

November 20, 2022

Dear Waterville Families,

I hope this week finds you well. While we prepare for a short week this week and a sprint to the holiday break in December, we continue to focus on continuing to provide strong instruction in each and every classroom every day. Our teachers spent time at their professional development day last Friday working with building teams to plan for stronger systems of support for all students and learning about language development and strategies to help our students grow as speakers, readers and writers from local ESD staff.

On my desk:

Notes. Last week I was lucky enough to spend a couple of days with several of our school board members at the annual WSSDA Conference. From that conference I learned about strategies to continue to grow in our ability to teach kids, new legal issues to be aware of, and resources to bring more opportunities to our students. I have pages and pages of notes to dig into. More importantly, I have incredible leadership from our board who is able to direct me toward work that impacts our students.

An MOU with Wenatchee Valley College. Our CTE (Career and Technical Education) department continues to add course work that give kids options for dual credit courses. This means students can take courses at Waterville and earn Wenatchee Valley College credits while in high school. One area of focus in our school as we work to fulfill our board goal of 'Increasing student learning and performance' is expanding opportunities for students to take rigorous courses and earn college credit right here at Waterville High School.

Information about Fentanyl. Last week several agencies sponsored a training for area schools. The training focused on the dangers of fentanyl and street drugs in our community. We learned about the increasing prevalence of these drugs and about the incredible dangers these drugs bring to our community. As I learn more about the dangers to our children, I invite you to learn more too. Together we can increase awareness and help to prevent student use of these drugs. One place to learn more is at: <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/fentanyl>

On my mind:

Thanksgiving is my very favorite holiday. I love the chance to slow down, to gather with friends and family, to eat great food, to watch football, and to celebrate a holiday all about being grateful. Usually I find myself so caught up in the busyness of life that I forget to be thankful for the big and little things in my life that make me happy. Many recent studies have found that practicing gratitude actually increases happiness for those who intentionally focus on both identifying the things they are grateful for and those who find opportunities to thank those around them. The research says the benefits of gratitude are vast – from decreasing stress, to improving sleep, to building stronger bonds in homes and families. Researchers suggest that we write thank you notes and begin a gratitude journal to make our work around being grateful more intentional. In that vein here are 4 things I am especially thankful for this year:

- 1) Waterville School. Being able to work in a school and with educators who are totally dedicated to kids and willing to work hard to support them in any way they can makes the tough work doable. I am lucky enough to work in a job I love because of the people I do the work with.
- 2) Family. Having a family who supports me in the tough days and celebrates with me on the joyful ones is the thing that keeps me going. From my husband to my kids to my parents and in laws, I am very thankful for these people who are in my corner and by my side.
- 3) Kids. Being surrounded by students is dang good gig. I love being around our students. The big ones. The little ones. The in between. These kids give me great hope for the future. They are strong and kind and funny and so talented in so many ways.
- 4) Christmas lights. Thanks to all of you who have it together enough to get those lights hung up for those like me who just can't seem to manage it every year.
- 5) Basketball. This weekend I had the chance to watch an incredible Shocker grad play on her college team and watch the Zags beat Kentucky with Marshall in the Spokane Arena. Next week I will be able to watch our Shockers take the court in our first jamboree. One year ago, Marshall was taking his first steps after surgery. What a difference a year makes as now I prepare to watch him play with his Shocker teammates.

I hope your Thanksgiving is full of family and friends and that you have the chance to spend time with the people you are most grateful for. I hope you have some time to give thanks to those who impact you and your family positively and to reflect on the things you are grateful for. My thanks to each of you for sharing your incredible children with us here at Waterville School. We are so dang lucky to have them here.

All my best to you and yours,

Tabatha Mires

Superintendent Waterville School