

NONNEWAUG SENIOR WINS CIAC MICHAEL H. SAVAGE SPIRIT OF SPORT AWARD



Nonnewaug High School senior Scott Meyer was named the CIAC Michael H. Savage Spirit of Sport Award honoree for 2024.

The gym erupted in cheers on Friday, February 2 when Scott was surprised with the announcement at the winter sports Red Out Pep Rally.

Scott was introduced as the winner by Gregg Simon, the CIAC Associate Executive Director who attended the surprise event. He will officially be honored by the CIAC at the annual Scholar-Athlete Banquet in May and will be in the running for a Section 1 Award for winners from New England, New York, and New Jersey.

The Michael H. Savage Spirit of Sport Award seeks to recognize individuals who exemplify the ideals of the positive spirit of sport that represent the core mission of education-based athletics.

He was nominated by Athletic Director Declan Curtin and NHS track and field Coach Deb Flaherty. Scott was given a brain tumor diagnosis at age six and endured five surgeries and two rounds of chemotherapy over the course of several years. The treatment left him with residual left-sided weakness, minimal use of his left hand, and seizures. But that has never deterred Meyer's perseverance and spirit on the field.

"Scott Meyer embodies qualities that every coach hopes to see in their athletes: sportsmanship, leadership, and perseverance," Flaherty said. "While it's true that there are many high school athletes who demonstrate these qualities, most have not needed to overcome what Scott has."

"He is our Champ," Curtin said. "He embodies our Vision of a Learner attributes as he has always adapted, adjusted, and persevered. We are incredibly proud of Scott."

From the Superintendent

The Region 14 annual budget cycle is fast approaching. I am excited to announce that the Region 14 2024-2025 budget proposal will be presented in March.

The budget will continue to focus on meeting the needs of every student in the district.

Region 14 will continue to focus on the four goals of the district. These goals include:

- a) improving academic performance
- b) providing a safe environment for all students and staff
- c) ensuring consistent communication
- d) developing a reasonable budget that meets the needs of all students

We are extremely grateful for the ongoing support of the entire school district community as our consistent mission is continuous improvement.

Below are the important dates regarding the upcoming budget presentations.

Region 14 2024-2025 Budget Presentation Calendar (All presentations start at 6:00 p.m.)

- March 4 - Board of Education Meeting(Mitchell Elementary School)
- March 11 - Board of Education Budget Workshop(Mitchell Elementary School)
- March 18 - Board of Education Budget Workshop(if needed)(Mitchell Elementary School)
- March 20 - Mitchell Elementary School
- March 21 - Bethlehem Elementary School
- March 25 - Board of Finance/Board of Selectman(Woodbury Middle School)
- March 26 - Public Hearing(Nonnewaug High School/Auditorium)
- May 7- Budget Referendum to Vote on Region 14 budget

Brian Murphy
Superintendent

MORNING MEETING AT MITCHELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROMOTES POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE



Once a month at Mitchell Elementary School, students come together for a "Morning Meeting" in the gym with Principal Kelly Pinho. These meetings, one for grades K-2 and one for grades 3-5 bring students together each month for team building and peer engagement.

"Morning Meeting is a great way for students to work on their team-building skills, to showcase things they are proud of, and is just a great way to start the day," Pinho said.

The 40-minute sessions start with whole class greetings to each other -- maybe a "hello" in American sign language, saying hello in Japanese or another foreign language, and other unique ways of greeting each other.

Pinho takes this opportunity to lead a brief discussion about school-related issues and then moves on to students sharing things they are proud of with the group. The sessions end with a fun team-building activity.

Recently a morning meeting activity was a group Hula hoop-raising activity. They've also done Jump in/Jump out, Freeze Tag, Would You Rather questions, and Trivia contests.

Pinho implemented the Morning Meeting when she arrived at MES, and it has been going strong since.

"Meetings are also a way in which we come together to review expectations or procedures," Pinho said. "It's a great way for classes to learn from other classes."



CAS ELEMENTARY ART AWARDS

Four Mitchell Elementary School students were honored at the CAS Arts Banquet at the Aqua Turf this month. The students are Hazel Brent, William Ryan, Fiona Haines, and Levi Chmielewski. The students attended the banquet with their families, Music Teacher Adam Snyder, Art Teacher Sandra Andes, and Principal Kelly Pinho. The students were honored for Excellence in Music and Art.



VALENTINE'S DAY GRANDPARENT'S DINNER AT BETHLEHEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS A GENERATIONAL TREAT



This month at Bethlehem Elementary School, parent volunteers on the PTO hosted the favorite Grandparents Valentine's Dinner, a multi-generational event that brings students together with their grandparents for a meal at their school. The event was sold out days after a flyer went home to families. There were two seatings for the 200 people who attended. Children were delighted to show their grandparents what they love about their school and then enjoy a Valentine's dinner with them in the cafeteria.

Many students dressed in their Valentine's finery and enjoyed a formal dinner complete with music, tablecloths, flowers, and homemade food and desserts. The BES PTO pulled out all the stops for this wonderful event. "This was a testament to our strong, family-based school community," said Principal Wendy Yatsenick. "Many thanks to Mary Ellen and Dionne in the kitchen for all of their hard work. With the overwhelming popularity of this event, next year we will plan for three seatings."

Tara Lanese, a member of the BES PTO who helped organize the dinner said it was wonderful to see the generations connecting over a meal. "A favorite part of the night for me was when a grandparent told me that they loved having a while to just sit down and talk to their grandchild over a meal without any technology to distract," Lanese said.



CAS ELEMENTARY ART AWARDS

Four Bethlehem Elementary School students were honored at the CAS Arts Banquet at the Aqua Turf this month for Excellence in Music and Art. The students are Alyxandra Pustola, Tye Weaver, Christopher Farisello, and Daisy Collett. The students attended the banquet with their families, Music Teacher Adam Snyder, Art Teacher Sandra Andes, and Principal Wendy Yatsenick.

NONNEWAUG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ART HIGHLIGHT



Back Row Melanie Boria, Ava Parks, Emily Matozzo, Rubie Lombardi, Audrey Rogers, Claire Rogers, Kiera Jacobi.
Front Row: Jiaqi Xie, Brooke Celello, Mae Addeo, Madison Willis, Kayleigh Gingras, Sophia Starr, Luke Cenatiempo

SCHOLASTIC ART AWARDS

Nonnewaug High School had another incredible showing in the 2024 Connecticut Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Competition. 17 students won awards in this professionally juried event that recognizes only the best Connecticut student artwork.

Gold Key Portfolio, Luke Cenatiempo

Silver Key Portfolio, Melanie Boria;
Madison Willis; Jiaqi Xie

Honorable Mention Portfolio – Emily
Matozzo and Melanie Boria

Gold Key CAEA Best In Show Drawing & Illustration – Emily Matozzo

Individual winning pieces:

Gold Key

Melanie Boria - Drawing and Illustration

Melanie Boria - Drawing and Illustration

Melanie Boria - Painting - Hive

Melanie Boria - Painting

Melanie Boria - Photography

Luke Cenatiempo - Drawing and
Illustration

Selma Dedovic - Drawing and Illustration

Kayleigh Gingras - Drawing and
Illustration

Kiera Jacobi - Drawing and Illustration

Kiera Jacobi - Painting

Rubie Lombardi - Photography

Emily Matozzo - Drawing and Illustration

Ava Parks - Drawing and Illustration

Audrey Rogers - Drawing and Illustration

Madison Willis - Drawing and Illustration

Silver Key

Melanie Boria - Drawing and Illustration

Brooke Celello - Drawing and Illustration

Luke Cenatiempo - Drawing and
Illustration

Kiera Jacobi - Painting

Rubie Lombardi - Drawing and Illustration

Emily Matozzo - Drawing and Illustration

Emily Matozzo - Drawing and Illustration

Audrey Rogers - Drawing and Illustration

Sophia Starr - Drawing and Illustration

Gregory Voros - Digital Art

Honorable Mention

Mae Addeo - Painting

Brooke Celello - Drawing and Illustration

Emily Matozzo - Painting

Ava Parks - Photography

Claire Rogers - Photography

Bella Starr - Photography



[Click to view full Scholastic Art Gallery](#)



OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND WITH STUDENT-LED INITIATIVES AT WOODBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL



At Woodbury Middle School, student-led initiatives have resulted in the empowerment of students and created new opportunities for all students in their school and Region 14 communities.

“We are excited when our students plan our events,” said WMS Principal Bill Nemec. “Students are more passionate, motivated, and engaged in the cause or project. These events often experience greater success when our students lead.”

This is true for two recent successful events. Students approached the WMS administration with their ideas along with the desire to implement them using volunteer resources.

The new and improved Super Bowl Pancake Breakfast came from members of the WMS Alliance group who wanted to bring the event back as a way to improve school-community relationships. The community responded to a call for donations and volunteers with force and WMS welcomed well over 250 guests to enjoy a great breakfast on Super Bowl Sunday.

Students also took the lead in introducing a school-wide Valentine’s Day Dance this month. WMS has not held a dance in many years due to declining student interest. The WMS Alliance group was able to organize this successful event in a few weeks. Once they presented their ideas to the administration, they received the green light to gauge student interest with a Google survey that was overwhelmingly in favor of a dance.

Students secured teacher chaperones for the evening, sold tickets during lunch, and turned the WMS gym into a fantastic Valentine’s Dance where over 230 students attended and enjoyed dancing, singing, and snacks.



DRAMA CLUB BACK IN ACTION AT WOODBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL

This year marks the return of the Drama Club at WMS. The students and staff are preparing to present Disney’s “Moana Jr.” later this spring. The first read-through included more than 30 students who were interested in joining the cast and crew and student participation has increased since.

Music Teacher Jamie Odell and World Language teacher Dawn Manogue are Drama Club advisors and are co-directing the musical. Students will also have vocal coaching from music teacher Jessica Lopa a few times a week during rehearsals.

“We are officially halfway through our study of the Moana musical and are ramping up to build sets, meet with parents, and begin fundraising,” Odell said.

Starting in March students will have rehearsals and set meetings several times a week. The musical hits the WMS stage for two performances on April 4th and 5th.

“We are so excited for the return of drama to the middle school,” Odell said.



NONNEWAUG STUDENTS GET ADVICE FROM LOCAL PROFESSIONALS AT CAREER PANELS IN CCRC



The College and Career Counseling Office at Nonnewaug is teeming with activity most days, especially throughout the fall and winter when CCRC counselor Kathy Green is helping seniors through the college application season and beginning to meet with members of the junior class.

Also during that time, Green makes a point of scheduling career panels with local professionals to give all Nonnewaug students some real ideas about real careers. This year so far, Green has had standing-room-only crowds for Career Panels on psychology and social work and one on the military.

A noteworthy aspect of these panels is that they include many local professionals but also members of the Region 14 community who are eager to share advice with Nonnewaug students. The January Psychology & Social Work Panel included MES Social Worker Kris Caceci and NHS Art teacher Genna Riggi.

The Military Panel in February included NHS Principal Dr. Mykal Kuslis, a National Guard captain, and student Sage Samuelson who is enlisting in the Navy upon her graduation in June.

"I'm so proud that so many of our students take advantage of these in-school opportunities to explore career paths they are thinking about or are looking to dig deeper," Green said.

The panels are open to all grades and Green said this is a key element to getting all students thinking about life after high school as early as freshman year. At the start of the year, NHS students were asked to fill out a Google survey to gauge interest in particular career fields. Green took those results and began organizing these panels in the fall.

"The career panels inform students of the education requirements for various fields, salary potential, and career outlook," Green said. "They also allow for students to learn of professionals' stories and how everyone's path is different." These panels can also help underclassmen during their course selection process.

Green is working on upcoming panels for the spring based on student interest including the areas of healthcare, engineering, and personal services, and welcomes local community professionals in these fields to join.

This spring will also see the rollout of job shadowing opportunities. "Students can bring me contacts they want to shadow," Green said. She has also teamed with the Woodbury Chamber of Commerce to provide additional opportunities. "We have connected in hopes of building a mutually beneficial partnership for our students and local businesses."

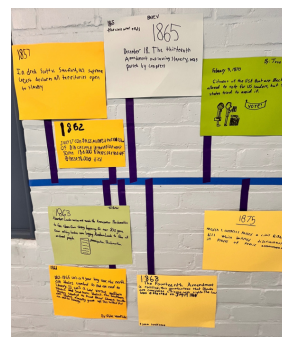
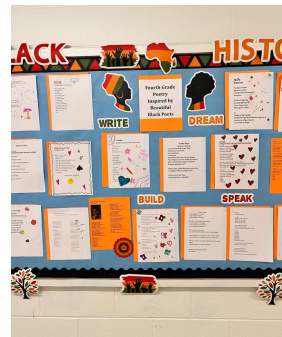
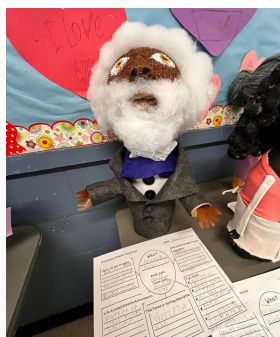
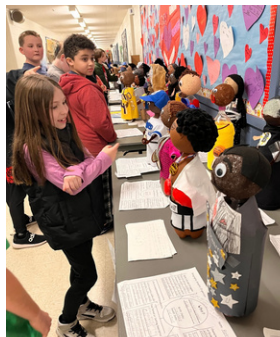
GALLERY WALK CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT MITCHELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The second annual Black History Gallery Walk at Mitchell Elementary School included various grade-level projects around the history and lives of notable Black Americans.

Parents and guardians were invited to tour with their child's class to view the many student creations placed throughout the school.

During February, which is designated as Black History Month, the students made projects on inventors, highlighted notable athletes and artists, created poems in the style of notable Black poets, and set up a walkable timeline of important events in history.

Third graders created Bottle Biographies and the Kindergarten students sang and signed "We Are the World" which was played for visitors on the lobby TV.



REGION 14 CLASSROOM PROJECTS AND ITEMS FUNDED BY CSDE/DONORS CHOOSE GRANT INITIATIVE

3D Jewelry Tools. Flexible classroom seating. Molecular and ionic model kits. Robots.

These are just some of the Region 14 teacher projects recently funded with grants made possible by a collaboration of the Connecticut State Department of Education and Donors Choose.

This unique partnership provided Connecticut educators with up to \$1,000 in funding for projects that support the unique needs of their students in the classroom. This funding grant was for any new project that contributes to the state's "priority areas" of learning acceleration, academic renewal, student enrichment, and/or the social, emotional, and mental health of students and school staff.

Nonnewaug High School chemistry teacher Melissa Hodges received 12 molecular model kits, a large molecular model kit, and an ionic compound model kit. "These kits will allow all of my students to build simple molecules, which helps them better understand how they look in 3D space," Hodges said. "The kits also include pieces that will allow my AP chemistry students to build more complex structures."

At the elementary level, there were multiple grants funded that included flexible seating, decodable books, mind-space activities, STEM supplies, math enrichment games, robots, phonics tools, and more.

MES Library Media Specialist Allison Loiseau wrote her grant for Bee-Bot robots to provide students with multiple opportunities to work as teams. "These Bee-Bots will promote enrichment and offer students a hands-on way to explore computational thinking," Loiseau said. "The logical nature of programming will allow students to divide tasks equitably."

The grant proposal period opened on February 1 and was funded on a first come, first serve basis for educators across the state. In total, \$4 million was allocated for this grant program by February 5. In Region 14, teachers at all of our schools were able to procure more than \$18,000 worth of classroom kits, flexible seating, and tools for students.

"It is fantastic that our teachers took the time to submit the project proposals and request items that will further enhance the learning environment for the students in their classrooms," said Dr. Taryn Fernandez, Region 14 Director of Teaching & Learning. "With 22 teachers in the district receiving a grant, over \$18,000 in funding was awarded to their projects by the CSDE."



CVC Pop Boards for phonics lessons at MES

Model Kits for Chemistry lessons at NHS



SCENE AROUND THE DISTRICT

The **Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience** Program Adult Education courses begin March 7 and meet on Thursday nights through April 4 from 6 – 8 p.m. in the Agriscience Building at Nonnewaug High School. The courses are taught by Agriscience teachers, local artisans, farmers, and agricultural professionals in the community, as well as former Nonnewaug High School agriscience students. Courses include Beginners' Welding, FAMACHA Certification Course (2 Nights) Training Yourself to Relax & Drive Your Horse Safely, All About House Plants, Equine Nutrition & Body Condition Scoring, Raising Chicks, Plant Care 101, Feeding Your Dogs & Cats, Small Ruminant (Goats & Sheep) Hoof Trimming, Jam Making 101, and Creating an Easter Arrangement. Courses are \$20 per class and are filled on a first-come basis. Course offerings include both single-night sessions as well as multi-session courses over five weeks. [Click the link for the Course Book.](#)



The **Bethlehem Elementary School** community recently donated more than 900 items to Caring For Bethlehem's The Comfort Closet. The BES Student Council organized the event and created boxes for each of the grades to fill. This BES Comfort Closet collection is a wonderful way for our elementary school students to exemplify the Vision of A Learner attributes of empathy, collaboration, and taking initiative.



Each year, the **Woodbury FFA** Advisory Group along with several FFA alumni visit with our Freshman Agriscience students at Nonnewaug High School to offer some insight into areas including building a resume, honing interview skills, and making good first impressions. This is an important experience for freshman students as they are working to lock in their SAE (Supervised Agriculture Experience), a requirement in their sophomore, junior, and senior years in the agriculture program.

New Entry Age For Kindergarten

In January, Region 14 announced our process for early entry to kindergarten in response to new legislation by the State of Connecticut requiring that students turn 5 as of September 1st in order to be eligible for Kindergarten. The legislation allowed for districts to admit students who turn 5 prior to January 1st to be admitted upon parent request to the principal and an assessment of student readiness performed by the district. If your child turns 5 between September 1st and January 1st and you are interested in your child entering Kindergarten for the 2024-2025 school year, please visit the [Kindergarten Information and Registration page](#) on our district website to access the necessary forms and learn more about the process.

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