



DR. STELLA'S PARENT UPDATE



Superintendent of Schools
Woodbridge School District

woodbridge.k12.ct.us January 6, 2016

Dear Beecher Road Families,

It was a delight to welcome our children and staff back from winter vacation. BRS is more than a physical structure. It is a learning organization in which everyone who steps into it, young or old, is guaranteed an opportunity to learn something new. With that in mind, we begin the new year with enthusiasm, renewed energy and hope for many exciting moments of learning in the coming months.

January 2, 2016 marked the completion of my 10th year as Superintendent of the Woodbridge School District. What an honor and pleasure it has been and is to serve the Beecher Road School community. Looking back, we have achieved a great deal together. Looking forward, we are committed to continuing the work of preparing our children for successful and happy lives in our rapidly changing world. In doing so, we seek to do the following:

- Create a generation of individuals who are life-long readers, writers, thinkers and learners.
- Develop students who have an awareness of, a sensitivity to and an empathy for other cultures
- Encourage a love for the Arts and for all aspects of life-long wellness.
- Use technology as a tool of choice to help students to accelerate along their own learning pathways, as well as do things that cannot be done without it.
- Give our students a strong academic background.
- Help our students develop the attributes of kindness, responsibility, respect and resiliency, as well as a strong work ethic.
- Encourage students to develop their passions and enhance their interests.
- Guide our children in developing the social skills of cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control.
- Model and teach the skills needed to think critically and to be able to understand issues from multiple points of view.
- Look for and promote the types of activities, events and celebrations that make school a place of joy and laughter.

At BRS, we like to say that we do it all. However, we couldn't do it without you. As we begin 2016, we extend best wishes to all BRS families. May the new year bring you and your children the joy of being together as a family, and the excitement of new learning as valued members of our school community!

LEARN

Superintendent's Parents' Curriculum Academy

Topic: School Community Conversation about Development of a new 3-Year Technology Plan

Facilitators: Superintendent and Members of the BRS Technology Team

Date: Jan. 28, 2016

Time: 6:30 --- 8 PM

Place: Library Media Center

Gaeton F. Stella

Fish & Bear: Magic or Technology?



Join Ms. Ulacco in Extended Day's newest club: **3D Tinkering**. Over four weeks,

students will learn how to use *TinkerCad*, a computer aided design (CAD) application, to execute their ideas and create 3D objects and structures. CAD software and 3D printing gives students the opportunity to enhance their spatial awareness, math computation, engineering and design skills. Our designers will be asked to collaborate to solve real-world challenges while reinforcing skills of science, technology, engineering, art and math. Check it out! www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us/3dprinter

Planning for Summer Programs

I am pleased to tell you that Ms. Simowitz will again serve as the Director of the *Summer Enrichment Program* and Ms. Salinardi will continue as the Director of the *Extended Day Program*.



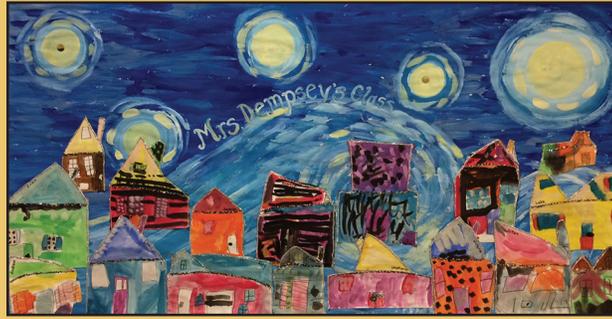
Save the dates. Back at Beecher Road School, we anticipate that the *Summer Enrichment* and *Extended Day* summer programs will begin on Monday, June 27, and continue through Friday, July 29, 2016.

Making music soar, BRS choral and band students entertained and amazed their audiences at December's concert. Thanks to Ms. Marroquin, Mr. Letsch, teachers and volunteers, it was an event to remember.





2nd grader recreated *Starry Night*



Kindergarteners painted Arles, France where Van Gogh saw that *starry night*.



Large composite of *Starry Night* by sixth graders

Starry, starry night

Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* is one of the world's most beloved paintings. At BRS each student interacted with Van Gogh's work in different ways. Among them, Kindergarten students recreated Arles, France, where the artist painted *Starry Night*. MAG children focused on the brush strokes that Van Gogh used. Grade 3 students looked at *Starry Night* and interpreted

"how they see it." In fourth grade, students thought about the question "If I were a drawing..." and created artwork around their thoughts. Grade 5 changed the phase of the moon in *Starry Night* affecting the light that Van Gogh may have seen under different lunar conditions. A collaborative enlargement of *Starry Night* was created by sixth graders.

Students also got a peek into Van Gogh's life by talking and learning about some of the other events that were occurring; from Art Nouveau, to the Battle of Little Bighorn, from the writing of *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens to the invention of the telephone.

Finally, the artwork that is hung throughout the school has some thought provoking questions such as: "In looking at the moon in the right hand corner, what phase do you see? When you look at the fifth grade paintings, what happens to the entire painting when the phase of the moon changes?" Also, "How does the artist create depth?" Or even, "How does the painting tell us about the time in which it was painted?"

We thank Ms. Acheson and Ms. Wagner for the role they are playing in coordinating this school-wide initiative to involve all of our young artists in the hands-on study of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. All classes, Pre-K-6 now have the opportunity to take a gallery walk to view the K-6 interpretations of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*.

School Board sends funding proposal to Town

In December, I presented the proposed budget for the 2016-17 school year to the Board of Education. This thoughtfully and carefully prepared funding plan was developed with two objectives in mind: (1) continue to support the educational mission and vision of the school district, (2) respect the taxpayer. The School Board approved the budget proposal as presented.

The proposal calls for a 2.48% increase over the current year. Many areas of the budget had significant decreases while others had significant increases.

The plan now goes on to the Town Boards of Selectmen and Finance for their consideration. They will hear my presentation and the need for the funding later this month or early next. The public is encouraged to attend. More information will follow.

Interested in being part of Alice in Wonderland?

This spring, the Drama Club will present *Alice in Wonderland*. We are looking for students in grades one through six to become cast members, stagehands and artists for set design. The first meeting of The Drama Club took place Monday. For more information email Cathy Salinardi: csalinardi@woodbridgeps.org.

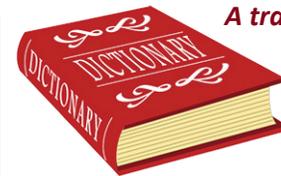
BIG CHANGE: South Central Connecticut schools will have same calendar

Beginning next year, all school districts in Connecticut will have a standard calendar determined by the regional RESC (Regional Educational Service Center). ACES, headquartered in Hamden, is the RESC that serves south central Connecticut that includes Woodbridge and BOWA districts. It also includes towns such as Hamden, North Haven, Wallingford, New Haven, Seymour and others. Calendar highlights include:

- The first day of school for students will be Monday, August 29
- The two common professional development days for the ACES region will be Thursday, August 25 and Tuesday, November 8
- The April vacation includes Good Friday

A copy of the 2016-17 school calendar can be downloaded from our district website:

1. Go to woodbridge.k12.ct.us (homepage)
2. On the lower right side of the homepage click on *calendar*
3. At the top of the calendar page, click on 2016-2017 school calendar



A tradition continues

Andrew Skolnick, Maryellen LaRocca and Tony Anastasio,

three members of the *Woodbridge Rotary Club* recently visited our third grade students. Every third grader was given a brand new dictionary. Mr. Skolnick spoke with the students and told them that although the world of learning has changed, the one thing that hasn't changed is the dictionary. He asked students to look up the word *civic* and read the definition. He then pointed out all of the words on the page from citizenship at the top and civilize on the bottom are all related. Students eagerly began looking through their dictionaries and excited murmurs filled the room. BRS extends sincere thanks to the Rotary Club for its generous support of this annual tradition.