



## January 1, 2022 • District Newsletter

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### Important Dates

- 1/1 - New Year's Day
- 1/3 - Return to School
- 1/5 - Joint Meeting of the School Committee & Town Council
- 1/10 - School Committee Meeting
- 1/17 - Martin Luther King Day
- 1/24 - District Improvement Team

### Connect with Us

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Find us on 

### ***Happy New Year!***

While there are those that oppose the making of new year's resolutions and those that make it a tradition, all can agree that the new year brings a sense of renewal and hope for the future. We wish a kinder, healthier, and more prosperous year for all members of our community.

~Judy Paolucci



### **FY23 Budget Development**

Preparation of the FY23 budget is underway. Principals and directors have submitted their requests to the superintendent's office. After a review of these requests, principals and directors will meet individually with the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and finance office to discuss needs and make adjustments to budget lines, as needed. Following these adjustments, the needs will be discussed at two public budget hearings, tentatively scheduled for February 7th and February 14th at 5:30 pm. The School Committee may make additional adjustments before their vote on the budget on February 28th. The approved budget is then forwarded to the Budget and Financial Review Board.

On or after March 22nd, the Budget Board will hold its first public hearing. Then, prior to May 15th, the board submits a proposed budget (combined town and schools) to the Town Council. Last, the Town Council conducts a public hearing and makes amendments it deems appropriate prior to final adoption.

Recently, state aid estimates were shared with district leaders. Although these estimates may change several times before the

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## **District Awarded \$51,648 from ECF**

Scott Barnett, the District Technology Director, submitted an Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF application from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on behalf of the district. In response, the FCC committed \$51,648 for Smithfield. The funds will be used to replace aging Chromebooks.

The ECF is a \$7.17 billion program that aims to help schools and libraries provide the tools and services their communities need for remote learning related to COVID-19. Congress authorized the Emergency Connectivity Fund as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021



## **Bus Strike Update**

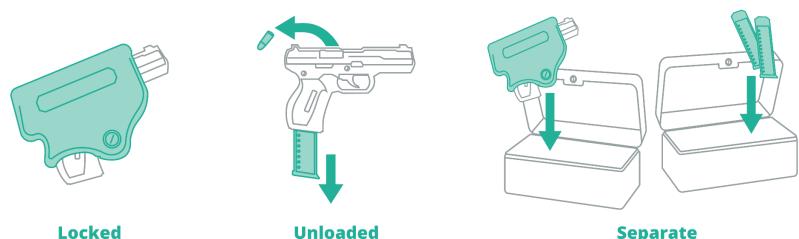
Negotiations between Durham Transportation and its employees continue with an additional negotiation session scheduled after the new year. At this time, there is no indication that a work stoppage will occur, though the district has made some preliminary plans to address such an issue. We are hoping that a fair agreement can be reached for these valuable members of our school community.

## **FY23 Budget, continued**

final budget adoption, they generally provide a good measure of what may be expected. This, in turn, allows school and town leaders to assess the impact of varying budget amounts on the local taxes. We are pleased to report that while many districts are seeing a large decrease in state aid due to lower enrollments, Smithfield's enrollments have remained fairly consistent, resulting in an expected increase in state aid for FY23. Another factor that goes into the state aid formula is a poverty factor, assessed by the number of Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) students. Due to the new way of assessing this figure, all districts saw a decrease in FRPL. The state is determining how to respond to this issue so two state aid estimates were provided - one using the district's prior FRPL value and one using its new value. With the FRPL not updated, Smithfield's estimated state aid increase is \$813,758. With the FRPL updated, this estimate is \$585,574.

Additional budget updates will be included in upcoming district newsletters.

**Assume children and teens can find guns.  
Store firearms **locked, unloaded and separate** from ammunition.**



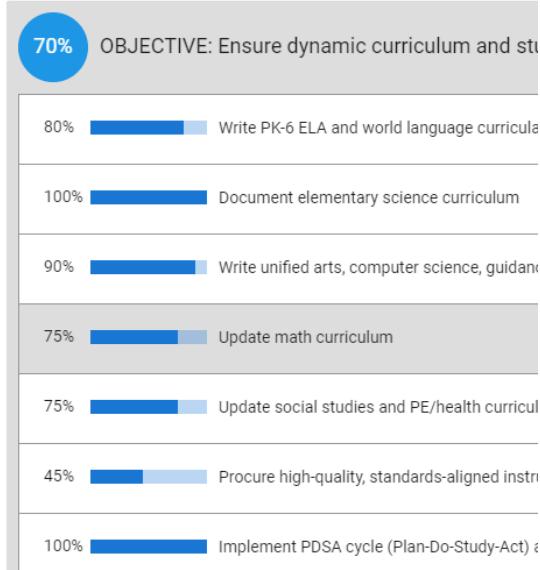
[BeSMARTforKids.org](http://BeSMARTforKids.org)

## District Improvement Team

The District Improvement Team (DIT) meets three times a year to monitor the district's progress with strategic planning goals. The team consists of parents, teachers, administrators, town officials, and School Committee members and is open to others interested. Anyone wishing to join the group should contact Lisa Petrone ([lpetrone@smithfield-ps.org](mailto:lpetrone@smithfield-ps.org)).

The District Strategic Dashboard ([ECRISS | Strategic Dashboard](https://ecriss.com/) ([ecragroup.com](http://ecragroup.com))) includes a list of action steps and provides an estimated completed percentage. The DIT updates these percentages at each meeting. In addition, selected data from a variety of sources are used as indicators for progress. While many district strategic plans are written but are left with no mechanism for a follow-up, here in Smithfield, the strategic plan is a means of keeping the district moving in a positive direction, regardless of what life throws our way.

## Instructional Programming and Practices



## Work Continues for the Smithfield Equity Task Force

In January of 2021, racist and hateful graffiti appeared on the support columns of the Route 116 overpass in Smithfield. Subsequently, three youths were arrested and charged with malicious damage. While the event was public and generated much dialogue about racism, there are other examples of behavior in the schools and in town that calls attention to the fact that there is room for improving equity and inclusivity in Smithfield.

In response to growing concerns, on April 20, 2021, the Smithfield Town Council passed a resolution "making Smithfield an increasingly welcoming, inclusive, and safe community for everyone to live, work, and learn; and to promote free thought and speech, while condemning racism, hate speech, bigotry, violence, and discrimination." The resolution also created the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, whose members include: Mike Lawton, Town Council; Ben Caisse, School Committee; Randy Rossi, Town Manager; Judy Paolucci, Superintendent; Sara Monaco, Assistant Superintendent; Richard St. Sauveur, Police Chief; Robert Caine, Recreation Director; John Burns, GMS Assistant Principal; Dorothy Chin Gerding, Resident; Stan Dorsey, Resident; and Rob Mecunas, Resident.

The task force meets monthly and has thus far focused on gaining a common understanding of what efforts have been made already and what areas should be of future focus. Members agreed that having an "outside eye" audit current practices would help prioritize future actions. Unfortunately, the response to a Request for Proposals (RFP) was lacking, warranting an investigation into what organizations exist in Rhode Island that can assist the group with its accomplishing the following goals:

1. Engage with Smithfield residents, interest groups, and businesses to seek feedback on their experiences that can improve life in our community.
2. Identify strategies that help the Town to be more inclusive in engaging our residents and businesses that will better promote unity, equality and understanding in Smithfield.
3. Work with a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant to develop a comprehensive plan and long-term vision of diversity, equity and inclusion goals for the community.

Ultimately, the group will be presenting recommendations to the Smithfield Town Council on how to achieve these goals.

Meetings of the Task Force are open to the public. Agendas are posted on the town's website, [www.smithfieldri.com](http://www.smithfieldri.com).

## **Boyle Project**

The Boyle Building Committee has been meeting to help guide the work of the architectural firm, Rowse Architects, to complete the Stage 2 application and schematic design for the athletic complex. The application is due to RIDE by February 15th but we are hoping to move to Stage 3 at the same time.

The plans may include another access road to the high school to alleviate traffic on Pleasant View Avenue, moving and expanding the tennis courts, and rolling in HVAC work (paid using ESSER III funds) so that reimbursements are maximized.



Preliminary plans are continually being revised as input is received from coaches and members of the building committee.

The building committee, consisting of town residents, school officials, and town officials, meets regularly and meetings are open to the public. Agendas are posted on the town's website.

## **Honeywell Energy Audit**

In March, the Town of Smithfield engaged Honeywell to assess potential facility projects that could bring about substantial energy savings. Due to both the need for facility repairs at SHS and GMS and the potential energy savings of such repairs, the school department is moving forward with the next step in this process - an engineering study to choose projects that can be financed through a combination of state housing aid and energy savings.

The objectives of the project are to decrease energy consumption by repairing or replacing inefficient facility systems, increase occupant comfort and safety, and reduce operational and maintenance costs. Honeywell estimates that there may be self-funded energy savings projects totaling in excess of \$1.5M. This is in addition to over \$1M of HVAC work anticipated to be funded through the ESSER III grant (COVID Relief Funds).

## **Family Guides: Supporting Learning**

Family guides, which provide an overview of the important literacy and math topics students learn in each grade. Each guide. The guides also include suggestions for everyday family activities to reinforce what students are learning and tips for focusing conversations during parent teacher conferences.

Kindergarten: [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Grade 1: [English](#) [Spanish](#) Grade 2: [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Grade 3: [English](#) [Spanish](#) Grade 4: [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Grade 5: [English](#) [Spanish](#) Grade 6: [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Grade 7: [English](#) [Spanish](#) Grade 8: [English](#) [Spanish](#)

HS Literacy: [English](#) [Spanish](#) HS Math: [English](#) [Spanish](#)

## **"Snow Day" Plans**

Smithfield Public Schools has requested approval from the RI Department of Education to use distance learning days in case of inclement weather. The hope is that all of our students will be able to participate in live virtual instruction with their teachers from 8:00-12:00 when a distance learning day is announced due to inclement weather.

If widespread power outages are expected and occur, students will complete paper/pencil tasks that will be sent home prior to the distance learning day. Snow-day packets were sent home with elementary students in December for this purpose. The full snow-day plan inclusive of schedules can be found [here](#).



### **Welcome, Jose Libano!**

We are pleased to welcome Jose Libano, Smithfield High School's new assistant principal. Dr. Libano holds a doctorate in educational administration from Boston College and has had nearly 20 years of administrative experience. Prior to holding administrative positions, he taught mathematics at Attleboro High School. WELCOME TO SMITHFIELD!



### **Pleasant View Elementary School Gets a New Old Sign**

If you've passed by Pleasant View Elementary School recently, you may have seen a new addition to the front lawn. The Winsor sign was moved from the front of Winsor School and its backside was carved to read, Pleasant View Elementary. The Winsor letters are still on one side of the sign, though the district plans to plant bushes on that side of the sign this spring. The project was done by Ahlborg Construction Company at no cost to the district.



Thank you Ahlborg Construction!!!

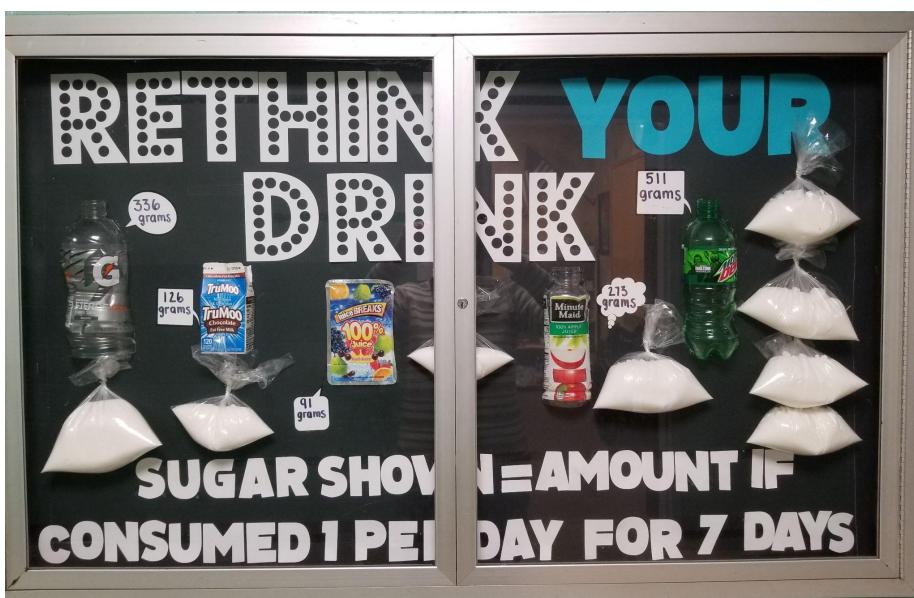
## This Month's Spotlight: Gallagher Middle School

We are at the halfway point of the second quarter, approaching the ringing in 2022! While we hope the end of the pandemic is in reach, our staff and students continue to amaze us with their diligence in mask-wearing, hand washing, etc. Together, we can continue to provide in-person learning.

**Wrestling** - This year, GMS has added a new sport: Coed Middle School Wrestling. Coach Brendon Vallee has a vast amount of experience as both a wrestler and a coach. Our students are excited about this new opportunity and can't "weight" to take down their competition at their first meet. The team, below, pulled down their masks to smile at the camera!

**Curriculum Work** - This year, we began our search for high-quality curriculum materials for English language arts. Our English teachers selected two programs to field test, StudySync and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Into Literature.

For the second quarter, our students are working with materials from StudySync. Your child's feedback about the program will be invaluable to our curriculum decision. The second program will be field-tested during the second semester.



**Health Info** - Have you ever thought about how much sugar is contained in your favorite drink? Each year, student nurses work with Mrs. Moan and, as part of this placement, each student nurse creates an informational display. Check out these sweet details . . .

**Happy Howlidays from the Wolf Pack!**