



4TH ANNUAL ELEMENTARY INVENTION CONVENTION SPARKS INGENUITY

A mood detector. A safety s'mores stick. A storage solution for skiing and snowboarding gear. A safety light for an outdoor cat. A device that keeps a popcorn bowl upright. These were just a few of the creative student inventions showcased at the 4th Annual Elementary Invention Conventions at each school.

Students began by identifying an everyday problem and then designed a creative invention to solve it. They also impressed judges with their elevator pitch presentations. Projects were evaluated by a panel of Region 14 staff and community members, including administrators, district science teachers, Library Media Specialists, Board of Education members, and other staff. Entries were judged on originality, design and construction, testing and refinement, market potential, social value, and presentation.

The event was organized as an optional opportunity for upper elementary students to explore problem identification, problem-solving, and creativity. Instructional Leaders Jen Schnitzer at BES and Alicia Schiavo at MES led the initiative to encourage innovative thinking and hands-on learning.

The top three winners from each school will advance to the state finals at the University of Connecticut on May 2.



Winners

1st Place

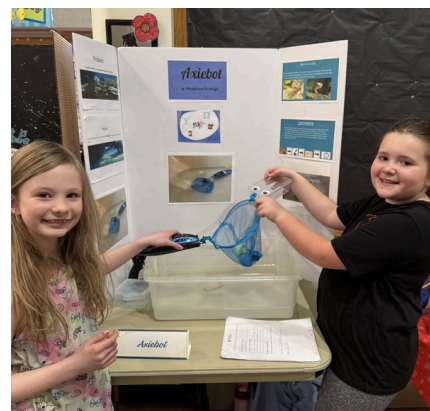
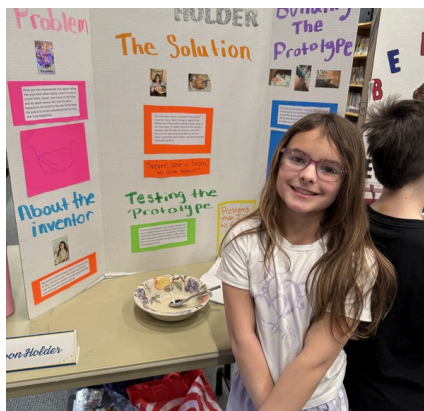
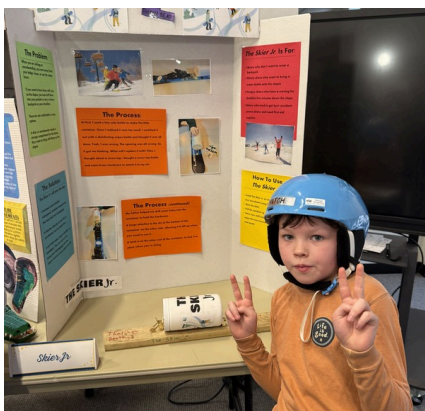
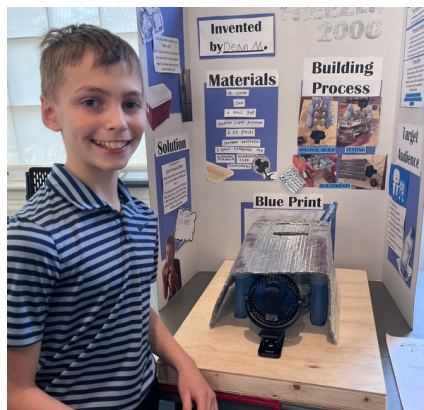
(MES): The Magnetic No-Mess Cooking Utensil by Nellie Salemme and Finley Morawski
(BES): The Skier Jr. by Thatcher Beatty

2nd Place

(MES): Cycle Freezer 2000 by Dean Morrisroe
(BES): Spoon Holder by Stella Crespo

3rd Place

(MES): The Car Catcher by Myles Macomber and Noah Fisher
(BES): Axiebot by Annabel Kochiss and Brooklyn Tuz



WMS HOSTS NHS CHIEF ADVOCATE FOR JOURNALISM DAY



The 8th-grade Journalism Day at Woodbury Middle School saw students in Adam Brutting's ELA classes meet with members of the Nonnewaug High School Chief Advocate to talk story ideas, angles, headlines, ledes, captions, relevance, and more. NHS Chief Advocate advisor Conor Gereg brought this group of student journalists to WMS, many of whom, just a year ago, were learning the basics as 8th graders, and now have several articles on a variety of topics published at the Chief Advocate.

WMS students shared their story ideas with their peers. They received guidance on topics such as interviews, grabbing the audience with headlines, and making larger-scale national stories relevant to their school community. WMS and NHS have partnered to bring journalism students together since 2022.

This collaboration introduces middle school students to journalistic writing as they prepare for high school, while also offering insight into the development of their peers' interest in news writing. Completed student articles are edited by the Chief Advocate staff and published in the Junior Chief Advocate, a section of the website created in 2022 to showcase eighth-grade work.

AGRISCIENCE STUDENTS PLANT FOUR O'CLOCKS FOR MICHAELA'S GARDEN

William Petit of the Petit Family Foundation visited the Agriscience students at Nonnewaug High School as they planted Four O'Clocks for Michaela's Garden Project. Each year, students in Eric Birkenberger's floriculture class cultivate these plants—the official Connecticut children's state flower—to support Michaela's Garden and help preserve this meaningful tradition. The plants grown at NHS are donated to the Petit Family Foundation and used in Michaela's Gardens across Connecticut, honoring Dr. Petit's daughter Michaela while raising awareness and inspiring positive change. Most of the pots will be picked up in May, with a limited number available for purchase at the FFA Spring Plant Sale on May 9. Proceeds from these sales will benefit Michaela's Garden.



NHS & WMS PARTNER FOR AFTERSCHOOL AGRISCIENCE CLUB

This month, 38 Woodbury Middle School students travelled to Nonnewaug High School after school to participate in the first-ever Middle School Agriscience Club session, hosted by NHS Agriscience students and staff. The brand new club is open to sixth through eighth graders and aims to give students a sampling of some of the many areas of the agriscience program at the high school.

During the first session, students took part in activities connected to the Natural Resource Management pathway. They learned about regional invasive species and overpopulation, and also explored hands-on projects such as making beeswax lip balm and maple syrup. Students also discussed agriscience program expectations, including Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) and the Future Farmers of America (FFA). This truly student-run program showcased the leadership of the NHS agriscience students, who did a wonderful job welcoming and engaging their middle school peers.

The second session on April 1 focused on Animal Science pathways. This club will meet during the Wednesday Professional Learning days for the remainder of the year.



BES STUDENTS BEGIN KINDNESS MURAL

Bethlehem Elementary School 4th and 5th-graders completed the first phase of their school's Kindness Mural by creating clay tiles. Representatives from Kind Works met with students to talk about kindness and the ripple effect it can have throughout a community. After the assembly, students designed their own tiles that will go back to the Kind Works' studio to be fired and set. In a few weeks, they'll return to BES for students in K-3 to paint them. The school's Kindness Mural is going to be constructed in a prominent outside location at the beginning of June.



MES ELA WIN GROUP STAGES PLAY

The Mitchell Elementary School 4th-grade ELA WIN enrichment students wowed kindergarten classes with a fantastic Reader's Theater performance recently. Using "Dog Breath" by Dav Pilkey, students revised their own script, performed with expression, and truly brought the story to life. This was a terrific example of creativity, collaboration, and adaptability in action.



NHS ART STUDENTS WELCOME LOCAL ARTIST

Nonnewaug High School art students welcomed artist Cynthia Gillette for an in-class watercolor demonstration. Gillette is a Woodbury-based artist and graphic designer who often visits Leeza Desjardins' art classes to share various techniques and perspectives with students. Region 14 is grateful for the many community members who share their time and talents with our students.





Woodbury Middle School music students Will Ryan, Fiona Lockwood, and Levi Chmielewski performed at the Connecticut Music Educators Association Northern Region Middle School Festival in March. Our talented WMS musicians performed alongside 442 students who successfully auditioned from across the region to participate in 3 or 6 of the ensembles: Treble Choir, Orchestra, and Concert Band. Over the course of two days, these students rehearsed extensively before presenting a spectacular concert at CCSU



Members of the Nonnewaug High School National Honor Society stuffed bags and buckets with candy, eggs, and hand-knit Easter Peeps made by advisor Melissa Hodges for the Egg My Yard fundraiser. The night before Easter, students decorated the many yards for families in the area who donated to this fundraiser. This year's Egg My Yard fundraiser raised more than \$1,100 to support the CT Children's Medical Center.



The annual Woodbury FFA Faculty Breakfast showcased Region 14's ability to adapt and adjust. Despite some of the weather-related challenges during FFA Week in February, the event was a great success, and attendees were greeted by eager FFA students ready to serve them a delicious meal. Guests included local government officials, Board of Education members, district administrators, and many enthusiastic NHS staff members who look forward to this tradition each year. Congratulations to the FFA students and officers for organizing a wonderful event.



Woodbury Middle School hosted its first Multicultural Night in March. This event celebrated the many cultures present in our greater WMS community with a variety of ethnic foods, music, traditions, and dance. Students began this project in their multi-grade WMS families as they discussed the many different countries competing at the 2026 Winter Olympic Games.

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH REGION 14

