

Miller Place Union Free School District

7 Memorial Drive, Miller Place, New York 11764-2036

Telephone: (631) 474-2700 Fax: (631) 474-0686

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Marianne F. Cartisano

Deputy Superintendent

Seth A. Lipshie

Assistant Superintendent

Susan G. Craddock

Executive Director for Educational Services

Sandra A. Wojnowski

School Business Official

Colleen V. Card

Board of Education

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December 15, 2021

Dear Miller Place School District Community,

We hope this message finds you and your families well as we approach the holiday break. At our Board meeting on December 8th, we had hoped to share information about some of the wonderful happenings in our District as well as provide responses to several of the questions that had been raised at previous Board meetings and submitted via email to the Board. Unfortunately, that meeting had to be adjourned early. Below is a summary of information that would have been shared by Superintendent Dr. Cartisano and the Board.

Student Accomplishments

We would like to congratulate all eight fall varsity teams that have qualified as scholar athlete teams. 133 of 188 student-athletes achieved 90 percent or higher GPA for the 1st quarter of the school year.

We would also like to recognize the following:

- Students who participated in Hour of Code activities
- Inductees into North Country Road Middle School and Miller Place High School honor societies
- Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach students who competed in the Sum-Dog math competition
- All our students who participated in World Kindness Day
- Our high school students who welcomed new students as part of their “break the ice” initiative
- All of our students and staff who honored and remembered our veterans and celebrated their families for Veterans Day

In January 2022 we are anticipating resuming Board recognition of students and staff at our monthly Board of Education business meetings.

In preparation for assisting community families during the holiday season, students and staff across the District have been involved in food drives to prepare food baskets and stocking our local food pantries with non-perishable items. Our school community is also involved with clothing drives to assist District families with winter apparel, as the colder weather is quickly approaching. We appreciate the continued efforts of our students and faculty as they try to make the holiday season a joyous one for those in need.

Open Schools Plan

We realize there are different points of view from community members regarding the District's masking policies, especially as they relate to our elementary students. Additionally, some questions were raised regarding classroom configurations. Our decision to wait until after the holidays to make any changes in how our classrooms are set up, or other policies regarding the health and wellness of our students, was made with the hope of mitigating any impact those changes might have on family holiday plans and any resultant need for significant quarantines when students return in the new year.

Regarding advertisements on the software program Class Tag - These advertisements are not supported or promoted by the District. These software program advertisements are the prerogative of the vendor and may be similar to those that may pop up on the District Facebook page, which are outside the control of the District.

Regarding elementary parents who are requesting access to their child's class to share experiences, such as holiday events and being mystery readers - the Board of Education is going to revisit the existing visitor's policy at the January 2022 Board meeting.

Regarding school trips and events – This school year has seen the return of many activities that had to be cancelled or held virtually last year, including student field trips, concerts and plays. We encourage parents to review our online school calendar for the dates and times of these activities. We also encourage parents and students to connect with building principals or central administration if they have any questions or concerns. Approvals for these activities move through building administration. These are not Board decisions.

Presentations at board meetings - the presentations made at Board meetings, when posted to the District's website, are not revised. If any revisions are made subsequent to the Board meeting, those revisions, and the date the revisions are made, are clearly specified on the version that is uploaded to the District website.

As we head into the holiday season, we know many of you are looking forward to a holiday vacation and once again celebrating with family and friends. In light of the rising positivity rates and concerns about the Delta and Omicron variants, as well as the common flu, we respectfully ask that you take whatever precautions you feel comfortable with for your families to mitigate transmission in order for our students to safely return to school full time and without interruption.

This past year we have spent a tremendous amount of time listening and talking about masks and vaccines. This has taken away from discussions about our students' education, their future, and our District. We have joined with our neighboring north shore school districts in forcefully asking our elected officials to provide our community with information regarding the metrics that are/will be used in evaluating when changes might be instituted regarding the mask state mandate. Please reach out to them, the New York State Department of Health and Governor Hochul, as they are the ones that hold the power to make changes.

On behalf of the Board of Education, our central administrative team, and the entire Miller Place School District family, we extend to you our best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season, as well as a healthy new year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marianne F. Cartisano
Superintendent of Schools

Johanna Testa
Board of Education President

Lisa Reitan
Board of Education Vice President

Keith Frank
Board of Education Trustee

Bryan Makarius
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