

Island Park Union Free School District

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ISLAND PARK, NEW YORK 11558



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DR. ROSMARIE T. BOVINO
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

July 12, 2018

Dear Parents:

Attached is a letter to the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools of West Hempstead UFSD. This follows discussion that took place last night at the Board of Education. It explains that all Island Park students currently enrolled at West Hempstead High School (WHHS) will continue to be enrolled until they graduate. This includes our students who enrolled in WHHS for September 2018; they, too, will remain at WHHS, receiving transportation and support services from us, until they graduate West Hempstead High School in June 2022.

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year (the year after next), it is the Island Park School District's intention to send all ninth graders to Long Beach High School. This is because parents and students have overwhelmingly chosen not to select West Hempstead High School and with such small numbers, it is not financially feasible for the District to continue with high school choice.

Thank you very much for your understanding.

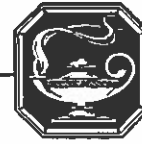
Yours sincerely,

Rosmarie T. Bovino

Rosmarie T. Bovino, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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July 12, 2018

Mrs. Karen Brohm, President
Board of Education
c/o Mr. Daniel Rehman, Superintendent
West Hempstead UFSD
252 Chestnut Street
West Hempstead, NY 11552

Dear Mrs. Brohm, Trustees, and Mr. Rehman:

On Thursday, July 5, we received an email from West Hempstead High School regarding special events for the 2018-2019 school calendar. This was followed by a complete calendar for the 2018-2019 school year from Mr. Rehman. We were given the date of November 14 for our annual eighth grade visit to West Hempstead High School in anticipation of high school decisions in January 2019 for the 2019-2020 school year. This correspondence was the impetus for a discussion that took place at the Board of Education Meeting last night.

For approximately five decades, the students of Island Park have had the privilege of attending West Hempstead High School. This has been a special arrangement in which your youngsters and ours have worked and competed together (on the same team) as scholars, athletes, artists, musicians, and thespians. Deep and lasting relationships have forged, often in friendships and marriages enduring a lifetime. Legacy relationships too, continued the tradition of attendance at West Hempstead High School from parent to child and sibling to sibling.

Ten years ago, after several years of requests, the Board of Education responded to the Island Park community's overriding interest in having their children attend a high school closer to home. As public servants, the Board listened, investigated, weighed options, and ultimately took responsible action by exercising a decision that satisfied two different community factions by offering high school choice between West Hempstead High School and Long Beach High School.

No doubt, the community's interest in having their children attend a high school closer to home intensified following Super-storm Sandy when many families were temporarily housed elsewhere and traveling to two communities (Island Park and West Hempstead or Long Beach) for their children to attend school. Unfortunately, during the past five years, our families continued to endure many hardships that included relocation as they renovated the first floor of their homes or chose to raise their homes altogether. Again, this often meant living with extended family members over months—sometimes years—as various projects were underway.

As a result, for the past five years our student enrollment at West Hempstead High School declined significantly; and, for the last three consecutive years, we had single digit enrollment at the ninth grade level. Though we continue to believe that our students are most fortunate to have the option (and luxury) of choosing between two wonderful high schools, the Board of Education believes it must

exercise prudent economic stewardship. As John Adams said, "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot altar the state of facts and evidence." Thus, given the notable low enrollment numbers, rising transportation costs that are magnified by having two high school bus contracts, a national inflation rate of 2% that appears to be growing, a State cap on the school budget's tax levy, and new costs that may arise from an adverse tax certiorari decision concerning the Barrett Power Plant, the Board has made the decision that the 2018-2019 school year will be the last year of enrollment for ninth graders at West Hempstead High School. Thus, eighth graders will not be visiting in the fall.

The Island Park Board plans to sign a five-year contract with the Long Beach City School District for the years 2020-2024. During the period of 2019-2020 through 2023-2024, Island Park UFSD will abide by its contract with West Hempstead UFSD as well as continue to support, transport, and participate in high school life with our students who remain at West Hempstead High School.

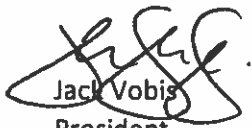
We hope you and the West Hempstead community understand the difficult decision we have made at this point in time. It has been an upsetting, emotional decision for us given the goodwill our two communities have shared, the wonderful memories we retain, and the heartfelt generosity West Hempstead showed our families throughout the years and especially following Super-storm Sandy. Our intention is not to close any doors between us but to act responsibly based on the decisions made to date by our parents and the economic factors that limit our financial flexibility.

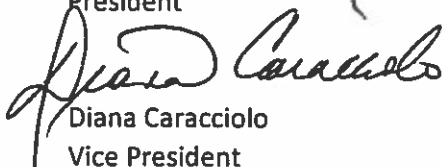
We continue to appreciate the hospitality you have shown us and we look forward to the years ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Rosmarie T. Bovino

Rosmarie T. Bovino, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools


Jack Vobis
President


Diana Caracciolo
Vice President


Tara Byrne
Trustee


Kathleen McDonough
Trustee


Ray Miley
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