



**WELCOME BACK ASSEMBLY PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS
WELLINGTON HEIGHTS SECONDARY SCHOOL
September 12, 2023**

Good morning, Wellington Heights students and staff, and welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! My name is Mr. Bloch, and my pronouns are he and him. I am delighted and honoured to serve for the fourth year as the Principal at WHSS, and I am confident that this year will truly be an amazing and exciting high school experience with all extracurricular events, sports teams, and special events in full swing. It will also be a special year in our school's history as this year we mark the 20th anniversary of our school, which was built in 2004 and brought together students from the former Arthur District High School and Mount Forest District High School and turned them all into Wellington Heights Wolverines.

Last week in homerooms, your teachers reviewed with you our expectations of you, as outlined in the *WHSS Student Handbook*. I have also emailed all students with a link to the *WHSS Student Handbook*, and hard copies can be picked up, for those who require one, just outside the main office. You will notice that there are some clear policies about identity-based harm, electronic devices, washroom breaks, academic integrity, and attendance - among others. Please take the time to read through this document in order to learn more about Wellington Heights and the high expectations that we have of our Wolverine students. Our goals are to maximise student learning, to keep everyone safe, and to ensure a memorable high school experience for all.

You will have heard on our morning announcements already that there is a host of opportunities awaiting our students outside of the classroom - from

field hockey, to volleyball, to basketball, to Social Equity Club, to Student Council, to Athletic Council, to LINK Crew, and the list goes on. You can see our entire list of extracurricular activities posted on our school website, and I challenge every student to get involved in at least one activity each semester, in order to make your high school experience a memorable one. Without your involvement, there is no team, and there is no club. Please listen to announcements, or read our daily announcements on our school website at the Daily Announcements tab, for information about our upcoming extracurricular opportunities, and get involved.

At Wellington Heights, we are very fortunate to have such a caring, dedicated, flexible, and conscientious teaching staff, who have been working diligently and creatively to plan for your instruction and who do their utmost to provide our rural Wolverines with every opportunity that your urban counterparts might have. Please give them your respect, attention, and best efforts as they often go above and beyond the requirements of their daily jobs for your benefit and success. Our Administrative Assistants and Guidance Staff have also been working long hours to prepare for your arrival, and I am grateful for their support. Our custodial staff has equally been working diligently these past several weeks to get our school thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to ensure our safety - and for that I would like to offer them our thanks.

Upon arriving to school this week, you may have noticed that we are proudly flying the Pride flag. This flag is a symbol of our commitment to ensuring equity and respect for people of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, and a reminder that everyone has the right to feel safe and welcome in their school community. We have a gender-neutral washroom available to all students in our Main Office, and we have a new Gender Affirmation process, through the Main Office, for all students who change their usual names, legal names, and pronouns. We also have a Multi-Faith Prayer Room in the Main Office that is available to all students for meditation.

During your high school career, it may be difficult to maintain one's self discipline and to aim for higher than mediocrity at times. In the words of former Arthur District High School Principal, P.E. Brown, "Do not forget that

our years spent in formal education are a preparation for our future responsibilities in the world of work. In the course of this preparation, we can do nothing else other than insist on our best possible effort in everything we undertake." Whether that be in the completion of our studies or our participation in extracurricular activities, we must develop the habit of giving nothing but our best effort. "In this manner, by giving our closest attention to seemingly minor details and by striving for perfection in what appear to be small matters, we are making the best possible preparation for our vocation in life."

In closing, I ask that you remember our school maxim, "Be Kind And Learn," and that you endeavour to treat everyone you encounter at Wellington Heights and beyond with kindness always, and that your focus at school be to continually improve your own learning. This maxim, coupled with our school motto of "Pride, Respect, and Friendship" should guide you and ground you in all that you do, and in all that you endeavour to be. Be proud Wolverines this year, as we collaboratively work to attain the greatest academic achievements possible. In the words of the first Black President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, remember that, "Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation."

Congratulations to all of you on a successful return to school, and best wishes for a memorable and successful year ahead!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brent Bloch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mr. B. Bloch
Principal
W.H.S.S.