

FOCUS ON 14

The monthly newsletter of Region 14 Schools
March 2025



ELEMENTARY INVENTION CONVENTION SPARKS STUDENT INGENUITY

Does your Stanley Cup leak? Need an extra hand to unlock the door? Or a better way to organize your lunchbox? Student inventors in Region 14 elementary schools have got you covered!

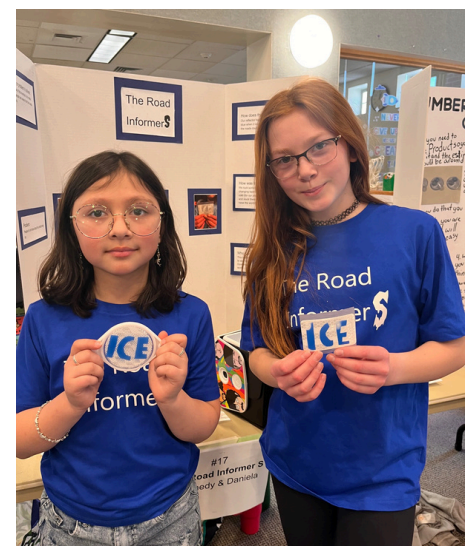
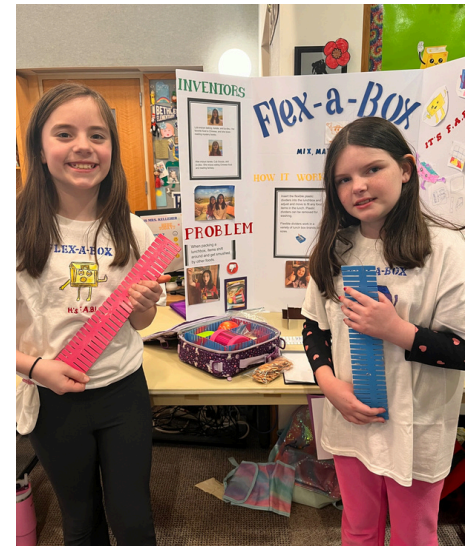
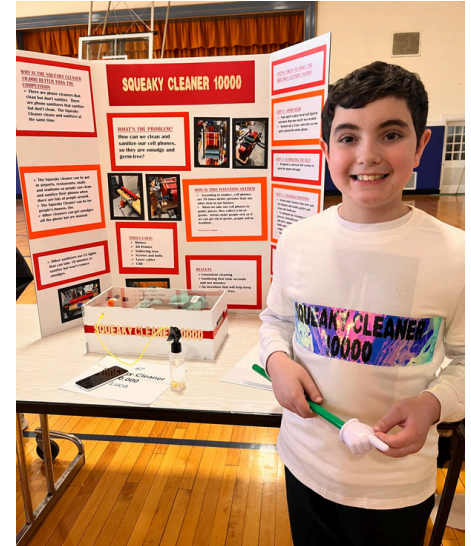
The Elementary Invention Conventions in March were terrific showcases of ingenuity where Bethlehem and Mitchell Elementary School's third, fourth, and fifth-grade students took an everyday problem and created a solution.

Both schools welcomed several Region 14 community members including administrators, district science teachers, Library Media Specialists, Board of Education members, and other staff who judged the students' work. Judges scored the inventions in originality, designing and building, testing and refining, market potential, social value, and presentation.

This event was organized for the third year as an optional event for upper elementary students by Christina Strell, the K-5 STEM and Social Studies Coordinator, to get students thinking about problem identification, problem-solving, and creativity.

Ten students and six inventions move on to the state finals at the University of Connecticut on May 3. The students representing Region 14 include Mitchell Elementary School 1st Place winners (tie) the Squeaky Cleaner 10,000 (Luca Maini) and Casa Control (Nola Salemmme) and the 2nd Place winner H2O Go (Marabella Macomber and Peyton Fisher.)

From Bethlehem Elementary School students are 1st place Flex a Box (Lyla Johnson & Mae Ambruso) and The Hair Saver (Reed Guisti & Nathan Romano) and 2nd Place winners The Road Informers (Kennedy Amodio & Daniela Garzon Arcila)



WMS 7TH GRADE EXPLORES THE ART OF MAPLE SYRUPING AT FLANDERS NATURE CENTER

Woodbury Middle School 7th-grade science students visited Flanders Nature Center for a lesson on maple syrup. Students applied what they've learned so far in their Matter Cycling and Photosynthesis unit by getting hands-on experience with the anchoring phenomena of maple syrup. At the Flanders Sugar House, students learned about the maple syrup-making process from start to finish, the history of New England maple syrup-making, and the different tools involved. The lesson included a demonstration of the evaporator to see how sap becomes maple syrup. Students also tried some of Flanders's famous maple syrup. Students also headed out to identify maple trees and measure their circumference to determine their age and whether they were tappable trees.



WMS STUDENTS EXPLORE CAREERS IN COUNSELING LESSONS

In March, Woodbury Middle School counselors worked with students on exploring careers. Students first completed a Career Interest Inventory through the schoolwide Naviance platform. They investigated a wide array of careers, with each student investigating and researching a career of their choice.

Upon completing their Career Interest Survey, students researched the career of their choice and were encouraged to present their "Career Vision Boards." They incorporated career facts, including training or education needed, potential salary, and where this job might be located. Students presented a wide range of careers from architecture and interior design to marine biology to forensics and professional sports like Major League Baseball and hunting.



NHS IN THE COMMUNITY



The Nonnewaug High School Junior Class Council dedicated time after school this month to help brighten the birthdays of local children in need. Using donations from parents and faculty members, along with Class of 2026 fundraising proceeds, the students assembled 40 Birthday in a Box kits for the United Way of Greater Waterbury. The United Way distributed these kits to local food banks to help make birthdays special for some of the children. Each kit includes a cake mix, frosting, sprinkles, birthday candles, birthday plates and napkins, a can of soda, and a disposable pan, all packed into brightly colored, cheerful bags. The Junior Class Council's original goal was to create 10 kits, but thanks to the generosity of donations, they were able to produce four times as many.



The Leo Club at Nonnewaug High School welcomed visitors from the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation this month. The Leo Club and the Woodbury Lions Club presented Fidelco representative Mark McGrath with a check for \$500 raised from a Leo Club/Lions Club chocolate fundraiser for Fidelco in February. McGrath spoke with club members about the guide dog program and encouraged them to get involved with Fidelco and visit the campus in Bloomfield. Students also met Fidelco German Shepherd Dog ambassador Sibley with her owner Kim Birge-Liberman, who is a volunteer puppy raiser with Fidelco.

NHS MATH CLUB COMPETES IN MaPP CHALLENGE AT SCSU

Sixteen Nonnewaug High School mathematics students attended the annual Mathematics Puzzle Program Competition at Southern Connecticut State University on March 20. The MaPP welcomes nearly 300 high school students from over 20 local schools for the annual puzzle hunt. Teams compete against each other in a combination of a scavenger hunt and escape room activities using contemporary mathematical research topics. During this event, students used mathematical concepts outside the usual secondary mathematics curriculum including design theory, game theory, number theory, graph theory, topology, and more.



AGRISCIENCE STUDENTS WORK ON SHOWMANSHIP IN EQUINE CENTER



Nonnewaug High School Agriscience students in Equine Science class worked with the horses on showmanship patterns. The patterns included some new maneuvers that tested students' ability to work with the horses and taught them more about communication through body language. They learned that horses truly are the best teaching partners.

NHS SENIOR EARNS NATIONAL HONORS IN SCHOLASTIC CONTEST

Nonnewaug High School senior Kiera Jacobi has won two National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for the piece titled "The Weight of It All." Kiera's piece was awarded a National Gold Medal and was chosen as the National American Visions Award winner. Kiera and art teacher Leeza Desjardins will attend the star-studded Scholastic Awards Gala at Carnegie Hall in June. Kiera will graduate in June and continue to pursue art at the Rhode Island School of Design in the fall.



AROUND THE DISTRICT

The first week of March marked Read Across America Week, and **Region 14 elementary schools** celebrated this favorite Dr. Seuss-themed week with a variety of reading events. Classrooms welcomed guest readers that included community members and town librarians, Region 14 administrators, Board of Education members, and teachers. High school athletes and agriscience students also popped into classrooms to read to students. During the month, each school also adopted its own book for the One School One Read. Bethlehem Elementary students read "Clementine" and Mitchell Elementary School read "The Wild Robot." March was a terrific celebration of reading for our elementary students.



Woodbury Middle School eighth-grader Madelyn Taylor was selected as a finalist in the School Gear Swag Design Challenge by Hit Promotional Products/EduNetwork Partners. In December, WMS Talented and Gifted coordinator Brenda Williams used the Swag Gear Design Challenge for her TAG students as a think tank-style design challenge -- to create a better backpack, multi-purpose lunchbox, or cross-body bag. Maddy's innovative design "Much Mates" was selected for creativity, innovation, and a clear understanding of the design principles of the contest. Maddy is invited to participate in an upcoming Hit Promotional Products Think Tank with the other finalists.



A group of **Nonnewaug High School FFA** students were selected to attend the state FFA Image Leadership conference in March at the Aqua Turf. Students participated in various workshops facilitated by state officers and a past National FFA Officer. This is an annual conference designed for Junior and Senior members aimed to answer the big question of "What's Next?" Student Merije Iljazi represented the Woodbury FFA in the Employment Skills competition and placed third overall. This contest entails the participant writing a resume, cover letter, and job application, participating in two job interviews, and writing follow-up correspondence after each interview.

Woodbury Middle School Presents
"Frozen, Jr."
 April 8 and 9 at 6 p.m.
 In the WMS Gym
 Tickets are \$5 at the door



Nonnewaug High School Presents
"Godspell"
 April 3, 4 & 5
 in the NHS auditorium
 Tickets on GoFan Region 14 Music

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