

NARRAGANSETT SCHOOL SYSTEM

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

25 FIFTH AVENUE

NARRAGANSETT, RHODE ISLAND 02882-3612

Telephone (401) 792-9450

FAX (401) 792-9439

PETER J. CUMMINGS, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

LESLIE BROW
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES
(401) 792-9426

KAREN M. HAGAN, CPA
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

August 19, 2019

Dear Parents,

I hope you have had a wonderful summer with your children and that you have had the opportunity to enjoy all that our community has to offer. We have been hard at work planning for the upcoming school year, and I would like to update you on some key points:

Staffing

We are pleased to welcome 7 new teachers to our district this year. Our new hires were selected from hundreds of applicants and bring a wide range of experience and a strong knowledge base to our schools. Our new hires include 2 new Preschool teachers to accommodate our expanded early childhood program and an additional Kindergarten teacher to accommodate increased enrollments this summer. Each of our new faculty members went through a rigorous hiring process, including interviewing with a committee of teachers, parents, and students, teaching model lessons, and then interviewing with the administrative team. Our new teacher orientation begins next week, and we are delighted to have them on board.

We also welcome Ms. Lisa Wilson back to Narragansett as the new Principal of Narragansett Elementary School. Lisa assumed her new role on July 1st, and comes to us with deep expertise in elementary education. Lisa most recently served as Principal of Peace Dale Elementary School in South Kingstown, and was the Assistant Principal at NES for many years before her role in South Kingstown.

School Safety and Security

The safety and security of our students, staff, and school community remains our highest priority, and we continue to enhance our security measures. This summer, we continued with technological and facilities security upgrades across all of our schools. We will again have 2 school resource officers for our district, Officer Kevin O'Conner and Officer Kyle Rooney, and they will be spending time at all of our schools. We work closely with the Narragansett Police Department to make our schools as secure as possible, and I am grateful for their expertise, assistance, and commitment to keeping our schools and community safe.

Additionally, we will continue to train our students and staff in the [ALICE](#) protocol. ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate) is a nationally recognized comprehensive program that teaches individuals what their options are in a violent intruder or active shooter situation. We will be conducting drills and refresher training for all staff members and, in an age appropriate way, students in the first weeks of school. We will always keep parents informed regarding these drills, and I encourage you to contact your school principal, our school resource officers, or me should you have any questions.

All schools will continue to focus on supporting student mental health and well-being. We have a full-time school psychologist available to students at each school, a district wide school social worker, and guidance counselors available to all students grades 5-12. We will also again be implementing [Sandy Hook Promise](#) programs this year in support of student connections to one another and mental health awareness, with the first event, *Start with Hello*, scheduled to take place in September. Finally, we will be implementing the Sandy Hook Promise [Say Something Anonymous Reporting System](#) this fall in order to give members of our school community (particularly our middle school and high school students) an additional option to share information regarding potential safety concerns. We will provide more information regarding this program in September.

Facilities

Our maintenance staff and operations director have been hard at work preparing for the school year. Our schools are clean, bright, and ready for our students to arrive. There have been several construction projects, including renovation of kindergarten and preschool rooms, work on the NES roof, renovation of our Computer Science CTE lab, and a significant upgrade to the sidewalks and pathways leading to NHS and NPS through the Safe Routes to School Program.

Career and Technical Education Program Enhancement:

This year will be the beginning of our new [Educator Preparation Program](#) at Narragansett High School in partnership with the national [Educators Rising](#) program. This new student opportunity joins our [Agriscience, Computer Science, and Plumbing](#) programs, and all of our Career and Tech programs are open to students from Narragansett and other RI towns. Please contact Joan Pratley at Narragansett High School at 792-9406 or jpratley@nssk12.org should your child be interested in any of these programs

Expanded Preschool Opportunities

This year we will offer expanded preschool opportunities for all Narragansett families. We are pleased that over 100 students have already registered, and we anticipate the continued growth of this much needed program. If you are interested in registering a student for next year, please contact Leslie Brow, Director of Student Services, at 792-9426.

The first day of school for all students is Tuesday September 3rd, though there are various orientation activities at each of our schools for students new to the school or district. More information on orientation programs will be forthcoming from each principal.

I am looking forward to the beginning of the school year, and hope to see many of you at our school events this Fall. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 792-9450 or email at pcummings@nssk12.org.

Thank you, and enjoy these final days of August!

Sincerely,

Peter J. Cummings, Ed.D

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Superintendent