

Thank you, Bella.

Good morning everyone.

Welcome back. I hope each of you had a chance to step away, refresh and think anew as you join the unique and important work that you do. When the dance takes a break and then resumes, it brings along new moves, new feet and a fresh energy into a broadly familiar rhythm.

The school committee, with your assistance, has begun to stem the losses and add teachers and staff as we welcome the larger and eager 9<sup>th</sup> grade class.

This is an year of transition for the high school, the returning staff and for all those who are starting in a new position at the high school. Let us embrace the change, welcome one another and join in the shared rhythm.

We, the school committee and you, have work to do this year that, when done, should enhance our mission – that of educating the children entrusted to us.

Let us reflect on what happens within these walls in this academic year. A student will be introduced to the Bard or other great authors, and he or she will learn how to critique and contemplate. Another will marvel at the movement of atoms or planets. Learning about wars and dictators as well as the glorious moments in human history will lay the foundation for their citizenship. Another will see the beauty behind the regular and irregular numbers and patterns. All will be exposed to a new language and a culture. Many would be active in sports and activities. All would form lasting friendships. All the while, the whole child will be cared for by all of you and those who take it up as their vocation. Each and every one of you does this – either directly or indirectly.

Who else, but you, can say they were there at the moment a mind blossoms? Who else, but you, can say they were there at the moment of creation – the creation of knowledge and independent thought in a student? Who else, but you, can say they take part every day in the dance of ideas and knowledge? It is a privilege. It is a noble job. It is a responsibility.

I wish you all the best.