storms, and floods. Emergencies range from highly dangerous, life-threatening situations to problems that are mere inconveniences. Schools and parents need to have general plans for dealing with a wide range of emergencies. The following information is intended to familiarize you with our general procedures for school emergencies.

II. Possible Response Actions

The nature of the emergency will determine the type of response action. If possible and timely, an emergency response team will convene at a command site to implement response actions. If possible and appropriate, the assistance of the fire department, ambulance, and police will be sought. The primary consideration in determining response actions will be the health and safety of students and staff.

- A) Cancellation of School - School officials may determine that school will not be in session for one or more days due to an emergency.
- B) Evacuation - Evacuation is necessary for situations ranging from routine fire drills to conditions where it is no longer safe or appropriate to have students in the school building. Evacuation requires all building occupants to exit the building and wait a safe distance from the building until the danger has passed. In some circumstances, however, the nature of the emergency may deem that the students be transported and held temporarily at another location.
- C) Early Dismissal - An early dismissal is announced in the event of a system failure such as loss of heat or other utility in the building, or in response to inclement weather. In inclement weather, due to the time it takes to coordinate early dismissal, many times it is better to wait until dismissal time to send students home. Road crews normally schedule their time to coincide with the dismissal time of schools.
- D) Sheltering in Building - School officials may decide to keep students in school in an emergency until the situation returns to normal or until dismissal or evacuation can be arranged, if it is determined that it is not safe to send them home. A lock down drill is a type of sheltering situation where students remain in their classrooms and windows and doors are locked.

III. Communication Systems

Internal: Communication inside the building will be via the public address system if possible. Otherwise, messengers will be used to relay warnings. Administrators have access to cell phones/radios to assist them with emergency communications.

External: In the event of an emergency, we will notify the following television stations: 3 - NBC, 5 - CBS, 9 - ABC and 10 - YNN.

Westhill CSD uses ParentSquare to keep in touch with you via text message, email or through the app regarding important events, closings, and alerts. Please ensure that your information is up to date in PowerSchool. If you are not currently receiving communication via ParentSquare, please contact the main office at your student's school building.

IV. Emergency Planning Committee

- Steven Smith Emergency Management Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent for Business Administration
- Edward Wittkowski 1st Alternate Coordinator
- Darcy Woodcock 2nd Alternate Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- Stephen Dunham Superintendent of Schools
- Lee Roscoe Westhill High School Principal
- Daniel Dolan Westhill High School Assistant Principal
- Mark Bednarski Onondaga Hill Middle School Principal
- Kathryn Ta Onondaga Hill Middle School Assistant Principal
- Jeremie Auge Cherry Road School Principal
- Beth Kramer Walberta Park School Principal
- Marietta Lachenauer Director of Special Education
- Richard Gunther Food Service Director
- Michele Rether School Transportation Supervisor
- Beth Nagraj Coordinator of Health Services
- Jennie Smarrelli Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics
- Katie Harmon Director of Instructional Technology

We hope we will never have to implement our plans, but we will strive to be prepared just in case. It is very important for every family to have a contingency plan explained to students should an unplanned early dismissal occur. Calls directly to or from parents would not be practical in a true emergency. We urge families to plan ahead for possible school related emergencies, especially early dismissal.

V. Communication Liaison for the District: Stephen Dunham, Superintendent of Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Westhill Central School District
400 Walberta Road
Syracuse, New York 13219-2214

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The Westhill Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, sex or race in its employment practices or educational programs.

School Board Recognition Week October 18 - October 22, 2021



In appreciation of your dedicated service to our
students, families, staff and community!
