



PARENT UPDATE FROM DR. STELLA SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

June 2, 2014

www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us Woodbridge School District

40 Beecher Road (south) - Woodbridge, CT 06525 - 203-387-6631



Dear Beecher Road School Families:

Communication with BRS families remains a top priority for our district. The district/school website is a critical means of communicating with parents, the community and the world. On July 1, the existing website will be replaced by one that is newer and more robust. This replacement was made necessary

when we were informed by our current service that they would no longer be operating in the schools sector as of July 1. With our new service, the website has the potential of becoming much more user friendly and easier to navigate. The feedback from the website survey sent to parents earlier this spring was considered in the overall new design. We look forward to building an indispensable communication vehicle for all of us to share.

Dr. Stella

Last Day of School: June 20 - early dismissal

- **PTO Family picnic:** June 12 - north playground - 6:00 – 8:00 pm
- **Sixth Grade Transition Events**
- “Graduation” ceremony: June 18, 1:00 p.m. Amity High School
- Sixth grade PTO-sponsored party: June 18, after “graduation” ceremony - later afternoon - at the Country Club of Woodbridge
- Sixth Grade Trip: June 19, Science Museum in Hartford
- Sixth grade *Giving Back Ceremony* and yearbook signing: June 20

June 2 – 6 is ...



Art rocks with rock art



Andy Goldsworthy is an artist who creates art from items found in nature – like rocks. We are going to create a serpentine

A Goldsworthy creation path in our woods from stones and rocks. Each child at BRS is asked to bring a stone for the path.



Students prepare for ArtsWeek7

For seven years, BRS has celebrated the visual, dramatic, and musical arts during **ArtsWeek**. This year’s theme is nature. Students have studied artists who have been inspired by nature and artists who use nature in their artwork. Every student participates in a school wide project that is displayed outdoors around the campus. This year you will see the *Earth Flag Project*, inspired by the *Prayer Flags of Tibet*. Every child was asked to create a design on their individual fabric flag prompted by their science studies. These flags remind us of the influence nature has on our art and our lives.

To celebrate musical and performing arts, our award-winning BRS choral and instrumental groups will perform Monday for all classes and Monday night for parents at 6:30 at the north playground performance space. On Friday there will be performances by Taikoza, a Japanese drumming group for all grade levels.

Another highlight of **ArtsWeek7** is Thursday’s **ArtsNight** - 6:30 to 8:30. The community is invited to tour the school and view the numerous galleries of student artwork on display. Students and parents can enjoy numerous open studios throughout the building. Help paint a mural on the wall outside in the courtyard, make shadow puppets or fairy houses, learn a few new dance steps with the high school dance team or create earthworks in the outside studio. A reception with *foods from the earth* is in the rotunda with an open mic for our budding musical artists.

Big state grant comes to BRS

A half-million dollar grant is coming to BRS for some badly needed paving, sidewalks and exterior lighting.



Thanks to the leadership and tenacity of *First Selectman Ellen Scalettar*, a \$500,000 Connecticut STEAP (Small Town Economic

Assistance Program) grant has been awarded to Woodbridge for physical projects at BRS. The town has attempted to secure this grant in the past.

BE PROUD!

BRS & AHS earn highest state honor

BRS is recognized as a *School of Distinction* by the State Department of Education. The honor is based on “highest overall performance” by all students. Of the BOWA schools, *Amity High School* also achieved this highest ranking.



L-R: AHS Principal Britton, Amity Superintendent Dumais, State Commissioner of Education Pryor, BRS Principal Prisco, Woodbridge Superintendent Stella

Construction causes BRS summer programs to find new locations

As you may know, BRS will undergo extensive building upgrades this summer. As a result, *Summer Enrichment**, *Recreation* and *Extended Day** programs will be held at Amity High School. The *BRS Special Education Summer Program* will be held at Ezra Academy.

We are grateful to both schools for helping us adapt our programs to their facilities. We thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation during this inconvenience. Be assured that safety and security remain uppermost in our planning. As during the school year, Officer Lynch will assist in the daily operation.



AT AMITY HIGH SCHOOL June 30 – Aug 1

*Summer Enrichment**: 9:00 – 12:00

Recreation: 8:45 – 12:45

*Extended Day**: 12:00 – 5:00

Extended Day Early Drop-Off: 8:00 – 9:00

AT EZRA ACADEMY July 7 – 31

Summer Special Education: 9:00 – 12:00

** To enroll in these programs go to the district website www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us*

Gifted and Talented program examined in a follow-up study

Dr. Jeanne Purcell, national authority on gifted education, presented her findings to the Board of Education and Administration on her follow-up study of the BRS Gifted and Talented Program as well as another related area, *Differentiated Instruction*.

At the request of the administration, one focus of her report was *differentiated instruction*, which means tailoring instruction and assessment to meet individual needs. With this, teachers consider students' modes of learning, interests and readiness. They adjust the content, presentation and learning environment. They provide varied opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning. Differentiated instruction was adopted as a district goal for the 2013 – 2014 school year.

Dr. Purcell spent three days at BRS conducting interviews with instructional staff and administrators, and observing students and teachers at work. The results of her work yielded commendations and recommendations for consideration.

In her report she states:

1. Woodbridge makes a sustained effort to meet the needs of all students, including those who are high achieving.
2. In May 2014, the Connecticut State Department of Education recognized Beecher Road School as a School of Distinction. Based on CMT data, the annual award is presented to those schools that have high performing subgroups of students, high progress, and high overall performance.
3. Since the Gifted Program Audit in April 2011, BRS administrators have devoted significant time and effort to address the recommendations.

4. With respect to its program for gifted and talented, the school has refined and clarified its identification procedures, refined its learning objectives, and created rubrics that can be used to assess the learning progress.
5. With respect to the regular classroom, all Woodbridge teachers have created and adopted a meaningful definition of curriculum differentiation.
6. The school has a well-developed Reader's and Writer's Workshop model in place for language arts. It requires differentiation for all students.
7. Woodbridge faculty has recently adopted *Investigations*, an inquiry-based mathematics program. Teachers in grades three through five implemented it this year; teachers in grades one and two will implement it next year. Like Reader's and Writer's Workshop, it supports differentiation for students.

The report also contained numerous grade level specific recommendations to move the school forward on its path toward making differentiated instruction a model program at BRS.

BRS sixth graders receive award

The South Central Area Superintendents' Association Recognition Award is given on the basis of community service, academic prowess (relative to ability), and leadership to the school community. This year's award went to Sarah Milner and Victor You.



At the awards luncheon L-R: Stacey, Mark and Sarah Milner, Mrs. Prisco, Ms. Eleck, Victor You, Hannah Chao and Yun You. Dr Stella and Ms. Smerekanicz behind.

What to do with your old books?

Swap them for someone else's. The BRS PTO recently sponsored a children's book swap where children got to select books they'd like to read at no cost. In turn, they brought in their old books that just might be the treasure another child was looking for. The PTO volunteers organized hundreds of books to make the selection process easier.



Choices! Choices!

Goodbye and Thank You

It is bittersweet to wish colleagues well as they move on to new chapters in their lives. Best wishes to these staff members.

Diane Dolan has been the Intermediate Grades Speech/Language Pathologist since Nov. 1, 1997. Diane served on numerous committees during her years at BRS. Diane has always been a true advocate for children with special needs and for celebrating the rich diversity they bring to the BRS learning community.

Lynn Piascyk joined BRS in Sept. 1978 and has taught in Grade 1 since. She was *BRS Teacher of the Year* for the 1993/94 school year. Lynn is the consummate professional, continually seeking to improve, always contributing to the school and community and constantly modeling the highest standards of professionalism.

Elizabeth Belisle joined BRS in August 1999 as a Grade 2 teacher moving to Kindergarten in 2000. Her enthusiasm, creativity and ingenuity created a learning environment that was inviting and relaxed for students and parents. She is revered by colleagues for her ethical standards and sense of professionalism, admired by students for her patience, kindness and sensitivity. Liz epitomizes team player and is a true advocate for children.

Stan Hershonik started at BRS as a Teaching Assistant in Sept. 1995. He served in a variety of capacities throughout his years in BRS, including Spec. Ed., Library/Media, Kindergarten, Primary and Intermediate Grades. He could always be counted on to adapt to change. His sense of humor, artistic talent and compassion are greatly appreciated.