

Office of the Superintendent - Woodbridge School District

Dear Families of Beecher Road School:

January 2 marked my first anniversary as your Superintendent of Schools. As I look back over the year I am proud of what we have started together and look forward to moving our school district toward unmatched student performance and remarkable 21st Century learning models. Here's a snapshot of the "state of the schools."

...Plans have turned to action

- There is a clear educational mission, vision, and plan that is connected and aligned.
- Major initiatives have been launched, including *Writers' Workshop* and a cohesive balanced *Literacy Program* in all grades.
- The process of reorganizing and strengthening the school's *Mathematics* program with links to the Middle School has begun.
- A systemic plan has been developed to implement *Responsive Classroom*, a character development program, throughout the school.
- *Music* and the *Arts* continue to thrive. Our instrumental program has been recognized for excellence on local, state and national levels.
- Linking our school to one in China, a *Global Knowledge Building Communities* initiative has begun.
- A highly praised *Technology Plan* is in the process of being implemented.
- An updated *Science* curriculum, conforming to new state science standards, has been written.

...How did we do on the Connecticut Mastery Tests?

- The CMT results from last March show some movement. Examples include: Woodbridge exceeded the DRG average in 4th and 5th grade Reading, 3rd grade Math, and 3rd grade Writing. Woodbridge was 2nd out of 20 districts in 5th grade Math, and fifth out of 20 districts in 6th grade Writing.
- The Woodbridge School District scored well above the 90% proficiency level in all areas of the state tested curricula, far exceeding all federal mandates. Are we doing well? Yes.
- Can we do better? Yes. With staff and administration cooperating together, serious systematic planning has begun with a focus on improving student performance. However, we will not be satisfied to do well on CMTs alone; we need to and will go beyond!

...There's magic in the air

- There's a buzz throughout the school. There's magic in the air. Good ideas are flowing from every direction. One success is leading to another. There's a good feeling, and we are starting to see results.
- With Town support, we have a new Science Lab and a new traffic circle.
 - We've initiated a major *Teacher Development* program that aligns with the district's Strategic Plan.
 - I have formed an *Administrative Dream Team* with the development of a Co-Principal model, a new Business Manager and a Director of Special Education.

Let's also remember that while technology, academics and increased student achievement are very important, it is equally as important for us to help students develop into happy, fulfilled human beings of admirable character.

...A positive atmosphere permeates the school

- Collective energy and wisdom of the school are channeled in a common direction.
- There is increased communication between school and community.
- All constituents are at the same table. There is open dialogue, communication, trust and thinking together.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers and staff are highly motivated. They give of themselves.
- What barriers that may have existed between administration and staff are fading. There is a reaching out, an effort to understand each other with common bonds and goals for our children, community and the world beyond.
- Parents have been active partners.
- A strong working relationship has been established between the *School District* and *Town*.
- Collective thought and common purpose helped to get us through a tough budget cycle.
- Closer links have been established with the BOWA districts.

***Mission, Vision and Goals:
The Next Three Years***

I have worked thoughtfully with my administrative team and staff to craft a *Strategic Plan* that will be our road map to improving the quality of teaching and learning at Beecher Road School. A summary of our mission, vision and goals of the *Strategic Plan* are as follows:

...What we want: Our Mission

To work together to prepare our children to pursue knowledge and learning throughout their lives so they can become responsible, caring and contributing members of an ever-changing and diverse global community.

In the best interests of our children, we are committed to:

- Learning as a challenging process of choice, discovery, change, and growth for all;
- Inspiring the development and sharing of everyone's unique gifts and talents;
- Providing a learning community that nurtures and integrates social, emotional, physical and academic development.

...How we see it: Our Vision

To accomplish our mission, Beecher Road School must be a nurturing and stimulating community that values achievement, creativity, personal integrity and self-discipline. Here, each child will develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically and ethically in an environment that promotes self-awareness and respect.

...When we want it: Strategic Goals

1. Prepare every child to be a *highly successful and independent* reader, writer, critical thinker and problem solver by the end of sixth grade.
2. Build the foundations of character and wellness that are essential for responsible participation as a local, national and global citizen.

In addition, the Board of Education has adopted three main goals that are purposefully aligned with the school's strategic plan.

***My Message to Families of
Beecher Road School:
Transform BRS into a 21st Century
model of education***

The District has developed a zero-based budget. It started at "zero" and was built one need at a time. Everything had to be defended. This budget supports the vision and educational mission of our school system. The budget proposal seeks to transform schooling at *Beecher Road School* into a 21st Century model. We cannot afford to lose one staff position, one penny of the budget, if we are to implement this model and achieve our shared vision. On December 18, 2006, the *Board of Education* gave a vote of confidence to all of us by unanimously approving the budget as presented.

...What can you do?

I will make a formal presentation of the school board's approved budget to the joint Boards of Selectmen and Finance on ***Tuesday, February 6th at 6:00 PM at Town Hall.*** Collectively we can achieve much, and for that reason I am inviting you to attend this public budget presentation and learn about our school.

In addition, I encourage you, in the next half of this school year, to support what we are trying to do for our children and school district in any constructive way that you can. As for my part, I will continue to be a strong advocate for the children of *Beecher Road School*, while, at the same time, being respectful to the taxpayer as we encourage a continued sense of trust, mutual cooperation and open dialogue among all town and school community constituents. We are one Town.

Thank you for all the support you have given me, my administrative team and school staff. The children of *Beecher Road School* will be the beneficiaries of our continued collaboration and cooperation. Together, we will do wonderful things for our children.

I look forward to serving you and the children of *Beecher Road School* in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Gaeton F. Stella, Ph.D
Superintendent