

TPS SUPERINTENDENT BULLETIN



Where Excellence Is Achieved Through Each Individual's Success



*Equity
over
Equality*



*Stimulate and Support
over
Rank and Sort*



*Transformative Practice
over
Tradition*

Here for you 860-335-2455



UPDATE FOR 2/19/2018

JUMP TO SCHOOL UPDATES:

Please CLICK BELOW to get the **DIGITAL BACKPACK** information for the listed school:

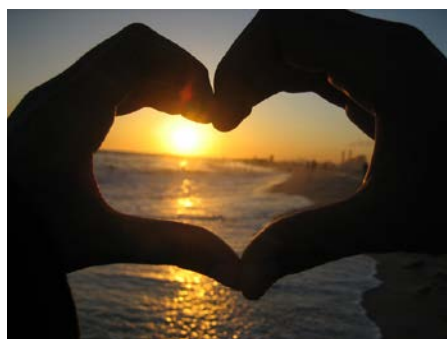
- [BG](#)
- [TIS](#)
- [TMS](#)
- [THS](#)

In light of the horrible and tragic events that took place last week at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, please see the link below. This information may be a useful resource in talking with children about this and other incidents.

[Talking to Children About Violence: Tips For Parents and Teachers](#)

Tolland Public Schools

Response to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy



In an effort to respect students, and the lives of those lost in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy, the Tolland Public Schools are planning developmentally appropriate activities for students at each of our school levels. On March 14th the students and staff of Birch Grove Elementary and Tolland Intermediate School will engage in school-wide discussions of student health and safety. At Tolland Middle School students will participate in a moment of silence at 10:00 AM, and will engage in at least 17 minutes of service activities such as letter and card writing to students at MSDHS, banner creation for MSDHS, and/or letters to representatives expressing their feelings. At the High School there will be an assembly where students will have the opportunity to share their feelings.

School staff will keep an eye out for students who are suffering, and school counselors, psychologists, as well as teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff will make sure that student needs are addressed. Please reach out to school counselors if you feel your son or daughter is experiencing any anxious feelings. The Superintendent's Breakfast for March 5th, 10:00 AM at the Central Office Building (51 Tolland Green) will be dedicated to a discussion of the safety and security protocols for the Tolland Public Schools, as well as the TPS response to the tragedy. Please come with your questions, comments, and conversation! If you are unable to attend, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

School Security in the Tolland Public Schools

In the wake of the Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy it is natural for people to think about safety and security. We are fortunate in Tolland to have many dedicated safety and security professionals focused on the protection of students, staff, and the community. Although I would never expect these words to take away the apprehension that this world has left us with in the last few days; it is my hope some of this information will give readers a better sense of the safeguards that are in place.

For the 2017-2018 year alone each school in the Tolland system has monthly Building Safety and Security meetings. In addition four quarterly District Safety and Security Meetings are held as well. School staff, safety and police officials attend these meetings. There are at least forty-three drills, including lockdown drills, secure building drills, as well as fire and safety drills each year. The school system has video surveillance in all schools, and at entrances to schools. This surveillance is shared with law enforcement and safety officials. The school system also has a specialized security system and locking control mechanisms that help control access in emergencies and potentially dangerous situations.

Out of thirty drills executed thus far this year, the schools have been rated as Exemplary in twenty-five drills (83%) and Effective for the other five. Police and fire officials participate in the drills, and all officials utilize a coordinated radio and communications system that allows for almost instant communications and a fast response. Lockdowns and secure buildings can be initiated through multiple communication methods and people, and communications to police and fire officials is automatic.

The buildings have undergone many security upgrades through a state grant that was received last year. These upgrades reinforced the physical structures, added to the security and phone network, and radio communications capabilities. Administration has been trained in the state required safety and security protocols, and large numbers of staff have been trained to provide restraints where necessary. In addition to this, the school district employs two School Resource Officers (police officers) that have a rotation schedule through all school buildings, and in communication with all school administrators regularly.

The staff of the schools, the police, and fire personnel are prepared to protect our children. The district has a Safety and Security Plan that is updated annually, and filed with the state. Our top priorities are safety and service to the children and families of Tolland. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Willett

Statement from the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CAPSS and CABE)

As leaders and educators in CT, where a heart-breaking and tragic school shooting took place at Sandy Hook in 2012, we feel that we have a special obligation to raise our voices in the aftermath of yet another school shooting, this time in Florida, and say, this is wrong. It is wrong that a disturbed individual should be able to acquire the means to destroy so many lives and impact a community for generations to come. It is wrong that so many disturbed individuals do not receive the treatment that they need. School safety and mental health should not be secondary concerns in any society. The idea that Americans can send their children to school every day and not be totally confident that they will come home again is unconscionable. The fact that our teachers and school staff must worry about their safety is ludicrous.

While we mourn the lives lost and potential of so many young people not realized, we must take action to ensure that no other community experiences such horror.

Please join us in calling upon our leaders in Washington, and across the country, to take action to end what has become an epidemic of senseless violence in our nation, and to support the principles set forth below.

First, we need sensible gun laws at the federal level and across the country that appropriately safeguard public safety. In the wake of Connecticut's own tragedy at Sandy Hook, we took action to ban automatic assault weapons and large-capacity magazines such as the ones used in Florida. However, state lines are porous, and statutes such as Connecticut's only go so far. We must also ensure that mandatory background checks for individuals seeking to purchase guns keep weapons out of the hands of those who pose a danger to our communities

We must invest in the security of our schools. While we don't want to turn our education settings into imposing fortresses, we have a responsibility to our students and staff to ensure that they can feel safe and secure as they devote themselves to the studies that will prepare them for adulthood. Connecticut has led this effort and continues to make funding school security infrastructure a priority despite the state's fiscal situation.

Finally, we need to operate more effectively as a Connecticut community and as a nation to identify individuals at risk of committing acts of violence such as these and ensure they have access to and receive the services and interventions necessary to avert the outcomes that we mourn today. In many cases, these individuals have raised flags prior to acting. We need to fund the mental health and counseling services that allow individuals to address the traumas they may be experiencing and resolve them in a healthy manner and not through acts of unthinkable horror such as Sandy Hook and most recently, Parkland, Florida. "

IMPORTANT information about “Vaping”

Message to all THS Parents and Guardians,

Over the last year, many students have been experimenting with a newer form of smoking called vaping. Because it has become more prevalent in schools and many students are receiving significant consequences for vaping, we wanted to take a moment to provide some wellness information as well as district policy and legal insight into vaping and its consequences.

Connecticut State law prohibits a person under the age of 18 from being in possession of a vape or the oil that goes inside of it. At no time is any person to be in possession of a vape or smoking a vape on school grounds. Students who have been caught in possession of vapes or vaping in school have been subjected to suspensions and arrest because of these infractions.

Over the last couple of months, the School Resource Officers have tested much of the oil that has been found in the vapes or in the containers of vape oil. There have been multiple instances where these oils test positive for tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, the addictive property of marijuana. While THC is what is being tested for specifically, any number of liquids or additives can be put into vape oil, the bottles resealed, and the consumer never knowing the difference.

While the first offenses in school have been handled without the assistance of law enforcement officials, the presence of THC concerns us and must be forwarded on to the School Resource Officer moving forward. This will result in police action whether the student is aware of the presence of THC or not.

As it took many years for researchers to identify the dangers of smoking cigarettes, the fullness of the dangers of vaping has yet to be determined. However, we encourage you to review the links below and discuss the known dangers of vaping now. Please review with your child the course of action that the school will be taking to address vaping moving forward.

When we share our concerns with parents about specific instances, many respond with a sense of feeling behind in all of the new things that kids are doing. To help keep you informed, many pictures of different styles of vapes and vape oils have been provided below. Vapes come in many different shapes and sizes. They do have a heating component and usually require a charger of some sort. The oils are often fruity smelling and when vaped, the smell can be sensed in the air. Students have been purchasing vapes and their oils over the internet and from friends, and they are frequently shared.

Tolland High School works hard to ensure a safe learning environment for all students. We hope that this communication helps to fuel a conversation that will reduce or eliminate the instances of vaping on school grounds and for our teenagers entirely. As always, we thank you for your support.

Resources on Vaping:

* <https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/concerns-explode-over-new-health-risks-vaping>

* https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm



Where Excellence is Achieved Through Each Individual's Success

2018- 2019 Incoming Kindergarten

Birch Grove Primary School at 247 Rhodes Road in Tolland, CT, will host the 2018-2019 Kindergarten Parent Meeting on March 8, 2018 at 7:00 pm in the Birch Grove Primary School gymnasium. This informational meeting is for parents of students entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2018. Any questions regarding the meeting you may call 860-870-6750. If you are unable to attend due to childcare constraints, please contact the superintendent's office at 860-870-6850 extension 1 and we will attempt to assist.

We are excited to announce a new online format for Kindergarten registration. At the parent meeting, you will be provided with step by step instructions to complete the online registration. If you find that you need assistance or have questions with the online process, we will be available at the Board of Education Office, located at 51 Tolland Green, between the hours of 10:00 am - 7:00 pm Wednesday March 21, 2018.

The New TPS ICON



Where Excellence Is Achieved Through Each Individual's Success

As the education system and the State of Connecticut have moved into the new century, educational practices have changed to meet the needs of the 21st century learner. In keeping up with those changes, and rebranding Tolland for the future, a new icon was created to replace the more than decade old predecessor. The school motto, shown with the icon (Where Excellence Is Achieved Through Each Individual's Success) represents Tolland's ongoing commitment to excellence. The districts core values of providing individualized attention to a student's needs, supporting a student and their family, and providing a transformational experience leading to continual growth are all crucial aspects of 21st century education in the literature, and espoused by the State of Connecticut (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2767&q=336508>).

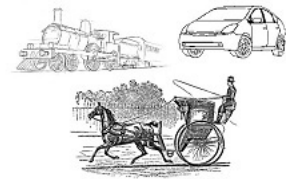
As Tolland competes with magnets and charters, and seeks to draw more students to its own programs and pathways of study, this new logo will align with those endeavors as well as relevant and contemporary philosophy, research, and terminology. For an overview of 21st century educational philosophy, research, and practice please see the information below:



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Equity over Equality

Educational professionals that practice mastery learning recognize that different students have different needs. This necessitates providing each learner with what is uniquely required for that person's success. While equality implies *sameness*, equity implies *fairness*. Equity is about making sure people get access to the same *opportunity*. Advantage, opportunity, and privilege associated with socioeconomic, racial, cultural, or historical factors can impact learning. It is the mission of all educators to do our best to provide each learner with opportunities to succeed that transcend disadvantage.

Stimulate and Support over Rank and Sort

Educational professionals that practice mastery learning recognize that students do not come to school having experienced the same level of preparation and opportunity. As a result institutional *ranking and sorting* can inadvertently stigmatize, de-motivate, and perpetuate the trajectory the initial limitations on opportunity created. Educators try to help students overcome this, and institutions have to be structured so student success is less reliant on the individual heroics of some educators, and more on *systematic* and consistent *processes and practices* of the institution that provide the greatest opportunities for restorative justice, productive habits, and academic success.

Standardized assessments beyond those used as universal screens (assessments given to all learners for the purpose of providing specialized assistance), or those that can be used to impact instruction (progress monitoring), should be carefully evaluated for their usefulness in the process of educating children. The objective should always be to benefit the child, and to do no harm. For instance, if poverty correlates significantly with lower state standardized test performance, how many times is it necessary to report to a disadvantaged child and family that they are performing poorly before institutional processes are put in place to address the challenge? In other words, some standardized tests tell us what we already know – and in the process jeopardizes the confidence and self-concept of the learner. Instead, assessment focused on *progress monitoring* over one-shot standardized assessments, provide the most useful and actionable information for improving the performance of all students.

Transformative Practice over Tradition

Educational professionals that practice mastery learning question current assessment traditions, and seek to transform teaching and assessment with a focus on practices that have the greatest chance of increasing student agency, ownership, reflection, and motivation of students towards their own learning and development. Mastery learning is recognized as a crucial aspect of SRBI (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=322020>) supports, and as such practitioners take into consideration developmental level and cognitive considerations of students when delivering instruction, remediation, and methods of encouraging habit change. It is the process of doing things because they work for students, not simply continuing “traditional” practices because it is what has always been done.

Areas of *emphasis* for Tolland

1. All forms of assessment are standards-based and criterion-referenced, and success is defined by the achievement of expected standards, not relative measures of performance or student-to-student comparisons.
2. Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process, and formative-assessment results are used to inform instructional adjustments, teaching practices, and academic support.
3. Summative assessments evaluate learning achievement, and summative assessments results record a student’s level of mastery at a specific point in time.

4. Academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance and class participation, which are also monitored and reported.
5. Academic grades communicate learning progress and achievement to students and families, and grades are used to facilitate and improve the learning process.
6. Students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected standards.

Resources

- [District Mastery Learning Plan](#)

Some Readings

- Guskey, Thomas: *On Your Mark - Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting*
- Dueck, Myron: *Grading Smarter, Not Harder - Assessment Strategies that Motivate Kids and Help Them Learn*
- Wormelli, Richard: *Fair Isn't Always Equal - Assessing and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*

Links

- [Center for Collaborative Education](#)
 - [The Great Schools Partnership](#)
 - [State of Connecticut Resources - Mastery Learning](#)
 - [League of Innovative Schools](#)
-



The Capitol Region Education Council (or "CREC") one of our area RESC's (Regional Educational Service Center) is working with Tolland on a District Scheduling Committee. The committee includes parents, teachers, and administrators and has organized conversations with students. The main objectives are to maximize student opportunity, maintain beneficial educational structures and programs, leverage new state credit and course requirements and grants, and prepare for new potential fiscal considerations. Please note, this committee is not tasked to replace or eliminate block scheduling. Working with CREC gives us an opportunity to have an outside organization, familiar with many other school district schedules and operations, interact with our parents, students, teachers, and administrators to make recommendations to us (my plan is at a BOE meeting in public session). I am actually not a regular part of the committee. This is by design, I'd rather have the input of the staff, parent/guardians, and students guide the process with the direction of CREC, who has a breadth and depth of experience in this area.

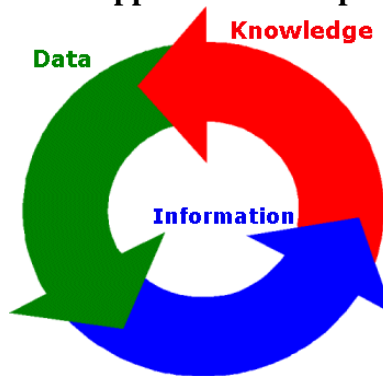
As part of the process - CREC has asked that the **Tolland High School parents/guardians** are given this survey. Please complete the survey by March 5th, 2018. It is important that they have your input.

Thank you!

Tolland High School Parent: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TOLLANDPARENT>

- Superintendent Willett

POWERSCHOOL UNIFIED CLASSROOM
Expanding information opportunities for parents and students!



Dear Parents and Students,

On February 9th, we upgraded the parent and student portal access to the new Unified Classroom. If you access your student's information with the mobile app, there are NO changes. If you use a desktop/laptop, then you will need to create your new Unified Classroom account. (If you have never created an account, please contact us, and we will be happy to help you. (860-870-6818 x10804)

Parents

If you already have an account follow the steps below.

<https://tollandschools.powerschool.com/public/home.html>

1. Click on Parent Sign In
2. Create PowerSchool ID
3. Enter your current login information
4. Next
5. Continue
6. Enter your email (which will now be your username)
7. Create a password
8. Click create

Below is a quick video that demonstrates how to set up your account/move to the new Unified Classroom dashboard. Watch Part 2 of the video if you already have a PowerSchool account.

<https://vimeo.com/227826452/6c02bab055>

Students

<https://tollandschools.powerschool.com/public/home.html>

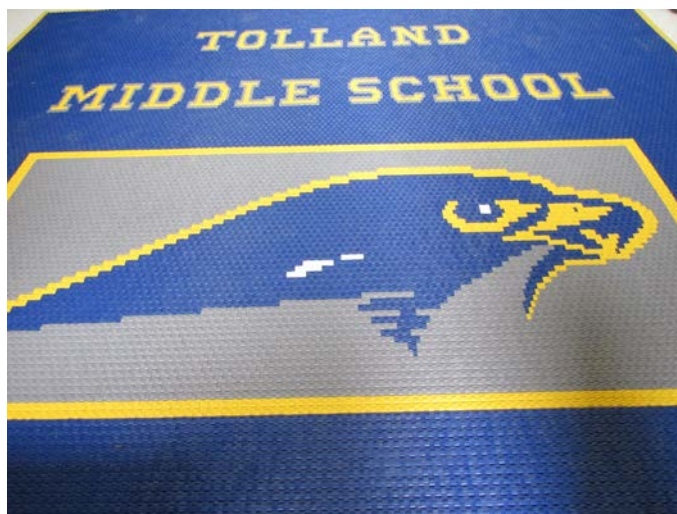
1. Click student sign in
2. Click 'Forgot password' option, enter in your school email (ex. JohnDoe54321@tolland.k12.ct.us) and send request. Go to your school email – there will be a link to click in the email that will send you to a reset password page.

Please feel free to contact the Educational Technology office with any log in issues or questions.
(860) 870-6818 x10804

Thank you!

TMS extends its thanks to our Student Council

TMS extends its thanks to our Student Council who purchased a new rug for our front entrance lobby. Funds have been raised over the past few years by sponsoring dances, selling Valentine's Day flowers, and other activities



Extra Help with Reading-Tolland Public Library

The library has an exciting opportunity for your child to receive extra help with their reading skills. A Tolland library patron would like to fund a reading development club for elementary school students. It would be held in the library for ninety minutes on Saturdays, starting on February 24 and would be administered by a teacher. The club would be held until the end of the school year, there would be a short break and then continue for six weeks in the summer. There would be two sessions each Saturday, the first being for 6 first graders from 10:30 until noon and then a second session for 6 second graders running from 12:30 until 2. Each ninety minute session would include 30 minutes of reading, 30 minutes of games and snacks, and then another 30 minutes of reading. Prizes would be awarded for attendance and reading improvement. Parent involvement is required. The teacher would be selecting materials, working on curriculum, monitoring progress of the students and providing guidance for each parent/child team but parents would be spending the session reading with their children. If you are interested please contact Barbara Pettijohn, Director of Library Services either by email bpettijohn@tolland.org or by phone 860-871-3622. Selection will be done by first come, first served.

Job Opening:

EVENTS COORDINATOR

We are seeking someone who is knowledgeable and experienced using audiovisual equipment such as projectors and sound systems and that has a flexible schedule to coordinate events on school property as needed. Events can be days, nights and weekends.

For more information and to apply visit our website at
www.tolland.k12.ct.us
District Offices/Human Resources/Employment Opportunities

BUDGET INFO ON THE WEB:



http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/board_of_education/budget

The Board of Education has adopted a .78% budget increase for the 2018-2019 year. This budget will now be passed on to the Town Manager for consideration.

HOW TO CONTACT THE SUPERINTENDENT:



Please take a look at the link below for some of the best ways to get an answer, meeting, or something else:

http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/DistrictOffices/superintendent_s_corner/superintendent_wille_tts_page/contactme/



2017- 2018 SCHOOL YEAR ATHLETIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

4:00 pm at Tolland High School

March 6, 2018
June 5, 2018



For parents and community members interested in the Tolland Public School K-5 assessment standards, please see the: [Standards-Based Assessment Information Guide](#)

COMMUNITY LEARNING WORKSHOPS

Community Workshops	Information
<p>May 2, 2018 7:30 PM Tolland Public Library</p>	<div data-bbox="781 1524 1143 1730" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Mastery Learning Model</p> </div> <p>Mastery Learning Workshop Come find out what it is about, and how ML is being planned for Tolland.</p>

2017 – 2018

BREAKFAST WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

10:00 AM AT THE TOLLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

51 Tolland Green, Tolland, CT



March 5, 2018

April 2, 2018

May 7, 2018

June 4, 2018

VOLUNTEERING



We would love to have you come and volunteer at the Tolland Public Schools!

Thank you for all you do for the Tolland Public Schools. Please contact the Central Office with any questions. For those already volunteering, and those new to the game, the BOE will now do background checks every three school years. If you will be volunteering for the first time in the upcoming school year, please complete the [online form under Quick Links](#). After you have submitted your application, please call 860-870-6850 extension 1 to provide your social security number. You can check with the school secretaries to verify your status.

YOUR TOLLAND SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTION:

CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK:



www.facebook.com/tollandpublicschools

FOLLOW SUPERINTENDENT WILLETT ON TWITTER:



Search for:

[TPS_Sup_Willett](#)

Or

[Superint. Willett](#)

LINKS AND OTHER ARTICLES OF INTEREST

[News from Brown University](#)

[CT Autism Walk](#)