

Dear Winchester Families:

Our students and staff members were thrilled by this weekend's Super Bowl victory for the Patriots! I hope you were able to enjoy the game with family and friends. Sports can teach us all much about the power of hard work, teamwork, and never giving up.

This winter the school committee has been tackling some complex issues, including the FY18 budget, transition to full-day kindergarten, strategic visioning, master plan, and the 17-18 calendar. The school committee next meets tomorrow, February 7th in their meeting room at the former Parkhurst School at 7 p.m. Meetings are also broadcast live on WinCAM.

At a recent meeting the school committee voted the school district calendar for 2017-2018. It is available on our website or you can get a copy here: http://www.winchesterps.org/Calendar%2017-18%20Voted%201_24_17.pdf Please note that, in accordance with a vote taken last year, the calendar has no-school days only on state and federal holidays, professional development days, and the three school vacation weeks. This decision reflects the district's commitment to supporting and respecting all families and our students when they are absent from school either to celebrate a variety of ethnic and religious holidays or for other legitimate reasons.

The school committee also recently voted to support the following Human Rights Statement, which was originally adopted in 2009 by the Board of Selectmen:

Winchester is a community that is grounded in respect for every individual, and therefore protects all residents, employees, business owners, students and visitors in the enjoyment and exercise of human and civil rights. It is Town policy to ensure equal treatment and opportunity to all individuals regardless of race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, ideology, socioeconomic status, health, sexual orientation, age, military status, or disability.

This statement aligns with our district and school core values and re-emphasizes our commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment for all students and families.

The school committee recently voted a budget for FY18 that will support our needs for the 2017-2018 school year and that does not raise athletic or bus fees. For more detail about our proposed budget, please see this link: http://www.winchesterps.org/family_resources/school_budget/index.php

As part of budget and program discussions, the school committee is also considering a transition to full-day kindergarten (FDK) for 2017-2018. Our current program runs for half-days, with the option of a tuition-based three-day program each week. Click here for more information about transition to FDK: <http://www.winchesterps.org/Full-Day%20K%20%20options.pdf>

If you are the parent of a student who will attend kindergarten either this fall or in coming years, we are interested in hearing from you! (If you know of families who do not yet have children enrolled in the district, please feel free to forward this survey link.) Please click here for a brief survey on FDK: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HLFB9R8>

As always, I welcome opportunities to speak with parents and families. Please check out our Facebook page (@winchester.ma.publicschools), follow me on Twitter (@JudithEvans1), or attend a chat. My next superintendent's chat is Tuesday, February 7th from 5:30 to 6:30 in the school committee meeting room at Parkhurst.

With respect,

Judith A. Evans, Ed.D., Superintendent