

WOODBURY FFA SHINES AT NATIONALS



The Woodbury FFA chapter sent 35 students and graduates to the 96th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis in October. The week-long convention, attended by over 70,000 FFA members from across the country, is the largest youth leadership conference in the country. Nonnewaug High School Agriscience students competed in events and received accolades to add to the chapter's already impressive history.

Overall, Woodbury came home with 1 National Gold Team and 2 National Bronze Teams. Individuals on all of these teams earned a total of 1 National Gold Medal, 1 National Silver Medal, and 10 National Bronze Medals for the Woodbury FFA. Two students were national finalists for their SAE Proficiency Awards pertaining to the students' after school work placement.

In addition to competitions, students performed community service, participated in leadership development workshops, and learned about the multitude of post-secondary options in agriscience by attending the college and career exposition. The Woodbury FFA also had six students receive their American FFA Degree, which is the highest award offered in the program, with less than 1% of members receiving it nationwide.

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 in the district is working together to improve learning opportunities for children. I am proud that every decision made is in the best interest of our students. Our students are excelling in many areas because of this collaboration.

We have identified district goals that are aligned with the 5-Year Region 14 Strategic Plan (District Website) and individual School Development Plans. District goals focus on **Academic Performance, School Safety/School Climate, Communication and Budget.** The district is improving in all of these areas. Region 14 is in the top 19% of all school districts in the state based on the Connecticut State Department of Education's Accountability Index. The indicators that contribute to the accountability index include measures of academic performance, attendance rates, graduation and post-secondary readiness targets, arts access, and physical fitness assessment results. These astounding results are a testament to the unparalleled commitment to continuous improvement by students, parents, and staff.

As Region 14 begins the second half of the school year, we will continue to strive to improve our curricular programs and educational opportunities for students. We will build on curricular changes that were made in several grade levels in Reading, Math and Science, and the midyear district benchmark assessments will help inform and guide our staff in developing personalized learning plans for every student.

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 district newsletter highlights the exemplary initiatives that are shared via email and posted to the district website.

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 has been 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**

15TH ANNUAL NHS SENIOR CITIZEN MEAL SERVES 140



It was a tremendous all-school collaboration for 15th annual Nonnewaug High School Senior Citizen Luncheon on November 30. There were 140 meals handed out to local senior citizens in this drive-through meal event.

Students in John Dominello's Advanced Culinary class prepared individual turkey pot pies, and used local ingredients for the sides and dessert -- Logue Farms corn, russet potatoes, Woodbury's "The Farm" butternut squash, roast turkey and pan gravy accompanied with honey-glazed carrots and Maple-Basil corn muffin stuffing with produce and herbs harvested by the students in the Farm to Table class. The meal also included New England cranberry-orange relish and an Apple Crumb Tart made with March Farm apples baked with cinnamon streusel.



Culinary students handed out the boxed meals to senior citizens from Bethlehem and Woodbury along with flower arrangements made by the agriscience students. The NHS Band and Chorus students provided festive music for the occasion. A sampling of art from art students accompanied the boxed meal whose label was created by students in Digital Design.

"Every student in every Culinary class has a hand in this event," Dominello said. "Then add in all the other Nonnewaug High School groups who participate, and you have a great group effort."



TURKEY TALK IN CULINARY



Eighth graders in Mike Hadoulis' Culinary Class at Woodbury Middle School celebrated their week of preparation of their Thanksgiving meal by enjoying the fruits of their efforts with an in-class meal.

All of the students took part in preparing the turkey and all of the fixings - mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, roasted string beans, cranberry sauce, homemade rolls, and apple pie tarts for dessert.

Students eagerly watched as Mr. Hadoulis gave them a demonstration on how to properly carve the turkey before sitting down to eat. Throughout the week, students put their kitchen skills to the test and had many opportunities for collaboration.



NEW ELEMENTARY MATH AND PHONICS CURRICULA ENGAGE LEARNERS

Fundations



N. Nut. Nnnnn. O. Octopus. Ah. Bethlehem Elementary School Instructional Leader and Literacy Coach Caitlin Jurkowski visits classrooms to help students learn sounds and be able to spell those sounds. Foundations is Region 14's new phonics curriculum that was rolled out in the elementary classrooms this year.

For a recent kindergarten lesson, students began with warm-up lessons on sounds and vowel extensions and worked on alliteration.

Jurkowski read to students and had them listen for the examples of alliteration throughout the story. Students then did a sound and match exercise with their magnetic letter tiles. Jurkowski visits BES classrooms weekly to assist in instructional practices to best support our learners.

Mitchell Elementary School first graders worked on mastering their math facts in class using a fun hands-on "shake and spill" technique.

This technique teaches students to decompose a number as a sum of two other numbers in more than one way.

Students spilled red and yellow counters out of a cup and arranged them to solve the different addition equations. With their math partners, students worked to solve "Put Together/Take Apart" problems with the unknown in different positions. They are learning about equations and how to represent problems using different methods of counting -- using numbers, drawing pictures, or using words to represent what they see.

Illustrative Math



VETERANS' DAY COMMEMORATIONS IN REGION 14



Region 14 Schools marked Veterans' Day with school-wide tributes, musical pieces, letters to veterans and current members of the service, classroom lessons on the origin of the day, and the annual placing of American flags at all school campuses.

Nonnewaug High School's Veterans' Day event was organized by the NHS Rho Kappa members and included comments from Principal Dr. Mykal Kuslis, who is also a member of the National Guard, the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner," and the playing of songs of each military branch by the NHS Band, Orchestra, and Chorus.

Woodbury Middle School musicians in band, chorus, and orchestra recorded a Veterans' Day tribute. Music teachers Todd Gorski, Jamie Odell, and Phaelon Koski worked with students on this special piece dedicated to our local veterans.



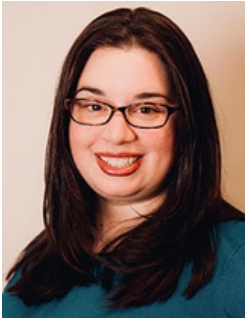
Bethlehem Elementary School fifth grade Student Council spent time interviewing their invited guest veterans about their time in the service before heading to the gym for an all-school event. Veterans were honored with songs by the Chorus including "God Bless America" and several students read their essays on the importance of our service members.

Mitchell Elementary School students read poems and honored and acknowledged each of their veteran guests by name. There was also a White Table remembrance ceremony to honor service members fallen, missing, or held captive in the line of duty.



CURRICULUM CORNER

DR. TARYN FERNANDEZ, DIRECTOR OF TEACHING & LEARNING



IN-DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS GUIDE DECISION-MAKING

Region 14 has expanded our in-district assessments to include grades 9-12 for math and reading and grades 3-11 for science. The data from these assessments helps guide decisions at the district, school, classroom, and individual student levels. From analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of curriculum, to creating an individualized skills plan for a student, the information gleaned supports continuous improvement and academic growth.

As we establish a more robust data culture, each school has practices in place that allow for faculty discourse around the results of the assessments to inform their planning and best meet the needs of each student. Each school also has a Student Success Team that specifically looks at the data of students who are performing below grade level and develops an intervention plan for the student that can include, but is not limited to, small group instruction, personalized skills plans, and scheduled time with an interventionist. Students' progress is monitored over a six week period and the data informs the next steps for the students' plans.

The following in-district assessments are administered three times per year, beginning, middle and end of the year:

mClass Dibels 8th Edition - Literacy assessment - Grades K-5

NWEA MAP Growth Reading - Literacy assessment - Grades 6-12

NWEA MAP Growth Math - Math assessment - Grades K-12 (this assessment has course-specific assessments for Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry)

NWEA Science - Grades 3-11

NWEA Life Science - Nonnewaug Biology students

MITCHELL NAMED SCHOOL OF DISTINCTION FOR 22-23

Mitchell Elementary School has been designated as a "School of Distinction" by the Connecticut State Department of Education for the second year in a row. This year's distinction is based on high academic growth for high needs students in English Language Arts for the 2022-2023 school year. Mitchell Elementary School is one of 155 Connecticut schools to earn "School of Distinction" status, and one of 26 CT schools to earn the distinction in this category.

In November, the CSDE released results from the 2022-23 Next Generation Accountability System that measures individual school and district growth by gauging how well a school is preparing its students for success. According to the CSDE, the Next Generation Accountability System includes 12 indicators and moves beyond test scores and graduation rates to provide a more holistic, multifactor perspective of district and school performance and incorporates student growth over time. The Next Generation Accountability index is based not just on the state's Smarter Balance Assessments given to students each spring, but also on attendance, physical fitness, arts access, graduation measures, and post-secondary readiness of our students.

Mitchell Elementary School's designation is based on the average percentage of the English Language Arts growth target achieved by our students with high needs. This category includes students with disabilities, students who receive free or reduced lunch, and students identified as multilingual learners. Mitchell Elementary earned 72.2% of the points available in this category putting them in the top 10% of schools in CT in this area of distinction. The state average in this category was 52.5%



ATHLETICS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



NONNEWAUG HIGH SCHOOL

The 2023 Nonnewaug High School fall athletics season exemplified athletics, sportsmanship, and service. Our teams -- varsity football, girls' soccer, boys' soccer, volleyball, boys' cross country, girls' cross country, golf -- all posted successful seasons. Post-season play at the CIAC State Tournaments gave some of our teams the opportunity to venture out of the Berkshire League for competitive play against other top-notch programs in Connecticut.

- 21 student-athletes received post-season Berkshire League accolades on First and Second Teams. Two student-athletes also earned All-State recognitions. Two members of the Northwest United Co-op Football team were named to the Connecticut Technical All Conference Team.
- The fall season saw 77 varsity athletes designated as Scholar Athletes who kept their GPA at 88 or above throughout their seasons.
- Nonnewaug High School was awarded the Fred Balsamo Sportsmanship Award from the CIAC in September and was honored at a banquet at the Aqua Turf in October. As part of the Fred Balsamo Award Nonnewaug High School received \$500 that will be used to recognize officials and promote sportsmanship in the Chiefs' athletic community.
- The Boys' Cross Country Team was named the recipient of the CIAC Ted Alex Award for Sportsmanship.
- The NHS Athlete's Council organized a bake sale at the Homecoming celebration games in October and collected more than \$1,600 for The Cancer Couch Foundation. The Cancer Couch matched the donation and \$3,200 was donated to help the fight against breast cancer. Additionally, the NHS Cross Country team donated a \$500 check to Tunnels for Towers.



WOODBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL



WMS Girls' Soccer and Field Hockey each had their second undefeated season in a row. Girls' soccer had an impressive record of 8-0-2 and Field Hockey posted a record 11-0 season. The Boys' Soccer team ended their season with a nice win over rival Shepaug and ended with a record of 7-3-1. In Cross Country, notable events were the Annual Zombie Run through the North Cemetery against Memorial and Shepaug and the runners also headed to Wickham Park for the Middle School State Championships. Over 300 runners participated in the event. Maddie Garguilo and Thea Oleynikov finished in the Girls Top 50. Tyler Holtman, Flynn Amodio, and Lucas Forcucci finished in the Boys Top 100. Congratulations to all the WMS Athletes and Coaches who had successful seasons. Looking ahead, the Warriors Boys and Girls basketball teams begin their seasons on December 19.



SCENE AROUND THE DISTRICT



Bethlehem Elementary School Physical Education Teacher Tim Jackson led a Bike Building afternoon to assemble nine new Cannondale bikes that will be used for gym classes and the BES Bike Club, a new morning riding club co-sponsored by Bethlehem Park and Recreation. Jackson, along with BES paraprofessional Erica Brayton, Henning Schroeder of Cannondale, BES parent Ron Jones who owns Pro Bike, and BES parent Chris Jacques and his fifth grader Connor Jacques worked to assemble three 24-inch trail bikes, three 20-inch bikes, and three 16-inch bikes. The funds to purchase the bikes were provided by the PTO and donations from Cannondale and Pro Bikes.

Woodbury Middle School eighth grade art students got a special visit from members of the Nonnewaug High School art department for a little sampling of what's ahead for them in high school art. Teachers Leeza Desjardins and Genna Riggi along with senior art student Luke Cenatiempo worked with students on a creative acetone ink transfer, something they would be doing as freshman in Art I at NHS. Starting in January, the NHS National Art Honor Society will sponsor a Junior National Art Honor Society chapter and welcome middle school students and mentor them in their efforts to attain the highest standards in art scholarship, character, and service.



The **Mitchell Elementary School** Student Council Stuff A Cruiser Food Drive was a huge success last month. Students brought in about 1,300 items for the Woodbury Food Bank to fill the shelves this holiday season for those in need. Not only did the donations fill MES SRO Officer Bobby's cruiser but WMS SRO Officer Tom came over with another cruiser to help deliver items to the Food Bank. Mrs. Kuzma's kindergarten class brought in the most donations for the drive and was the winner of the Class Competition.

SCENE AROUND THE DISTRICT

The Leo Club at **Woodbury Middle School** had a successful week-long food drive and collected nine boxes of food for the Woodbury Food Bank. Club members along with advisor Caroline South and Lions Club member Ken Deschino, who oversees the school Leo clubs, were on hand last month to present the donations to Woodbury Food Bank Manager Deirdre Bologna. In addition, the Leo Club is making a \$200 donation to the Woodbury Food Bank and a \$200 donation to Caring for Bethlehem.



Nonnewaug High School freshman agriscience students in Agriscience Mechanics class completed a project that had them learning to plane wood, weld, spray paint and stain, use a grinding wheel and Sawzall, and to use fasteners. Upperclass students also stepped in to help teach some of the freshmen to weld. It was a terrific hands-on student collaboration experience for the group.

As part of their commitment to kindness, the **Mitchell Elementary School** community hosted a Kindness Rock Painting evening recently. MES students, their families, and some staff members painted rocks together and Principal Kelly Pinho and Social Worker Kris Caceci read stories on kindness. Admission to this event was a nonperishable food item and MES collected two crates of nonperishable items to donate to the Woodbury Food Bank. The rocks are small tokens made to spread kindness in the community.



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