



PARENT UPDATE FROM DR. STELLA SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

August 27, 2013

www.woodbridge.k12.ct.us Woodbridge School District
40 Beecher Road (south) - Woodbridge, CT 06525 - 203-387-6631

SPECIAL EDITION

Dear Beecher Road School Families,

Let me start by extending a warm welcome to each of you. The summer months have been busy at BRS with a variety of programs and the myriad of activities that administrators and teachers do to prepare for another school year, e.g. curricula updates, scheduling, staffing, think tanks, reflection and study, ordering materials, training, review of safety protocols and recommendations, etc. What an exciting summer we've had preparing Beecher for this new school year. Not only have numerous maintenance projects been completed, but many of our teachers have been busy continuing their education at colleges and universities. We even have some new teachers and other staff to welcome to the family - (see pg 2).

BRS is a school that welcomes parents as partners in their children's education. This parent community has shown time and again that it supports the work of the school and is ready and able to assist in any way possible. Newer and tighter security procedures in no way diminish our desire to involve you in our school.

The CMT (Connecticut Mastery Test) results are in, and we are proud - (see pg 3).

Safety and security policies and procedures are in place and take effect the first day of school. Please be aware of these changes to ensure a smooth opening - (see below).

This edition of Parent Update is published before school starts because it contains time-sensitive information you need to know.

I look forward to seeing you next week, September 3, and to personally say hello to you and your children.

Best wishes for a wonderful school year.

Stella F. Stella



Important changes to how children enter and leave Beecher Road School



Safety and security of schools has taken on greater importance in light of events that have unfolded over the past few years throughout the nation and even closer to home in Newtown. A District Safety Committee made up of teachers, administrators, staff members, PTO, a School Board representative and fire/law enforcement personnel has met regularly to develop plans for an even safer school environment. With the input from safety and security experts, that committee has developed approved plans that are now in effect. Please become familiar with the details that are included here.

Beecher Road School prides itself on being a community school – one in which parents are welcome. We now must balance that philosophy with the need to know who is in the building at any given time and where they are.

During the morning ingress, parents and visitors will not be allowed to congregate in the front hallway of the north entrance. Your cooperation in this matter will support a safer, more secure environment for our students. We will constantly assess procedures related to this issue and adjust when and if necessary.

Ingress/Egress Procedures

Experts tell us that having faster ingress and egress periods at the start and end of the school day is one way to improve safety and security. It is during these times that schools are at the greatest risk for accidents and security breaches. Therefore, the following new procedures have been adopted at BRS.

Ingress – changes for parents

- Doors will be unlocked at 8:10 am for children only.
- Only children attending *Extended Day* will be admitted prior to 8:10 am.
- When doors open for ingress, *children only* will proceed directly to their classrooms at 8:20 am.
- Doors will be locked at 8:30 am.
- Parents and visitors must be identified, buzzed in and then report directly to the North Office upon entering the building for **any purpose**.
- During ingress, any adult who has business of any nature in the building must report directly to the North Office upon entering the building.
- A Community Police Officer, administrators and staff will be monitoring the ingress process as well as caring for children. We seek to provide a warm, welcoming approach, while at the same time providing a more secure entry process.

New Safety and Security Measures Now in Effect - Important Changes You Need To Know

Egress – changes for parents who pick up children

If it is imperative to pick your child up, the new procedure is as follows:

- Parents picking up children must enter through the gate to the immediate left of the North Entrance.
- Parents wait on the sidewalk along the kindergarten wing.
- Doors will open at 3:05 pm.
- Parents proceed into the cafeteria following designated traffic pattern.
- Parents sign out students and exit cafeteria following designated traffic pattern.
- Note: There are no changes for parents of bus riders in the afternoon.

Why we strongly recommend that BRS families send their children to school by bus:

- One of the most important security steps that we can take is to reduce the amount of time it takes to get into and out of the building. With the high number of car drop-offs and pick-ups, the process is seriously delayed.
 - The large number of cars entering and leaving the campus during morning ingress



Take the bus

and afternoon egress causes traffic problems and, at times, interferes with bus drop-offs and pick-ups.

- Taking the bus is socially and emotionally beneficial to your children. Your child will gain more independence, self-confidence and learn the skills of interacting with others.
- The buses are owned and operated by drivers who have been doing this for years. They know the roads, the children and the families. They take pride in being part of our school community.



New safety and security measures cont pg 4

THE BRIDGE shines light on exemplary programs and practices

The Bridge, our seventh annual education report to the citizens and businesses of Woodbridge, went out earlier this month. Did you get yours? Check it out on the district website. There is much to be proud of.



Ice Cream!



Meet other parents and make new friends. Come to the annual ice cream social sponsored by the BRS PTO. September 11, 5:30 - 7:30 on the school grounds. In case of rain — in the cafeteria.

BRS Handbook has lots of new information



Look for the new BRS Parent and Student Handbook that will be included in your child's packet on the first day of school. Refer to it often and be familiar with its contents and policies. There are several new policies in effect. Among others, pages for frequent reference include the school calendar (inside front cover), the school map (inside back cover), staff directory (page 5-7), time schedules (page 10), and report card and conference dates (page 17).

New names, familiar faces, coming on board and changing places

Newly Hired Staff

- Joseph DePalma - joins the Grade 1 team
- Christina Domschine - joins the Grade 1 team
- Elizabeth Szondy - joins the Grade 5 team
- Mary Vincitorio moves into a Literacy Support / school-wide SRBI position
- Elisa Rosner - Resource Grade 4-6
- Kayla Widmeyer - Intermediate Grades Psychologist
- Cedric Jeffries TA - Special Services

Changes In Assignment

- Kristina Hart-Rooney - MAG Grade 1
- Barbara Ahern - MAG Grade 3
- Louise Golden - MAG Grade 4
- Mary Riley-Maier - Resource Grade K-1/MAG
- Doreen Merrill - Resource Grade 2-3
- Susan Simoniello - Resource Grade 5
- Caterina Zdrowski - Resource Grade 6
- Barbara Butler TA - Special Services Intermediate Grades
- Laura Sexton TA - Special Services Primary and Intermediate
- Jennifer Vizzo-Toracco TA - Special Services Primary Grades

Improvements, much needed repaving completed

Many improvements to the building and grounds were made over the summer. Here are some of the highlights:



- Thanks to the cooperation of the Board of Education, the Town and the BRS PTO, repaving the basketball courts and some of the pathways leading to the school has been completed. The PTO, through its fund raising efforts, made a considerable \$12,000 contribution toward the project. Well done!
- New basketball hoops and poles were installed and additional safety enhancements to the primary playground were completed.
- The custodial staff has completed a comprehensive building cleanup.
- Painting was completed in nearly a dozen classrooms.
- A new acoustical system was installed in the cafeteria to create a safer and more comfortable environment for our children.
- Replacement tiles and carpeting were installed in the library and in the main office.
- A new telephone/PA system was installed throughout the building to improve safety.
- Parking stripes were repainted in both the north and south parking areas.

Jean Molot is Teacher of the Year

It is my pleasure to honor Jean Molot as the *Woodbridge School District Teacher of the Year*. Jean began her teaching career in Woodbridge in 2005 as a Math Specialist. She continuously makes indispensable contributions to the total school program at BRS by serving on numerous committees, being a consummate professional and a natural leader. She holds the highest standards of excellence, honesty and integrity and is a dynamic and exceptional teacher.



As a life-long learner, Ms. Molot brings a positive role model to her profession and is a valuable member of our Primary Team. Her colleagues often seek her advice and support. She is truly appreciated by her peers and colleagues. In the classroom, Ms. Molot provides a stimulating environment of trust, respect, motivation, challenge and affection for her students. She engages her students with creative fun, humor and confidence while remaining focused on their individual achievement.

In every school there are the stalwarts who are the backbone of a professional faculty. They seek not fame nor glory but only to do their job in the most professional and responsible manner. They model wonderful qualities and practice the ways of those teachers who children will remember long after they complete their schooling. Ms. Molot is an asset to Beecher Road School, well respected by staff, parents and administration and a gift to her students. She has earned the recognition and the honor of this designation.

Open House Dates

Sept 17 Grades K, 1 and 2
 Sept 24 Grades 3, 4 and MAG
 Sept 26 Grades 5 & 6

Classroom Teacher Assignments 2013-14

Grade	Teachers	Teachers
Pre-K	DePalma, M	
Kindergarten	Belisle, E	Salinardi, C
	Coleman, A	Wyman-Ancil, S
	Dempsey, J	
Grade 1	DePalma, J	Piascyk, L
	Domschine, C	Sanders, S
	Fanelli, C	
Grade 2	Buzzard, A	Ramia, T
	Hamm, A	Shepard, M
Multi-Age	Ahern, B	Golden, L
	Burness, R	Hart-Rooney, K
Grade 3	Concilio, K	Hutchinson, J
	Halsey, P	Lavigne, E
Grade 4	Don, D	Reizfeld, N
	Echeverry, C	Waldron, M
	Krawec, M	
Grade 5	Blinstrubas, S	Mulligan, L
	Guerra, C	Rourke, T
	McCollom, K	Szondy, E
Grade 6	Chase, D	Ngov, V
	Eleck, S	Smerekanicz, N
	Holowienko, J	

Connecticut Mastery Test results give us cause to celebrate and analyze

Our initial reaction to the CMT data is that there are areas of reporting with which we are pleased. For example, there was a 100% rate of proficiency in both reading and mathematics in the 6th grade. In addition, the percentage of students at or above goal was 95% and above. The 5th grade had close to 100% proficiency in all three core subject areas with 91% at or above goal in writing, 92% in reading and 93% in mathematics.

On the 5th grade science test, 99% of students scored at proficiency or above; 91% scored at or above goal.



On the other hand, 3rd grade scores warrant closer scrutiny. The lower than usual 3rd grade scores in reading and mathematics may be attributed in part to the fact that we have moved to a *Common Core Curriculum* in the primary grades. This change, while not reflected in the CMT results, aligns our curriculum with the new set of tests coming this year.

After nearly three decades, the CMT is being phased out in Connecticut.

More detailed CMT information will be shared in the upcoming weeks.

Welcome to our new School Board members

We welcome our new Board of Education members who took office this summer and look forward to working together for the betterment of our school district. The new Board members are: Lisa Connor, Christianne Jaffe, Karen Kravetz, Keri Matthews and Emily Melnick. Returning Board members are: Steven Fleischman, Matthew Gilbride, Margaret Hamilton and Carl Lindskog.

BRS nursing staff provides school with their special care



School nurses at Beecher Road School are very busy. An important role of school nursing is to improve attendance through health promotion, disease prevention and disease management. Improved attendance

means the student is in the classroom and ready to learn. The nurses at BRS logged in more than 7,000 visits last school year by students. After being evaluated by a school nurse, 95% of the students remained in school.

Due to advances in medical science and technology, children with complex medical and behavioral conditions and chronic illnesses are being educated in the public school setting. The nursing staff manages over 100 students with chronic medical conditions such as severe food allergies, diabetes, seizure disorder and asthma. They also case manage many students with complex medical conditions. They administer specialized services to students such as medication administration and insulin pump management.

The nursing staff also conducts mandated vision, hearing and scoliosis screenings and initiated referrals for follow up care. They collaborate with the Special Services Department, school Food Services department as well as with the Physical Education department.

The nursing staff also participates on committees that address the health and safety of the school environment. The school nurses at BRS take the responsibility and accountability for providing quality care very seriously. A graduating sixth grader noted, "The nurses are caring and any student can go regardless of their issue." A faculty member said, "The Beecher Road School nurses are always supportive of the entire Beecher community, regularly reaching out to support, encourage and enhance the lives of the students, teachers and staff."

Grounds track cleanup is Eagle Scout project



James Nicholas Letis (left above), a former BRS student chose to make his prior elementary school the recipient of the efforts of his Eagle Scout project. James said, "For my project I led other scouts and volunteers and cleared out a buffer area that is between the Kucinkas Loop and the baseball field to make it look nicer, and be safer for the students and others using the track." James completed the project in early July after working on it since May. Mr. Taddei (right above), BRS physical education teacher, served as James' advisor and mentor. The support of the Town, that supplied 70 cu. yd. of woodchips, and the hard work of James and the other volunteers is gratefully acknowledged.

In case of a school evacuation: Procedures in place

In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation of the school campus, students will follow the procedures they have learned in the drills conducted throughout the school year. *Please be assured that we are sensitive to the psychological needs of children and conduct drills with that in mind in an age-appropriate manner.* With everyone's cooperation, an orderly and swift campus evacuation can be realized.

Parents should follow the protocol below.

Important Note: Do not come to BRS.

- Parents will be notified through the *Instant Alert System* of the necessity for a school closing or shutdown and the circumstances for it. Please be sure you have signed up and checked all appropriate message indicators. For information on how to sign up for Instant Alert, please see the school district website and click on the *Parent Information* tab > *Instant Alert*>*Directions*. If that is not possible, please call Lola Johnson at the BRS main office, at 203-389-2195.
- All children at BRS have a personal *emergency lanyard* to wear around their necks. It contains information needed to be sure each child is released to the right person. We can only release a child to a parent or other authorized adult. Please be sure anyone authorized to pick up your child is listed on the emergency lanyard.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES ARE PRACTICED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- In the event of a school campus evacuation, students scheduled for bus transportation will board their bus and go directly to their bus stop. Designated BRS staff members are assigned to ride the buses with the students. They will only release students to a parent or authorized person listed on the child's emergency lanyard. These designated BRS staff members, rather than the bus driver, will be solely responsible for the release of students at the bus stop. A parent or one of the people authorized by the parent for pick-up must be at the bus stop waiting for them.
- If there is no parent or authorized person waiting for the child **at the bus stop**, the child will be transported to the **Center Building** at 4 Meetinghouse Lane. Children must be picked up there, not at school. Children will only be released from the Center Building to a parent or a person authorized to pick up the child and listed on the child's emergency lanyard.
- **There will be no Extended Day Program in a shutdown or evacuation.** Students scheduled for Extended Day will be transported to the Center Building. They must be picked up there. Children will only be released from the Center Building to a parent or a person authorized to pick up the child and listed on the child's emergency lanyard.
- *Recreation and after school activities are cancelled* when school is shut down. Students will follow their routine dismissal. There will be no transportation to religious classes. Students will board their bus and go directly to their bus stop. Plan to have one of the persons authorized for pick-up at the bus stop waiting for them. If there is no one waiting for the child, they will be transported to the Center Building for pick up.

Students will practice this procedure as part of the drills that are conducted throughout the year. This protocol requires the cooperation of everyone, most importantly our parents and those responsible for picking up your children. It is strongly suggested that you take some time to have a plan in place in the event of a school shutdown.