



## Huntington Union Free School District

*"A Tradition of Excellence since 1657"*

James W. Polansky

Superintendent of Schools

November 21, 2017

Dear Huntington Families:

*"Gratitude can transform common days into Thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy and change ordinary opportunities into blessings."* This quote from William Arthur Ward is a particularly accurate reflection of my experiences in Huntington. Every day, I am moved and inspired by what I see. After many years, I still marvel at the incredible devotion of our staff and their unique abilities to teach and inspire our children. I continue to celebrate the unwavering support provided by parents and the greater community. During this time of Thanksgiving, I'd like to share my gratitude with all of you for the roles you play within our educational community.

Helping children to grow, achieve and gain confidence is among the most important charges we possess. I am beyond grateful to our faculty and staff for committing their professional lives to serving our students. They take each child's success personally. They spend hours before and after school doing the extra things that few people see, but that make all the difference for the students they teach and support. I see and feel their passion when I visit classrooms. At the same time, I see the joy in the faces of our children and witness the appreciation from parents for their efforts.

I am appreciative that our schools have the power to change the lives of young people. I'll reflect on a recent conversation during which a former student shared that he is now pursuing a master's degree in education. This student was the first in his family to earn a high school diploma and no less a college degree. He shared that it was the Huntington teachers, administrators and staff members he came to know through the years who believed in him and encouraged him to pursue his dreams. He plans to pay it forward as he becomes an educator himself, eagerly awaiting the chance to inspire students of his own. He may not realize that he is the true inspiration. Stories like his should make all of us even more grateful for the incredible work done each and every day.

Additionally, I am beyond grateful for the many students, parents, and community members who also serve to inspire and generate considerable Huntington pride. Each year, our students volunteer thousands of hours after school, helping dozens of local agencies and organizations. From our elementary leadership teams and student councils to the many service clubs and honor societies at the secondary level – they gain no greater satisfaction than from giving. Their service and dedication is unparalleled.

Huntington parents continue to allow us to be part of their children's lives – a genuine honor and tremendous privilege. They support us unconditionally in the work that we do. They share with us the joy in their children's education. They make us a stronger school community. We are all exceptionally grateful for the strong home-school connection.

Further, we are blessed with support from many community organizations that offer generous grant programs and resources that we could not secure otherwise. They also provide services and opportunities to our students beyond school hours, which contribute significantly to their academic achievement and their social and emotional growth.

It should not go unnoticed that Huntington is characterized by an outstanding group of Board of Education trustees who are truly vested in the success of our students and staff. They are compassionate individuals who see the incomparable value in public education. I am honored to work with them and greatly appreciate their service.

In closing, I ask that all of you continue to recognize that the strength of our school district lies in the people we serve and the people we employ. Personally speaking, I am especially grateful to be part of the Huntington family. Again, I thank you each of you for all that you do and wish all of our families a very safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

*James W. Polansky*

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Superintendent of Schools