



## Brookfield Public Schools

# A Newsletter from Superintendent John W. Barile

October 2015



## School Opening

As we begin the year I look forward to sharing several updates regarding leadership transitions, enrollment, academic improvement planning and operational processes. I began the work of the superintendent three months ago. During this time I have oriented myself to Brookfield by listening to the faculty, staff, students, parents, seniors, elected officials, PTO, civic groups, and conducting the assistant superintendent survey. The time spent meeting with all of these people and organizations has helped me with rapid assimilation to Brookfield's culture and status as a beautiful community. I also have spent a great deal of time observing the daily operation of the schools and drawn upon my experiences as a teacher, coach, principal, superintendent, tax payer, and parent.

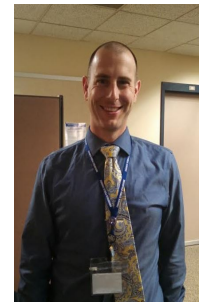
During my first address to the community in June, I stated that Brookfield Public Schools was primed to move to even greater heights. I believed that then and am even more resolute in this belief today. With the support from families and the community we will ensure that our students are well-educated, exceptional young people who will shape the future.



## Staffing Update



The 2015-2016 school year got off to an excellent start. Based on school visits and feedback from staff, parents and students, our opening proved to be a smooth beginning, especially those matters related to transportation and the welcome of new students. The [opening convocation](#) followed. At this kick-off meeting, all school employees were in attendance for a [message from the superintendent](#). Our focusing theme for the year is [212 degrees](#).



Prior to convocation, our school year began in August with a New Teacher Orientation coordinated by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Maureen Ruby. Twenty-two new teachers were hired to fill the vacancies which have resulted from retirements and resignations; 12 at the middle school, 3 at Brookfield High School and 7 in the Pupil Personnel Services Department, who serve in a variety of roles across the district. This year's new staff are a unique blend of educators coming from various backgrounds, including recent college graduates, and experienced staff from other districts.



As many of you are aware we have an entirely new central office leadership team and new high school principal. Our assistant superintendent, Dr. Maureen Ruby is transitioning well, having led several professional development projects to orient the new staff and also support our veteran teachers with curriculum, instruction, and assessment matters. Mr. Al Cameron, our director of finance and operations has been digging into to district finances and collaborating with town officials to close out the 2014-2015 budget and ensure that all business matters including health insurance, contracts, monthly reports, and the operation of the district are running smoothly and always improving. Mr. Marc Balanda, the Brookfield High School principal, is leading the staff on a myriad of projects, including NEASC preparation, professional learning and school improvement planning.



## Enrollment

Each school year, local Connecticut districts submit what is considered official enrollment figures to the Connecticut State Department of Education. These figures are subject to minor changes pending State certification.

Brookfield's October 1, 2015 enrollment totals 2,697 students including preschool, special education and out-of-district placements. These figures indicate that we are 130 students above those

contained in the Peter Prowda Report from 2011, and 39 students above those in the Milone and MacBroom Demographic study, and on target with our district projection of 30 students less than last year.

Our K-12 class size sections reflect that Center School's groupings are above district guidelines; Huckleberry Hill's are above these guidelines in Grade 4; Whisconier's 7th grades are well-above the target

guideline of 22 students; Brookfield High School's class sizes are above the targeted figure of 20 students per class in many sections.

We will closely monitor the above figures as they will impact our projections and funding request for 2016-2017.

Please see the [Superintendent's memo regarding enrollment to the Board of Education](#).

## District Improvement Plan

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*The sole reason  
for the existence  
of our profession  
is the student.*

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[This plan is designed to focus on three key areas: Leadership Development and Capacity Building, Student Achievement, and Enhancing Culture, Climate and Communication.](#) This document will serve as a guide and catalyst for the work to occur at the District level and in each school in the coming years. The schools are collaboratively developing their School Improvement Plans, which will be posted on each website in the near future. These school based plans are aligned with the District Improvement Plan.

The District Improvement Plan was developed together by central office administration and the building level leadership teams. As we determined the scope of the plan, careful consideration was given to student assessment data, survey data, experience, research, and the resources available. Each improvement area and its subsequent goal and objectives serve to focus our collective efforts on a few high leverage strategies: Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional model, close reading, argumentative writing, development of feedback skills, and communication.

While the plan will focus our efforts and allocation of resources, it is not a narrowly prescriptive document. The broad nature of the goals provides each school with the opportunity to develop specific plans based upon its own data-sets. In turn, each building leader and their teachers will have appropriate flexibility to address personalized professional learning needs and immediate student needs while still serving the district and school focus areas.

We look forward to engaging in this work on behalf of the children of Brookfield.



## Facilities



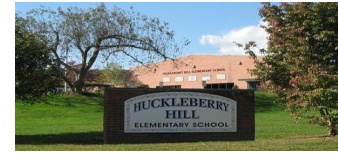
The physical plant conditions of the four schools have been thoroughly monitored, not only for safety but also for operating budget inclusion and its impact on our Capital Projects Plan.

Integral to that linkage is the role of our Facilities Supervisor position. Mr. Tom Tibolla has been in this position for almost a year. Tom is responsible for the overall maintenance and upkeep of all facilities and equipment for the Brookfield Public Schools

He is now leading a licensed plumber and electrician which have been added to our team to address long standing facility issues. Specifically, we have completed numerous outstanding maintenance projects and have developed a preventative maintenance plan. Anecdotally, staff and parents alike have shared how pleased they are with the recent enhancements to the work in this department. As part of facility maintenance and enhancements, security upgrades continue to be implemented at

the schools.

The Town has been instrumental in generously supporting the Capital Plan for schools. 3.2 million dollars has been allocated to replace, repair or renovate, many deteriorating building conditions. Furthermore, the capital funds are supporting many security upgrades mentioned above and large scale maintenance projects, including the high school roof replacement project.



## 2016-2017 Budget

It has been determined that the Superintendent will submit the 2016-17 budget proposal to the Board of Education and the community on December 16, 2015 at the regular Board of Education meeting. This process officially began at the October 7th Board meeting when the Superintendent conducted an initial discussion with the Board as to budgeting priorities and any areas, guidelines, or parameters they believe should be addressed in [next year's request](#). Some areas broached at that meeting included: class-size maintenance and restorations to established Board of Education guidelines; exploration of a World Language Lab at the high school and establishment of an English Language Learner program to support the significant increase in enrollment of students who have primary languages other than English. We also discussed the necessity to restore positions eliminated in recent years. Consideration of the part-time College Admission Coach position and providing sufficient leadership in technology were also mentioned. Furthermore, we discussed the need to examine and develop the math curriculum/program, health curriculum, and develop and align an assessment system throughout the district. These items, including restoring infrastructure support positions and others will be discussed and thoroughly vetted during our budget sessions this winter.

Input from staff, students, parents and community is an integral source of information that the Board and Superintendent want to consider. Please share your thoughts, ideas and suggestions at [www.brookfieldps.org](http://www.brookfieldps.org) throughout the process. All information will be reviewed, assessed and prioritized into the final document presented to the Board of Education. The budget recommended to the Board generally is composed of three categories: restoration items; necessary and/or mandated new proposals; enhancements to programs, personnel and facilities.

The Superintendent's recommended budget is thoroughly discussed and scrutinized by the Board of Education throughout January, with the Town Charter mandating a Board of Education budget adoption and submission to the First Selectman by January 31, 2016.

Per Town Charter, the Board and Town budget request moves forward to the Board of Selectmen, then to the Board of Finance and to its final stage, the electorate, in a Town-wide Referendum in the middle of May. Please note that during the approximate five month process, there will be several occasions for the Board of Education to present its request to the Town Boards and community, as well as numerous opportunities for public input and discussion. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this process, hopefully from its beginning stages.

*The budget is a financial statement of our values and beliefs about education*

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### ***Mission Statement of the Brookfield Public Schools***

*To inspire, challenge and prepare all students to live meaningful and productive lives.*

*Every student is empowered to become a critical thinker, problem-solver, effective communicator, global citizen, and life-long learner through rigorous, relevant and comprehensive educational experiences, expansive student opportunities and active community involvement.*

[Click here for the Winter Weather Advisory Letter](#)

## **Closing Thoughts**

Public Education is in the midst of transformative change. Over the past several years the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, school reform legislation, new accountability measures including dramatic changes to teacher and administrator evaluation, student assessments, and rigorous NEASC accreditation standards are concurrent with a shift in how districts and schools define excellence. The challenges faced by school districts are many. The common theme of those community members, teachers, and administrators that I have met with believe our Brookfield mission dictates that we focus on the following critical leverage points. We must (a) ensure that every student masters the learning expectations rather than have educators simply provide students with the opportunity to learn; (b) support strong outcomes driven instructional leadership rather than rely on only school management; (c) empower educators to function as collaborative teams that promote and facilitate personalized learning for students rather than rely on lone experts functioning in isolation; and (d) build capacity and secure accountability through coherent, ongoing district improvement planning rather than maintaining the existing silos of individual schools functioning independent of the system.

It is my intention to lead our district in securing the foundation of this wonderful system and to move us to excellence in all facets of the enterprise.

We must always strive to improve our professional practice and district operations as we pursue excellence. As I continue to learn about Brookfield, programs and methods that once were thought to be beneficial may not necessarily be effective, and other strategies may ultimately provide increased impact on learning. This is a major thrust of our Strategic-Coherence Planning and Budget Development.

Thank you for welcoming me into your community. I look forward to continuing to develop trusting relationships and leading this dynamic district forward.

It is an honor to serve the Brookfield Public Schools.

Sincerely,



John W. Barile, Sr.  
Superintendent of Schools