Michele Maghini
6th Grade ELA Teacher

Dan Sonstrom
Principal, Northeast Middle School
530 Stevens Street

Dear Dan,

Please accept this letter as formal notification that I will be retiring from my position as 6th grade Language Arts Teacher effective June 30, 2027.

It has been a true privilege to be a part of the Northeast community for the past 19 years. During my time here, I have had the pleasure of working alongside incredible colleagues, supportive leadership, and wonderful students. I am deeply grateful for the opportunities I've had to grow professionally and contribute to our school's mission.

Over the coming months, I remain fully committed to maintaining the highest standard of instruction for my students. I am also happy to assist in making this transition as seamless as possible, whether that involves organizing my classroom materials, helping prepare for a successor, or assisting with handoff notes.

Thank you again for your support and leadership during my tenure at NEMS. I wish you, the staff, and our students continued success in the future.

Sincerely,

Michele Maghini
Teacher

October 5, 2026

Rose Ortiz-Diehl
Fifth Grade Teacher & Enrichment Coach
Stafford School, Bristol Public Schools

To: Latanya Farrell
CC: Joseph Grabowski
Bristol Public Schools Administration

Subject: Notice of Intent to Retire – End of 2026–2027 School Year

Dear Administration,

Please accept this letter as formal notification of my intent to retire from my position as a Fifth Grade Teacher and Enrichment Coach at Stafford School at the conclusion of the 2026–2027 school year.

Reflecting on my 20 years of service within Bristol Public Schools, I am filled with immense gratitude for the opportunity to educate, mentor, and grow alongside such a dedicated community of students, families, and educators. Serving this district over two decades has been one of the most rewarding journeys of my professional life.

Teaching has brought me profound joy throughout my career. I will deeply miss the daily interactions in the classroom—the spark of curiosity in my students when a new concept clicks, the enthusiasm during enrichment activities, and the warmth of our school community. Collaborating with my colleagues and participating in our students' growth year after year has left an indelible mark on my heart.

As I prepare for this final year, my commitment to my students, team, and school remains as strong as ever. I look forward to making the 2026–2027 school year a fulfilling and memorable experience for everyone at Stafford School. I am also dedicated to assisting in any way necessary to ensure a seamless transition for my students and the incoming faculty before my departure.

Thank you for your support, leadership, and guidance throughout my years with Bristol Public Schools. I look forward to celebrating this milestone year with our school community.

Sincerely,

Rose Ortiz-Diehl
Fifth Grade Teacher & Enrichment Coach
Stafford School, Bristol Public Schools

Sharon Vocke
Northeast Middle School

October 13, 2026

Ms. Iris White, Superintendent of Schools
Bristol Public Schools Central office
129 Church Street
Bristol, CT 06010

Dear Superintendent White and Members of the Board of Education,

Please accept this letter as formal notification of my intent to retire from my position as Instrumental Music Teacher at Northeast Middle School. My last day of employment with Bristol Public Schools will be February 1, 2027, with an effective retirement date of March 1, 2027.

My decision to retire was not easy. Although I'm excited about my future, I'm also deeply grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in so many lives, and it has been deeply fulfilling. As a child, I was mostly ignored by my parents and felt invisible, until my elementary band director chose me in fifth grade to be in a quartet. I became a music teacher because I wanted to make sure young people all feel seen and special. I had teachers along the way who served as phenomenal role models and I'm grateful to Bristol for giving me the opportunity to "pay it forward."

I have always known intuitively that learning to play an instrument enhances the brain. A player must use fine and gross motor movement, with the precision and timing needed, all while listening, matching, blending, and adjusting every moment. This happens while reading notes, rhythms, tempos, and dynamics, following a conductor, and creating phrases and expressing emotion. This activates every part of the brain.

Playing an instrument is one of the few activities that can be enjoyed alone or with others for the rest of one's life, and the skills and socialization are proven to enhance the lives of the young, old, and very old. In band, there's a place for everyone, from the very gifted to the most limited. No one is excluded and no one is benched. It's a win for everyone, including musicians, composers, and audience members, and, in turn, the world.

Thank you to the City of Bristol, for allowing me to nurture students and support them in their joys and struggles in this challenging and rewarding endeavor. I have had the pleasure of working with many wonderful, supportive families here, and many have become dear friends.

I could not have done this without the incredible support and help I received from Ken Bagley. He reminded me that I'm good at this job when I doubted myself. He helps all of us in our department in big and small ways, when he's able, including subbing at 7:00 am without hesitation, and he helped when the new BAIMS music area was damaged. He put the art tables together at the new NEMS when the legs finally came in. When I had 27 students auditioning for Regionals one year, he helped coach them before school every Friday for months. He's a servant- leader who lifts up others around him, and encourages and teaches rather than being critical. He's been a positive role model and a tremendous help to me. He's one of Bristol's greatest treasures.

I am fully committed to ensuring a smooth passing of the baton to Northeast's new band director. I want the students' experience to continue to be meaningful and fulfilling. Please let me know how I can best help the administration and the fine arts department make this transition as smooth as possible.

I am confident the Bristol Public Schools will continue to thrive and grow. I will carry the memories of all who supported me as I continue my journey.

With gratitude,

Sharon Vocke

CC:
Daniel Sonstrom, Principal, Northeast Middle School
Kenneth Bagley, Supervisor, Fine Arts
Joseph Grabowski, Office of Talent Management
Allison Wadowski, Benefits Coordinator
Mike Reynolds, BFT President