

# BELCHERTOWN

*Public Schools*  TRADITION AND INNOVATION – TOGETHER

CENTRAL OFFICE:

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Dear Belchertown Public Schools Families:

As the days of summer quickly pass by, we are all diligently working toward completing plans for the 2019-2020 school year. It has been a busy summer for hiring new staff, professional development, maintenance projects, and planning for the new school year.

As the new Superintendent for the Belchertown School District, I am honored to welcome you back for an exciting and productive year which promises to be filled with learning, music and art performances, athletic events, and family/school gatherings. I want to begin by thanking the numerous staff, parents, students, and community members who continue to provide a warm welcome to me in my new position.

As Superintendent, I plan to offer weekly updates to parents and staff about happenings in our district. In my “Friday Focus” emails I will share with you some important, innovative, and exciting things that we will do in district as we work together to build a relationship of trust and communication that is necessary for our success. I will be out in the community and at our schools; feel free to say hello and share with me what’s on your mind. I want to hear from you about what our schools are doing really well, where some of the opportunities are for improvement, and any events that our students are involved in within the community.

During the 2019-2020 school year, we will maintain a focus on four priority areas in our work. The first is **social and emotional learning (SEL)**, which aims to develop resiliency, responsible decision-making, healthy relationships, and empathy. Research continues to show that social and emotional learning not only creates a healthy context for learning to take place, but that these skills actually enhance academic rigor. Along with SEL, we will continue our work to develop **tiered supports for students** that allow us to differentiate our practice to meet the diverse needs of our students. Next we will continue with **technology integration**, as we work towards a consistent implementation of developmentally appropriate, high-quality, tech-enhanced teaching and learning practices across all grade levels. Finally, we will focus on **literacy**. Literacy is so fundamental to learning that its importance cannot be overstated — it is the essential foundation of education. The ultimate aim of any education system is to equip its children with the necessary literacy, numeracy and wider skills that they need to take control of their destinies and fulfill their potential.

In addition to the four areas identified above, a district-wide strategic planning committee was established during the last school year consisting of parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and school committee members to create a five-year strategic plan for the district. The committee met several times to identify and establish outcomes, objectives and initiatives. I would like to thank all involved for their time, commitment, and feedback. It is greatly appreciated! The district will now work towards creating and implementing a year-one action plan to be implemented in the fall.

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There have been two additional changes to the administration in Central Office. Dr. Shawn Fortin has been promoted to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and Ms. Rebecca Kudron has transitioned to the role of Director of Student Support Services. Please feel free to call/email or stop by the Central Office should you ever need their assistance.

As in the past, we will continue to use School Messenger for communicating with our families when there are school closings and important announcements. It is critical that the school has your most current email addresses and phone numbers. If these change throughout the year, please notify the school immediately to ensure the PowerSchool database is accurate.

Students in grades 1-12 will report on **August 28, 2019**; Kindergarten students will have a staggered entrance on **September 4th and 5th**; and preschool will begin on **September 5, 2019**.

Please check the district website for the school calendar which shows vacations, professional days and early release days. Lunch is served on early release days. BHS and JBMS are dismissed at 12:00PM while CSS, SRE, and CHCS are dismissed at 1:00PM. There is no afternoon preschool on early release days.

In closing, I would like to thank all members of the Belchertown Educational Foundation for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to enriching the educational opportunities of students in Belchertown Public Schools. Nearly, \$30,000 in Student Success Grants has been awarded. Amazing! Thank you!

I hope that each of you enjoy the remaining days of summer. I look forward to a year filled with great success and great learning.

Sincerely,



Brian C. Cameron  
Superintendent