



November 27, 2024

Dear WTPS Community:

Tonight, my kitchen will be an absolute disaster. As my past Thanksgiving Eves indicate, pots, pans, casserole dishes, and aluminum foil will take over my countertops, and random potato and carrot peels will undoubtedly fall to the floor. I usually keep the box of Band-Aids within reach because, without question, I will think my slicing and dicing skills are on par with that of an Iron Chef; I can assure you, they are not. I know what my kitchen will look like because we literally prepare the same exact dishes every year. For 364 days a year, my palate prefers variety, but NOT on Thanksgiving. The family will revolt if we do not make Grandma's sausage stuffing. If Uncle Mike doesn't have homemade carrot cake, he will literally declare a Thanksgiving do-over. My sisters will send me packing if we do not make "turnips." Technically, these "turnips" are rutabagas but my great-grandparents called them turnips, so they will forever be referred to as turnips. I think you get the picture. Yes, we have a rigid Thanksgiving menu, but, honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way. In an ever-changing world filled with unknowns, I welcome a day that is chock full of "knowns." To me, that day is Thanksgiving. I am so grateful for the opportunity to celebrate and honor our family traditions. Truth be told, I loathe "turnips," (A.K.A. rutabagas) but Thanksgiving wouldn't be the same without them. I hope someday my daughters will continue the "turnip" tradition even though they don't like them either.

My guess is that my messy kitchen is not an outlier. I imagine there are so many family traditions - food and non-food - that will have their annual re-emergence throughout the WTPS community this Thanksgiving. I think what appeals to me the most about Thanksgiving traditions is that so many are generational and that they are passed on by spending time together.

I hope that you have the opportunity to celebrate your own traditions or perhaps even start new ones. May Thanksgiving 2024 be one of fond remembrance and renewal for you and yours.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,
Tracy R. Handerhan, D.Litt.
Superintendent of Schools