



## Parent Update – April 8, 2009

### From Dr. Stella – Superintendent of Schools

#### **Mark your calendars with these end-of-the-year and summer dates**

**Last Day of School:** Providing there are no unforeseen weather or other emergencies, the last day of school for BRS students is Monday, June 22. It will be a shortened day with a 1:10 dismissal. The last day for teachers is June 23.

**Sixth Grade “Graduation”:** Friday, June 19, at 1:00 in the Amity High School auditorium. Sixth grade students will be transported by bus from BRS to the high school. Parents can take their children home after the ceremony. As started last year, we will use a ticket system for admission. Details will follow.

**Sixth Grade “Graduation” Party:** We expect to hold the sixth grade party on Monday, June 22 after early dismissal.

**SEP – Summer Enrichment Program:** Five weeks. June 29 – July 31. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. Course details will be posted online shortly.

**Recreation Department Programs:** Six weeks. June 29 – August 7. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon.

**Extended Day Program:** Seven weeks. June 29 – August 14. **Early Bird Arrival** 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Programs 9:00 – 12:00 noon. Extended Day continues 12:00 – 5:30 p.m.

#### **Mathematics: Focus of the Superintendent’s Curriculum Academy and Board of Education curriculum review**

On March 26, a well-attended *Superintendent’s Parents’ Curriculum Academy*, a forum for parents to learn about aspects of the curriculum, provided an overview of mathematics education practices at BRS. Members of the administration and school staff presented an informative program that looked at the new Connecticut mathematics standards, how math fits with a *21<sup>st</sup> Century Model of Education*, BRS data on math achievement, multiple resources used in math instruction, demonstration lessons, and other topics. A question and answer session followed.

At the same time, the mathematics curriculum is in a review cycle as a regular process of curriculum revision. Starting this summer and continuing through next school year, this comprehensive activity will address several areas. Among them are:

- Update curriculum based on 2008 Connecticut and national mathematics standards;
- Update assessments that provide data to guide math instruction;
- Review all resources and materials used in math instruction;

- Focus on *professional development* of the staff and the application of *professional learning teams* to improve math achievement;
- Ensure a balanced instructional approach that includes computational fluency, conceptual understanding, problem solving and higher order thinking skills;
- Strengthen the math connection with Amity’s grades 7-12 program.

Mathematics is fundamental for the success of our children. As a district we will strive to apply the best practices as we continue to improve math achievement. Decisions will always be made in the best interests of all children.



*Leavin’ On A Jet Plane...*

#### **Away they go**

Two BRS teachers, Mr. Wood and Mr. Crawford, leave for China today. They will be visiting our *sister schools* where they will work with their Chinese counterparts in creating meaningful digital projects for BRS students to interact with Chinese students. During their travels and time spent at the schools in Shandong Province, the teachers will be in constant communication with us through written journals, audio podcasts, video podcasts, photographs and more – all posted on the Internet. They are writing specifically for elementary and middle school students and will include answers to questions submitted by students. Follow their daily adventures at [www.cconnn.org](http://www.cconnn.org)!

This trip marks the fifth in a series of sister school reciprocal visits with the goal of promoting global citizenship.

- October 2007 – Chinese educators visited BRS at the start of the *sister school* program.
- November 2007 – Dr. Stella went to China as part of a State Education Department delegation to enhance

educational ties between China and Connecticut, and to establish a sister school relationship.

- April 2008 – Mrs. White, sixth grade teacher, went to China to work with Chinese educators at our sister school.
- January 2009 – Two principals from China visited Woodbridge. One was from our sister school and the other was from a different school with a proposal to become our second sister school. We accepted.
- April 2009 – Mr. Crawford and Mr. Wood are in China visiting both sister schools now.

### ***Kucinkas Memorial Loop/Track update***

Plans to build the exercise loop on the BRS campus continue. The project has been reopened to the bidding process to ensure the most competitive proposals. The submission deadline for new bids is set for April 22. Please continue to support the fundraising efforts of the PTO – [www.brspto.org](http://www.brspto.org).

### ***“March Madness” comes to BRS***

On March 19, the first of what may become an annual sporting event came to BRS: *The Student/Staff Basketball Challenge*. Laughter and joy as well as loud applause filled the south auditorium as students and teachers competed against each other in this basketball competition. I got to throw the ball for the opening jump shot. The game was fast moving; the outcome was close. As predicted, the students managed to edge out the teachers in the final minutes of the game. Thanks to Mrs. Simowitz, Physical Education Teacher, for planning this fun-filled event.

### ***More kudos to students and staff***

Our music and marching band students have distinguished themselves in several ways at recent competitions. On March 27, the BRS *Jazz Ensemble* jammed at *Jonathan Law High School* in Milford scoring an impressive 91 out of 100 points, winning a gold medal. On March 28, the BRS Winterguard finished in third place at a regional competition held in Trumbull. At the same event, the *Amity High School* Winterguard, including many former BRS students, finished in third place in the competition.

Additionally, April 4, the BRS *Percussion Ensemble* defended its championship title for the fifth year in a row. They came in first. We are extremely proud of our students and their leader, Mr. Letsch.

In other news, the annual SCASA (*South Central Association of School Administrators*) Awards Luncheon was held on March 20. Two students from BRS received a Superintendent’s Award. They were George Tucker from Mr. Katzen’s class and Caroline Burkhart from Mrs. Osborne’s class. Congratulations to both students.

Mrs. Torre and Mrs. Blinstrubas accompanied Woodbridge Fire Marshall Mike Cavanaugh to a luncheon in Cromwell to honor Ryan Oleynik on March

26. For the first time in eight years, the town of Woodbridge has a county winner in the *Connecticut Fire Safety Poster Contest* competition.

### ***Capital budget moves forward***

As a point of clarification, an *operating budget* is the funding plan for supplying the school with what it needs to keep educational programs in place and moving forward for one school year. On the other hand, a *capital budget* is separate. It calls for large expenditures of money for big projects such as equipment acquisition, major building updates and repairs, and other items calling for large sums of money. We have a capital budget proposal that was put forth last year.

*Here’s what’s in it:*

- **Technology:** Hardware, systems and infrastructure
- **Building Infrastructure and Upgrades:** update/replace heating/ventilation (HV) components; replace windows; replace ceiling tiles and casework; paint and repair walls; bring components up to code; replace light fixtures and other electrical components; replace exterior doors; paint and update exterior components of building; update/replace plumbing items; install air conditioning; address roof problems; grounds and landscape projects.

*Here’s the projected timeline:*

- March ‘09: The Board-of-Selectmen-appointed *Building Committee* (BC) started the process.
- April – June ‘09: BC selects design team.
- July – October ‘09: Votes taken to move ahead; Town referendum documents prepared.
- November ‘09 – March ‘10: Town meetings, presentations.
- April 2010: Town referendum on plan.
- May ‘10 – December ‘10: Prepare contract documents.
- January 2011: Contract for construction.
- June 2011 – August 2012: Execution of work.

### ***Budget dates set***

We are pleased to say the proposed 2009-10 *operating budget* request is good for the school and fair to the taxpayer. On April 20 there will be a preliminary Town Budget hearing. On May 18 a public meeting of the Boards of Finance and Selectmen will make all budgets final at the annual Town Meeting.

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### ***Spring vacation, warmer weather, sunshine and blossoms brightening your way...***

Best wishes to you and your family for a happy, safe, and healthy spring recess next week.

