

A message from the Superintendent:

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## *Learning is Our Mission*

In contemplating the beginning of the new school year, our challenge, as always, is to reaffirm our commitment to academic excellence. As a school community, parents, teachers, administration and students alike, it is important that we remain devoted and committed to the idea that “Learning is our Mission” and that everything we do in our school life is aligned to that end. This is a comprehensive commitment that not only includes pedagogical/ instructional facets but also the philosophical, social, extracurricular, and public service elements that serve to facilitate a climate that is conducive to and cultivates learning. School Climate, Scholarship, Partnership, and Service are the tenets that provide the foundation for Learning as Our Mission.

**School Climate:** First and foremost, a school must be a place that is safe, secure, accommodating, and enjoyable. This is most evidently accomplished by providing, implementing and enforcing policies and regulations that ensure a safe and orderly environment and also by infusing the curriculum and providing programs that promote character values such as honesty, kindness, understanding, politeness and concern for others. In a subtler vein, it is also achieved by implementing practices that cultivate a sense of pride and friendliness in the school environment such as simple things like theme weeks, assemblies, pep rallies, and the promotion of school spirit through the prolific exposition of the Woodstown Wolverine. The emphasis on ceremony and tradition in many of our activities is employed with this purpose in mind. The culminating illustration of this is manifested when our high school students all sing the alma mater at the pep rally with a great sense of pride and vigor. It is important that we create an atmosphere that everyone, staff and students, feels comfortable in and wants to come to every day and a place where parents want to send their children. Absent this foundation, “Learning” will struggle and flounder. With it, “Learning” will flourish.

**Scholarship:** The emphasis on learning must be complemented and provided for by a competent and dedicated staff that envisions what they do as more of a vocation than an occupation. This is further augmented by instilling a belief system based on high expectations, a rigorous curriculum and a healthy and honest work ethic that is shared and promoted by all the educational stakeholders: students, parents, staff and administration. A good school climate alone, without the belief and practice in the aforementioned convictions, is just a playground. With it, it is a place where learning prospers ... a place we call School.

**Service:** A school must not forget that we are service providers to the community, that service being Education. A “Learning” environment will most likely benefit when that service is provided in a way that is friendly, accommodating, and communicated in an articulate manner. “Learning” can be hindered when the customers (parents) are frustrated by an environment that impedes their understanding about the progress and assessment of the service we are providing (education). In essence, “Learning” is enhanced when the organization informs and communicates to its parents and community about how our service is being provided and how our clients (students) are progressing. This must occur in concert with school climate and scholarship in order for “Learning” to thrive.

**Partnership:** This is the culminating facet for a maximized “Learning” environment. All the stakeholders in a school, students, parents, staff and administration, must have a sense of ownership and pride in the institution and its purpose. They must communicate amongst each other in pursuit of our shared and agreed-upon goals. Procedures and processes must be in place to facilitate this. Without it, fragmentation and inconsistency thwart the learning environment. With it and in sync with the aforementioned beliefs, our “Learning Mission” will be accomplished.

May we remain mindful of and reinvigorate our commitment to these tenets as we embark upon the school year and promote our commitment to Academic Excellence.