



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I would like to wish everyone a joyous holiday season. It is a wondrous time of year to reflect on the past and express gratitude for all of the good fortune in our lives. I am extremely grateful for the magnificent students in Region 14 and the exceptional parents and staff in the district. Every stakeholder is working together to improve learning opportunities for children. I am proud that every decision is made in our students' best interests. Our students are excelling in many areas because of this collaboration.

Region 14 continues to make significant progress on our 5-Year Strategic Plan goals and individual school development goals. Region 14 is ranked in the top 24% of all Connecticut school districts based on the state's Accountability Index metrics. These metrics include academic performance on state standardized assessments, student absenteeism rates, physical fitness assessments, arts access, and post-secondary readiness targets. A big congratulations to the students and staff at Bethlehem Elementary School on being named a "School of Distinction" for exemplary student achievement for the second year in a row. This is the fourth year in a row that a school in Region 14 has received this prestigious honor.

As Region 14 begins the second half of the 2025-2026 school year, we continue to improve our district curricular programs and educational opportunities for all students. The district is in the process of revising our elementary and middle school Social Studies curricula to align with state standards. Nonnewaug High School continues to increase its dual college credit course offerings that allow students to save thousands of dollars in tuition costs. Nonnewaug High School now has over 40 dual college credit courses as part of its Program of Studies.

Please take the opportunity to connect with Region 14 through our district website, digital app, and social media pages (Facebook/Instagram). In addition, the monthly newsletter highlights the exemplary initiatives that are shared via email and posted to the district website. A special thank you to Maria Duncan (District Publicity Specialist) for creating these fantastic monthly newsletters.

We are always grateful for our partnerships with parents and community members. I would also like to thank the Region 14 Board of Education for their tireless efforts in supporting the goals of the district. Their support is immeasurable. I would like to wish everyone a safe and relaxing holiday break and a fantastic new year! We can't wait to see everyone in the new year.

Warm Regards,

Brian Murphy

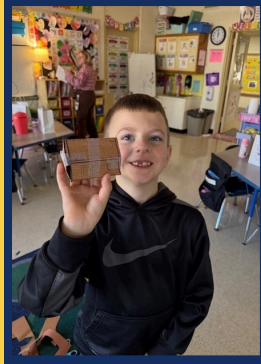
Superintendent of Schools

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH REGION 14

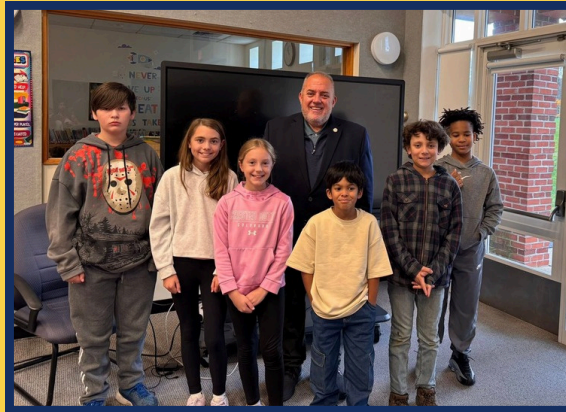


ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES DAY GIVES STUDENTS A LOOK AT COMMUNITIES

For Social Studies Day, our elementary school students explored life in our communities in the past and present. At Mitchell, students welcomed guests in the areas of public safety, police, veterinary medicine, art, and transportation, and learned about their roles within the community. First graders used what they learned about the different people and roles in a community and created their own paper town. At Bethlehem Elementary School, first graders learned all about pilgrims and the Wampanoag. Students read about the early settlers and Native Americans and constructed cardboard houses, made ears of corn, and created their own paper Wampanoag Purses used by the Wampanoag to store and carry items.



STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT GOVERNMENT & HISTORY



Fifth graders at BES had a visit from Senator Eric Berthel, who gave students a brief lesson on the branches of the government, making laws, and some fun facts about the state of Connecticut. Sen. Berthel invited the fifth graders to the State Capitol in the spring, where he will show them around. Woodbury resident Jamie McLaughlin, local historian and former Connecticut State Representative and State Senator, also stopped by BES to give the third graders a talk about Connecticut history. McLaughlin spoke to students about the history of the Bethlehem and Woodbury area and the many influences of Connecticut in the past and present political and industrial history of the United States. The visit coincided with the third graders' unit on the State and local government and Connecticut and America's story. To further their lesson on Community, second-grade students at BES did a walking tour of the town. Students met and learned about town government officials, including the Town Clerk, local CT State Troopers, members of the Bethlehem Ambulance, and the Bethlehem Fire Department.



MES fifth graders cast their votes in the 2025 Kid Governor election in Connecticut. Students worked together to analyze the seven candidates' platforms on important community issues. Students watched each candidate's campaign video and learned about the community issues important to them, and then voted for their pick. This will help determine who will serve as Connecticut's next Kid Governor. Students were able to livestream the results during the week of November 17. This was a wonderful experience for the fifth-graders to get involved in civic engagement.

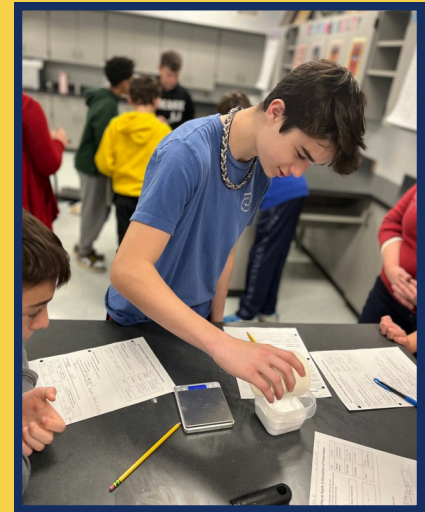
AGRISCIENCE STUDENTS HELP WITH MAPLE SYRUP SEASON

The Nonnewaug High School agriscience students in the Natural Resource classes stayed overnight at the June Norcross Webster Boy Scout Reservation in Ashford to help them prepare for the upcoming maple syrup season. The night included pizza and s'mores by the fire and a terrific time with their peers. Students were up early and, after a pancake breakfast, they got to work setting up the lateral line to collect the sap.



WMS CO-CURRICULAR LESSON ON MUMMIFICATION

Woodbury Middle School seventh graders are learning about ancient Egyptian mummification in a cross-curricular activity. Before Thanksgiving, WMS seventh-grade science classes learned about the mummification process and began their own lab to mummify apples. Students are determining which is the best solution for their apple mummification – salt, baking soda, salt and baking soda, or just air. After a week, students came back to their apples to weigh and examine them and record the desiccation process. They are using that data as evidence and combining it with what they've learned in Social Studies for an essay about ancient Egyptian mummification.



STUDENTS HELP BRIGHTEN THE HOLIDAYS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS



The NHS Leo Club & National Honor Society and MES Student Council hosted Food Drives in November. Students collected more than 1,000 pounds of non-perishable items for Food Banks in Bethlehem and Woodbury.



2nd ANNUAL WMS HARVEST LUNCHEON FOR LOCAL SENIOR CITIZENS

The second annual Woodbury Middle School Senior Citizen Fall Harvest Luncheon was a terrific success in November. Thirty-five students in the WMS culinary and Nonnewaug High School advanced culinary programs collaborated on a sit-down meal for more than 40 senior citizens from Bethlehem and Woodbury. Students created and served a fall vegetable medley soup with homemade croutons, Shepherd's Pie with herbed local corn, and cheddar mashed potatoes garnished with basil grown by the WMS culinary students. The meal was topped off with Baked March Farm Apples with a cinnamon streusel and maple drizzle. The tables were set with beautiful holiday-themed displays made by students in Tech-Ed, and the guests were treated to music by WMS students on piano and violin. This collaboration for a sit-down meal is a wonderful learning and mentoring opportunity for students in Mike Hadoulis' and John Dominello's culinary classes and highlights the real-world skills students gain in these courses.



NHS SOCCER COACH DENMAN HONORED BY WCSOA

Nonnewaug High School boys' soccer coach and science teacher Toby Denman received the 2025 Western Connecticut Soccer Officials Association's Paul Bourdeau Award for his unwavering commitment to the sport. Coach Denman has won 9 Berkshire League titles and has more than 260 career victories during his more than 20 years coaching at Nonnewaug. His influence extends beyond the field, and his athletes learn lifelong skills and build lasting relationships. Congratulations, Coach Denman!

NHS DRAMA WOWS AUDIENCES WITH "DRACULA" PRODUCTION

The Nonnewaug High School Drama Club put on four spectacular performances of Bram Stoker's "Dracula" in November. This year's show thrilled audiences with its suspense, mystery, and dramatic storyline. The use of special effects in sound, lighting, and a fog machine helped create a truly wickedly-theatrical performance, bringing Bram Stoker's classic novel to life on the stage. Congratulations to the Drama Club on such a terrific show!



VETERANS' DAY IN REGION 14 SCHOOLS

All Region 14 Schools commemorated Veterans' Day with school-wide events in November. Nonnewaug High School welcomed 24 veterans for a Veterans' Day commemoration that included a formal presentation of the flags by the Color Guard, music of each military branch by the NHS Band, Orchestra, and Chorus, the reading of "In Flanders Fields" and "God Made a Veteran," and the distribution of poppies. Following the commemoration, students and staff cheered as the veterans were led to the CCRC for refreshments made by the NHS culinary students. WMS welcomed four veterans from the community to speak to students about their time serving in the United States Military. Students heard from U.S. Army Colonel Joe Roden, U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Margie Fish, U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant Michael Boback, and Navy First Class MMS David McCurdy. Students asked them about their military careers, including their inspiration for joining, the kinds of training they underwent, places that they served, proud moments of their careers, what it's like to come home after being deployed, and more. Bethlehem and Mitchell Elementary Schools welcomed veteran members of their students' families for assemblies that included patriotic songs, the distribution of poppies they made in art class, the White Table Ceremony at MES, and breakfast with the students and families.

