



## Message From Superintendent

David G. Title

October 1, 2010

My thanks go out to each of you for welcoming me as your Superintendent of Schools. Everyone in the Fairfield community has been most gracious and helpful as I get acclimated to the history, culture, tradition and practices here.

Each month I intend to communicate to you about important issues in the district in addition to celebrating our successes. By the end of October, I will begin a blog on the newly revamped school district website where I will be updating the community on a more frequent basis.

Without question, the biggest item the Board tackled this month was the re-working of the middle school feeder pattern. With the Fairfield Woods addition scheduled to open in September 2011, and with a larger group of students populating our middle schools into the foreseeable future, the Board needed to change the feeder pattern to send more children to Fairfield Woods. I asked that the Board make this decision by the end of September so that we can make all elements of this transition work as smoothly as possible.

The new feeder pattern structure is as follows, effective September 2011:

**Fairfield Woods MS** - Jennings, Holland Hill, Osborn Hill, North Stratfield

**Roger Ludlowe MS** - Riverfield, Sherman, Mill Hill, Dwight

**Tomlinson MS** - McKinley, Burr, Stratfield

In addition, to ease the transition, the Board accepted my recommendation to “grandfather” existing sixth and seventh graders as follows:

- All students in sixth and seventh grade will be allowed to remain in their current middle schools until they complete eighth grade.
- Parents may “opt out” of the above provision only if they have a child slated to go to a different middle school and they wish all children to attend the same school.
- Transportation will be provided in both cases.

Over the next several months we will be working with the middle and elementary school principals and teachers to develop a transition plan for the children and families impacted by this change.

In September the Board also adopted a policy on the use of breathalyzers at high school events. This proposed change was controversial last spring and was held over until this fall. After reviewing the proposed policy with the Board’s sub-committee, I recommended that the Board adopt the policy and it did so on September 28. The Board’s new policy requires the use of breathalyzers at all high school dances. It allows the high school administration to use breathalyzers at other social events.

This year we welcomed 60 new teachers and administrators to the district (including me). While some of these individuals were hired to fill additional positions required by increasing enrollment, most are replacing teachers who resigned or retired at the end of last year. We are fortunate to have a talented group of new teachers and administrators who have chosen to work in Fairfield. We have an excellent system of induction and support for new teachers to assist them in becoming successful in their new positions.

While our official enrollment is based on the October 1 count, our September figures indicate that Fairfield’s enrollment continues to rise. In 2009-2010, we had official enrollment of 10,032 students. Our September count is 10,121. This is in contrast with the rest of Connecticut where virtually all other communities are facing declines in enrollment.

We have engaged the services of Prismatic, Inc. to conduct an operational audit of the Fairfield Public Schools. The purpose of the audit is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the school system. A survey of staff was completed in September and community members were asked to email ideas directly to the company. The audit team has collected over 100 documents from central office regarding the District’s operations. The audit team will be on-site from October 11 through October 14, visiting schools, observing transportation operations and interviewing additional staff members. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. The final report is due to be presented to the Board of Education on December 14.

We have made a change in the grade spans served by our curriculum leaders. The new configuration is that the elementary curriculum leaders will serve grades Pre-K through 5; the secondary curriculum leaders will serve grades 6 through 12. This change gives us additional curriculum leadership for our pre-kindergarten programs and provides one curriculum leader for each subject area in our middle schools.

Once again, thank you for all of your hard work on behalf of the students of Fairfield.

All the best,