

Community Unit School District 200

Administration and School Service Center

130 W. Park Avenue
Wheaton, IL 60187

Phone: 630/682-2000

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October 2003

Dear District 200 Families:

District 200 has been a busy place since the opening of school just a few weeks ago. I want to make you aware of some of the things we've been working on this fall, including:

- The proposed 2004-05 school calendar
- Public meetings to discuss the future of Hubble Middle School
- 2003 School Report Cards
- High school principal selection process
- School safety issues: drills, evacuation sites, parking in fire lanes
- Voice messaging to enhance communication with parents

2004-05 School Calendar

The Board of Education on October 8 posted for public review the proposed 2004-05 school calendar. It is printed on the back page of this letter for your reference. There are several features of the calendar I'd like to bring to your attention:

- All schools would be closed the entire week of Thanksgiving.
- Students would attend school on Veteran's Day, November 11.
- The dates for the opening and closing of school are not impacted.
- Parent/teacher conferences would occur outside of regular school hours in most instances.

The primary reason for the proposed change is to improve the continuity of instruction by increasing the number of consecutive five-day weeks when students are in attendance. If you have comments on the proposed calendar, you may send them to me via fax at 630/682-2068, email at dyoung@cusd200.org or by U.S. Mail at 130 W. Park Avenue, Wheaton, IL 60187. We must receive your feedback no later than November 5 for it to be considered before the Board adopts a calendar on November 12.

Public Meetings on the Future of Hubble Middle School

I will be conducting three public meetings in October to discuss the future of Hubble Middle School with parents and members of the community. The meetings will be held on October 23 in the Hubble Middle School Library, 603 S. Main St., Wheaton; October 27 at Bower Elementary School, 4S241 River Rd., Warrenville; and October 29 at Wiesbrook Elementary School, 2160 Durfee Rd., Wheaton. All meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

During the meetings I will explain several options for Hubble, including renovating the existing school, building a new school on another site and building a new school on the existing site. I will also give a status report on the District's work with the Cities of Wheaton and Warrenville regarding the redevelopment of the Hubble property and the purchase of land in Warrenville on which to build a new middle school. At the end of the meeting, we will ask those attending to complete a survey regarding the various options.

The Board is planning to move ahead with a decision on the future of Hubble as quickly as possible, so if you are interested in this issue or have a student who is or will be attending Hubble, I encourage you to attend one of the meetings.

2003 State Report Card

We will be posting the 2003 State Report Cards and related information on our website by November 1 or as soon as the state releases them. You may access the report cards by going to http://www.cusd200.org/tp_resources/reportcard.htm. The last page of each school's report card contains information about that school's improvement goals for the year. Teachers and principals have worked very hard analyzing test scores and demographic data and identifying areas in need of improvement. A complete improvement plan is available for review in each school. The District has also developed an improvement plan that includes strategies to improve achievement in reading, math and writing across the District. In District 200, we believe that all students can learn and learn at high levels. Through our improvement efforts at the school and District levels, we are confident that we will achieve this goal over time.

High School Principal Selection

As most of you are probably aware, both of our high school principals are retiring at the end of this school year. Both Dr. Baker at Wheaton Warrenville South and Mr. Heatherington at Wheaton North have done an outstanding job of leading our high schools. We will miss them and their contributions to the District and its students.

The process for selecting the new principals begins this month when we advertise the vacancies and seek applicants for the positions. It will continue into the first several months of 2004 while applicants are screened, interviewed and then hired to lead each school. In preparation for the screening and interviewing of candidates, I invite input from parents, students and community members regarding the qualities and characteristics they seek in a District 200 high school principal. I will use the information as I screen and interview the candidates during the various stages of the selection process. You may direct your responses to me at the addresses listed in the calendar section above.

Applications for the high school principal positions will be accepted through December 1. Following that, the applications will be screened and several candidates will be selected for interviews. I will interview those candidates and select two or three finalists for each school. A school-based committee consisting of four teachers, four support staff members and four parents will be convened at each school to interview the finalists. Immediately following each interview, I will talk with the committee about the candidate's strengths and weaknesses. When all candidates are interviewed and references checked, I will recommend one to lead each high school.

School Safety Issues

We are extremely fortunate to have a broad based Safety and Security Task Force that includes representatives from the emergency response agencies that serve District 200. Over the past four years, this group has developed procedures for schools to follow in case of any building emergency. These plans have served us well on a number of occasions, but we continue to revise, practice and train our staff on how to implement them. Please be aware that unannounced practice drills will be taking place in your child's school this year. We have done these drills in the past, but want to remind you that this is an ongoing practice in order to prepare both students

and staff for an emergency response. Police and fire officials are sensitive to the school schedule when planning these drills, but they may occur at any time throughout the year.

In the event of a 'real' emergency when the school must be evacuated, there is a designated evacuation site for all schools. Students will either walk to the evacuation location or be bused, depending on its proximity to the school. Parents will be notified as circumstances allow on how to pick up their child. If you do not know your school's designated evacuation site, you may get that information from the school office.

Please be aware that beginning January 5, 2004 the no parking restriction will be enforced in designated fire lanes at all schools. Over the years, these fire lanes have been largely ignored. Through the Safety and Security Task Force we have realized that emergency vehicles may not have needed access to some schools because fire lanes are frequently blocked with parked vehicles. Families may continue to drop off and pick-up students around the fire lanes, marked by yellow painted lines. **Vehicles may not, however, be left unattended or the driver risks being fined by local police.** The fine is \$50. We ask your cooperation in enforcing this important safety issue.

Voice Messaging Communications

Due to the number of times during a typical school year that the District or an individual school needs to reach parents immediately, we will be piloting a voice messaging system this year. The system allows me or a person I designate to record a message for delivery to the homes of specified students. It could be a message to the homes of all students announcing a weather related school closing or it could be directed to an individual school or a grade level within the school. I recognize that we are not a society that is particularly appreciative of unsolicited calls, but in this instance I believe you will welcome the speed with which you receive information you need to know about your child or his/her school. After we've had the opportunity to use the system a few times and before we commit to using it again next year, we will be looking for your feedback.

In closing, I'd like to remind you again of the importance of students being in school every day. Please make every effort to schedule appointments before or after school and vacations when school is not in session. Taking children out of school not only impacts the educational process, but as I noted in an earlier newsletter it also impacts the amount of money the District receives in state aid. We realize that not every appointment can be scheduled outside of school hours and that some absences are unavoidable, but we appreciate your cooperation when you do have a choice.

As always, we thank you for your support and value your involvement in the schools.

Sincerely,

Gary T. Catalani, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Community Unit School District 200

Proposed 2004-05 Student Calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
JULY						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
No Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
AUGUST						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
6 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
SEPTEMBER						
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	i	25
26	27	28	29	30		
21 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
OCTOBER						
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	i	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						
20 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
NOVEMBER						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				
17 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
DECEMBER						
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
13 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
JANUARY						
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
19 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
FEBRUARY						
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13	14	15	16	17	i	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					
19 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
MARCH						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
17 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
APRIL						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	i	30
20 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
MAY						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
21 Student Attendance Days						

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
JUNE						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8*	9*	10*	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
5 Student Attendance Days						

Community Unit School District 200
Office of the Superintendent
 130 W. Park Avenue
 Wheaton, IL 60187

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Important Information Inside:

- Proposed 2004-05 School Calendar
- Meetings on Future of Hubble
- School Safety Issues