



# Westwood Regional School District

Board of Education

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Dear School Community Members,


During this holiday season and as we make our way into the New Year, it seems so appropriate to reflect on these past several months and acknowledge the good work that we've done as a school community. At the August 26 Board of Education meeting and then again in a follow-up letter dated September 06, 2021, I made a tall ask of our school community. In summary, it is captured by the simple brilliance of author Margaret Wheatley as she shares a statement from her book *Finding Our Way: Leadership for Uncertain Times*. The statement draws from a powerful situation: She writes, "1. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF; 2. TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER; 3. TAKE CARE OF THIS PLACE." Hopefully, you'll recall the powerful image of the post-fire return to a school building after an evacuation and during a heavy downpour, where the principal is greeted by eight hundred pair of shoes in the lobby of a junior high school.

Margaret Wheatley's scenario resonated deeply with me and continues to do so because I find that so many of our parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, board members, borough and township partners, and resident supporters are so dedicated to what we do on behalf of children. During one of our most challenging returns to school, I asked that we take our dedication to the next level and that we commit to taking care of ourselves, each other, and this place. Now, in addition to the usual challenges that come our way, evidence of our success includes but is not limited to the following: graciously moving through the midst of a pandemic that has impacted student academic, social, and emotional wellbeing; skillfully returning an entire school-full of displaced teachers and students to their building; and patiently and appreciatively making our way through a significant shift in district leadership. In addition, I am proud of the success and growth of the Board during this transitional period. All of this and more takes my tall ask to a higher level than anticipated. I thank you wholeheartedly for exceeding my expectations. Suffice it to say that we are more than "finding our way."

But our hard work is far from finished. Please, as we make our way into the New Year and grapple with not only existing but also new challenges, let's continue to take care of ourselves, take care of each other, and take care of this place. Let's lead with empathy and continue to forego judgement and politics. As a result, our children will ultimately win.

Once again, on behalf of the entire Board of Education, I extend thanks to all the above-mentioned groups for your ongoing contributions to our children and to our schools. Happy holidays to all and the best of all that the New Year has to offer!

Sincerely,

  
Frank Romano III, Ed.D.  
Board of Education President

Joseph Abou-Daoud, Vice President  
Maureen Colombo  
Andrew Gerstmayr  
Roberta Hanlon

Michael Pontillo  
Stacey Price  
Michelle Sembler  
Thomas Snee