



Parent Update - May 11, 2011

From Dr. Stella - Superintendent of Schools

We're searching for a new principal

As you are aware, Mary Lou Torre, the former Principal of the BRS Intermediate House, left at the end of September 2010 for a position in a school district closer to her home. We have been fortunate to have the services of Interim Principal Dr. Len Tomasello. Dr. Tomasello will end his interim assignment at the end of this school year. Therefore, a search for a new intermediate principal, grades 3-6, has begun. Ads were placed in local and state newspapers, in Education Week (a national publication), as well as on state and regional web sites. Applications were accepted through May 6. Interviews will follow throughout May and early June. Our hope is to provide staff and parents with the opportunity to meet the finalist(s). The culminating step will be the presentation of the finalist(s) to the Board of Education for review and approval. We anticipate having a new principal in place before the beginning of the new school year.

We have two principals at BRS

BRS has a dual principal model of administration. One principal is in charge of the elementary house, including Pre-K – 2 and the MAG program. Another principal is in charge of the Intermediate House, grades 3-6. The enrollment in each house, primary and intermediate, is approximately 366 students – the size of a small elementary school. The Board of Education voted to maintain this structure for the 2011 -2012 school year and to authorize me to begin a search for a new *Intermediate House Principal*.

What qualities should a principal have at BRS?

The Principal Search Committee is seeking your input. We have posted an online survey to get that input. If you are able, please complete the brief survey to assist the committee in their deliberations. Go to the district web site at www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us and follow the link to the principal search survey.

The survey will be available Wednesday, May 11th, at 4 PM through Sunday, May 15, at midnight.

Mrs. Bequary will retire at the end of next year

Carol Bequary, principal of the Primary School, announced her retirement date as June 2012. The Board accepted her retirement with regret and with appreciation for her many years of dedicated service at BRS. I look forward to working with Mrs. Bequary next year as we enter a new chapter at BRS.

Visiting scientists bring the curriculum to life



Dr. Huang and students

Through yet another avenue, BRS has engaged students in science by tapping parent resources. It happens often. As one of many examples, on April 15 Dr. Joseph Huang and four of his colleagues from Yale University came to BRS to teach his daughter's fifth grade class (Mr. Ngov's class) about the five senses. They did so by captivating this group of 22 inquisitive 10 and 11-year-olds with three dimensional models of the sensory organs, video clips of sensory functioning, and hands on activities that met key concepts of the curriculum, and then some. Rotating to the five stations set up by each doctor, students participated in finding their blind spot, scent testing, and performing a two-point discrimination test on various parts of their body. The outreach program brought the senses to life for these students and left them with a very memorable learning experience.

End-of-the year dates for your calendar

- Last Day of School: Tuesday, June 21, 1:10 p.m. dismissal
- Sixth Grade Promotion Ceremony: Monday, June 20, 1 p.m. at Amity High School
- Sixth Grade Party: Monday, June 20, from 4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- SEP – Summer Enrichment programs: Five Weeks, June 27 – July 29, 9 a.m. – 12 noon (*See brochure on district web site, www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us Go to left bar and look under Summer Enrichment*)
- Extended Day Program: Six Weeks. June 27--- August 5, "Early Bird" arrivals 8:00 – 9 a.m. Programs, 9:00 – 12 noon. Extended Day continues 12 noon – 5:30 p.m.
- Recreation Department programs: Six weeks. June 27 – August 5, 9 a.m. – 12 Noon
- First Day of School: Tuesday, August 30, 1:10 dismissal

Next year's calendar has changes

An adjustment to next year's school calendar has been made to eliminate the make-up of snow days during the last week of June and instead defer to the April vacation if necessary. To view the entire 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 of the page.

How we choose your child's teacher

This time of year is an exciting one as you and your child end one year and look forward to a new one – after a bit of summer fun, of course. Parents sometimes ask us how we decide where students will be assigned for the following year. A comprehensive process helps guide those decisions.

Your child's classroom teacher and teaching team members consider many factors in placing your child. Some of these factors include: special needs of children, academic achievement, social and emotional needs, peer relationships, class balance by gender, teaching and learning styles, teacher-parent-relationships and maintaining a sense of security for children. Although parent input is also considered, parents cannot choose their child's teacher.

The placement process is time consuming and requires the involvement of the faculty and administration. It is very comprehensive and made in the best interest of all children and the school. Final placement decisions are made by the school staff and administration.



Cash donation is welcomed gift

Master Kim, of Global Taekwondo in Woodbridge, and teacher of several BRS students, recently donated \$805 to the school district. The money will be used to help fund a summer reading clinic. Dr. Stella gratefully accepts the gift from Master Kim.

SCASA Awards go to BRS 6th graders at luncheon



The South Central Area Superintendents' Association recognized Michaela Seales and Ryan Pethigal (center) for their high academic achievement, strong extra-curricular involvement and a commitment to community service. Teachers Mary Sell

and Stephanie Eleck, Dr. Stella and Dr. Tomasello accompanied the students.

Lifelong readers start here

The school wide launch of *Readers' Workshop* this year is helping to develop a generation of lifetime readers and learners. As I walk through the halls and step into classrooms, it is evident that teachers have worked with great effort and zeal to implement the structures, methods and expectations of rigorous workshop teaching. From our youngest readers in Kindergarten to our most mature students, what's most thrilling to see is the engagement of students during independent reading, and the love of books and reading our children are developing.

PTO-sponsored book fair brings smiles to young readers (right)

Harry and Mandy enjoy a chance to pick their own books. Doesn't hurt that Harry's book has his name in the title.



Election Day candid says it all (below)



While their parents were engaged in election day activities, (l to r) Marion, Julie, Zoe, Adam and Samantha all spent time engaged with a good book.

Just a sample: children bask in a "Sea of Literacy"

- Readers and Writers Workshop model, K-6
- As an affiliate site of the Columbia University's Reading and Writing Project, BRS benefits from on-going support
- On-going celebrations of student work in reading/writing
- Student book clubs
- Extensive multi-genre/multi-level book collections in every classroom
- Large, state-of-the-art library/media center with extensive collection of print and digital resources
- Integration of core subjects through a balanced literacy approach
- Literacy based Integrated Technology Projects on every grade level, beginning with Kindergarten, culminating with digital story-telling in grade 6.

My best wishes to you all,

Dr. Stella