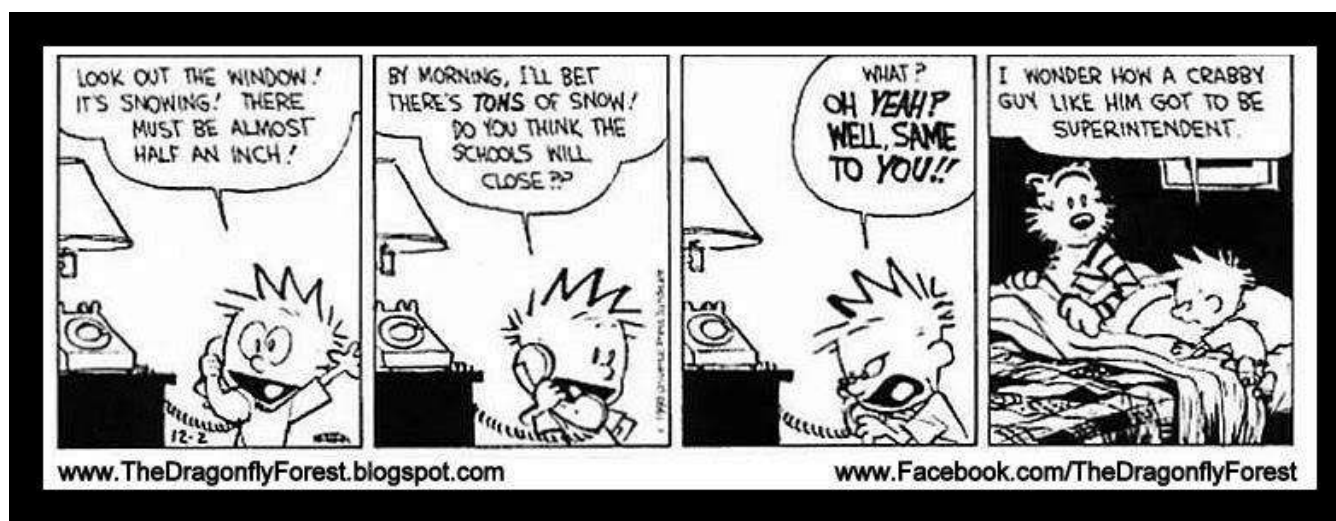


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UPDATE FOR 1/23/15

JUMP TO SCHOOL UPDATES:

[Birch Grove](#)

[TIS](#)

[TMS](#)

[THS](#)

SUPERINTENDENT' NOTES FOR THE WEEK

The Breakfast with the Superintendent held this week was wonderful. I deeply appreciate the input of all who attended, and the great discussions. These breakfasts are great opportunity to come together to ask questions, get answers, and share. Please come again! The Breakfast with the Superintendent is held monthly at the Central Office – 51 Tolland Green. The next one will be February 18th 9:00 – 10:00 AM, childcare provided (please call ahead). I look forward to seeing you there.

With two budget workshops this past week, and more budget sessions next week – we are definitely in the thick of *budget season*. Despite the budget work and all that it entails I was able to get back out to the schools this week visiting TIS and THS during their lunch waves. The high school students told me about their finals, and new classes – and the TIS kids were eager to express their thoughts about winter, recess, and the playground. As always, it was wonderful to sit, talk, and hear from them.

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I also dropped in on a planning meeting for the new Juvenile Review Board, or JRB. This is a great program that is being established through a grant. The purpose of the JRB is to provide a community based mechanism for diverting appropriate juvenile cases from the Juvenile Court system. The board has members from Youth and Family Services, Police Services, the School System, the Fire Marshal's office, and the Juvenile Probation office of Rockville Juvenile Court. Kudos to Nancy Dunn, Margot Martello, Dominique Fox, Steve Corradi, and other for making it happen!

Last but not least I was able to drop into a Writers Workshop training session. The CREC instructor, and school staff, did a fantastic job. I observed a lot of hard work, dedication, and progress. As we move forward, more and more quality training will be available to all. I am grateful to Carolyn Tyl, the Coordinators, and the Principals for helping make that happen.

CHECK IT OUT

- Check out the Superintendent's Page, with presentations and relevant information:
http://www.tolland.k12.ct.us/DistrictOffices/superintendent/superintendent_willett_s_page/
- Also: Please check out the attachment: *Dresses for a Cause*

COMING UP:

<u>1/28/15</u>	<u>Board of Education Budget Review Session</u>	<u>Superintendent/Business Manager</u>
<u>1/28/15</u>	<u>Presentation to BOE of Superintendent's proposed</u>	<u>Superintendent/Business Manager</u>
	<u>Fiscal Year 2015 – 2016 Budget to Board of Education</u>	
	<u>Board of Education Budget Review Session</u>	
<u>1/29/15</u>	<u>Board of Education Budget Review Session</u>	<u>Superintendent/Business Manager</u>
<u>2/04/15</u>	<u>Board of Education Budget Review Session</u>	<u>Superintendent/Business Manager</u>
<u>2/11/15</u>	<u>Regular BOE meeting</u>	<u>BOE</u>
	<u>Adoption of Board of Education Budget</u>	
<u>2/17/15</u>	<u>Superintendent submits Board of Education</u>	<u>Superintendent</u>
	<u>Budget to Town Manager</u>	
	<u>(by February 21, per Town Charter)</u>	
<u>3/3/15</u>	<u>Manager convenes joint meeting between</u>	<u>Town/BOE</u>
	<u>Council and Board of Education</u>	
	<u>(by April 11 per Charter requirement)</u>	
	<u>Council Room – 7:00 p.m.</u>	

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5/5/15

Budget Referendum

Tow

INFO TO KNOW:



Congrats again to Anthea Grotton Teacher of the Year 2014-2015!

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- **Family dinners may help kids cope with cyberbullying.** finds research led by McGill University scientists. The study examined data collected from 18,834 students ages 12 to 18 from 49 Wisconsin schools on their experiences with cyberbullying. Nearly 19 percent of the students reported that they had been bullied online in the previous year, and cyberbullying was associated with anxiety, depression, suicide ideation, vandalism and substance use problems. However, children who more regularly had dinner with their families had a lower rate of mental health and substance use problems associated with being bullied online (JAMA Pediatrics, online Sept. 1).
- **How we react to violence may depend on our individual brain circuitry,** according to a study led by scientists at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. Researchers split 54 men into two groups — one had more aggressive traits and the other had less aggressive traits. The researchers scanned the participants' brains as they watched violent scenes on the first day; emotional, non-violent scenes on the second day; and nothing on the third day. Participants also had their blood pressure taken every five minutes during sessions. Investigators compared the two groups and found that while watching violent scenes, the aggressive group had less brain activity in the orbitofrontal cortex, a brain region associated with emotion-related decision-making and self-control. The aggressive participants also described feeling more inspired and determined and less upset or nervous than non-aggressive

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participants when watching violent media, but not emotional, non-violent media. In line with these responses, aggressive participants' blood pressure went down over time when they saw violence, while the non-aggressive participants experienced a rise in blood pressure ([PLOS One](#), Sept. 10).

- **A combination of drug therapy and parent education appears to help reduce aggressive and serious behavioral problems in children**, according to research led by researchers at Stony Brook University School of Medicine. The study involved 168 children ages 6 to 12 who had been diagnosed with ADHD and disruptive behavior disorder and who displayed significant physical aggression. Scientists divided the children into two groups. In the "basic" group, children received the stimulant drug OROS methylphenidate and their parents were trained in behavior management procedures for nine weeks. In the "augmented" group, both children and parents received the "basic" treatment, and the children also took the drug risperidone. Researchers found that children in the augmented group showed less anger, irritability and aggression, according to parents ([Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#), September).
- **Shared pain brings people together**, suggests a study by scientists at the University of New South Wales in Australia. In one experiment, researchers asked 54 students to submerge their hands in a bucket of water, locate a metal ball and place it in an underwater container. For one group, the water was painfully cold, while for the other the water was room temperature. The students were also asked to perform an upright wall squat (a sometimes painful exercise) or to balance on one leg, with the option of switching legs to avoid fatigue (a less painful exercise). Participants then rated statements designed to measure how they felt about their group. The researchers found that those who performed the painful tasks reported a greater degree of bonding than did those who performed the less painful versions ([Psychological Science](#), online Sept. 5).
- **Children show an intuitive understanding of probability and other math concepts as early as age 2**, suggests research led by University of Washington scientists. Thirty-two 2-year-old children watched as researchers played a game in which they placed a wooden block onto a box located near a marble-dispensing machine. One block activated the machine two-thirds of the time, while another different colored and shaped block triggered the machine only one-third of the time. After the children watched 12 run-throughs using the different blocks, researchers had the children play the game themselves, and most picked the block with the greater success rate over the other block ([Developmental Science](#), online July 16).
- **Perfectionism is a bigger risk factor in suicide than many realize, especially those that occur without warning**, according to a research review led by a York University psychologist. The researchers summarized data showing that perfectionists are at greater risk due to co-occurring risk factors, such as hopelessness. Socially prescribed perfectionism is identified as a consistent predictor of suicidal tendencies. The authors conclude that people under great pressure whose work requires precision — such as physicians, lawyers, architects and those in leadership roles — have elevated risk for perfectionism-related suicide. The authors say there is a need to design preventive programs tailored for key personality features, such as perfectionism, to enhance people's resilience ([Review of General Psychology](#), September).
- **Teenage girls can be taught to tell an adult if they are worried about a peer's eating or weight**, according to a study led by a psychologist at Laurel School's Center for Research on Girls in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Immediately before a class presentation on the early signs of eating disorders and the importance of early intervention, researchers surveyed 116 eighth-grade and ninth-grade girls about whether they would tell an adult if they were worried about a friend's eating or weight. Shortly after the presentation and again four months later, the girls demonstrated an increased willingness to alert an adult to the signs of an eating disorder in a peer ([Eating Disorders](#), online Aug. 4).
- **Coping skills help women overcome the distress of unwanted cat calls, demeaning looks and sexual advances**, finds research conducted at the University of Tennessee. Psychologists surveyed 270 undergraduate women about their ability to cope with sexually oppressive experiences. They found that young women experience psychological

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distress when they are being sexually objectified and that women with low resilience are especially vulnerable. They tend to internalize these behaviors, reasoning that their own inferiority is to blame for these bad experiences. The study also showed that women high in resilience seem to cope and adapt better to these negative sexual experiences, possibly because they can manage stress better than those low in resilience ([Sex Roles](#), August).

Making Later High-School Start Times Work

“Anyone who’s ever tried to rouse a high-school student from bed to catch that 6:55 a.m. bus to arrive at school on time knows how tenaciously that teen will cling to the bedcovers,” says Merri Rosenberg in this *School Administrator* article. “Pity the teacher who has to instill complicated algebraic concepts at 7:30 in the morning or discuss the subtler points of the American Revolution during that groggy first-period class.” Influenced by an ongoing stream of research, the American Academy of Pediatrics said in August 2014 that school shouldn’t start earlier than 8:30 for adolescents. And indeed, about 1,000 of the nation’s 18,000 high schools have moved their start times forward or are planning to do so, including the 187,000-student Fairfax County district in Virginia.

What exactly does the research tell us? In a sidebar article, Kyla Wahlstrom, director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota/ Minneapolis, says the most important finding is the “sleep phase shift” that takes place during adolescence, making it difficult for teens to fall asleep before 11:00 (this is aside from their fascination with their peers and electronics). Despite a strong body of research pointing to the wisdom of later school start-times, the issue has been contentious in many districts, with concerns about bus schedules, increased costs, after-school athletics, after-school jobs, and teens having less time to care for younger siblings after school. Some districts have tried to win over opponents by making incremental changes in start times – for example, moving from 7:30 to 7:50, or phasing in later times over several years. But Wahlstrom has found that “every change, no matter how small in scale or limited in the amount of the time shift, caused the same amount of community disruption.” Better to go for broke, she says.

“The districts making the most significant moves to later high-school start times tend to be the places that carefully and completely gathered and discussed all the factual information now available,” reports Wahlstrom. “The medical research about the development of the teen brain and the role of sleep in academic learning, healthy choices, and emotional well-being is so strong that it is difficult to ignore those facts... Individuals still skeptical are generally those who are unaware of the strength of research or those who choose not to believe the facts.” Wahlstrom says research has shown that later dismissal times (say 3:30) have had no negative impact on the level of participation in sports and extracurricular activities. Some coaches, after initially objecting to later times, have found that students are more mentally alert with more sleep. Nor do most teens stay up later because they don’t have to get up so early in the morning.

From districts that have made a successful shift to later secondary-school hours, here are some problem-solving suggestions:

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- To address transportation challenges, some districts have flipped secondary and elementary bus tiers, resulting in little or no budgetary impact. This does necessitate additional parental supervision of younger students waiting for buses in the dark during the winter months.
- For some parents, earlier elementary start times mean they can drop kids at school on the way to work rather than first taking them to day care.
- Some districts have increased the number of buses, which is costly.
- Another approach is creatively rethinking bus routes (hub-and-spoke or combining multiple ages and schools on the same bus) and coordinating with the city transit system.
- To accommodate parent work schedules, some districts have added or expanded after-school programs and partnered with day-care providers.

Rosenberg goes on to profile three districts that have successfully shifted secondary-school start times forward:

• *Edina, Minnesota* – Nineteen years ago, Edina became the first U.S. district to move its secondary-school hours. After a six-month study of research and ramifications (the strongest pushback came from athletic coaches and local employers who had students working part-time right after school), the district changed the middle school opening time to 7:50 and high school to 8:30. When there are out-of-town games with districts with earlier dismissal times, teachers allow student athletes to leave early. “The kids were on board right away,” says then-superintendent Kenneth Dragseth, and parents saw the benefit of having older students around the house to watch younger children in the morning. The district has maintained the later hours ever since and is proud of having made a decision based on what was best for student learning.

• *Columbia, Missouri* – The opening of a new high school in this spread-out 18,000-student district prompted a discussion of start times in 2012-13. A committee consisting of the school-board president, deputy superintendent for transportation, principals, teachers, and parents made its recommendations and the board decided on an 8:50 opening time for the high school and earlier hours for younger students, with some having bus pick-up times as early as 6:30. Because of extensive outreach and communication with parents, resistance has eased, and student attendance K-12 has increased from 85 to 90 percent among all demographics.

• *Jackson, Wyoming* – The district explored later hours in 2006-7 but encountered such strong resistance that the idea was tabled. But chronic student tardiness and parent complaints about the struggle to get kids in gear in the morning resurfaced the issue. “We have learned that when you enact change, you need to have a powerful ‘why’ first,” says Teton County Superintendent Pamela Shea. “It has to be very purposeful and address a need. You have to engage communities. People want to know and be involved.” The district ended up moving the high-school kick-off to 8:55, one of the latest in the country, mostly to ensure that kindergarten students weren’t waiting for buses too early. The initial cost was \$250,000, including new buses and drivers and revamping bus routes. The result: 220 fewer tardy students and a 70

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percent reduction in car accidents involving teens. In three years, the district will review the results and decide if changes are needed.

“Clearing the Snooze Hurdles” by Merri Rosenberg and “Creative Solutions for the ‘Sleep Phase Shift’” by Kyla Wahlstrom in *School Administrator*, January 2015 (Vol. 72, #1, p. 14-20), www.aasa.org; Rosenberg and Wahlstrom can be reached at merri.rosenberg@gmail.com and wahls001@umn.edu.

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Tolland High School Weekly Bulletin

Tolland High School Musicians Participate in Eastern Region Music Festival

Twenty-six members of the Tolland High School Music Department participated in the CMEA Eastern Region High School Music Festival which took place at Jorgensen Auditorium at the University of Connecticut on January 9 and 10. Students were selected through an audition process which took place on November 22 at Plainfield High School, which included students from 42 high schools in eastern Connecticut. Representing Tolland High School in the concert were Camryn Florence, Michael Marandino, Sean Mathieu, and Matthew Vatteroni (band); Alicia Chiang and Leonard Chiang, (orchestra); Eric Gottier (jazz band); Ryan Boutot, Annabella DeFaria, Katherine Dos Santos, Shannon Gorsky, Andrew Harger, Annchi Li, Jenny Lindquist, Charles Perosino, Greta Schmitz, Amanda Steinhilber, Travis Tran, Alexandra Trifan, Aaron Wilson, and Natalie Wyse (mixed chorus); and Olivia Cusson, Sarah Gannon, Gabrielle Heilman, Natalie Hurlbut, and Felicity Roche (treble chorus). These students now have the opportunity to audition for the All-State Music Festival on February 7, which will take place April 30-May 2 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 28 - Half-Day Session - Teacher In-service

January 28 - Orientation and Course Fair for 8th Graders - 6:30 p.m. THS Auditorium

January 29 - Meet & Greet with Superintendent Willet - THS Café - 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

February 2 – Community Advisory Council 7:30 a.m. THS Conference Room

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The next Community Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 2nd at 7:30 a.m. in the THS main office conference room. If you are interested in attending, please email Dominique Fox at dfox@tolland.k12.ct.us.

Tolland High School is fortunate to have a dedicated and enthusiastic group of parents and local community members who support our school and many of the programs within it. In light of that, we are committed to increasing parent and community engagement in our school. A few years ago, a Community Advisory Council was established as a means to encourage parents and community members to become active partners in educating our children. Through this council, both groups of stakeholders are able to maintain an organized voice at Tolland High School, become involved in the decision making processes and procedures, where appropriate, voice their concerns, communicate their needs, and ask questions. To date, it has provided a forum for parents to discuss school-related issues such as leveling, grade weighting, teen drug and alcohol use, and safety concerns, among others.

BOOSTER CLUB

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The next meeting is scheduled for February 9th at 7:00 p.m. in the THS main office conference room.

Please join us to learn about what we do and how you can help in raising funds for our students at THS.

We are looking for a treasurer and a new president for next year.

HELP WANTED

Food & Nutrition Services is looking for substitute workers. Work only while your student is in school. Apply now for positions for the school year. Opportunities to move into permanent, part-time positions are available. Please contact Mary Layman at 860-870-6853 or m Layman@tolland.k12.ct.us.
