Greetings Canton Community,

It is hard to believe that we have already entered the month of July and it will not be long before the doors will reopen for students in the Canton Area School District. My hope is you have been enjoying some rest and relaxation with your friends and family. We have been working very diligently over the summer as we prepare for the students to return in late August.

As you probably already know, the Canton High School will be under new leadership at the start of the 2019-2020 school year. At the end of June, Mr. Coleman successfully made his retirement trek to the great Southwest, and we were excited to move forward with our new high school principal Mr. Donald Jacopetti. Mr. Jacopetti comes to us with over 12 years of experience in the classroom and four years as an administrator in the Wyalusing Areas School District. Mr. Jacopetti began his new assignment effective July 1st, and he already has many great plans in store as he prepares our students and teachers for the 2019-2020 school year. If you have a free minute over the summer, please feel free to stop by the high school and introduce yourself. I know he is excited to meet the students, parents, and all other Canton community members.

This year, we are very excited to expand our Positive Behavior Interventions Support (PBIS) program to the high school. We have had a team of teachers and administrators working to implement Tier I of this program for the start of the 2019-2020 school year. Fortunately, we were able to secure grant money for this expansion, and we want the parents and the community to understand that this will be a work in progress. As is the case with any new programming, there will be “bumps and obstacles” that we must overcome. However, we are confident in the academic and behavioral results this program will have as we move forward addressing the social and emotional needs of all students in the district.

At our elementary school, they will continue to expand their PBIS program and find ways to address some of our Tier II and Tier III students through the reallocation of resources for students who have the greatest social, emotional, and academic needs. Last school year, our elementary PBIS team was asked to present at the PA PBIS Implementer’s Forum in Hershey, Pennsylvania, highlighting some of the great outcomes from students we have had with this program. During the first week of July, our district was also invited to participate in a statewide panel highlighting how our school addresses the mental health needs of all students with our PBIS, Student Assistance Program (SAP), and Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) programs. Again, we are excited to showcase this great work that is happening here in Canton, Pennsylvania.

Speaking of the Student Assistance Program, we are extremely excited to partner with our local counseling agency Finding New Hope with our SAP program. Teresa Allen and her staff will be the new SAP liaison for our school. Teresa and I have met over the summer and have already collaborated on ways in which she will support the faculty and students in the district through professional learning opportunities around behavioral and mental health. We are also very excited to continue this great partnership and look forward to the work she will provide to our school district.

Unfortunately, each year when I meet with the parents of students in our incoming kindergarten class, one of the greatest concerns they have is the safety and security of their child as they are in the buildings of the Canton Area School District. Please understand that it is impossible for any school building to be 100% “intruder proof.” However, I would argue that the students of the Canton Area School District are in one of the safest places they could be within our community, county, and even the state.

Our safety team spends countless hours making sure our school is safe and secure. These efforts are led by the district’s safety coordinator, Mr. Darryl Jannone. This past year, the district celebrated the start of our “Safe School Community” team. This group meets four times a year and consists of guidance counselors, law enforcement, sheriff’s department, county commissioners, building and district level administrators, state representatives, and other community members. The groups goals are to ensure that we are proactive when dealing with school safety, developing and implementing best practice safety and security principals, and ensuring our school community is as safe as it can be. As part of these meetings, we read and analyze state and federal security documents to help drive the practices we implement in the Canton Area School District.

This past spring, our school district participated in a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (RVAT)through the Pennsylvania State Police. This comprehensive review stretched over two days, and state police officials walked the entire school district property with the district administrative team highlighting some of the best practice safety procedures and protocols we have in place and offered a few recommendations on areas where we can approve. We were then provided a confidential report with their findings. I am happy to report that between 75-80% of the evaluative components in this report had the Canton Area School District providing “best practice” procedures and protocols.

Moving forward, we do anticipate even more changes to the school district to ensure that our students are safe and secure. This summer, we will be reviewing our entry procedures on how and who we allow to enter our buildings. Please be patient with our staff as we adjust to potential entry procedure changes, and remember, we are not doing this to inconvenience you, but to keep our students safe. I thank you in advance for your understanding on this matter.

The first year of our Community and School-based Behavioral Health (CSBBH) program was very successful. We served around 24 students and their families in our elementary school. The Friendship House also was able to successfully launch a summer program for these students and their siblings. We have seen great growth with many of the students in this program. This is just another example of a resource we were able to add to our school to assist in meeting the social and emotional needs of our students. For the 2020-2021 school year, I have already placed a request to expand this program to our high school as well.

Finally, the Bradford County Superintendents have reached out to the commissioners of Bradford County to explore potential “school-based” services from the county Children and Youth or Mental Health office. This planning is in the infancy stages, but our hope is that we can secure a person, through a county based funding stream, to support our guidance offices as they continue to support some of our students who struggle in and outside of school.

I would also be remiss if I would not give credit to the great school board our district has. During my three years serving as the superintendent, I feel confident in saying that our school board has provided our administrative team and teachers a level of trust to ensure we are continuing to meet all the needs of our students. They, too, are also aware and very involved with all of the programs and services I have outlined above. I always attempt to keep them very informed so they can inform their community should the constituents have any questions about the happening within the school district. If you happen to see one of our board members, please thank them this summer for their service to our students and the school.

On behalf of the Canton Area School District, our teachers, administrators, and support staff, I wish each and every family a safe and enjoyable rest of the summer. We are excited to have many great things in store for the students at the start of the 2019-2020 school year which begins on Monday, August 26, 2019. Without your continued support, none of this would be possible. In the Canton Area School District, We are Focused on Learning: Every Child, Every Day, the Warrior Way!