



Parent Update - March 9, 2011 From Dr. Stella - Superintendent of Schools

Welcome Officer Lynch to Beecher Road School

Officer Lynch keeping us safe

Following our winter break, we introduced our sixth graders to Officer Lynch, from the Woodbridge Police Department. Officer Lynch will join our staff as part of the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program.

We are very happy to have DARE at Beecher Road School for our sixth graders. It is a nine-week program that helps children make appropriate choices and resist pressures that may influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and/or drugs. Students from individual sixth grade classrooms meet with Officer Lynch each week for one hour. His instructional lessons are taken from the official DARE Program curriculum.

He uses a variety of teaching strategies during the lessons. These may include the use of audio-visual materials, role-playing, lecture, and short readings. One of the problem-solving strategies he teaches is a decision-making model, which is **D**ecide on the problem; **A**ssess the choices that are available; **R**espond; **E**valuate your choices.

At the end of the program, students will write individual essays to explain what was learned during the program. Graduation for students completing the program will be held in May.

In addition to teaching the DARE program, Officer Lynch has been assigned to support BRS as a community officer. In that capacity, you can see him on most days directing traffic during the morning ingress and afternoon egress of students and interacting with students, administration, staff and parents throughout the day. Stop and introduce yourself to Officer Lynch as a new and welcome member of the BRS community. We extend our thanks to First Selectman Ed Sheehy, Police Chief Marcucci and Deputy Chief Ray Stewart for reinstating this position. We also extend thanks to former DARE Sergeant Tom Balch for his dedicated service to BRS during the past several years.



Staying safe in emergencies takes practice

Members of the Safety and Security Committee, chaired by Mrs. Bequary, have met regularly this past year to revisit and revise all safety protocols. On February 28, students, faculty and staff participated in the practice of a lock down. Watching the entire school go into this mode in 1 minute was amazing.

The administrative team and Officer Lynch walked through the building, checking for locked doors and covered windows. Everyone did a good job. In fact, they did such a good job that you could hear a pin drop in the school. This was the third practice emergency drill staged this year.

Bus evacuation and school evacuation were practiced last fall.

Shelter in place, taking refuge in a specified place while indoors, is scheduled to be practiced this spring. In January when the campus and school were covered with snow and ice, committee members did a walk-through of the building with the Fire Marshal to confirm that all exits and walkways were properly cleared and safe.

The committee analyzes each event, including regularly scheduled fire drills, to improve practice and attend to issues that surface to make for the safest possible outcomes in any of these events. The committee will continue its weekly meetings and ongoing work to produce an updated *Crisis Manual* for the district. If you have any questions about safety procedures at BRS, contact Mrs. Bequary at cbequary@woodbridge.k12.ct.us.

REMINDER
Parent Conferences April 4 and 6.
Early dismissals.

Dr. Stella to Present

Dr. Stella will share the budget presentation for the 2011-12 school year at the PTO meeting on Monday, March 14 from 6PM-7PM in the library media center.

This presentation is filled with information of interest to parents. All are invited to come.

Tomorrow's newscasters start here

Sixth grade students are now working on news broadcasts that will be shown throughout BRS on a weekly basis. The program is being developed as a way to increase communication within the school with students and faculty.

The newscast will take advantage of current technology in the school and will broadcast using the internal school network on classroom *Smartboards*. As a start, sixth grade students doing a weekly newscast will discuss such topics as food options, field trips, and other interesting activities happening in the school.



All sixth graders were invited to join the program. Approximately 30 students applied, filling such jobs as directors, reporters, anchors, and camera/light/sound positions. These newscasts are designed to strengthen our school community by sharing information and giving students real-world experiences. James Crawford, a member of our library/tech team, will provide oversight and supervision of this program. Contact Mr. Crawford if you have questions or comments about this project. He can be reached by e-mail at jcrawford@woodbridge.k12.ct.us.

Where in the world is Timbuktu? Ask Emily.



Congratulations to Emily Maranets, a sixth grade student, who qualified to represent BRS and participate at the state level of the *National Geographic Bee*. The state bee will be held on Friday, April 1, at *Central Connecticut State University*. One winner from each state and territory will advance to the national competition, which will be held May 24 and May 25 at the *National Geographic Society* headquarters in Washington, D.C.

We also congratulate all of the grade 4-6 students who participated in the series of geography bees coordinated by Dr. Tomasello this past year. We anticipate that the annual geography bee will become a tradition at BRS.

Southwestern theme highlights family night

On March 3 the *Extended Day Program* held its first family dinner of the new year. The cafeteria was packed with children, their family members, teachers and staff. There was a southwestern theme to the evening as the children from *extended day* served a delicious menu of southwestern food. Later, under the direction of Cathy Salinardi, 30 kindergartners entertained the crowd with a hoedown that included country and patriotic songs.



The Florez Family

The *Extended Day Program* dinners promote community and highlight the importance of family and the diversity of our BRS community. The dinners also act to support character development of our students. As an example, the leftover food from the dinner was donated to

the *Columbus House* shelter in New Haven.

For more information about the *Extended Day Program* go to the district web site, woodbridge.k12.ct.us and click *Extended Day* on the bar on the left hand side of the home page. If you have questions or comments, e-mail Mr. Hurwitz, the *Extended Day* program director, at lhurwitz@woodbridge.k12.ct.us.

Minor changes to next year's calendar

The 2011/12 Woodbridge School Calendar was recently approved and developed in collaboration with the BOWA (Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge, Amity) districts. It is important to align the calendar with the BOWA districts, especially Amity. A minor adjustment has been made to eliminate the make-up of snow days the last week in June and instead defer to the April vacation. In addition, the January professional development day was switched to March to align with the other BOWA districts. To view the 2011-12 calendar, go to the district web site, www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us, and click on district information in the bar at the left side of the page.

President's Day was a day of learning

The theme of the day included a focus on U.S. presidents. There were multiple hard copy and digital resources that were used to enhance the instructional program, including a *Power Point* trivia presentation on the Presidents prepared by Dr. Tomasello. I had the pleasure of reading a biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to all fifth grade classes as well as the story of Abraham Lincoln to the multi-age program. The primary grades also took advantage of the school's opening to celebrate the 100th day of school. It was a true day of learning.

As for attendance that day, 88% of students, 98% of faculty, and 100% of the Administration Team were present.

My best wishes to you all as we look forward to spring.

Dr. F. Stella