



Committed to Excellence

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SUPERINTENDENT

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New Hillcrest Middle School Assistant Principal

We are proud to announce that we have hired a new Assistant Principal for Hillcrest Middle School, Ms. Kathleen Laird. Ms. Laird has been a member of the Trumbull High School team for the past 19 years, most recently as the Department Chairperson for Mathematics. Ms. Laird has been an unwavering support to teachers and has extensive experience developing professional learning activities, mentoring and evaluating teacher performance, analyzing student outcome data and implementing effective instructional strategies in the classroom. Ms. Laird will be an outstanding addition to our district administrative team and to the many students, families, and staff she will be supporting. You can contact Ms. Laird via email at klaird@trumbullps.org



2021-2022 District Goals – End of Year Update

We believe in explicitly outlining our goals for each school year and holding ourselves accountable for achieving them. Ultimately, our goals all focus on keeping and improving the high-quality of education that our students and families deserve. Throughout the 2021-2022 school year I provided everyone a copy of our District Goals, a Midyear Update, and now an [End of Year Update](#). These goals are a group effort and I am proud of the persistence and focus from our entire district to accomplish them. If you have any specific feedback or thoughts on the goals or the outcomes, please feel free to [reach out to me](#). I use an extensive feedback loop to identify and develop goals and I value your feedback.

Teacher of the Year/Para of the Year

Each year, Trumbull Public Schools is pleased to offer the opportunity for all stakeholders to nominate teachers and paraeducators to represent our district for the excellence they provide our students and school communities. Each of our eleven schools met with their school-based committee to select one nomination to be considered for the 2023 Teacher of the Year and one nomination for the 2023 Paraeducator of the Year. Their nominees completed short essays based on the state qualifications for Connecticut's state level Teacher of the Year Award and Connecticut's Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award. District committees of teacher representatives and paraeducator representatives then met to read their submissions with names redacted. After rating all applicants and engaging in rich discussions about the wealth of outstanding candidates, it is our pleasure to announce the 2023 Trumbull Public School district committee selections:

Elizabeth O'Hagan Trumbull Public Schools Teacher of the Year 2023

Elizabeth "Liz" O'Hagan has served Trumbull Public Schools for 23 years. Currently, an 8th grade English Language Arts teacher at Madison Middle School, at the core of her philosophy of education, she believes that children need to know what they are learning is relevant, important, and meaningful. "In the end," she writes, "what I want is for the students to want to learn and to see the value in it. I want to encourage and guide them to be lifelong learners. I want them to be happy and comfortable and to feel welcome when they are with me. I want them to do their best and to see what they can accomplish. I want them to feel comfortable being the incredible humans they are."



Trumbull Public School Teacher of the Year 2023 Elizabeth "Liz" O'Hagan with Madison Principal Peter Sullivan, Superintendent Marty Semmel, and Assistant Superintendent Susan Iwanicki. O'Hagan was presented with district recognition on Friday, June 10th 2022.

One Madison parent shared "Mrs. O'Hagan really took the time to get to know my son despite his sometimes-challenging behavior issues this year at Madison. She always fully supported him and has been an advocate for him. She made her classroom a safe space for him no matter when he needed to go there. She was always available to communicate with me via email or phone when needed. It is a wonderful feeling when you know someone truly "gets" your kid and takes the time to find ways to make him feel safe and supported. It takes a special person and dedicated teacher." Another parent stated about Mrs. O'Hagan, "She is

a teacher of children rather than a specific subject. Students in her class know they are respected, valued and cared for, and in return, strive to do their best as to not let her down. The rapport she builds with students is amazing..."

A Madison colleague expanded, "Our teachers have been tasked with maintaining children's social emotional health, delivering a guaranteed and viable curriculum, reintroducing rigor to our classes, all while keeping the kids safe and learning. Any teacher can do any of these things. However, to accomplish all four in one academic year.... That is a rare gift...True Teachers of the Year understand that students are more than a product of the system, more than a test score, and more capable than they believe. Liz not only achieved the four things vital to a successful school year, she was able to do it while keeping the kids happy and enjoying school. In a year when it was so easy to break, Liz maintained professionalism and strength which is contagious to her students and colleagues."

Representing the many exemplary educators in service of students and families across our school communities, Trumbull Public Schools recognizes, honors, and celebrates Liz O'Hagan for her teaching excellence and selection as Trumbull's teacher ambassador for the 2023 Teacher of the Year Award.



Trumbull Public Schools Teacher of the Year 2023 Liz O'Hagan with Madison 8th Graders

Melissa Daniele
Trumbull Public Schools Paraeducator of the Year 2023



Trumbull Public School Paraprofessional of the Year 2023 Melissa Daniele with Hillcrest Principal Bryan Rickert, Superintendent Marty Semmel, and Assistant Superintendent Susan Iwanicki. Daniele was presented with district recognition on Friday, June 10th, 2022.

Melissa Daniele has worn many hats in supporting Trumbull Public Schools—from regular substitute at Booth Hill to PTA Boards at Daniels Farm and Hillcrest to paraprofessional at Daniels Farm and Hillcrest, she puts it simply, “...my heart is in our schools here in Trumbull.” Currently serving Hillcrest Middle School, Melissa Daniele has served in Trumbull Public Schools for over 14 years as a paraeducator. She shared “I love helping students at all levels. When I walk in a classroom I make it known that I am there to help anyone at any time, even if it is not for the class we are in. To put it simply, I love that I am able to help students and push them to their limits and strive for success. When they realize that they can do something it is the biggest reward that I can get.”

According to one Hillcrest teacher, “Melissa Danielle goes above and beyond in establishing great relationships with students and staff. She is compassionate and knows when to push individual students to do more and when to support them...Moreover, she does her work with ease and grace.” According to another nominator, “Melissa is an asset to every classroom she is in, helping not just special education students, but all students in the room. Melissa does remarkably well building relationships with all students, which is evident by the comradery the kids show her in and out of the classroom. Melissa is a team player by always willing to pitch in to help out.”

Representing the many exemplary paraeducators in service of students and families across our school communities, Trumbull Public Schools recognizes Melissa Daniele for outstanding dedication and



Trumbull Public School Paraprofessional of the Year 2023 Melissa Daniele with Hillcrest Student Moses Arden

support of students and selection as Trumbull's 2023 Paraeducator of the Year Award.

2022-2023 Budget

The budget marathon is over and the Board of Education finalized their 2022-2023 budget document on June 7, 2022. The \$115,915,558 million budget represents a 3.22% increase over the 2021-2022 budget with 120% of the increase going to contractual salaries and benefits. Our students are currently benefitting, especially at the elementary level, from the additional literacy and math support specialists we hired to start the 2021-2022 school year to combat the learning loss caused by the pandemic. These specialists have supported the students, the classroom teachers, and the building leaders and the collective efforts of everyone involved has led to excellent gains in academic learning. These additional specialists have been paid for from the Federal ESSER grant and we are thankful that the ESSER grant will continue to cover these costs for the 2022-2023 school year.

Like many of you, we are concerned by the spike in costs as inflation hits 40-year highs. During the budget approval process, we were surprised by the benefits costs for staff rising by 10.5%. This caused our team to go out to bid and we are finalizing our move to a new insurance carrier and plan that meets the requirements in our collective bargaining units while saving our district and staff members costs. During the budget process, the town locked into our year-long diesel contract that will ultimately cost the Trumbull Public Schools an extra \$100,000 than originally budgeted. We fully support the diesel contract but the additional costs absolutely decrease our buying power. In February, the BOE adopted a budget of \$117,297,398, a 4.45% increase. The budget adopted by the Town Council meant that the BOE had to find \$1,381,840 to eliminate from their budget. Coupled with the rising inflation costs and insurance demands, this was a daunting task. Anticipating that our budget request for 2022-2023 may not be fully funded, we made the decision on March 8th to freeze our budget and required all remaining purchases be carefully examined. We expected these steps would create an available balance that we could use to pay off future liabilities. These steps worked and helped us reduce the number of staff we needed to eliminate from the budget.

As we look towards the 2023-2024 budget, there are several concerning factors. First, our bus contract ends in June, 2023 and we are currently taking steps to secure a new contract. We have seen significant increases to transportation costs for our neighboring districts, upwards of 20%. Second, we have no idea where inflation is heading and whether the tools deployed by the Federal Reserve will have the desired impact. Continued high inflation will impact everything from food prices, to paper products, and everything else we need to teach our students. Finally, our buildings range from 1920 when Long Hill Elementary was built to 2005 when TECEC was completed with the majority of our buildings being built between 1950 and 1970. All of these buildings require costly maintenance, especially in a high-inflation environment, and these costs will need to be accounted in either the BOE's operating budget or in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.

And Finally

I hope everyone enjoys a safe, fun, and patriotic 4th of July!



Sincerely,

Martin J. Semmel

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