

## **Bridgewater & Pomfret Joint District School May 2015 update**

Welcome to spring. A time to plant our gardens, get out the bikes, welcome back the summer birds, watch out for bears, and to admire all the growth that is sprouting around us.

The joint board has been very busy since Town Meeting Day working on many issues in order to get ready for the opening of the new school in August.

Speaking of the “New School”, it’s time to come up with a new name; we’re getting tired of “Bridgewater-Pomfret Joint School District School”! Please submit your entries (no limits on how many you can enter) to [ggreene@wcsu.net](mailto:ggreene@wcsu.net) or drop them off at your school office. We will be asking kids to submit entries to their teachers starting later this week. The deadline for entries is June 1st.

We are very pleased to announce that Lisa Sjostrom has been hired to act as the new school’s full time Principal. She comes to us from a large middle school in Chatham, Massachusetts, and we are excited to welcome her to lead us as we grow.

The single most important piece of any school is the people that do the important work of teaching our children. The Joint Board spent a significant amount of time trying to work through the challenging task of selecting the staff for the school. It was a difficult and emotional process; we used input from the Superintendent, the Administrators, and the Board members when making these incredibly difficult choices. Every one of us wishes our communities were not facing the challenges that made the joint district our best option at this time, however the Board and Superintendent had to make tough decisions that they felt were in the best interest of the students and families.

The staff was offered contracts in mid-April, and had until Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> to accept and return these contracts. At the next Board meeting (Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM at the WCSU office) the Board will review the contracts and will announce the staff after that meeting.

The grade level configuration has not been finalized. The board feels strongly that the Principal and Staff need to discuss the options together and come up with a plan that is in the best interest of the students. Principal Lisa Sjostrom, WCSU Superintendent Alice Worth, and the Teaching staff will be working on the structure over the next month.

One part of a vibrant and thriving school community is an active and involved Parent-Teacher Organization. There are many projects and events that are simply not possible without the PTO’s work. As there is not presently a Bridgewater PTO, the Pomfret PTO is in process of transitioning to a Joint-School PTO. Information on how to get involved will be coming to all school families very soon, please consider getting involved in this crucial piece of the puzzle in building an outstanding school.

The present staff is working together on the materials that will transition from Bridgewater to Pomfret for next school year, and are doing lots of spring-cleaning in preparation for moving items after the school year. We will be looking for volunteers to help with the move.

We are very excited about building a Food program that includes Farm to Table concepts, teaching students how to develop nutritious eating habits, and providing breakfast and lunch options for the students.

This has proven to be a more challenging project than originally budgeted for, mostly related to state mandated equipment and renovations to the existing kitchen. Seth Shaw and Bob Coates have worked tirelessly on getting this project moving in the right direction. We have applied for State and Private grants to assist with the needed funds and hope to have the kitchen ready to serve our kids at the beginning of the school year.

This is an exciting and important time in the future of education for our towns, please get in touch with your board members with any questions, suggestions and feedback you have.

Thank you for your support,

Bridgewater-Pomfret Joint School Board

Bob Coates  
Jody Eaton  
Jennifer Gieseke  
Greg Greene  
Seth Shaw  
Justin Shipman