



# MR. GILBERT'S PARENT UPDATE



Superintendent of Schools Woodbridge School District

## MISSION

*Beecher Road School is a caring, creative community that models and inspires the joy of lifelong learning, embraces diversity, and celebrates the unique qualities of each person.*

woodbridge.k12.ct.us

April 11, 2018

### Funding Our Schools: The Lifeblood of Excellent Education

Dear Beecher Road School Families:

I would like to provide you with an update of our budget requests for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. The Town Boards of Selectmen and Finance have reviewed our operating and capital budgets, and have made the following adjustments:

**Capital Budget:** reduced \$185,000. What we lost:

1. Asphalt replacement in the north parking lot and access path (\$135,000)
2. Erosion control landscaping (\$50,000)

At the Board's suggestion, we will explore the feasibility of the Town Parks Department performing the requested erosion and landscaping work.

At this time, our remaining request for Technology Infrastructure equipment (\$46,000) will be included in the final Capital Budget brought forward to the taxpayers.

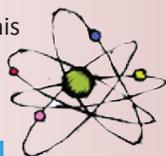
**Operating Budget:** The Board of Education approved a budget request of \$14,722,284 for 2018-19. This amount represented an increase of \$378,782 or 2.64% over the current year. This budget maintains all current programs and certified staff. The budget also adds 1.5 positions for enrollment and Pre-K, supports our strategic plan goals/initiatives, and provides new cost efficiencies, shared services and revenue streams. The next step in the process was to present that request to the town's Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance. After their deliberations, \$50,000 was reduced, while at the same time designating \$50,000 from the Town's current projected surplus to be held in reserve for Special Education related costs that are volatile, based on often unexpected needs. The Board of Education 2018-2019 Operating Budget request to be presented to the taxpayers is \$14,672,284, or a 2.29% increase as compared to the current year.

*School Budget Coming To  
Public Hearing April 23:  
Operating Budget Approved  
by Boards:  
**\$ 14,672,284**  
A 2.3% increase over  
current year*

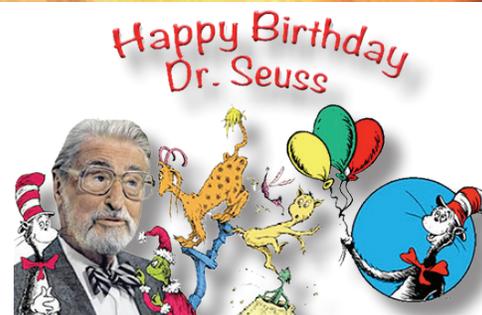
Further complicating funding for local districts is the uncertainty at both the state and federal levels. Our elected officials face a new layer of complexity. In Woodbridge we are fortunate to have the continued support, understanding and commitment of our Boards of Education, Finance, and Selectmen, in approving our funding request.

The next step in the budget process will be the annual Town Hearing currently scheduled for April 23, 7:30 p.m. in the Center School gymnasium. The final part of the process takes place with the annual Town Meeting on May 21 at 7:30 p.m.

If you have been following our Parent Updates and BOE presentations this year, you will know that exciting initiatives are taking place at BRS that not only meet the needs of TAG (Talented and Gifted) students but all students. Initiatives such as Enrichment Clusters (gr. 3), Genius Hour/Project Based Learning (gr. 5) and Capstone (gr. 6) are examples of how BRS is moving towards the realization of a "School Wide Enrichment Model." These programs, coupled with the differentiated instruction in classrooms and other enriching opportunities, (EDay, Band, Chorus, Robotics, Poetry Guild, and Math Olympiad), provide stimulating choices for our students. Work is also taking place to restructure our TAG identification process to assess all students at BRS. The BOE will be updated on progress as well as future plans for the "School Wide Enrichment Model" at their regular Board meeting in May.



## Enrichment



**Read Across America** is a national day to celebrate reading and promote its importance in our lives. In honor of Theodor Seuss Geisel's birthday, beloved children's author known by his pen name Dr. Seuss, each March 2 (or thereabouts) adults are invited to come to schools across the nation and read to children.

In all, 24 guest readers ranging from the Chief of Police, to State Senator and Representative and other elected officials, to Board of Education chair and a visiting superintendent, PTO and Woodbridge Town staff and many others came to BRS to be part of Read Across America.



*State Senator George Logan reads to children at BRS as part of Read Across America Day.*

At BRS the "day" was extended to a week of daily reading activities. Pursuits such as enjoying a book on *Tumblebooks* (digital book), reading somewhere different, reading on non-fiction day, and creating a giant post-it detailing a favorite book or character pasted on a huge book on public display to name some.

### DATES OF INTEREST

- Parent/Teacher Conferences April 9 and 11
- PTO Spring Book Fair April 9-13
- Spring Break April 16-20
- Earth Day April 22
- Town Budget Hearing April 23
- WBOE Meeting April 24
- Spirit Day April 27

## BEAUTY & THE BEAST Rehearsals Are Underway Now



**BEAUTY & THE BEAST**, this year's Extended Day Drama Club Production, will be performed on the BRS stage May 3 at 4:30 PM, and May 4 at 6:30 PM.

### Survey coming April 25 – We value your feedback

Our school survey, administered by survey company Panorama, will be available to families from April 25 to May 7. Each family will receive one email message and one survey link. We encourage you to participate as part of our continuous improvement process. Students in grades 3-6, and the staff, will also have an opportunity to take the survey during the week of April 23.

A summary of responses will be presented at an upcoming Board of Education meeting – this June or this summer.

# SBAC!

Annual Smarter Balance Testing for grades 3-6 will take place from Tuesday May 1 through Friday May 11.

The SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) tests are the only standardized tests that we have and the data from the tests help us measure growth over time of our students. And, the tests give you a snapshot of how your children are achieving in relationship to established benchmarks.

All testing is done online. Students are very familiar and comfortable with the mobile device on which they take the tests.

We urge all families to have their children in grades 3-6 take the test. As always, we will watch over them and support them in the process. Our school is an outstanding educational institution. We expect an "excellent" designation, the highest rating, from the state.

As your children have reminded you, "It's (fill-in-the-blank) week at school. I need ..." And so it goes at BRS where *BKindness Week* and *Spirit Week* have recently been observed in March.

Everyone from teachers, teacher assistants, custodians, cafeteria workers and administrators participated in *BKindness Week*.

*BKindness Week* is embedded within the school's Safe School Climate Plan, which is created by our Safe School Climate Action Committee. It is a way to bring the community together to remind everyone how doing good feels good.

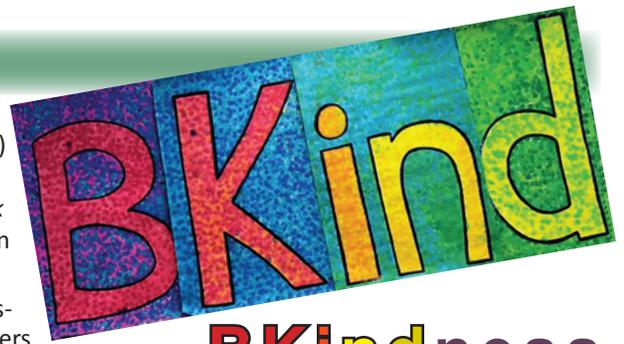
Students participated in many ways that included sharing a 😊 sticker with a friend in need, singing a cooperation song as a whole community, watching a book read by our Director of Special Services Cheryl Mammon, and participating in art activities. There was also a home-school connection, with students completing colorful hand cut-outs listing ways they were kind at home.

During *School Spirit Week* students celebrated their school pride by participating in school-wide activities, coordinated by the Student Council. These special activities helped students to get to know their school and each other better.

For example, each day of the week was designated by a different theme: Crazy hat/hair day; Patriotic Day; Disney Day; Fancy/Formal Day; BRS Spirit Day. Students and staff spent the week enjoying each other's creativity.

School Spirit Week was also an opportunity to raise funds for a special organization, *K9 First Responders*. Grade levels competed to bring in the largest number of coins. This unique organization will be visiting our school with four dog teams in May and will be presented with a financial gift from our generous school community.

It is no surprise that students look forward to *BKindness* and *School Spirit* weeks each year.



## BKindness WEEK



*Patriotic Day features smiles and lots of red, white and blue.*

### Comprehensive Professional Development Workshops Keep Teachers Current



*Teachers hone skills through discussion and online activities for Next Generation Science Standards.*

You probably remember BRS had a planned "no school for students" day on March 29. Teachers were hard at work in professional development sessions in subject-specific activities, research, demonstrations, updates and other methods of enhancing their skills.

Samples of topics in all-day sessions include Kindergarten Orientation, Music PLC Collaboration, Text Bands, New Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Google Forms, Power School (software)

and Privacy, Technology Infrastructure Review, and more.

Expected outcomes for the day were clear and teachers came away with honed strengths and information that they apply to their classrooms.