



# Westwood Regional School District

Board of Education

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Dear School Community Members,

I write today on behalf of the Board of Education to announce that on Thursday, January 27, 2022 at its regularly scheduled public meeting, the Board will appoint Dr. Jill Mortimer to the position of Superintendent of Westwood Regional Schools. Dr. Mortimer has served as our Acting Superintendent for these past six months, and prior to that, she served as our Assistant Superintendent for seven years. During this past year, when 25 percent of superintendents across the country have left their jobs (AASA 2021), Dr. Mortimer has furthered her commitment to our district by not only stepping up but also stepping toward the challenges that abound. She has led with foresight and focus, communicated with clarity and consistency, and bred a sense of confidence and calm.

On October 4, 2021, the Board opened a survey, asking for community input that would help in developing a candidate profile. On October 28, the Board sent a follow-up letter with the results of our superintendent search survey. As evidenced by the results, our school community is in favor of a candidate who:

- Holds a Doctorate in Education or at least an Ed.S.;
- Has served as a superintendent or assistant superintendent;
- Exercises collaborative and situational leadership;
- Has expertise in curriculum development and evaluation and budget development and management;
- Demonstrates an ability to develop and direct an effective management team;
- Demonstrates a keen ability to think outside the box and develop creative solutions to complicated problems;
- Is exceedingly responsive (i.e., shows follow-through and follow-up);
- Is honest and ethical; and
- Holds the vision that the District has followed during the past several months and is capable of making necessary changes.

All of the above contributes to the conclusion that Dr. Mortimer is not only the best fit but, more importantly, the right fit for the Westwood Regional School Community. We are fortunate to have Dr. Mortimer because she knows our district well, and she has all of the attributes that one hopes to find in a public school leader. She is well educated; she possesses broad and deep life experience; she presents the dispositions and skillsets that will serve students, parents, faculty and staff, administrative colleagues, board members, and the general community well.

Dr. Mortimer has a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the College of St. Elizabeth, a Master of Arts in Teaching English Language and Literature from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Dr. Mortimer has gained a wealth of varied experiences in roles such as teacher, staff developer, principal, superintendent, and even board vice president.

Some of Dr. Mortimer's noteworthy and exceptional leadership work during these past six months includes:

- Transitioning students back to school and keeping schools open during a pandemic;
- Coordinating onsite COVID-19 testing for staff and students;
- Providing for a school of displaced K-5 faculty, staff, and students during a post hurricane recovery;
- Managing critical High School and Middle School security threats;
- Strengthening partnerships with the Borough and the Township;
- Leading an elementary level building, classroom space, and class section analysis in order to plan for establishing and maintaining optimal class sizes;
- Supporting a strong administrative team by engaging consultant and coach Dr. Tracey Severns;
- Collaborating with a team of Pascack Valley Superintendents;
- Maintaining high visibility at schools, performances, and varsity sporting events;
- Engaging parents and Board of Education members by increasing communications; and
- Partnering with the Board Curriculum Committee on creating a Kindergarten student placement system that better provides for students.

Those who know her well feel reassured by her strength and talent as an educational leader, her ability to engage parents and guardians, and her promise to continue doing great things with faculty and staff. Most importantly, she has proven to be someone who cares about adolescents and children, as she understands what it takes to provide them with the variety of services and experiences that they need to not only survive but thrive. During her most recent interactions with the Board, Dr. Mortimer has presented herself as a highly intelligent, thoughtful, and well-trained educator who is genuine, personable, and poised. Her interactions have inspired confidence, unified purpose, and direction.

We hope that you will join us in congratulating Dr. Mortimer on her appointment. We as a board are thrilled and look forward to taking our partnership to the next level.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Romano III". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frank Romano III, Ed.D.

Board of Education President

on behalf of the Westwood Regional Board of Education