



Mr. Carl L. Albano, Superintendent  
1100 Route 9D  
Garrison, NY 10524

Tel: (845) 424-3689 ext. #222  
calbano@gufs.org  
www.gufs.org

---

November 22, 2020

Dear Garrison School Community,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well and looking forward to a restful Thanksgiving Holiday. Although there are still many uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, I am hopeful that we have reached a turning point with the recent positive news on vaccinations. As we continue to navigate through the current challenges, I want to assure you that our district remains committed to pursuing several strategic goals that will improve the overall quality of education for our students well into the future. I hope you find this information interesting and helpful.

**Strategic Coherence Plan:**

The Garrison Board of Education has launched a long-range planning process for the District that will result in a focused and aligned community vision of student success beyond school. The first step is to build a consensus regarding the critical skills and attributes we believe are most essential to future student accomplishment. This information will be used to guide our planning and decision making. To involve as many constituents as possible in this process, our entire community has been invited to contribute their thoughts to a conversation on this topic through a Thoughtexchange. If you haven't done so already, please take a moment to share your perspective by clicking on the following link [GUFFS Coherence Plan Thoughtexchange](#).

**Anti-Racism & Equity Task Force:**

This past summer, a 13-member Anti-Racism & Equity Task force made up of parents, teachers, board members and administrators was created. After three training sessions and three work sessions, the Task Force established the following mission statement and priority areas, which were presented to the Board of Education on November 4th:

*The Garrison Union Free School District Anti-Racism and Equity Task Force is committed to recognizing, addressing, and dismantling racism in all its forms. We are dedicated to creating, fostering, and sustaining a safe and inclusive environment in which differences are valued, respected, and supported in all areas of school life. We*

*want to produce self-reflective students who experience academic success, who view the world with a critical lens, and who are prepared to be responsible and empathetic global citizens.*

*Priority Areas:*

- 1. Curriculum & Assessment*
- 2. Professional Development*
- 3. Safe & Inclusive Learning Environment*
- 4. Evaluation of Work*

The Task Force has recently invited members of our school community to join the initiative and contribute to the development of action plans for each priority area. We look forward to our important work ahead.

**Teaching & Learning:**

Since the beginning of the school year, our teachers have been preparing for the likelihood of teaching remotely. This month, Mrs. Emig has led the effort to refine our remote learning model in collaboration with Mr. Scott Kaufman, our Interim Director of Technology. Over the past two weeks, Mr. Kaufman has provided targeted staff professional development on leveraging our technology platforms and organizing digital resources. We will hold an evening parent workshop in early December to help parents better understand how to provide the structure and support necessary for their children to be successful in a remote learning environment.

I am pleased to share that we have launched a comprehensive special education evaluation process with our outside consultant, Roberta Wiener. The evaluation's primary objectives are as follows:

- To identify goals to support all student learning;
- To maximize the adults in the classroom to support learning for all students;
- To promote and train the teacher as the leaders of the classroom;
- To train all teachers, aides and related service providers to actively engage in the instruction and support of student learning;
- To teach how to collect data to inform CSE recommendations;
- To develop clear expectations for collaborative classroom instruction, CSE recommendations and to be knowledgeable of students' IEP needs;
- Prepare a list of PD to support the goals.

This process will continue for the next 5-6 months, and will culminate with a formal evaluation report to the Board of Education and school community in June.

**District Capital Project:**

Following the approval of Garrison's \$9,912,540 capital improvement project last year, Tetra Tech was retained as the architect for the project, and Calgi Construction was retained as the construction manager. The design process has continued on schedule in spite of the pandemic. Numerous virtual meetings with the design team have occurred and a wide range of District personnel have been involved in the design of the project. The architect and construction manager have performed fieldwork, environmental testing and survey work. Currently, the architect is completing the plans and specifications for the project which will be submitted to the New York State Education Department (SED) Office of Facilities Planning in December for review and approval. Once SED approves the project, it will go out for public bid in the Spring of 2021. The construction contracts will then be awarded by the Board of Education to the lowest responsible bidders and construction will commence in July 2021.

The project includes much needed infrastructure improvements to our school. Among other things, the entire heating system (original equipment) will be replaced with a new energy efficient heating system. Other improvements include asbestos abatement, floor tile repairs, lighting replacement with energy efficient LEDs, new ceilings, phones, security cameras and a renovated nurse's suite. Additionally, the computer lab will be removed to open up the library, and the art room will be renovated as a new art and maker space. It is anticipated that the project will take approximately eighteen months to complete.

Regular updates on all District initiatives will continue to be provided at our regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings on the first and third Wednesday of each month. As always, we welcome your participation and feedback.

Sincerely,

*Carl L. Albano*

Carl L. Albano  
Superintendent of Schools