

Welcome, everyone, to the first CPC meeting of the 2023-2024 school year! I hope you all had relaxing and wonderful summer with friends and family. I know the first day of school is sometimes long awaited by the parents, not so much the kids, but for me, I was really hoping summer would last just a little longer and that first day would wait another few weeks as it was my very last first day of school. Nineteen years I have been sending one or all my kids off to school and I don't know which one was the hardest, my first one back in 2004 or this one. But, nonetheless, it was a great one for the seniors with the new Senior Sunrise and breakfast. So, thank you to Mr. Danbusky and team for making that happen.

While many of us were enjoying the summer, the administration was busy preparing for the new school year. We have some notable new additions to our district family and would like to give a warm welcome to our new director of STEM, Mr. Brian Taylor, a new High School AP, Ms. Carissa Hajdasz, and our new director of Special Education Ms. Nicole Schimpf along with a number of new teachers that were added to support the smaller class sizes. We welcome them all and look forward to learning more about their visions for our district.

While Ms. Gierasch and her team were in planning mode over the summer, they received some amazing news that is worthy of many a kudos! If you were able to attend the September BOE meeting, you heard Mr. Danbusky give an overview of last school years AP and Regents scores...which showed great improvement! And if you haven't heard already, we were named the top High School in Suffolk County and our over all placement in the US News and World Report rankings climbed by 30 places! Thank you to everyone involved for this tremendous news! Ms. Gierasch, Ms. LaGattuta, Ms. Hech, and Mr. Danbusky, many thanks to you and your teams for all you have done over the last two years that have led to this! And I would be amiss if I did not mention the students' and their hard work and dedication so congratulations all on your success.

If you have not had the chance, please go onto the website to take a look at the new Scope and Sequence Guides for grades 9-12. This is a project that was two years in the making led by Ms. LaGattuta in collaboration with teachers our directors that greatly outline what our students are learning up at the High School. At the last board meeting when Ms. LaGattuta presented them, she said that these are living documents and that they, as with the curriculum guides, may be updated throughout the year. One question that came up during the presentation from the Board was in regard to book lists and although the guides

do not have booklists on them at this time, it was suggested a parent could refer to the class syllabus or reach out to the teacher. So, thank you to Ms. LaGattuta and all the teachers and directors that contributed to this amazing resource. Great strides have been taken by this administration to have more information available to the parents so please take advantage of it. We are very lucky to have a strong and communicative administrative team that not only responds to community requests and concerns but does so in a manner that benefits our students and raise our scores so thank you again to you all.

The new STEAM wing was officially opened yesterday. Such an exciting day for our community! This has been a long time coming since the bond vote back in 2019 so it was wonderful to see it come fully to fruition. Please check social media and the website for photos of the event.

Also, if you were unable to attend the September 18th BOE presentation on the Child Victims Act cases, it is up on the website. In short, three claims from over 40 years ago were filed in early 2021 and were settled between April and August of 2023 for a total of \$14.3 million dollars, \$300,000 has already been paid to one victim. The presentation outlined payment options for the remaining amount due. In order to help make the payment, one option is to liquidate 5 million of the capital reserve fund which is currently around 7.6 million dollars which would need a public vote that is on November 16th. This 5 million would help avoid interest costs that would be accrued by a bond, which is needed to comply with the settlement and is needed to comply with the law. I do not want to get too much into the weeds as Ms. Gierasch and Ms. Costa are both here and can answer questions. But both the presentation and video recording are both on the website.

We have Mr. Bongino joining us today to talk about our athletic program, health curriculum, the Remembrance Bowl, next month's homecoming and the new practice schedule at the high school, which is going to have tremendous impact on our students moving forward so thank you Mr. Bongino and Mr. Danbusky for working together to bring this about.

Finally, if you haven't already noticed, we have a couple of more seats at the dais this year. Our school district is fortunate to have many wonderful and dedicated parent groups that provide invaluable support to our students, teachers, and families. The Central Parent Council brings together parent leaders from across all

of these groups to foster collaboration and amplify the impact we can have together. While each parent group serves an important purpose, SEPTO fills a particularly critical need - helping parents of children with special needs navigate the complex world of special education and advocacy. The experiences and perspective of these parents is unique and essential. By bringing SEPTO to the dais, we hope to facilitate more open communication and partnership between all of our parent groups. Our school community is stronger when we recognize our common mission to support all students, while also acknowledging the specific needs and roles of each group.

So, thank you everyone and welcome!