

Dr. Neil Howard Superintendent of Schools

It is an exciting time to be involved with education. The Race to the Top reform legislation provides us with many academic and financial challenges. The reality of increased evaluation of teachers and principals and performance-based compensation is here. The educational needs of our students, the tax cap, unfunded mandates, and decreased education funding are all in the forefront of our thoughts and influencing our decisions. I believe the Taconic Hills Central School District is uniquely positioned to meet these challenges and opportunities. Our staff is continually building relationships with families, community members, and local businesses, to improve delivery systems of knowledge. Together, with the efforts of our parents, faculty, and staff, we work together to influence a learning environment that places an emphasis on achievement, improved higher-order thinking skills, accountability, character development, and a sense of community involvement important to the success of all students.

[Standards-focused education](#) supported by high-quality [curriculum](#) provides a unique opportunity to educate children as they experience a time of great mental, physiological, social, and emotional change in their lives. We embrace all students as they progress through elementary school to the Jr/Sr high school and prepare for the challenges that lie ahead, as well as reinforce the academic foundation they have been provided. Through a focus on [inquiry-based learning](#)—involvement that leads to understanding—it is our goal that students make steady gains in all academic areas and learn valuable life skills that will help them become competitive members of the [21st century](#).



Please take the opportunity to learn more about the exciting programs and services our school has to offer through our [website](#). Evidence of our students' achievements is everywhere. From engaging interdisciplinary projects across subject areas, creative technology integration and use of research skills by our computer and library media staff, informative field trips and assemblies, the cultural influences of art, music, drama and foreign language, current and historical events used as a catalyst for meaningful reading and writing opportunities in social studies and language arts, science and math enrichment opportunities like participation in the annual Science Fair, Odyssey of the Mind, the spirited involvement of our Student Council, numerous extra-curricular clubs and activities, accelerated coursework opportunities and the vital messages promoted by our physical education, family and consumer science and health departments about good nutrition, the

importance of physical fitness and leading a healthful lifestyle, our students are deeply involved in all levels of learning. We will continue to strive toward achieving our school district's mission "where every member is involved in and dedicated to the learning process. We believe that every student should have the right, accept the responsibility, and be provided with the means to grow educationally, socially, and emotionally."

We are grateful for the involvement of parents and community members on our Shared Decision Making Teams, PTOs, as chaperones on field trips and during school activities, and as a presence in the school. The staff and I appreciate and value the constructive feedback and input provided in an effort to promote a positive school culture.

Together, members of the [school community](#) can work together to provide a positive, safe and caring school setting where children can maximize their opportunities to learn. It is through constructive communication with parents, and clear expectations for students that we will foster a respectful relationship between children and adults that positively influences teaching and learning.

Biography

I bring over twenty one years of experience in education and administration to this position; most of my career has been spent at the middle school level. Having successfully taught a variety of core and special area classes for over twelve years allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the changes we face in providing our students with the knowledge and skills of a 21st century learner. This experience has also given me a keen insight into the capabilities, mental, emotional, and physical challenges of this age group of learners.

As a lifelong resident of the Taconic Hills Central School District, I am completely committed to the excellence of the Taconic Hills Central School District. My wife, Cybil (District Business Manager) and I are raising our family in Churchtown. We have three children, ages 14 (ninth grade), 11 (sixth grade) and 8 (third grade). I have always been, and continue to be, impressed with the enthusiasm, respect, and positive attitude of the faculty and staff of our district toward our students.

Education:

M.S. Biology Education, University at Albany

Doctorate of Chiropractic and B.S. Human Biology, Texas Chiropractic College

B.S. Psychology, Syracuse University

Fleet Officer Program, United States Naval Academy

NYS Certifications:

School District Administrator Certification

School Administrator/Supervisor Certification

K-12 Health Teacher Certification

7-12 Biology Teacher Certification

7-12 General Science Teacher Certification

Administrative Experience:

Middle School Principal

Teaching Experience:

Life Science, Physical Science, Health, Physical Education, Multi-Age Adaptive Physical Education
Family and Consumer Sciences, Living Environment, College-level Anatomy and Physiology I and II