

FOCUS ON 14

The monthly newsletter of Region 14 Schools
January 2025



THE ELLIS P. CLARK AGRISCIENCE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM SPRING COURSES BEGIN ON MARCH 5

Small engine repair. Bee-keeping. The art of Maple syruping. Needle felting. Floral design. Equine massage. Meat-cutting basics.

These skills and more are part of the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience & Technology Spring Adult Education Program course line-up.

The spring 2025 courses will be held on Wednesday evenings from **March 5 to April 9** at Nonnewaug High School in Woodbury. Classes are from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and include both single-night sessions as well as multi-session courses over five weeks.

Courses are offered in areas including Animal Science, Ag Mechanics, Food Science, Horticulture, Natural Resources and Aquaculture, Agricultural Arts, and a Pesticide Recertification program. 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.

"Our goal is to not only educate our students but to also educate and connect with the members of our community," said Jennifer Plasky NHS Agriscience teacher and Adult Education Program Coordinator. "Our favorite types of classes are the ones that let our participants take something home."

All courses are \$20. Some courses require additional material fees which are noted in the description.

To register for courses and view the course catalog, visit www.woodburyffa.org/adulted



WMS SUPER BOWL PANCAKE BREAKFAST



The Woodbury Middle School Super Bowl Pancake Breakfast happens on **Sunday, February 9, from 9 - 11 a.m.** in the Woodbury Middle School cafeteria. Eighth-grade Alliance members Amelia Ouellette, Sadie Nichols, and Delani Packett are spearheading this year's event. The group is seeking donations to help make this event a success. Items needed include aluminum trays, foil, complete pancake mix, brown and serve sausage, mini chocolate chips, syrup, ground coffee, tea, sugar packets, orange juice, 12-oz hot cups, and plastic utensils. Advance tickets are \$5 or \$7 at the door. All of the proceeds will benefit the end-of-the-year activities for students at WMS.

NONNEWAUG HIGH SCHOOL ART STUDENTS SHINE IN SCHOLASTIC ART AWARDS



Nonnewaug High School had another incredible showing in the 2024-25 Connecticut Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Competition, a professionally juried event that recognizes only the best Connecticut student artwork. Nonnewaug student artwork earned 5 Silver and 2 Honorable Mention Portfolio Awards, 10 Gold Key awards, 7 Silver Key Awards, and 4 special awards -- CAEA/Arnini Best In Drawing, the CAAA Best In Photography, the CAEA/Arnini Best In Traditional Media, and the American Visions Nominee.

Artwork is displayed at the Donald and Linda Silpe Gallery at the University of Hartford through January 31. The Awards Celebration is Sunday, January 26, 2025 - at 2:00 pm at the Lincoln Theater at the University of Hartford.

View the student work here: [Scholastic Art Awards](#)



TALENTED & GIFTED PROGRAMS OFFER COLLABORATIVE AND INDIVIDUAL ENDEAVORS FOR GRADES 3 - 8

Region 14's afterschool Talented & Gifted Programs give students opportunities to pursue topics of interest with a STEM focus while also inspiring community involvement.

The TAG programs support the district's most advanced students in grades 3 - 8 in this weekly after-school enrichment program. Led by Brenda Williams at Woodbury Middle School, Allison Loiseau at Mitchell Elementary School, and Jennifer Schnitzer at Bethlehem Elementary School, these afterschool groups are a setting for students to interact intellectually and socially with logic and problem-solving through a variety of different collaborative and individual learning experiences. The elementary groups also engage in peer tutoring and enrichment for students in grades K-2.

Students kick off each week with math challenges, STEM tasks, or brain teasers and can then choose how to spend their time—either in the STEM Challenge Center or working on self-selected projects that spark their creativity and curiosity.

So far this year, the BES TAG students have worked on football and baseball statistics, video tutorials, game design, and string art. Before the break, students collaborated on a Sierpinski tree using tetrahedrons—a fantastic blend of math, art, and teamwork. Next up - coding robots. MES groups are working on a school newspaper, digital escape room, fantasy sports teams, art portfolio to display, and a detailed History Walk culminating with a History Day partnership with the Woodbury Public Library. In addition to independent work, Loiseau and Schnitzer fit in collaborative building projects, puzzles, and problem-solving in efforts to unite the students as a community of learners.

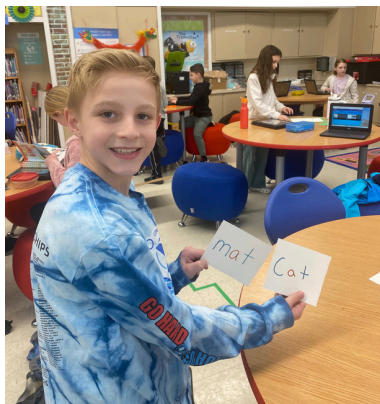


At WMS, students use linguistic skills, spatial reasoning, computation, and logic to solve a problem or answer a question and share their problem-solving strategies to learn from each other.

In December, students collaborated in small groups on a Think Tank-style design challenge - create a better backpack and multi-purpose lunchbox for a national School Gear Swag Design Contest. They worked in groups to conduct market research, make detailed changes to their ideas, and design the prototype of their creation either drawn by hand or with CAD - computer-aided design. Over break, students submitted their entries for a chance to win some prize money for their TAG group.

This winter, students will use some of their personal interests to curate and review a collection of works. Completed reviews will be submitted to the New York Times' "My List: A Different Kind of Review" contest that promotes students' engagement with arts and culture. WMS students are also working on a project using the idea of probability to create a carnival-inspired Game of Chance. Once complete, the WMS TAG group will bring their Games of Chance to the elementary groups to see if the odds are in their favor.

The new TAG programs began in September and provide enrichment opportunities for identified students who can attend. Dr. Taryn Fernandez, Director of Teaching and Learning said students were identified for the program beginning with an analysis of their standardized testing in math, reading, and literacy. Students who scored in the 90th percentile or above were invited to participate in the OLSAT - Otis Lennon School Ability Test. The OLSAT was administered at each school and students who scored in the 80th percentile or above in their "Age Percentile Rank" were invited to participate in the afterschool program.



STUDENTS MAKE MUSIC TOGETHER NHS/WMS COLLABORATE ON JAZZ TO ROCK CONCERT



The first Jazz to Rock Concert at the LMC at Nonnewaug High School this month was a terrific showcase of musical talent in Region 14. NHS students in the Rock Ensemble, led by Chris Connelly, performed pieces by Radiohead, the Surfaris, and Kenny Wayne. The Jazz Band, led by teacher Joel Pietrorazio, featured musicians from both Nonnewaug and Woodbury Middle School on pieces by Johnny Mercer, Thad Jones, and Stanley Clark. A special treat for attendees included an Open Mic session where four WMS students took on some classic blues.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE COMBINE IN THE WMS SPANISH CLASSROOM



While teaching the Spanish language to students, Woodbury Middle School Spanish teacher Tania Fernandez makes time to weave in the many different parts of the culture. Students learned about the many winter holidays in Spanish-speaking countries, including el Día de los Reyes, the January 6 Hispanic celebration of Three Kings Day. Students heard about the traditions, food, and different ways Hispanic communities celebrate this holiday that commemorates the visit that the Three Wise Men paid to Jesus after his birth, also known as the Epiphany. Fernandez also brought in the traditional Pan de Rosca for students to try. This "Three Kings Bread" is only made in bakeries from January 1 – 5. Students finished out the lesson by creating their own "haz tu corona" Three Kings crowns.

MES 2ND GRADERS LEARN ABOUT COMMUNITY

Early in January, as part of their unit on community, Mitchell Elementary School 2nd graders got a visit from members of the Woodbury Food Bank. Jeff McKenna, President of the Community Services Council of Woodbury, and Food Bank Manager Deirdre Bologna spoke to students about the ways the Food Bank serves members of the community. They told students that the MES school-wide food drives are great resources to help stock shelves and fight food insecurity for residents in this community. Students were excited to ask questions and get ideas for future school-wide food drives.



NHS STUDENT-ATHLETES COMMIT TO NEXT LEVEL



NHS seniors Lincoln Nichols and Ellie McDonald have officially committed to continue their sport at the varsity level in college. Lincoln has committed to the men's basketball team at Ave Maria University in Florida. Ellie has committed to Track and Field at Middlebury College in Vermont. Both students recently had signing ceremonies with their families at Nonnewaug. Congratulations and continued success to these two terrific student-athletes!



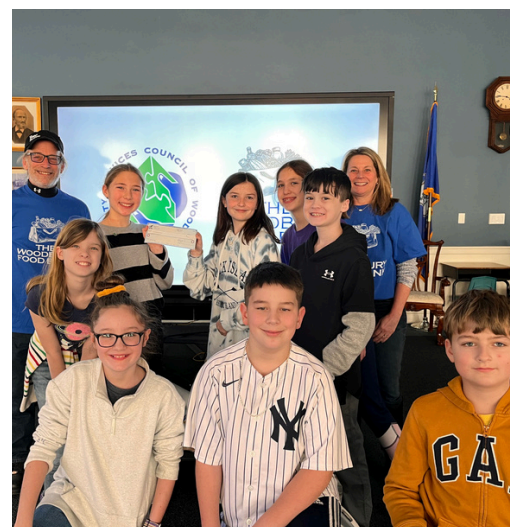
AROUND THE DISTRICT



NHS sophomores in the Agriculture Production classes got right back to hands-on learning with a lesson on basic cheese-making. These agriscience students created mozzarella cheese from milk and learned the steps from curd to kneading and stretching it out, to setting it in a brine. They were excited to sample some of their homemade cheese.



Twelve 4th and 5th grade students from BES Student Council headed to Western Connecticut State University in Danbury for the annual CAS Elementary Leadership Conference. These students had an opportunity to meet other student leaders from schools in the state and develop and hone their leadership skills in creative problem-solving, communication, decision-making, and productive thinking.



The MES Student Council members presented the Community Services Council of Woodbury with a check for \$100 this month. A few members of the Student Council made and sold gingerbread cookies at the Woodbury Tree Lighting in December and donated all proceeds to the CSCW.

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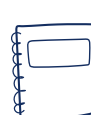
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