



West Orange Public Schools
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Superintendent of Schools

J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.

Good afternoon West Orange Public School Families,

September 10, 2021

I hope this finds you all well and having made a relatively smooth transition into the 2021-2022 school year.

Prior to providing some updates with regard to the school district, I would be remiss if I did not preface them with an acknowledgment of the 20 year anniversary of 9-11 which will be observed tomorrow. Every year, this date conjures up a host of feelings and reflections: remembrance of the lives lost, empathy for the families and loved ones who they left behind, the way in which our world was arguably changed forever; but also the way our country, our communities rallied together, united, and persevered collectively through unthinkable tragedy, sorrow, and loss.

Now, entering into the second year of living together through a global pandemic, what additional insight might we gain? Perhaps, that like we persevered then, we will persevere now through the ongoing challenges we face. That life is precious, and to be reminded to keep all things in their proper perspective. As I would say at the beginning of all this, ask oneself three questions: Am I okay today? Are the people I care about okay today? Am I doing everything I can to ensure that it remains so?

And so please join me in remembering and honoring all those who lost their life on September 11, 2001, and all those affected every day since, by living life to the fullest and spreading light and kindness to all with whom we interact.

The 2021-22 school year got off to, all things considered, a relatively smooth start. I would like to extend on behalf of the Board of Education, administration, and staff my sincere thanks to all of the families and students for their outstanding attitudes, effort, and cooperation to make this opening week a success. Like the opening of any school year, particularly after almost 2 years without a full opening, not surprisingly we encountered a few bumps in the road.

For any families or students who encountered difficulties or inconveniences related to transportation, we apologize and appreciate your understanding as we work towards getting the complicated endeavor of transporting 4000 students daily down to a finely tuned Science.

While in many ways, we observed the carefully designed school reopening operations and procedures work exactly as we had planned, we also recognize that as plans are put into practice, lessons are learned and adjustments made. Rest assured, that the administrative team will debrief our opening days and continue to refine and improve upon our operational procedures as always to ensure the greatest degree of health and safety for our students.

Over the course of the last two days the school district has fielded a large volume of calls from parents with inquiries of all sorts. This is to be expected and appreciated, we are happy and strive to provide the highest level and experience in customer service possible. The district staff has been working extremely diligently to turn around these questions and concerns in as timely a fashion as possible. In this way, in no time, the lion share of questions will be answered and we will be well on our way to finding a rhythm. That being said, we have Returned and Reconnected, let us now remain so and venture down the path of Re-imagination together!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott Cascone".

J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.
Superintendent