



## Parent Update - October 22, 2009 From Dr. Stella – Superintendent of Schools

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### Woodbridge students shine again on state tests\*

Each spring, students in all of the state's public schools are required to take a battery of tests called the *Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)*, so academic progress can be assessed. The results of the CMT are widely reported and used in the state for various purposes. Data from the test is also used by the federal government as part of the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* law. The results also give school districts important information on how well students are learning and where they need improvement.

In Woodbridge, our students continue their upward trend in achieving high standards of academic proficiency. In order to understand the results, you should know that five levels of attainment are set forth by the Connecticut State Department of Education: *Advanced, Goal, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic*. For discussion purposes we will focus on proficient and goal.

**Proficient:** Achieving this standard means a student has an adequate knowledge of grade-level concepts. The NCLB law is tied to this standard.

**Goal** is a higher level of achievement which means that students demonstrate an extensive knowledge of grade-level content and are able to demonstrate a consistent ability to apply concepts.

The federal government's NCLB law has its own set of terms.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** is an achievement standard that means all the students are making progress toward increasingly more difficult academic goals. The intent of the AYP targets is to move students in all districts to 100% proficiency in all test areas.

Tested in grades three, four, five and six last spring, the results point to many indicators of success.

- The vast majority of BRS students attain proficiency levels well over 90% in most areas. In one case, 100%.
- Our sixth grade class scored at 94% at or above goal in math. Only three districts out of 20 attained that level in our DRG.<sup>§</sup>
- Our fourth grade class ranked first in writing at 89% at or above goal in the DRG, with our sixth grade tied for first at 88%
- Woodbridge is compared to other high performing school districts. In many cases, the difference between being #1, #2, or #3 in the DRG comes down to one or two tenths of a percent.
- A CMT Action Plan was presented to the Board of Education recently that addresses areas where our achievement did not match expectations.

§ District Reference Group - a designation by the state used to make fair comparisons among districts.

**What do the results tell us?** Overall, students are learning very well. The high levels of *proficiency* and *goal* attainment affirm that our curricular initiatives are making a difference in all students. We shall continue that path.

**Are we satisfied?** No. When 100% of the students are *proficient* and more than 90% of them have attained *goal* we will be pleased – ready to soar even farther.

\* For complete results go to the District website. [www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us](http://www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us)

### H1N1 Flu Vaccination Clinic coming

As new developments with the H1N1 flu virus become known, our school staff is in constant contact with the Quinnipiac Valley Health District (QVHD) staff. Recently it was decided that we would host a clinic for H1N1 flu vaccinations. A packet of information, including permission slips, went home on Oct. 20 (See district website for a copy of the packet.) The top half of the permission slip, on the form called **Public Provider Vaccination Administration Record**, must be filled out by the parent or guardian and returned to school by Oct. 28.

At this writing, this is what we know about the plan for the clinic:

- It will be held soon, after school at BRS – 3:30 – 7:30
- It is for BRS students only.
- QVHD nurses will administer the vaccine. Parent volunteers will assist.
- Our head nurse, Stacey Katz, will oversee administrative details.
- Participation in the clinic is voluntary. Parents should consult their child's pediatrician.
- When the QVHD knows when they will get the vaccine for us, they will give us five days notice to alert you about the clinic.

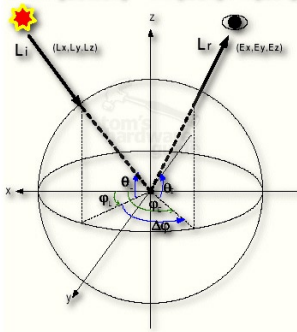
### BRS Nature Trail Revitalized



Dr. Stella congratulates Alex Carpenter, (second from left), and members of his team for reclaiming the Nature Trail as part of Alex's Eagle Scout Project.

Story on page 2.

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## Where do mathematicians come from?

At BRS, our sixth grade students have a solid record of math achievement. In fact, on last spring's CMT 100% of the students scored at the *proficient* level and 94% of them scored at or above the *goal* level in math. This year's new group of sixth graders follows in those footsteps. To get their eager minds cogitating, the class is enrolled in a national math competition.

This effort is the Continental Math League (CML). The CML experience is designed to give students opportunities to participate and to improve their problem solving skills. BRS students participate with others on the same grade level from schools all over the United States.

CML meets occur once a month for 5 months. Students have 30 minutes to complete 6 problems. The higher order thinking questions are very unique and emphasize reading, analyzing, and synthesizing as compared to computational skills. Student scores are submitted to CML headquarters in N.Y. and compiled into state and national results.

The true value of these *meets* is the rich discussions that take place afterwards. Numerous problem solving strategies are discussed and alternate approaches explored. In the past we have competed in the Pythagorean division. However, recently we have added the Euclidean division.

**Are you as smart as a 6<sup>th</sup> grader?** Try these examples of past questions: (Answers inverted at the end of the newsletter.)

### #1 - Pythagorean Division Sample Question

The *product* of three whole numbers is 60. The numbers are all different and greater than 1. The *sum* of the three numbers is 13. What are the numbers?

### #2 - Euclidean Division Sample Question

The stadium in City A seats 11,500 more than the stadium in City B. The stadium in City C seats 6,800 more than the stadium in City B. If the seating capacity of the stadium in City A is 75,000, what is the seating capacity of the stadium in City C?

## System Test set for Nov.4 - Are you on INSTANT ALERT?

The Woodbridge School District is working to take full advantage of the *Instant Alert* system that has been used in the past for emergency notifications to parents and staff.

**Instant Alert requires every parent to register or update**  
Our goal is 100% participation. The first step in this process is for parents to login to register or update settings for receiving notifications through Instant Alert. Directions may be downloaded from the Parent Information page of the district website found at [www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us](http://www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us).

### Parents and school need to test Instant Alert

The second step will be a test of the entire system. This test will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 4. But, it only works for those families who have registered and updated information.

### Four color coded "alert" levels are planned

You control which of the following alerts you wish to receive. The four "alert" levels are:

**RED ALERT** - Emergency notifications

**ORANGE ALERT** - "No School" announcements, delayed openings, early closings due to weather.

**YELLOW ALERT** - Transportation: bus delays, other events that impact transportation.

**GREEN ALERT** - General announcements: upcoming minimum schedule and conference days, newsletters, Superintendent's updates, etc.

### Routine Communication through Instant Alert

By the new year, we anticipate that routine communications will be sent to the BRS community through the Instant Alert system as *Green Alerts*. Our goal is to improve communication while reducing consumption of paper.

For questions: email - [instantalert@woodbridge.k12.ct.us](mailto:instantalert@woodbridge.k12.ct.us), or call Larry Hurwitz at 203-389-2195

### BRS Parents: Are you thinking safety in the car?

Every year, more than 40,000 Americans are killed in motor vehicle crashes. Children can be severely injured or killed.

While most of these crashes are preventable, surviving a crash increases dramatically when children are properly restrained.

However, as I and others have seen, many children who are driven to BRS are improperly restrained. Connecticut's Child Passenger Safety Laws include the following:

Children **must** remain in a booster seat until they are *over* six years old *and* weigh more than 60 pounds. It is recommended that children ride in boosters until they are 4'9". Older children **must** wear a seatbelt at all times. Some children ride with the shoulder portion behind them. Riding without the shoulder part of the belt increases the risk of head and abdominal injuries. It is also recommended that children ride in the back seat until they are 13, as airbags can injure or kill smaller front-seat passengers.

As we enter a period of hazardous driving conditions, these reminders are good for all of us to remember.

### Eagle Scout Project Reclaims BRS Nature Trail

Alex Carpenter, an Amity High School student, developed an Eagle Scout project that essentially brought the old unusable BRS Nature Trail back to life. Over the Columbus Day weekend, Alex coordinated and worked on the effort that involved nearly 50 people of all ages who logged 250+ volunteer hours. Included were Boy and Girl Scouts, Brownies and Cubs, BRS families, school staff and AHS students including members of the wrestling team.

The plan called for installing a split-rail fence and sign along the trail, cutting and digging out the undergrowth, and laying down wood chips and mulch. The Town, through the efforts of Carl Quist, supplied four truckloads of mulch and chips. The School District supplied the lumber for the fence. BRS teacher Anthony Taddei provided technical assistance.

As the project got underway, sandwiches, drinks and other items were supplied to the hungry workers by the Carpenter family and others.

We are grateful to Alex Carpenter for taking on this project and executing it so well with assistance from many.

My best to you all, *Gaston F. Stella*