



# SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

200 Hartford Road, Salem, CT 06420

August 11, 2023

Dear Salem School District Families,

As we celebrate and enjoy the final weeks of summer before school starts, we want to take this opportunity to remind all of our families of key dates and information leading up to the first day of school scheduled for Monday, August 28, 2023.

Please see information below from our Food Service Director regarding the recently announced State of Connecticut meal program, a request for feedback from Board of Education Chair, Sean Reith, on the District's Draft Strategic Plan, as well as introductions for new faculty.

As always, thank you for your support and partnership as we head into the 2023-2024 school year. Looking forward to seeing everyone soon. In the meantime, please feel free to provide feedback and questions on all things related to school opening by clicking [here](#) to fill out the Salem Start of School Feedback Form. Principal Driscoll will be sending an update to all families on Monday, August 14th with information on transportation, drop off and pick up policy, student/parent handbook, and parent/teacher school community communication tools, as well as teacher assignments and answers to questions submitted in the Start of School Feedback Form. Additionally, brief special education and curriculum updates will accompany Principal Driscoll's communication from our new Director of Student Services, Kim Gritman, and Assistant Principal/Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Megin Sechen.

Wishing everyone a great rest of summer.

Sincerely,

Brian Hendrickson  
Superintendent, Salem School District

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### **Key Dates:**

- *First Day of School - August 28, 2023*
- *Staff Professional Development Days - August 23, 2023 through August 25, 2023*
- *PTO Sponsored Back to School Bash- August 24, 2023 from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm*
- *Student Drop In Hour - August 25, 2023 from 10:30 am - 11:30 am*
- *Open House - September 21, 2023 from 6:00pm -7:30 pm*
- [SY2023-24 School Calendar](#)

**Food Service Update from Food Service Director Chris Urban:** The Connecticut Department of Education working with the Governor's Office and legislative leadership, have created funds to support households by allowing 1) ***breakfast meals at no cost to all students*** in schools participating in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and 2) ***lunch meals at no cost for students eligible for Free/Reduced-price meals*** participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). For SY2023-24, under the NSLP and SBP, free and reduced-price meal eligibility will be determined for each individual student (*applications for free and reduced meals are approved each school year*). Full Paid Students will return to regular price lunch. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Urban at [CUrban@salem.cen.ct.org](mailto:CUrban@salem.cen.ct.org).

### **Draft Strategic Plan Message and Invitation for Feedback from Board of Education Chair, Sean**

**Reith:** Please [click here](#) to review the Draft Strategic Plan, which was developed through a Board of Education workshops and the Board's Long-Range Education Planning Subcommittee. The Board of Education is using the policy approval approach to formalize the Draft Strategic Plan and the Board will conduct a second reading and possible adoption of the Draft Strategic Plan at the August 14th meeting. After formal adoption of the Strategic Plan, the Board will be engaging with the Connecticut Board of Education (CABE), Field Representative, Nick Caruso to facilitate discussion and evaluation of the District's progress.

If you have any feedback on this plan, please email them to Sean Reith ([sreith@salem.cen.ct.gov](mailto:sreith@salem.cen.ct.gov)) prior to August 14th.

**New Faculty Announcements:** With last year's retirements as well as openings from this summer, Salem has been truly fortunate to welcome in an experienced, dedicated, dynamic group of educators. We are also very grateful to the parents, students and staff that participated in the hiring process to ensure all stakeholders were involved in selecting the very best candidates for Salem. We had an extremely competitive pool of candidates with outstanding experience and are excited to announce the following new faculty members.

#### **Elementary Teachers:**

- Sarah Andrews - Grade 4
  - Sarah has been teaching fourth grade in Bolton for the past three years and has decided to return home to her alma mater as she is a Salem graduate. Go Cougars!
- Sarah Brousseau - Grade 1
  - Sarah has been teaching first grade in Norwich for the past five years. She is very excited to be working with Mrs. Swider again as they were former colleagues in Norwich.
- Hannah McAdam - Grade 4
  - Hannah completed both her pre and student teaching with us here at Salem and we are very excited to have her continue her career here in Salem.

- Vanessa Mitchell - Building Substitute/Grade 3 LTS
  - Vanessa is a recently certified teacher and has been working with children in academic, extra-curricular and childcare settings for the past eight years. This will be her very first teaching experience and she is very excited to join Salem School.
- Kristine Ton - Grade 3
  - Kristine has been teaching third grade in Norwich for the past six years and we are excited to welcome her back as she completed her student teaching in Salem prior to working in Norwich.
- Ana Rose Webster - Grade 2
  - Ana comes to us from Jack Jackter in Colchester where she has been a grade 3 teacher for the past three years. She is very excited to join the incredible Salem School community!

#### Middle School Teachers:

- Jen Leinbach - Grade 6 ELA/SS
  - Jen comes to us from Sayles Elementary School where she taught fifth and sixth grade for the past three years. She also is joining a former colleague, Rebecca Mozzochi.
- Kevin Orenstein - Grade 7/8 Math
  - Kevin is a Waterford native and after serving 25 years in Los Angeles, decided to move back to CT with his family. He is joining us from Norwich where he most recently served as a Math Coach. He is very excited to join the Salem School community.
- Joanna Priest - Grade 6 Math/Science
  - Joanna has been teaching for 17 years. Her last position was in New London as a STEM Instructional Coach. She has cherished her teaching experiences and she looks forward to guiding students to achieve their personal goals. She is very eager to join the Salem School community.

#### Related Arts Teachers:

- Sheila Miller - PE/Health Teacher
  - Sheila was a PE teacher at ISAAC in New London for ten years before taking a break from teaching to raise her family here in Salem. She's very excited to give back to her community and teammate Mr. Ali to keep bringing amazing opportunities to Salem students.

#### Student Services Teachers:

- Anette Haylon - Special Education, Grade 5/6
  - Anette has been teaching for 11 years. Her last position was with East Lyme Public Schools and has experience in a variety of settings.. Anette is excited to start her new position in Salem.

#### Administration:

- Kim Gritman - new full time Director of Student Services.
  - Kim Gritman was appointed to the position of Director of Student Services for the Salem School District, effective July 1, 2023. Ms. Gritman was selected from a strong applicant pool of experienced special education leaders and successfully navigated through a rigorous hiring process, which included the development of the DSS Profile, a panel interview with staff, special education parent representatives, administration and Board members, a performance task, and finalist interviews with the Board of Education. Throughout this process, Ms. Gritman distinguished herself

as an experienced and thoughtful leader that is passionate about serving the needs of students and families as well as supporting staff and facilitating district initiatives.

Ms. Gritman's wealth of knowledge and experience in a variety of educational settings, most recently in Woodstock, CT serving as the District's Director of Student Services for the past five years, as well as her background as a school psychologist, have provided her with the knowledge and experience necessary to be an outstanding full-time Director of Student Services in Salem.

*"Thank you for the opportunity to become a member of the Salem School District team. I am truly honored to be selected as the Director of Student Services and am looking forward to working with parents, faculty, and staff to foster the continued educational success of our students." Kim Gritman*

*Staffing appointments will continue to be made and we anticipate all grade level classroom positions will be filled for the start of the school year.*