



# DR. STELLA'S PARENT UPDATE



Superintendent of Schools  
Woodbridge School District

woodbridge.k12.ct.us November 13, 2015

## "Good excuses to come together.."



Halloween night's **Truck or Treat** at the Woodbridge Firehouse brought out the community for a spectacular display of cultural symbols and fun for all involved. The fireworks capped the festivities.



Dear Beecher Road School Families:

As we prepare for Thanksgiving in actions and thoughts, I am reminded how grateful we are to the Woodbridge community and all that it encompasses. In this unique and beautiful place to live and grow, our children give us good excuses to come together both inside and outside of the BRS campus. I'd like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to the many people, individuals, families and groups, who have come together to enrich the lives of our children etching memories and values that will last a lifetime.

Wishing you all a Thanksgiving that is filled with warmth, love and kindness – and lots of good food.

*Gaeton F. Stella*



(left) An incredible natural resource, Alice Newton Street Park provided the backdrop for the PTO Harvest Hike where children hike, learn, wonder and discover. (right) At the PTO Halloween Hoot, teachers are joined by the First Selectman in a fund raiser for the BRS Teacher Social Action Committee. The committee's mission is service to those with less.



Seen on the faces of these BRS girls, the annual Woodbridge road race brings out the joy of organized physical activity and a healthy sense of sport and competition.

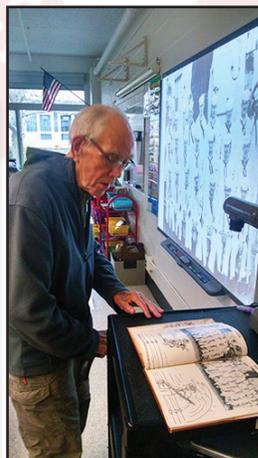


(left) Hamlet Hernandez, Branford Superintendent of Schools and a retired Lt. Colonel from the US Marine Corps, spoke to 5th & 6th graders about his life growing up and why he wanted to go into the military.

## VETERANS DAY: A DAY TO LEARN. A DAY TO SAY THANK YOU.

Not all school districts are open on Veterans Day. In fact, many are closed in Connecticut and around the country. It is not a federal requirement to close on Veterans Day, but rather a decision left up to individual school districts. Several years ago Woodbridge decided to remain open and use the day to include Veterans Day activities, in which children throughout the school would learn why the holiday is celebrated and hear from veterans about their service in the military. Students also learned to thank vets in letters and cards, delivered to the VA Hospital in West Haven.\*

(below) A WWII veteran, and grandfather of one of Ms. Vincitorio's 3rd grade students, shared his thoughts and US Navy Commemorative Book with students.



(below) US Veteran Raymond Stuart, Deputy Chief of the Woodbridge Police Department, told the assembled audience of students, teachers, parents and friends about his experience and reflections of military service.



\* Since veterans are hard to tell from the general population when they are out of uniform, Green Light A Vet has become a growing phenomenon. To show thanks to those invisible vets, a visible green light on your porch or in your window sends that message. The green light below was spotted next to a Woodbridge front door on Rimmon Rd. For more information: [GreenLightAVet.com](http://GreenLightAVet.com)



(below) Children and invited veterans attend the BRS formal ceremony held Wednesday to honor veterans. The school's band and honor guard commenced the activity. Afterward the vets visited classrooms.



## Students' First Year SBAC Test Results Put on "Pause" by State

After three decades of administering the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) to the state's students, last year a new assessment was adopted and administered throughout Connecticut's public schools. The results of the new Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium, SBAC (pronounce "s"-back), test are in and the results have been put on "pause," according to Ajit Gopalakrishnan, and will not be used to classify schools on the achievement continuum.

At BRS, the SBAC was administered last spring to students in grades 3–6 and measured achievement in mathematics, reading and writing. Over all, the results at BRS revealed areas that need considerable attention. This was not a surprise to us as our emphasis in making the transition from CMT to SBAC was really one of procedure and environment.

The SBAC is administered on computers and requires students to sustain their focus on that technology for significant amounts of time. In preparation for future SBAC tests, our first priority was to create an environment where students did not feel anxious or stressed by the new assessments. We worked to make them feel comfortable in a non-threatening environment. The SBAC was not made out to be the "be all/end all" evaluation of achievement, but rather it was, and is, one of many measures used to determine student needs.

Throughout the state, many school districts adopted a similar approach. At the state level, year one of the SBAC is seen as a "getting to know you" period,

as students, teachers and administrators got a feel for what is expected and how to take the tests. The state is not using the

first year results to classify schools into its various rankings except for the schools that performed poorly.

### State Classifications For Student Achievement

- Level 1 = Does not meet the achievement level expected
- Level 2 = Approaching the achievement level expected
- Level 3 = Meets the achievement level expected
- Level 4 = Exceeds the achievement level expected

### Woodbridge Language Arts: Reading and Writing

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
3	5%	26%	24%	45%
4	13%	17%	19%	51%
5	12%	15%	39%	34%
6	6%	16%	38%	41%

### Woodbridge Mathematics

Grade	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
3	10%	15%	38%	37%
4	8%	28%	31%	33%
5	20%	36%	21%	23%
6	11%	24%	18%	48%

**When compared with 165 school districts in Connecticut, this is what the Woodbridge data looks like:**

### State Language Arts: Reading and Writing

District	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
State	22%	23%	32%	23%
Woodbridge	9%	18%	31%	42%

### State Mathematics

District	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
State	32%	29%	23%	17%
Woodbridge	12%	27%	26%	35%

### Keeping Our Children Safe

With the cooperation of the Town, two new crosswalk signs have been installed at BRS. That means drivers must stop when any person is in the crosswalk at the school. We remind you to follow the rules of safety when dropping off your children. Be good. Officer Lynch is watching.



6th Grade Ringmaster, Natalie Modiano, kept the circus on track, introduced the varied acts and provided the ballyhoo for the "greatest show on earth!"

### Under the Big Top

Extended Day students and their teachers recently staged a circus for the enjoyment of parents, friends and staff, and gave the children a chance to work as part of a team. Clowns, magicians, animals, mimes, lion tamers and others put their talents on display to the delight of audience members.

### Halloween Spooky Science

Second graders participated in a week-long event, Spooky Science, to strengthen their understanding of different states of matter. Each day students had a different second grade teacher conduct the lessons that included homemade lava lamps, spooky play-dough and other science activities.

(right) Solid, liquid or gas? One of the experiments and observations students engaged in during Spooky Science Week.

