

October 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This September, the District staff greeted approximately 8,300 students as they arrived at one of our five exceptional high schools. The Sewanhaka Central High School District opening was outstanding and our entire staff should be congratulated for all the hard work that was extended to ensure that our schools were prepared for our students' return. Throughout the past month, our students have represented the District in a positive manner as they participate in our fall interscholastic athletic program. Many of these contests will play a large part in determining which of our teams advance to the Nassau County playoffs. We hope that you will have the opportunity to attend these events and you will encourage our teams on to victory. Our students continue to take great pride in their individual performances, as well as that of our teams. Nothing pleases them more than having their parents/guardians, administrators, teachers and fellow students supporting their efforts.

The Sewanhaka Central High School District is over 80 years old. Initially, Sewanhaka High School, the first of the high schools to be built, was built in 1929. The economy was hitting a low point, but District residents saw the need to give a secure future to the next generation by building the remaining four schools during the fifties and sixties. During those 80+ years, thousands of students have graduated, moved into the workforce and now some of those original graduates, beam as their grandchildren live and attend school in our District.

Another wonderful event for you to consider attending is the annual **Newsday** Marching Band Festival. This year the event will take place on Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m., at the Mitchel Field Athletic Complex. All five of our District's marching bands will be sharing their talents with the thousands of fans who turn out yearly for this magical music showcase.

As the midpoint of the first marking period approaches I would like to encourage you to contact your child's teachers and/or counselor, if the progress report you receive does not meet your expectations for your child's performance in school. The parent portal is now open and you are now able to view your child's grades in each of his/her classes at any time. Please know that the teachers have two weeks to enter grades to ensure that the grade book is updated and current throughout the school year. If you have any questions, regarding the parent portal, please contact the Main Office in your child's high school. The District's teaching staff and building administration should be commended for their efforts to ensure that this new process is implemented in an effective manner. It is extremely important for you to closely monitor your child's achievement. This will help to ensure that his or her first marking period grades are up to the standards/goals that you and your child set for his or her academic achievement. Your involvement in your child's education will enable our home-school partnership to have a positive impact on our children's education. As you are aware, it is critical that you remain actively involved in your child's education.

Another District priority is the safety of our students. During the month of October we will begin to notice that our daylight hours are fewer. Please remind your children to be careful when traveling to and from school. We hope that they will keep the volume of their phones and/or musical devices low enough to enable them to hear their surroundings.

The District is very excited about the third year of the student one-to-one initiative. In September, every student in grades seven through twelve was issued a new iPad that will be used in the classroom and while at home.

The new school year brought changes to the Sewanhaka Central High District as it implements the Alternative High School and Academic Learning Center, both housed at Sewanhaka High School. The Alternative High School is supporting our students who are nontraditional learners. It provides opportunities to further individuality, improve self-esteem and enhance social skills for students where educational, behavior or medical needs cannot be accommodated in a traditional school environment. The Academic Learning Center was created to educate students who receive an out-of-school suspension, so that there is no loss of instructional time.

At the September Board Meeting, the SCHSD was presented with a rebate check from PSEG Long Island in the amount of \$613,265. This rebate was given to the District for upgrading more than 8,000 lighting fixtures in its buildings, replacing more than 400 bulbs with LED bulbs and updating refrigeration systems in all five school cafeteria kitchens. This rebate helped to defray the cost of projects under the Energy Performance Contract and bond referendum. Due to savings and rebates, as well as funds received from the State Education Departments, the District was able to implement \$18.6 million in infrastructure work to be completed at no cost to taxpayers.

On October 22, 2018, the Sewanhaka Central Council of PTAs and the Sewanhaka Central High School District will be sponsoring a See Saaw Program on *Opioids & Beyond: Challenges for our Students*. Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, President & CEO of Family and Children's Association, will be making a presentation to address the increasing local trends associated with opioid use and the dangerous risks associated with adolescence today. It will be held in the Sewanhaka High School Auditorium @ 8:00 p.m., immediately following the SCHSD PTA Meeting. I encourage you to attend this presentation to learn about how this crisis is affecting our children.

Please know that I continue to be appreciative of the interest that you take in your community's schools and hope that this school year will be especially rewarding for our children. The District will continue to face many challenges as we plan for another difficult budget development season. I will continue to extend every effort to maintain the exceptional programs and experiences offered to your children and look forward towards our collaborative efforts to ensure that our students' educational, social, cultural and athletic needs are met as we continue to address the challenges that lie ahead.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph P. Ferrie, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools