

FOCUS ON 14

The monthly newsletter of Region 14 Schools
May 2025



REGION 14 BOARD APPROVED BUDGET SUMMARY 2025-2026

Board Approved Budget April 7, 2025
\$43,346,298 (4.99% Increase) Defeated May 6, 2025

Budget Reductions:

High School Dean of Students/Athletic Director Administrative Position
High School Guidance Counselor
Mitchell Elementary School Kindergarten Teacher
New Proposed Elementary School Spanish Teacher
Bethlehem Elementary School Media Specialist (Reduced to Part-Time)
High School Science Lab Technician
Savings from the Agriscience Teacher Salary

Total Board Approved Reductions \$ (470,083)

Board Approved Budget May 9, 2025 \$42,876,215 (3.85% Increase)

Region 14 Budget Referendum Tuesday, May 20, 2025
6 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Bethlehem Town Hall 36 Main Street South
Woodbury Senior Community Center 265 Main Street South

WMS CAPSTONE CLASS SHOWCASES STUDENT PASSION PROJECTS



Students in the 8th-grade Capstone class at Woodbury Middle School are looking ahead to Expo Fest on June 3, where they will present their final Personal Interest Projects that they have been working on over the last two trimesters. The Capstone class, which has 20 students, is led by WMS Spanish teacher Tania Fernandez this year. Capstone is a unique two-semester opportunity for 8th graders to engage in a rich learning experience that encompasses the Vision of a Learner attributes – taking initiative, thinking critically and creatively, collaborating and communicating effectively, demonstrating empathy, perseverance, and adapting and adjusting. Student projects range from learning a new skill, honing a skill, or pursuing a new hobby, helping a non-profit or a national cause, finding a way to market a skill, teaching a skill to younger peers, organizing community-building events within WMS, organizing an athletic tournament, writing a cookbook, and more. In May, one group brought their project to the culinary room to host a Copycat Cake Decorating event inspired by the Netflix show, Nailed It. The three-member team stated that their project was designed to bring the WMS community together in a fun setting. They had 12 participants try their skills in this cake decorating event.

NHS FLORICULTURE STUDENTS GROW 4 O'CLOCKS FOR PETIT FOUNDATION



Nonnewaug High School Floriculture students were happy to cultivate and set aside a special order of flowers as they prepared for the annual Plant Sale on May 10.

Representatives from the Petit Family Foundation visited NHS today to collect 300 Four O'Clocks that students had grown in the greenhouses for them this year. The Four O' Clocks were donated to the Petit Family Foundation to be used in Michaela's Gardens in honor of one of Dr. Petit's daughters.

Michaela's Gardens are located throughout Connecticut to honor Michaela, to create awareness, and to motivate positive changes. Nonnewaug High School Floriculture students grow the Four O'Clocks each year to help keep the cycle of Michaela's Garden ongoing.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SPRING ART SHOWS & CONCERTS



Woodbury Middle School
Art Show & Concert
May 28 at 6 p.m.



Nonnewaug High School
Art Show
June 4-6
Opening June 4 at 6 p.m.
Showing June 5 & 6 after school
Spring Concert
June 5 at 6 p.m.



Mitchell Elementary School
Concert & Art Gallery
June 4 at 6 p.m.



Bethlehem Elementary School
Concert & Art Gallery
June 9 at 6 p.m.

ELEMENTARY INVENTORS WIN AT STATE COMPETITION

Congratulations to our fifth-grade scientists from Bethlehem and Mitchell Elementary Schools who won awards at the Connecticut Invention Convention State Finals at the University of Connecticut this month. The BES team of Lyla Johnson and Mae Ambruso won the CT Science Center Award for their invention "Flex A Box." MES 5th grader Nola Salemme won the Women's Innovation Award for her invention "Casa Controller." We are proud of our young inventors for their amazing projects. The Invention Convention in Region 14 is led each year by Science and Social Studies Instructional Leader Christina Strell.



TAKING ATHLETICS TO THE NEXT LEVEL: NHS CHIEFS' COLLEGIATE SPORTS COMMITS



Five student-athletes in the Nonnewaug High School Class of 2025 will continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level. Emma Jackson will join the Track & Field at Roger Williams University; Ellie McDonald will join the Track & Field team at Middlebury College; Lincoln Nichols will join the Men's Basketball team at Ava Maria University; Matt Shupenis will join the Men's Basketball team at Mount St. Mary College; Jeff Bernardi will join the Wrestling team at Norwich University; and Durkin Stankevich will join the Wrestling team at Trinity College. Congratulations to these student-athletes on their continued academic and athletic success.

TOP 3 STUDENTS LEAD NHS CLASS OF 2025

Valedictorian Gavin Sandor has been a dedicated student at Nonnewaug High School. He served as the 2024 Co-Chair for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and Co-leader for the SandLinc Financial Literacy Learning Campaign. As Varsity Soccer Captain, he earned Berkshire League First Team and CIAC All-State honors. He also competed in indoor and outdoor track, achieving League All-Star status. He supports fellow students academically as a mentor in the Harbor Program and a founding member of the Writing Center. He serves on the Superintendent's Council, the Athletes Council, and Advocates for Substance Abuse Prevention. Gavin is also a member of the National Honor Society, DECA, and Spanish Club. In addition, he was a recipient of the Rensselaer Medal Award, NHS Exemplary Service Award, and CIAC Scholar-Athlete. Outside of school, he works at ShopRite and in his free time enjoys fishing, hiking, and playing with his dogs Buoy and Kennedy. He will attend Yale University and major in mechanical engineering.



Salutatorian Micah Tracht has been an enthusiastic learner throughout his four years at Nonnewaug High School. He was the president of the Math Honor Society and Math Club for 2 years, a member for 4, as well as being a member of the National Honor Society. He has taken his learning outside of school through extracurricular activities and building his own projects. For his studies and scores, Micah became a National Merit Scholarship Finalist, a Presidential Scholar Candidate, and a CAPSS scholar. In the future, Micah plans to pursue a career in AI research, combining his passion for coding and mathematics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His advice - "Go deep on whatever you love doing. No matter what that thing is, it will get you far in life. Something you probably don't know is that colleges want to see you have an interest, that you've gone deep on something, so if you take your time to pursue the thing you like, rather than hurt you in college admissions, it'll help you. And in life, that is what will bring you success. Start today, and go deep on what you want - your life will work out for you if you do."

Essayist Alex Tracy was involved in a multitude of activities and extracurriculars during his time at Nonnewaug. He was a member of the NHS Tennis team and attended the Tennis State Finals two years in a row. Alex also played striker on the NHS soccer team. Alex served as this year's President of French Club, was an active member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, and Science Honor Society. During his time at Nonnewaug, Alex was recognized along with a few of his peers with 1st place in the Destination Imagination: High Stakes Community Service Challenge. He also dedicated his time to tutoring his peers in math and other subjects several times a week. Alex received Nonnewaug's Chief with Character Award twice, awards in Excellence in Mathematics and Natural Science, Excellent Engagement in Mathematics, Excellence in Chemistry and French, AP Scholar with Distinction, and the AP Capstone Diploma. Alex will attend the University of Connecticut and aspires to contribute to the field of STEM and give back to the medical community that has supported him throughout his high school career.

RECYCLED MATERIALS MAKE FUN BIRD FEEDERS AT BES

Bethlehem Elementary School students looked at items like milk cartons, water bottles, and plastic coffee containers in a different way. In a STEM activity, students made bird feeders out of these everyday materials that would normally just be discarded. Students cut up the items, added paint and string, and hung them in some of the trees in the courtyard. As a bonus, over the next few weeks, students will be watching and learning to identify the different birds that visit their feeders in the courtyards.



FIELD TRIP TO LABONNE'S IS A SPECIAL TREAT FOR PRE-K STUDENTS

Mitchell Elementary School Pre-K classes took a terrific field trip to LaBonne's Market. The store employees were welcoming and organized an experience that allowed the children to have a better understanding of how a grocery store operates. The preschoolers grabbed carts and shopped and even took turns scanning their items at the checkout. We are grateful for these kinds of community partnerships that are an invaluable part of the experience for all students in Region 14 from Pre-K to Nonnewaug High School.



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