

# The LITCHFIELD PRIDE

FALL 2020

Official Newsletter of Litchfield Public Schools

ISSUE 1

CENTER SCHOOL • INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL • MIDDLE SCHOOL • HIGH SCHOOL

## A Unique Time: 2020

By: Christopher Leone

I write this during a unique time in our local, state, national, and world history.

When one hears “2020,” they can logically draw upon the concept of clear vision. This year has brought us many challenges with an international pandemic. Some can say that those challenges would obscure a vision of the future. Instead, I think this year has actually helped us see the potential.

When I reflect on this year, I see four communities, and two districts, coming together to benefit nearly 2,000 students. I see that no challenge, or obstacle, is too great and no detail is too small.

I know from this summer that our schools would not open right now without the work of countless staff members across our districts. I know that we would not have our students learning in person without tireless effort. I know now, more than ever, that the future is not centered on the past, but what we can create in the future.

Like many, I do want 2020 to end. However, I am thankful for this year, for what it has taught me, and what we all have shown to be possible.

As we head into the holidays, my thanks to everyone and my best wishes that 2021 will only build upon our success.

The best days are yet to come.

Chris

## Improving Communication

By: Christopher Leone

Dear School Community,

On behalf of the Litchfield Public Schools and the Board of Education I wish to introduce *The Litchfield Pride*.

This new quarterly publication from the district is furthering our commitment to increase school to community communication. We know that everyday there are amazing events occurring in the schools for our students. While we can't always share those events the goal of the publication is to bring more about this great work to everyone in the community.

You can access a copy of this publication on the district website [www.litchfieldschools.org](http://www.litchfieldschools.org).



You can also utilize social media to follow the districts and our schools:

### Twitter

District - @RSD6\_LPS\_Supt  
LHS/LMS - @LPS912  
LIS - @456Litchfield  
LCS - @LCSK31  
LPS Athletics - @LHS\_Sports

### Instagram

District - rsd6\_lps\_supt  
LHS/LMS - ctlhs  
LIS - LitchfieldIntermediate456  
LCS - lcs\_k3

As we head into the holiday season there is plenty to give thanks for in our district. I hope you enjoy seeing the results of the work and know that our students are receiving an amazing education from an excellent staff.

Best wishes,  
Chris



## LPS and RSD6 Summer Learning Celebration

### “2 Districts, 1 Summer”

By: Pam Vecca, RSD6 K-12 Humanities Coordinator



The Curriculum Office is pleased to share student participation and engagement in summer learning. In June 2020, Litchfield and Region 6 students in grades Pre-K to 12 were invited to participate in a number of summer learning activities that were posted on the Extended Learning Opportunities website. This website was created as a way of encouraging our students and families to remain engaged in reading and math during the summer months. Various resources, both digital and print, were made available in order to reach all students at both the elementary and secondary grade levels.

Upon return to school in September, students and families provided feedback via a cross-district survey on their participation and engagement.

The feedback collected was outstanding! Both districts had a combined total of 730 students who participated in one or more reading and/or math activities. Also, our students collectively read over 6,500 books this summer!

Raffle tickets provided a great incentive for students to continue their participation. Tickets were awarded for each reading and/or math activity participated in; for each picture of summer reading and math that was sent in or shared on social media; and for completing the district survey. Local businesses that generously donated to our raffle baskets and gifts were: Hickory Stick Bookshop, Toast & Co., Hometown Pizza in Litchfield, The Deli in Morris, Popey's Ice Cream Shoppe, and Arethusa Dairy.

To recognize and celebrate this success, a drive-thru event was held on October 8th, 2020 at Litchfield High School. This event was made possible by the efforts of the Joint Event Planning Committee, consisting of ten school staff members from both districts. Students and families registered to attend this event, where they received a book bag filled with goodies, an awards certificate, pencils, book marks, and ice cream sandwiches. Student volunteers from both Wamogo and Litchfield High School were also at the event to cheer on the participants as they drove through. We are proud of the students and families in our communities for all of their efforts and commitment to learning.

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# Litchfield Intermediate School

## Physical Education at Litchfield Intermediate School

By: James Rosa. Physical Education and Health Teacher. Litchfield Intermediate School

Our amazing students at Litchfield Intermediate School worked on a social-emotional physical education unit to start the school year. I felt it was important as ever to guide our students to become reacquainted with one another, especially after virtual learning and summer break. Students' social, emotional, and mental health needs are equally as important as their physical well-being. Students worked in a safe and welcoming environment participating in a variety of activities that encouraged them to be more proactive in developing their communication, cooperation, and self-reflection skills that included speaking assertively, while also being a strong listener. Students thrived in putting to use their ability to work cooperatively with others by building up not only themselves but others as well.

After such a long period of time where physical activity was limited due to our current world situation, we learned to recondition ourselves through a series of games. Within each game we had a component of physical fitness such as cardiovascular endurance. Students were required to engage in three tasks during these games: run, flee, and chase. This activity served to engage students in exercise while making it fun and enjoyable. Just as you might hide vegetables and other healthful foods in your child's meals, I try to hide heart, bone, and muscle strengthening exercises in games and activities!

A core value of our program at LIS is to help build and foster the children of Litchfield to become lifelong movers, as well as give them the tools they need to maintain their physical health. I was both surprised and proud to see our students taking the initiative and independently employing our initial games and activities during their mask breaks! Regardless of what we are learning or playing, we will continue to make social, emotional, and mental health part of every activity as that is what our students need right now.



PE & Health Teacher Mr. Rosa instructs students from Mrs. Lemnotis's class in an outdoor social-emotional learning activity. Students on the left from front to back: Cormac Zakriski, Matilda Moore, Lillian Kennedy, Alessandro Perugini, and Elbhlín Parker. Students on the right from front to back: Kellen Quinlan, Audrey Pickert, Nora Youell.

## Tradition Holds Steady at LIS

By: Kerri Lacilla, Instructional Assistant at Litchfield Intermediate School

Remember bike riding to school with friends, meeting up at the park till dinner time, and enjoying a little freedom and independence? At LIS, bike riding has been rediscovered as an awesome way of traveling to and from school. The tradition of bike riding has grown to record numbers at the school with the number of bikes almost outgrowing the bike rack on campus.



Mr. Rosa, PE & Health teacher at LIS, facilitates dismissal as bikers head home after school.

This healthy method of transportation often gives adolescents a sense of pride and empowerment, certainly two very important social and emotional tools during this unprecedented time. It also promotes a healthy lifestyle and comradery among the LIS community. "I get to hang out with my friends and it's good exercise," said Chuck Pickert, a sixth grader at LIS.

Biking to school has also shown how much the students appreciate and value our beautiful Litchfield community. When asked why they enjoy riding their bikes to school, students commented on their aesthetic journey. "I get to see all the sites in Litchfield on the way to school," explained 6th grader Joe VanOrmer. Luke Lacilla, also a 6th grader, said, "Biking to school is more fun than riding the bus. My friends



6th grader Joseph VanOrmer departs from LIS with his fellow bicycle riders.

Embracing a growth mindset by small, achievable goals is part of the beautiful journey of biking at LIS. While the colder weather is upon us, we hope in the spring we will see even more bikers enjoying their commute to school as we continue to promote a healthy lifestyle, commodity amongst peers, and an appreciation for the beautiful community that is Litchfield!

## LIS Celebrates Veterans



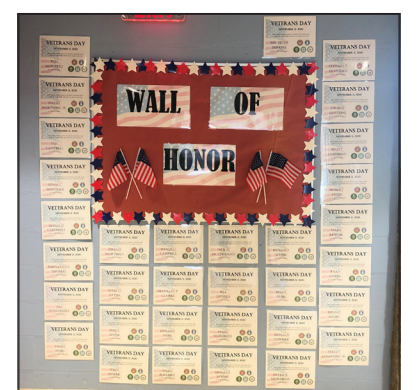
LIS 6th grader Cecelia Tiul displays a placard in honor of her cousin & godmother who served in the United States Navy for twelve years.



LIS 4th grade Sophie Reynolds holds her Veterans Day letter. The letter was given to a local veteran at Brandywine Living in Litchfield.



Fourth grade students in Mrs. Leifert's classroom wrote letters to local veterans.



A Wall of Honor displayed at LIS in honor of Veterans in our families and community.

# Litchfield Center School

## Reading Program Improvements

By: Lisa Deltano, Principal

During the 2019-2020 school year, a committee of teachers and administration met regularly to review and research available phonics programs. The previously utilized program had been in place for many years. Periodically, it is important to review curriculum and programs to determine their effectiveness. We researched 3 different programs Units of Study in Phonics by Teachers College, Reach by National Geographic and Foundations by Wilson.



Learning how to write our letters - in shaving cream!

As part of the research, we were able to do a site visit at Goshen Center School. We also met virtually with representatives for the Reach program. We reached out to other teachers and schools using the various programs to determine their effectiveness and impact on students' reading and writing achievement.

All teachers in Grades Kindergarten through Second Grade received a full day of training in implementing the program. The professional development included a Wilson trainer to walk us through the program and answer our questions. It also gave us access to the Wilson Academy website. In the Academy, there are videos, print resources and activities to use with students.

Learning to read incorporates an understanding of print, identification of letters and sounds, phonemic awareness (letters make sounds), vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Students need explicit instruction in all areas to be able read fluently and comprehend text.

Our students are enjoying the program. They are learning the daily routines. Teachers and their helpers, Mama and Baby Echo, owl puppets, teach them the letters and sounds. The students "echo" the teacher to practice. Students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 are also practicing writing the letters. We have already seen improvement in student handwriting and letter formation. Students in Grade 2 are working on learning spelling rules and application in reading and writing.

We will continue to monitor students progress and evaluate the program's effectiveness through the school year.

## Grade 3 visits with the Litchfield Historical Society

By: Joanne Moore, LCS Library/Media Specialist

Believe it or not, grade three students at Center School have been going on several field trips...virtual field trips, that is! Through the collaboration of the Litchfield Historical Society, grade three teachers (Mrs. Jennifer Johnson, Mrs. Marni Smith and Mrs. Darlene Tarrant), and the Center School Library Media Specialist (Mrs. Joanne Moore), students have been able to "tour" the museum and the library archives.

In preparation for their field trips, during Library Technology and Social Studies classes, students were introduced to the early history of Litchfield, and they developed essential questions about the settling of the town, daily life, and how the local citizens of long ago have contributed to our country.

Through a scheduled Google Meeting during Library Technology sessions, each class was able to meet twice with Miss Kate Zullo, the Head of Education at the Litchfield Historical Society. The students were attentive and curious about so many things! They learned about the value and purpose of museums, the difference between primary and secondary sources, and they even got a tour of the Helga J. Ingraham Library and the Ching Reading Room Library archives, where valuable primary source materials, such as ledgers and journals from the 18th century, are cataloged and stored.

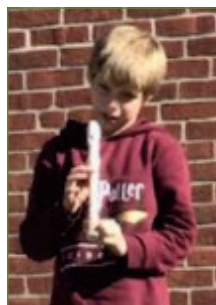
After our field trips, students were excited to begin their presentations about Litchfield Long Ago. Using their Chromebooks, students worked on Google Slideshows to share their newly discovered knowledge about our community. At Center School, we are all so excited and grateful to be able to continue to nurture learning through all modalities, as we overcome the obstacles of today.



Mrs. Moore, our Library/Media Specialist and Kate Zullo, Litchfield Historical Museum Head of Education, meet virtually with students to share Litchfield town history.



Owen Frank and preschoolers in Mrs. Bailey's preschool class carved a pumpkin. They described the pumpkin using descriptive words and had the opportunity to investigate the pumpkin guts.



Liam Nilsen practices the recorder outside for music class.

Joey Blazek, Freya Boisvert and Carter Henneberry organized a game of tic tac toe with their chalk on pajama day with Mrs. Melanie O'Leary.



Learning new Morning Meeting Greetings to welcome each other each day with Mrs. Kim Roe.



Mr. McDevitt's Kindergarten students learning the Pledge of Allegiance.



Miss Nichols's class enjoyed our Pumpkin Patch from the Litchfield Health and Wellness Resource. Pictured: Front Row- Bryce, Monroe, Jovoniz, Felix and Lilith Back Row- Austin, Celia, Matilda, Emma, Wyatt.

# Litchfield Middle & High School

## Litchfield Middle School Community Activity Thursdays Under Way

**By: Kristen Della Volpe, Principal;**

**Melissa Swanson, LMS 8th Grade Team Leader;**

**Kyle Harris, LMS 7th Grade Team Leader**

Litchfield Middle School staff and students are once again organizing “Advisory Community Activities” every Thursday, as part of their daily Advisory Program. As explained by LMS Team Leaders Melissa Swanson (grade 8) and Kyle Harris (grade 7), “the purpose of these activities is to provide opportunities for all students to engage in our community.”

An LMS Advisory class is comprised of one staff member and 11 randomly selected students. A common program in many Connecticut schools, Advisory classes are intended to pair students with adults other than their own classroom teachers and peers other than those they commonly interact with in academic classes. Specific agendas are set for each day of Advisory during the week, and Thursdays are reserved for student-generated activities that challenge students with a grade level to work on collaboration and communication skills in a “low-stakes environment.”

Advisories sign up in advance for a designated week to present their activity to the other 7th and 8th grade advisories. So far this year, the LMS students have worked on a virtual escape room (Mr. Harris’s 8th grade Advisory group); a spooky story time (Mrs. Swanson’s 7th grade Advisory group); and a food drive to support our Thanksgiving Basket program for families in the community.

As students transition from the “one teacher, one classroom” elementary model to a more compartmentalized, secondary model, it is important to provide students with opportunities to see the relationship among the skills and content they are learning with a different teacher for each subject. Advisory Community Activities are a way for students to apply the skills they are learning discreetly in English class, and math class, and social studies class. It also provides the opportunity for students to further hone interpersonal and collaborative decision-making skills.

## Litchfield High School Students Honor Veterans

**By: Kristen Della Volpe, Principal**

Litchfield High School students will continue their annual tradition of honoring veterans on Veterans Day. As a visit to Brandywine Living at Litchfield, located on 19 Constitution Way, on November 11 was not possible, students instead worked collaboratively with LHS staff to create a video to be aired on that day. Tobylynne Yurchick, Escapades Producer for the facility, will coordinate these airings. The video will include all aspects of their typical program, which includes the LHS Chamber Choir, led by



LHS Band Rehearses for Veterans Day.

LHS Choral Director Peter Perkins, in their rendition of the *National Anthem, My Country ‘Tis of Thee, America the Beautiful, and In Flanders Fields*, a selection based on the poem by Canadian physician Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. The woodwind and brass ensemble from the LHS Concert Band, led

by LHS Band Director Dan Porri, will perform the *Armed Forces Medley*, which is a collection of the official marchpasts/songs of the six services of the United States Armed Forces: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and as of 2020, the Space Force. Assisted by All-School Student Council advisor Patti O’Neill, four members of the All-School Student Council have been recorded reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and sharing thank-yous’ from our entire student body to those veterans who risked so much to ensure a better future. All staff and students involved would also like to thank Technology Education teacher Raymond Zetye, and Library Media Specialist Brendan Eckert, for their help in producing this Veterans Day honor.



Chorus Rehearses for Veterans Day.

## College Board Releases List of Advanced Placement Scholars

**By: Kristen Della Volpe, Principal**

Every July, the College Board identifies those students who have demonstrated outstanding performance on multiple AP exams. As a result of the May, 2020 Advanced Placement Exam administration, Litchfield High School celebrates the following students for their accomplishments:

### AP Scholar - Students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams

Colin Acerbi ('21)

Allison Davenport ('20)

Will Rodriguez ('20)

Will Allee ('20)

Aidan Parilla ('21)

Kyla Farrel ('20)

Olivia Bryant ('21)

Noah Parilla ('21)

Zeke Hartfield ('20)

Natalie McDermott ('21)

### AP Scholar with Honor - Students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

Tristan Coolbeth ('20)

David O’Hara ('20)

### AP Scholar with Distinction - Students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams

Samantha Barnes ('20)

Harley Harris ('20)

Antonio Butler ('20)

Ruby Hatfield ('20)

Francesca Luzzi ('20)