



# PARENT UPDATE FROM DR. STELLA SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

April 16, 2015

[woodbridge.k12.ct.us](http://woodbridge.k12.ct.us) Woodbridge School District  
40 Beecher Road (south) - Woodbridge, CT 06525 - 203-387-6631

Dear Beecher Families,

Spring is a time of renewal as we witness signs of new life all around us. It is also a time of new hope that encourages us to reflect on the uniqueness of every one of our students. There is no doubt in my mind that every one of our children has a set of special gifts and qualities that should be regarded as gifts for themselves, and, at the same time, gifts to share with others. There are no exceptions.



Those special gifts in each of our children are worth developing. For that reason, a momentum has been created at BRS towards more student-centered, personalized learning. Examples of that can be seen in our workshop model of teaching reading and writing, our approach in promoting the arts, the use of technology as a tool to promote creativity and innovation, the variety of collaborative projects in the multiple academic areas, our focus on the social-emotional development of children as well as in our school movement this year to

support differentiated instruction in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Of course, your partnership in the development of your child is essential. Our new reporting system provides a means for increased and continual dialogue between you and your child's teacher about how your child is progressing on their individual learning pathway. We encourage you to engage in that dialogue with your child's teachers on an on-going basis.

After this arduous winter, enjoy the spring and our school vacation.

*Stella F. Stella*

## Wizard of Oz is a triumph

Last week, the drama club, sponsored by the BRS Extended Day Program, presented *The Wizard of Oz* to SRO audiences of BRS students, staff, parents, grandparents and community members. Over 60 children performed or supported this classic musical. The acting, singing and dancing were superb. Costume and scenic design were professional quality. Kudos to Extended Day Director, Kathy Salinardi and staff (Teresa Ramia, Jen Cooper, Ashley Wagner, Jean Ciarleglio) for helping to bring out the best in our children.



Dorothy and Toto pause for a publicity shot with Cowardly Lion, Scarecrow and Tin Man

## Sally port increases security at BRS

The BRS building upgrade calls for the installation of a comprehensive set of security items. One of those projects, as we have mentioned in past *Updates*, is the installation of a *sally port* in the north entrance of the school. When you return from spring vacation, you will notice some changes in the north entrance. A sally port will be constructed during the April vacation; therefore, there will be some procedural changes for parents visiting Beecher Road School.

### What is a sally port?

A sally port is a secure entry whereby a visitor enters an outside set of doors, is stopped and cleared, then passes through a second set of doors into the building. The clearing process includes stating the intended business, showing and verifying identification, and issuing a temporary pass.

## New Security Procedures Will Affect You

Do any other elementary schools have sally ports?

Sally ports are already installed in Bethany and Orange schools, and are in progress in many others throughout the country.

**New Security Procedures go into effect on April 27<sup>th</sup>**

What are the new security procedures for parents and guests?

Arrival:

1. Access the outside buzzer system
2. Enter through the first two sets of doors
3. Go directly to the new reception area/communication window on the right (Office side of the hallway.)
4. State the reason for visit
5. If dropping off a forgotten item (lunch, snack, notebook), please pass it

through the reception drawer

6. If there is a need to enter the school (attend a meeting, watch a program, serve as a volunteer) you will be required to leave your driver's license, and receive a visitor's pass that must be visible during entire stay
7. Your name and reason for visit will be recorded by a member of the office staff
8. Access will then be granted through the final set of doors

Departure:

1. Return to the reception area/communication window to retrieve your license and turn in visitor's pass

Thank you in advance. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us to improve security for our children.

# Vote

**Vote in Amity  
Referendum**

The budget that funds the Amity School District, grades 7 – 12, is up for a referendum vote. Please exercise your right to vote in this referendum on Wednesday, May 6.

## SBAC testing to start next month

Students in grades three, four, five and six will participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests, for the 2015-16 school year. The dates for administration of the assessment are May 4 – 15. There will be one test per day, and the students are not tested every day during this period. The tests are not timed; testing sessions will last no longer than one hour. Individual student scores will be shared with families once received by the district.

Students should not feel anxious about the SBAC tests. They will take the assessments in a comfortable, teacher-supported environment. Students should get a good night's rest before each test, eat a good breakfast, and do their best.

As is the BRS philosophy, we care about each individual child, and have made the necessary accommodations to meet individual needs. The SBAC tests will adhere to all federal and state privacy laws.

Questions: please contact Principal Prisco by email at: [gprisco@woodbridgeps.org](mailto:gprisco@woodbridgeps.org).

## Morocco presentation creates interest

BRS teacher, Cathy Zdrowski, and grade 5 students gave a presentation about Morocco on March 24 at the Woodbridge Library. The presentation drew a large crowd of over 60 people. The exhibits on display, multi-media presentation, contributions made by Ms. Zdrowski, our students, Professor Halima from UNH and members of the Fulbright group enlightened the audience. It was a night of cross cultural communication and learning. Moroccan cookies and tea added a special touch as well. (See district web site for video and pictures of workshop presentation as well as Ms. Zdrowski's trip to Morocco: It can be found under the teaching and learning section or directly at <http://woodbridge.k12.ct.us/morocco>)

## Eva Block Fire Prevention Day\*

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, I had the pleasure of attending the Eva Block Fire Prevention Day at the Woodbridge Firehouse. Despite the weather, there was a large turnout of families. Fire Chief Sean Roland, Fire Marshall Joseph Cappucci and the members of our volunteer fire department did an outstanding job, once again, in organizing the day. It was fun, and, at the same time, there were lots of learning opportunities about fire safety for children and adults.

\* From Woodbridge, Eva Block was a student at Marist College who perished in a fire while away at school in 2012.

At right: Beecher student dons a firefighter's respirator at the community event to heighten awareness about fire safety.



After school classes in Chinese are now offered in the Extended Day Program. Children are having fun learning the Chinese language

and culture through games, songs, art projects, outdoor exploration and simple plays.

Meet the teachers:

Hiyang Wang, a Beecher parent, teaches at the Southern Connecticut Chinese School and Aux Tris Pommes Language School in New Haven. She has a B.A. and an M.A. in English and American Literature; she received a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from City University of Hong Kong.

Rongzhen Li has taught Chinese as a faculty member at Yale University since 2003. She holds a B.S. and an M.A. in Chinese Language and Literature. Ms. Li has worked in many other programs, including the summer Princeton Program in Beijing, and the Harvard Beijing Academy.

This language institute is an example of the possibilities when we partner with parents and community. (Special thanks are extended to kindergarten parent Joyce Shavers who helped to organize the program.)



Ms. Li works with children who are learning Chinese in the BRS Extended Day Program.

## Caring: A core value exemplified here

On April 6 and 8, the Student Council sponsored its biannual bake sale at the PTO book fair. The council would like to extend a big thank you to the BRS community for its continued support of this event. The sale raised \$737 which will go towards a child in Bolivia whom the council has sponsored through Save the Children, as well as other upcoming projects to benefit the BRS and Woodbridge community.



Ms. Simowitz, Student Council advisor, and members of the Student Council at fund raising bake sale to sponsor a Bolivian child through Save the Children.

## Summer programs will begin on June 29

Once again, thanks to the cooperation of Dr. Dumais, Amity superintendent, the Summer Enrichment, Extended Day, Early Literacy programs as well as the Woodbridge Recreation program will take place at Amity High School while construction updates continue at BRS. Thanks to our friends at Ezra Academy, the Special Education summer program will be held there again this year. More information will follow.