



Parent Update – August 20, 2008

From Dr. Stella – Superintendent of Schools

Welcome back to all!

First day of school: Wednesday - Aug. 27

I hope that you and your children have had an enjoyable fun-filled summer. With a strong commitment to work for the success of your children, our administrative team, the entire staff of *Beecher Road School*, and I look forward to the new school year.

As most of you know, Mr. Kevin Kucinkas, a classroom teacher at BRS for many years, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in July. I am proud of the Beecher community and the support it has given to the Kucinkas family during this time. We will all miss this special teacher.

As we move into the new year, be assured that we will continue to focus on the district's two main goals. These goals promote the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of your children. The first goal is *to prepare every child to become a highly successful and independent reader, writer, critical thinker and problem solver by the end of sixth grade*. The second goal is *to build the foundations of character and wellness that are essential for responsible participation as a local, national and global citizen*.

We are in an exciting time at Beecher Road School – a time filled with promise and anticipation of new challenges and opportunities. Working together, we will continue to do wonderful things for our children.

Say “hello” to new staff

We welcome 11 new staff members to fill openings due to retirements, maternity leaves and resignations. They are:

- Multi-Age Group 4: Barbara Ahern
- Multi-Age Group 1: Shannon Sanders
- Grade 2: Carson Echeverry and Allison Schulze
- Spanish: Stephanie Wielgoszinski
- Intermediate Math Specialist: Jennifer Schnitzer
- Resource Teacher Grade 5: Caterina Zdrowski
- Teacher Assistant, Kdg.: Jennifer Cooper
- Teacher Assistant, Spec. Ed.: Elisa Brochin Rosner
- Teacher Assistant, Spec. Ed.: Lakeisha Walker
- Custodial worker: Ed Stockman



A look at staff changes from last year

New assignments at BRS:

- Dolores Don, formerly Gr 2, is now teaching Gr 3
- Timothy Rourke, formerly Gr 5 resource room teacher, is now teaching fifth grade
- Frank Joyce was appointed as the new night supervisor of custodians.

Teaching elsewhere:

- Karin Fullam, Gr 2 teacher, teaching in New York
- Connie Lyssy, Gr 3 teacher, teaching in Florida

Retired:

- Diane King, grade 3 teacher
- Joan Benevento, intermediate math specialist
- Peter Swan, teaching assistant

Summer maintenance projects update

The following facilities projects were completed or will be completed in the near future:

- Cafeteria kitchen floor has been power cleaned and sealed.
- Room cleaning and floor waxing has been completed.
- Painting has been done in some parts of the building.
- South parking lot has been lined and painted.
- Asbestos abatement and floor tiling for three classrooms and an office are completed. Asbestos abatement in the South auditorium is completed.
- The *Special Education Administrative Office* was moved to the suite in the middle of the building. The

Recreation Office will move to the old music room shortly. The district offices will move to Beecher Road South sometime in September.

- The missing *Beecher Road School* sign at the entrance to the school has been replaced.
- Maintenance work has been done on the school grounds.

Connecticut Mastery Test results

We have received the scores from last spring's CMT's, and there are many indicators of success. These results will be shared at the September 15 Board of Education meeting as well as in a future newsletter. Student CMT reports will be sent home to parents when they are received from the state.

World Language Program has changed

As you may be aware, the *World Language Program* at BRS is now being implemented starting in kindergarten and continuing through grade six. Spanish will be the sole language of instruction. A proficiency model of instruction, where the outcome is skills-based, is being implemented. The revamped program aligns with the middle school.

A busy summer at Beecher

Summer Curriculum Work: Administrators and staff members worked on several key curriculum areas this summer including Social Studies, Health Education, World Language (Spanish), Language Arts, Science and an **SRBI** (*Scientifically Research Based Intervention*) school-wide model.

Reader's/Writer's Institute: During July and August, members of the Beecher Road School staff attended week-long *Reader's or Writer's Workshop Institutes* at Columbia University. Attendees included Carol Bequary, Mary Sell, Diane Krivda, JoAnn Giaquinto, Maureen Krawec, Adrienne Coleman, Ellen Regan, Nicole Cioffi, Jennifer Lloyd Crespi, Monique McDonald, Sharon Blinstrubas, Mary Vincetorio and Visna Ngov.

Summer programs for children: Beecher Road School remains open throughout the summer. Over 500 children participated in successful summer programs. In spite of the constant traffic, our custodians worked diligently and effectively to get the building ready for the first day of school. We appreciate their hard work.

Two more projects in the planning phase

New track: A consulting firm has completed a study and conceptual design for the construction of a new track. The study will be brought to the school board's facilities committee and to the full Board of Education for review and discussion.

Cafeteria Acoustics: A consultant has been hired to do an acoustical study of the school cafeteria.

Join us at the Beecher Café – Adults only.

Parents and staff are invited to come and enjoy a cup of coffee or a light breakfast snack, at reasonable prices, at our newly created *Beecher Café*, located in the school's cafeteria. Healthy breakfast snacks and beverages range from \$.50 to \$1.75. The café is open from 7:00 AM to 10:30 AM. Adults only.

Reminder: Lunch prices will be slightly higher this year due to rising costs. You will find more information in the student packet that is being sent home on the first day of school.

Look in your children's first-day take-home packet

There are many important items of information that are sent home with your child on the first day of school. Many of them require your attention as soon as possible, if not immediately. Others are there for your information to assist you in planning a successful and pleasurable school experience for your child.

Look for the updated copy of the district's award-winning *Parent/Student Handbook* in your child's take-home packet. The handbook contains literally hundreds of points of information that are critical to ensure that you are informed about your child's school. I invite feedback on the handbook through e-mail or other forms of communication.

"Open House" dates are coming very fast

The "Open House" nights are a wonderful time to establish relationships and get to know your child's teachers. We encourage you to attend. The dates for the different grades are:

Thursday, Sept. 4: Grades 5 and 6

Wednesday, Sept. 10: Grades 3, 4, and Multi-Age Group

Thursday, Sept. 11: Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2

Please receive this welcome message as encouragement to join the Beecher family in our work with children during the 2008-2009 school year. Whether you are a parent or family member, your support in the challenging work of educating our children is very important and valued by all. Consider joining the PTO and offering your services as a volunteer.

The Woodbridge Board of Education, school administrators, teachers, staff and I look forward to working with you and other members of the community in order to make this the best and brightest school year ever.

Best wishes for a successful and happy school year!

Sincerely,

Gaeton F. Stella, Ph.D.
Superintendent