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## Parent Update – September 7, 2007

### From Dr. Stella – Superintendent of Schools

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#### ***It's Here! What Your Child Learns: A Parent's Guide To The Curriculum***

Dear Families of Beecher Road School:

I am happy to present you with our new publication, *What Your Child Learns: A Parents' Guide to the Curriculum* – one copy for every *Beecher Road School* family. With the support of the school board, this guide was developed by my administrative team and staff members to enhance communication between school and home. With all of the *other* expectations placed on today's schools, sometimes the curriculum takes a back seat. In Woodbridge, we are placing *our* curriculum on display as a living document for the world to see.

The publication is interactive. With such high visibility, we welcome the joys and challenges that the spotlight creates. The *Curriculum Guide* will raise questions, start conversations, and place the emphasis in our schools squarely on the question: *What do we teach the children?*

The new *Parent's Guide To The Curriculum* will serve you and your children in several positive ways.

- For the first time, you have *concrete* and *comprehensive* information about what your children learn. This information will make you better consumers of what we provide: *education for your children*.
- You will have a basis and a starting point to have meaningful discussions with educators about subject matter content. We encourage you to become involved in the educational process. This information will help you do just that.
- Special sections throughout the guide give you explicit ideas to support education and the curriculum at home.
- We hope you will, at an age-appropriate level, discuss the curriculum with your children and show an understanding and interest in what is being learned. You can help your children anticipate new learning and reinforce that already taught. Your discussions will demonstrate that learning is a serious endeavor and that the whole family values education and expects its children to put forth their best effort in school.

It should be understood from the outset that the curriculum guide is not a "how to teach" manual, but rather a "what to teach" reference. Teachers will have a

ready reference from which creative and interesting lessons flow. To the trained teacher, one simply written skill or concept triggers a vast number of ways to teach it. That's the art of teaching. Teachers will have a road map to which they can easily refer as they balance the constraints of time against the reality of a comprehensive curriculum. They will have common ground around which conversations and team plans can develop and can use the guide as a focus for parent/teacher conferences.

Bringing unity and consistency of curriculum to the classrooms is always a challenge. This guide gives administrators and staff a tool to design professional development activities for groups and individuals, and to focus decisions in a common direction. Curriculum is ever changing. *The Guide* can point out where efforts need to be directed. For example:

- *Does our curriculum reflect needs that may be unique to Woodbridge?*
- *Or, Is the curriculum so comprehensive that in-depth understanding of skills and concepts is sacrificed in order to "cover the material."*
- *Or, How does our curriculum support the skills expected by high-stakes tests like the CMT?*

We are confident that this new publication, ***What Your Child Learns: A Parent's Guide To The Curriculum***, will be a catalyst for across the board improvement in what our children learn. It always will be a work in progress and as such will be adjusted and updated as the need arises.

Feel free to contact any member of my administrative team, or me, with any questions or feedback that you have about this new publication.

Best wishes to you and your children for a great school year!

Sincerely,

*Gaeton F. Stella*

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