



The Connection

WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WINTER 2021-2022

*Bringing the accomplishments and initiatives of the Waterford Public Schools to the Town, Community and beyond to create a **Connection** that will reinforce a strong commitment to coming together to educate the whole child.*

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Update from the Waterford Board of Education

As budget season is upon us, the Waterford Board of Education has proactively worked to ensure a budget that focuses on both our commitment to maintain a high quality education for our students and our responsibility of careful consideration of fiscal resources. To assist in the budget development, the Board of Education Finance Committee met throughout the winter working closely with District Administration to analyze line items prior to the Special Budget meetings. The Board of Education Finance Subcommittee meetings promoted earnest discussion on the budget on an earlier timeline. All meetings were livestreamed and can be viewed on the BOE YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7hhqBh6eoFpZjYCtoSxsTA/videos>.

Superintendent Giard presented the recommended budget to the board and the community at two budget workshops on February 3rd and 10th. The budget will go for final approval by the Board at the February 24, 2022 regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting.

Key points of the FY23 Budget:

- ⇒ Fixed cost increases, contractual obligations, benefits, tuitions, heat, energy and fuel, legal, insurances, and transportation account for 2.88% of the 2.89% increase over FY 22.
- ⇒ A significant portion of the FY 23 budget request, approximately \$732K, is offset by the effective use of the federal COVID relief funds. If not for these funds, the budget request would be 1.5% higher.

See page 8 for more information on the budget timeline and approval process

From Crisis to Opportunity



Reimagine & Reinvigorate

WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2022-2023 (FY 23)
Superintendent's Recommended Budget

View budget at https://www.waterfordschools.org/our_district/departments/business_office/budget

Mask Mandate Update

On February 14, 2022, the state senate passed the bill (approved by the house on February 11) extending the mask mandate through February 28. Absent action by a local BOE, the state mask mandate will expire and Monday, February 28, 2022 will be the first day when masks will be recommended and not required inside school buildings. The bill that passed also states the CSDE commissioner would have the right to reactivate a mask mandate through June 30, 2022 should public health conditions warrant.

There is a federal executive order that still requires masks on all school buses in the U.S. that will remain in effect even when the mask mandate for schools expires in CT. "The Order remains in effect unless modified or rescinded or until the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services rescinds the determination that a public health emergency exists."

The school district will continue to publish weekly COVID numbers on Friday afternoons on the district [COVID Dashboard](#) and will continue to safely employ our mitigation strategies and protocols that have kept our schools open throughout the pandemic.

New Director of Special Services



Colleagues and supervisors in Brookfield remarked that Ms. Wygonik's "engaging personality, strong social emotional skillset, and genuine good nature are personal qualities that allow her to set the tone for a positive school climate and culture"

At the February 10, 2022 Waterford Board of Education Special Meeting, Ms. Gina Wygonik was appointed as the next Director of Special Services at Waterford Public Schools. Ms. Wygonik will officially begin this new role with Waterford on May 9, 2022. Ms. Wygonik will fill the vacancy created by the upcoming retirement of Ms. Kathy Vallone.

Ms. Wygonik brings a multitude of professional experiences in education and special services to this new position in Waterford. She holds a Sixth Year in Educational Leadership from Southern Connecticut State University, Special Education K-12 Certification from Southern Connecticut State University, a Master of Arts and Teaching from Sacred Heart University and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public and Community Health from Southern Connecticut State University.

Ms. Wygonik currently serves as the Director of Special Education at Brookfield Public Schools and has held that position since 2019. Prior to this role, she served successfully as a Secondary Special Education Supervisor, Special Education/Math Interventionist/Administrative Designee, Special Education Coordinator, Principal and Teacher. She also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Special Education Master's Program at Southern Connecticut State University.

Colleagues and supervisors in Brookfield remarked that Ms. Wygonik's "engaging personality, strong social emotional skillset, and genuine good nature are personal qualities that allow her to set the tone for a positive school climate and culture"... "She knows her faculty and staff, students, students' families, community perspective"... "she possesses leadership qualities critical for effective administration"...she is "a natural role model for her profession"...and "possesses a tremendous passion for education and making a positive difference in students' lives".

On behalf of the entire search committee, we congratulate Ms. Wygonik. We are confident she will be a great addition to the staff, students, and families of the Waterford Public Schools.

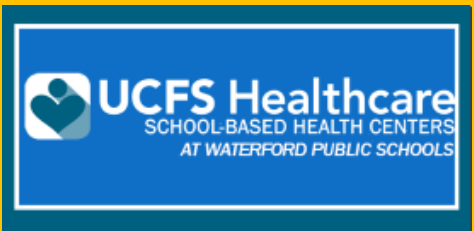
Ms. Wygonik is excited to join the Waterford team. She looks forward to bringing her passion and talent as an educational leader to the Waterford school community

UCFS Behavioral Health Services and Sports Physicals

The UCFS School-Based Health Centers at WHS and CLMS provide behavioral health and well care to all students who attend Waterford Public Schools. **The behavioral health services available include mental health assessments, counseling and substance use screenings.** Registration forms for services can be completed electronically on the [UCFS School Based Health Center](https://www.waterfordschools.org/parents_family_for_students/school-based_health_center) website. Registration forms can also be found in the main office at all schools or by emailing sbhc@ucfs.org.

Reminder that the [UCFS School-Based Health Centers](https://www.waterfordschools.org/parents_family_for_students/school-based_health_center) are also conducting Sports Physicals for students. We encourage families to register students now to have access to this convenient and important service provided by UCFS for our students and families. To register, click on the link for the [Enrollment Form](#). Physicals are conducted by an APRN (advanced practice registered nurse) and are conducted in the schools at the School-based Health Centers.

More information on the School-Based Health Centers can be found on the Waterford Public Schools Website at https://www.waterfordschools.org/parents_family_for_students/school-based_health_center.

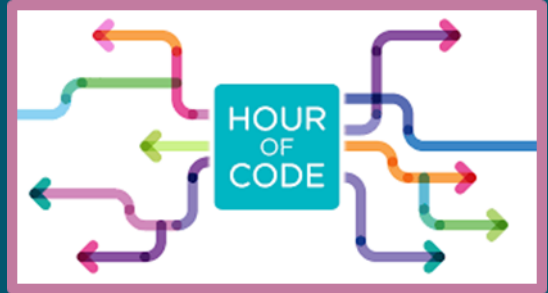


WPS Website - Translation in 10 languages

Did you know that the Waterford Public School's website and all of the individual school's websites can be translated into 10 different languages? By simply clicking on the language button at the top of the website, users can select any language shown.

Hour of Code

Students grades K-5 in Waterford recently participated in the 2021 Hour of Code event which was held at each elementary school. This event takes place every year during Computer Science Education Week. It is a global movement introducing tens of millions of students worldwide to computer science, inspiring kids to learn more, breaking stereotypes, and leaving them feeling empowered. This event makes a statement that Waterford is ready to teach essential 21st century skills. We know that whatever field our students choose to go into as adults, their ability to succeed will increasingly depend on understanding how technology works.



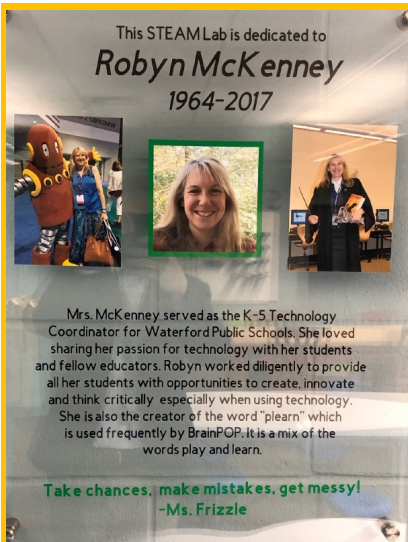
Ms. Laura McCue, a Technology Specialist for the district, stated “Coding requires discipline, attention to detail, perseverance, the ability to predict an outcome and problem solving skills. These are skills we want all of our students in Waterford to fully develop.” Students collaborated and worked independently on many different age appropriate coding activities. They used Chromeboxes and Chromebooks to visit online coding sites, they used iPad coding apps, and even coded and ran programs to have various robots move, make sounds, light up and more. Some students even created designs to be printed on a 3-D printer!

It was exciting that our students got a chance to be involved in such an important global initiative. If you are interested in reading more about it and the benefits of coding, visit <http://hourofcode.com/us>.



Capstone Projects at WHS

Waterford High School launched its Capstone course during the fall semester of 2021. Eighty-seven juniors began this new adventure under the guidance of teachers in the English and Social Studies Departments. Students created authentic individualized learning experiences that were aligned with the high schools Vision of the Graduate skills. Students submitted proposals, conducted research and communicated to others about their project. In January, Capstone students presented their Projects to all 9th, 10th and 11th graders. Presentations took place in the WHS Fieldhouse and the WHS Auditorium. Capstone expert Dr. Elizabeth Radday spent both days at WHS and summed it up this way: "Waterford High's students were so welcoming and their projects were great. They set the bar high and it will continue to rise each term as students do projects. It was great to hear so many stories of students working with family members, enjoying their projects and following their interests and passions. As you know, this year is all about figuring out what works and I'd say Waterford is finding a lot that works." Audience members were treated to a wide variety of Projects from donations to the CT Humane Society to Sustainable Kelp Farming. Faculty, staff and students were all impressed with the semester's Capstone students.



Opening of STEAM Lab at QH

Quaker Hill Elementary School officially opened the QH STEAM Lab, dedicated to Mrs. Robyn McKenney, former Technology Coordinator for Waterford Public Schools. [Mrs. McKenney] "loved sharing her passion for technology with her students and fellow educators...she worked diligently to provide all her students with opportunities to create, innovate and think critically." The QH STEAM Lab will provide opportunities for students to explore the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. Thank you to Walmart, Google, the QH PTA and the Waterford BOE for helping to build this awesome space for our kids!



WPS Gives Back

- ♦ All schools participated in the PJ Day for Kids to support Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Together student raised over \$4,000. Money raised will benefit the juvenile cancer treatment program at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.
- ♦ The Explorer's Cafe at CLMS raised over \$300 for the school Unified Program. The Café, self funded using grants and donations, partners general education and special education students to run the cafe under the guidance of three special education teachers. The Cafe welcomes not only CLMS faculty and staff, but even the Waterford Police Department.

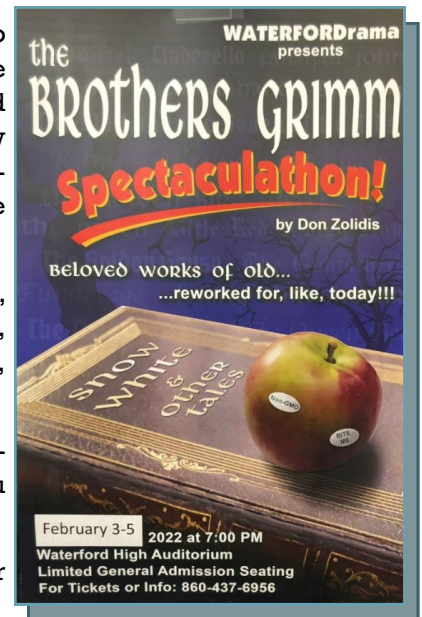
WATERFORDrama is Back!

On February 3 and 5, WATERFORDrama held their first in-person show in two years at the Waterford High School Auditorium. The hysterical comedy, *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon*, had audiences laughing from beginning to end each night. Drama Director Shane Valle stated that “the 29 person cast and crew started rehearsals the last week of November and battled their way through absences due to close contact, mid-year exams, a blizzard, and Omicron to arrive at their final destination. No obstacles could stop this impressive team!”

The cast was made up of Madison Gates, Avital Goldberg-Curran, John Morgan, Julie Morrison, Sofia Fioravanti, Nina Fioravanti, Skyler Jones, Yana Abramova, Isabela Haque, Tighe Burridge, Kyijong Tenzin, Phoebe Brown, Suhana Sharma, Karas Boluch, Francesca DeSantis, and Jamie Gannon.

The crew consisted of Fern Hill, Charlotte Morin, Quinn LaBelle, William Lathrop, Nia Bosco, Kyra Tuckwood, Aaliyah Banks, Mia Ramos, Nataly Chan, Jiarou Liao, Anabel Bueno, Analys Bueno, and Amaris Rosado.

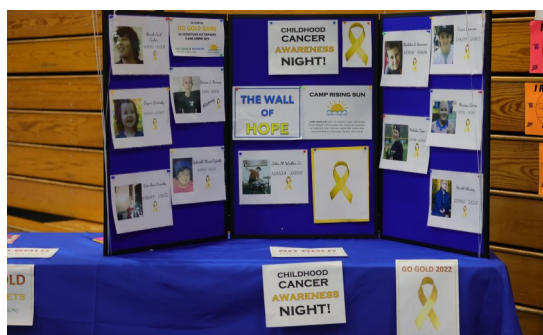
WATERFORDrama was so happy to have their audience back and can't wait for the next opportunity to entertain their school and community.



Congratulations to Great Neck Elementary School's Chorus on their ensemble being selected as a Showcase Performance Ensemble for the Connecticut Music Educators Association (CMEA) Conference that will be held March 31-April 2, 2022 at the Connecticut Convention Center. Look for information and photos in an upcoming newsletter. We are very excited to showcase our talented students with a greater audience.

Waterford staff and students carried on the Go Gold for Childhood Cancer tradition at the February 8th boys basketball game against New London High School. During this special event, donations were collected for the Camp Rising Sun for Childhood Cancer Research. The pregame message, read by WHS Physical Education Department Chair, Teacher and Softball Coach Andy Walker, displayed below, encapsulates the vision and true meaning behind this game:

"This is a very special night here at the Francis X Sweeney field house...a tradition that began five years ago, Waterford senior Marissa Walker, the 2018 NFHS National Spirit of Sport Award winner, and cancer conqueror, currently in the accelerated nursing program at the University of Miami, organized an evening raising awareness for childhood cancer and the great need for more research dollars. The tradition continues tonight....cancer has taken far too many children from our communities.... Madeline Guarraia, Marek Tucker, Travis Brennan, Dorian Murray, Brynn Levitsky, Nicholas Tiseo, Marissa Satiro, Harold Alvarez, Gabriella Castillo, Kim Ann Crowley, and John Walker Jr....let us not forget them, tonight we remember them...tonight we play for them...tonight we raise money for Camp Rising Sun which exists to provide a safe, nurturing environment for kids who have faced the diagnosis of cancer so that they may grow and learn from their experiences to become the best they can be....please consider a donation to camp rising sun, the table is located near the entrance of the field house. When the ball is tossed up to begin the game, the spirit of these children will be present as well as the spirit of competition. This is high school sports at its best. Thank you in advance for your generous contribution to Camp Rising Sun!"



Spring 21-22
Newsletter

Waterford Athletics

A Message From Athletic Director Chris Landry

Welcome to Waterford High School Athletics!

We are currently over half way through our winter sports season and I am very happy to say that things are going extremely well. Our student-athletes and spectators have been following the Covid protocols currently in place and it has been great seeing so many spectators at events supporting our athletes. I look forward to the rest of the season and all of our post season competition.

I am hopeful that the spring season will look much like the fall in regard to spectators. The WHS Athletic Department will send updates when additional information becomes available to be sure to register early!

Thank you again, for your continued support of the Waterford athletics program and our student-athletes. Creating a positive environment for all student-athletes is one of the most important things we can do. Stay healthy!

Sincerely,
Chris Landry, Director of Athletics and Student Activities

Spring Sports Registration is Now Open!

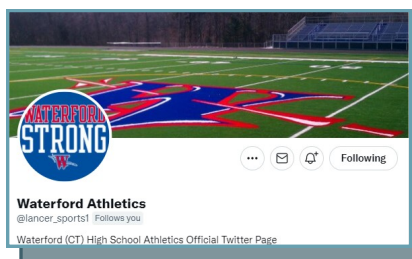
Please remember that all candidates must have proof of a current physical and must register using our online registration program, [FamSIS](#). **Spring sports registration will close on March 15th.** Please be sure to register before the 15th. Please note that certain sports hold tryouts prior to the registration deadline. Coaches will relay tryout information to students in advance.

Baseball pitchers & catchers begin conditioning March 12th, and softball pitchers & catchers on March 14th. First practice date for all other spring sports is March 15th (first contest date, April 2nd).

Registration can be completed by clicking this link:
[FAM SIS SPORTS REGISTRATION LINK](#)

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Congratulations to Waterford High School Student-Athletes, Maddie Burrows and Jake Kozlowski, for committing to a Division 1 program by signing a commitment letter to their chosen institution. Maddie committed to the softball program at Villanova University and Jake committed to the lacrosse program at Colgate University.

Check out the Waterford Athletics [Spring Newsletter](#) for up to date information regarding spring sports, registration information, snapshots of the winter season, as well as articles on the Student Athlete Advisory Board and All-State athletes. Be sure to follow Waterford Athletics [@lancer_sports1](#) or Athletics Secretary [@WendyMorris66](#) on Twitter for athletics information and amazing photos of sporting events and athletes.

Budget Timeline



February 24, 2022
Board of Education
final action on the
Board of Education
Budget for 2022-2023.



March 23, 2022
Board of Education
presents budget to Town
Board of Finance. Public
Hearings on Town Budget
as well as BOE Budget.



March 28, 2022
Town Board of Finance
Final Action on Budget.



May 2, 2022
Board of Education
presents budget to
Representative Town
Meeting. Public
Hearings on Town
Budget as well as BOE
Budget.



May 11, 2022
Representative Town
Meeting Annual Budget
Meeting. Final Action
on Budget

2022-2023 Budget Timeline & Highlights

Helpful Links for Board of Education Information:

CLICK
HERE

- BOE YouTube Channel (Livestream and Recordings of Meetings) - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7hhqBh6eoFpZjYCtoSxsTA>
- Contact the Board (Board member emails) - https://www.waterfordschools.org/board_members/information/board_members
- BoardDocs (Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Schedule) - <https://go.boarddocs.com/ct/waterford/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>

Board Member Recognition

Greg Benoit, board member for five terms over six decades, November 1977 to November 1981, November 1999 - August 2007 and November 2013 to November 2021 was recognized at the November board meeting for his years of dedicated service, his commitment to the board and students of Waterford Public Schools and for providing valuable insight into the policies and decisions for the district.

Also at the November meeting, the board welcomed the newly elected Waterford Board of Education member, **Kathleen Elbaum**, who will serve the term 2021-2025.

Board members **Joy Gaughan**, **Christopher Jones**, and **Deb Roselli Kelly** were also reelected to the Board of Education to serve for the 2021-2025 term.



Waterford Public Schools

Pat Fedor, Board of Education Chairperson

Thomas W. Giard III, Superintendent

15 Rope Ferry Road

Waterford, CT 06385

Phone: 860-444-5852

Fax: 860-444-5870

Contact: Caroline Whittaker - Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

E-mail: cwhittaker@waterfordschools.org

Waterford Public Schools is a community of learners that fosters and supports high aspirations, ensuring every student acquires the skills and knowledge necessary to be a responsible citizen, prepared to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing world.

Stay Connected...

- ♦ **WPS Website** - Visit www.waterfordschools.org for up to date BOE, school and event information.
- ♦ **BOE meetings** are held on the 4th Thursday of each month. For the complete schedule of meetings, go to the [BOE section](#) of the WPS Website.
- ♦ Download the [WPS App](#) to 'stay abreast' of all the happenings at our schools.
- ♦ Follow us on **Twitter**: [@WPS_CT](#) and [@WaterfordSuper](#)