

Wachusett Regional School District
Chocksett Middle School

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Margaret N. Morgan, Principal

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Principal's Message
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Social Networking

As technology continues to morph around us, it provides undreamt opportunities for teaching, learning and student interaction. The Chocksett Middle School prides itself on embracing new technology, insofar as it provides students with engaging ways to learn. If knowledge is truly power, our children have the chance to grow, intellectually, far beyond the capacity of previous generations.

Social networking sites such as; Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and Bebo are growing at exponential rates, across all demographics of our society. Social Networking allows for members of an online community to share materials of interest and communicate, in some cases instantaneously, with vast numbers of people. This is the new reality and as such has implications for schools.

The Chocksett Middle School's position on Social Networking is that while we recognize and welcome our obligation to provide 21st century skills for our students, it has been our experience that a majority of pre-adolescents are emotionally unequipped to use these tools in respectful and responsible ways. Think back to your own pre-adolescence; remember the conflict you struggled with in establishing your identity and the awkward moments as you navigated through different peer groups. Now, take those feelings and moments, and, by virtue of this technology, make them so public that friends of friends of friends have access to your thoughts, pictures and words. By virtue of this technology and the instantaneous, passive, detached, sometimes anonymous, environment it provides, friends and friends of friends can or may respond to you in highly inappropriate ways. For these reasons, most Social Networking Communities have age restrictions. *Facebook*, for example, insists that students are **at least 13 years of age**. They also "strongly recommend that minors 13 years or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet".

We are aware that many of our Middle Level students have *Facebook* accounts and that many of them have written and posted things that they would never say or do in a face to face interaction. Social Networking sites are blocked through our District's Network.

It is our strong recommendation that you talk with your children about Social Networking and, if you don't know, ask if your child has a Facebook or similar account. If they do, make them show you their page, profile and the pages of their friends. We're confident that you'll agree on

the importance of open communication as a bridge to helping your child, develop the necessary skills to make informed decisions.

On May 13th, our Grade 6-8 students will attend an assembly/presentation on Internet-Cyber Safety by Ellen Miller from the District Attorney's office. Since social networking increases during the summer while students are home, it is an opportune time for them to be reminded of this important issue.

NCLB Report Card

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has now posted the 2009/2010 NCLB Report Card for the District and each school. You can view our school's report via the District's website; <http://www.wrsd.net>. On the opening page scroll down the left side until you see District/School Report Cards. This takes you to a page that has a link to the individual school's report card.

Removal of Pay Phone

The Chocksett School Council has approved the removal of the pay phone from the Chocksett School. With the onset of cell phones and the availability of our school phones it has been rarely accessed. This will be a cost savings to our annual school budget of approximately \$1000.00.

The 2010 Chocksett Middle School Parent Survey

Please take a few minutes to share your impressions with us. We value and use your feedback as it helps us to frame programming and policies for the coming and subsequent years. You can access the 2010 online Parent survey at <http://www.wrsd.net/chocksett/> The Survey will open on May 1st and close on May 14th. Thanks in advance for your attention to the 2010 Parent Surveys and, as always, thank you for your continued support of our school. If you do not have on-line access please contact the school office to arrange a time to use our school technology.

"Principal's Coffee"

It is hard to believe that we are in the final term of the school year. Our final "Principal's Coffee will take place on Tuesday May 18th @ 9:00am in the Chocksett School Library. We will be discussing the 2010-2011 budget and how it will affect Chocksett. I have enjoyed meeting with many of you and discussing "life" at the Chocksett Middle School. I thank you for the invaluable information and conversation we have shared during the school year.

As always, if you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Margaret Morgan, Principal