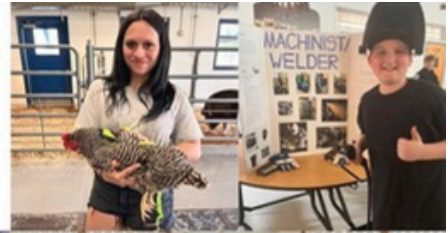


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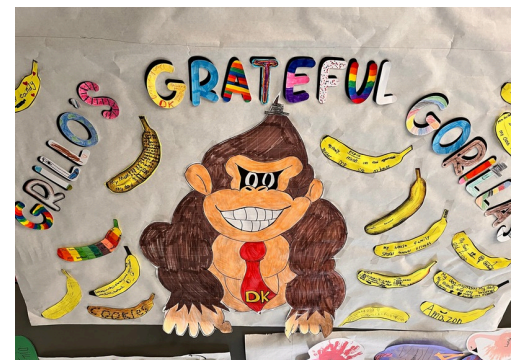
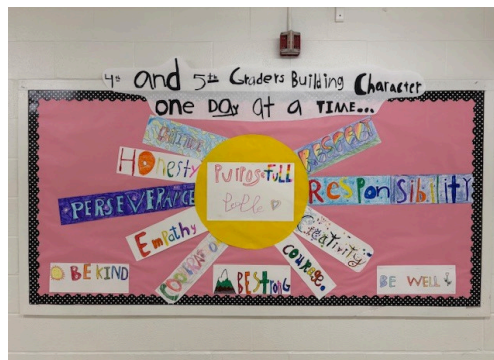
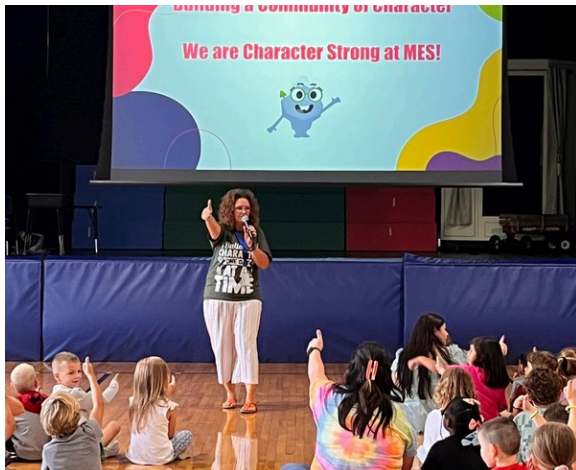
Focus on 14

The monthly newsletter of Region 14 Schools



MES KICKS OFF SCHOOL YEAR WITH CHARACTER STRONG INITIATIVE

Mitchell Elementary School kicked off its yearly school-wide kindness initiative in September with a school-wide assembly. This year's theme is "Building a Community of Character," and MES will explore character traits every few weeks with in-class lessons and projects centered on kindness, gratitude, respect, and responsibility. During the kick-off assembly, the whole school gathered in the gym for team-building activities to learn how they will all be part of building a community of character at MES. Every few weeks, the whole school will gather in the gym for an assembly on the character traits before teachers embed lessons into class time. Classroom lessons have included team-building bulletin boards on a character trait, making posters, or discussing how they can use the traits both at school and at home. This year's annual Kindness Walk, sponsored by the PTO, will center around the character traits and classes have designed banners to carry during the walk based on specific Community of Character traits students are exploring. Students who embody the character trait of focus are celebrated before the next one begins, allowing all students to show how they are part of the Community of Character.



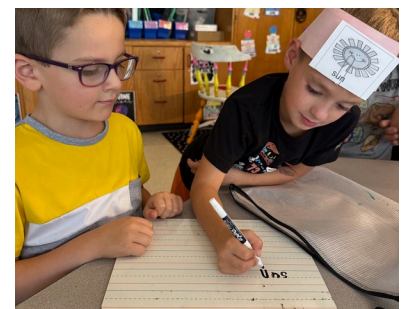
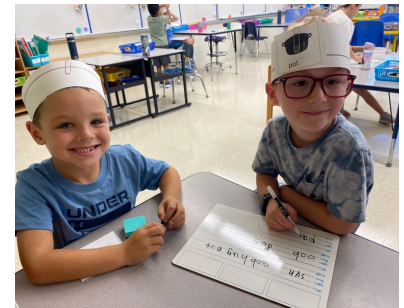
THE CAMPUS IS THE CLASSROOM FOR NHS AGRISCIENCE STUDENTS

The good weather at the start of the school year has been perfect for Nonnewaug High School Agriscience students who rely on the outdoors for hands-on lessons and to work on skills for upcoming Career Development Event competitions. Students brushed up on their forestry technique by calibrating their pace, measuring DBH, or diameter at breast height of the tree, determining merchantable height, and calculating volume. They are preparing for the State Forestry CDE competition in November. Agriscience students also jumped on their tractors and competed in the Chapter Tractor Driving CDE. Students demonstrated their knowledge and skills on a two-wheel and four-wheel wagon. The top two students will go on to compete at the district level on October 15. Students also headed outside with former Agriscience teacher George Lyman to identify and remove invasive Spotted Lantern Flies. Students found and removed these pests on a Tree of Heaven on campus. While the Tree of Heaven is the preferred host, the Spotted Lanternfly will also invade grapes, hops, apple trees, and maples, causing issues for the agriculture industry.



BES FIRST GRADERS TAKE ON PHONICS WITH INTERACTIVE GAMES

Taking everyday games like Headbanz and Tic Tac Toe and implementing them into classroom lessons on words is one way to learn words in first grade at Bethlehem Elementary School. First-grade teachers Rebecca Lerner and Michelle Tscheppe used these classic games to help their students with structured literacy sounds. One student gave clues about the word on their partner's headbands for them to write the word and read it out loud. Students also used some of the words they've already learned to spell in a terrific game of Tic Tac Toe.



STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES KEEP REGION 14 BOARD OF EDUCATION UP TO DATE ON SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Nonnewaug High School senior Maia Colavito and junior Addison Bushka return to their roles as Student Representatives to the Board of Education for the 2025–2026 school year. The students will make their first report to the BOE at the October 6 meeting. Colavito has been the student representative to the Board of Education for the past three years and said she has enjoyed being a liaison between the BOE and the students. “This experience has allowed me to connect with a diverse group of people in our school community that I otherwise would not have,” Colavito said. She added that her role as Board Rep allows her to learn about many activities, events, and student awards not only at Nonnewaug but in all the schools to share at the BOE meetings.

Bushka returns for her second year as Student Representative and is looking forward to sharing the good news in Region 14 Schools with the Board. “I am grateful to be in this position,” Bushka said. “It’s a great opportunity to see what is going on all over our school community.”



Bushka, who serves as Deputy Editor in Chief of the Chief Advocate at Nonnewaug, said being on the paper also helps her in her role as she seeks out and reports on the news and events in the Region for the Board. Colavito and Bushka will alternate their attendance at regular BOE meetings throughout the year.

NHS STUDENT VISIONARIES WIN 2025 CONNECTICUT TITLE



Due to a recently discovered accounting error, it was announced that Nonnewaug High School students Billy Herr and Brayden Whipple have been awarded winners of the 2025 Student Visionaries of the Year for Connecticut by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, now known as Blood Cancer United. Herr and Whipple, and their team, the NHS Cancer Crusaders, successfully raised \$58,107.25 and will be formally recognized by Blood Cancer United at the spring 2026 gala as the winning 2025 Student Visionaries team for Connecticut. Their inspiring campaign included raising funds last winter with Nonnewaug High School’s Annual Red Out Week, bake sales, raffles, sending hundreds of letters and emails to friends, families, and local businesses, and conducting several in-person presentations to businesses and civic organizations. The team also met with a blood cancer survivor who shared details of his personal journey involving innovative stem cell research. The team is also mentioned in a recent Forbes magazine article that includes more information on the Student Visionary program and a list of winners from across the country. Herr and Whipple’s NHS Cancer Crusaders team included NHS students Everett Pierce, Luciano Pedros, Jonathan Cheung, Scott Viveros, Boe Stokes, Ella Quinn, Grace Rubacha, and Maia Colavito.

GOODWIN UNIVERSITY RETURNS TO WMS FOR A VIEW OF ENGINEERING & MANUFACTURING IN THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Earlier in September, Woodbury Middle School students had an up-close look at the manufacturing industry in Connecticut with a visit from Goodwin University for a Manufacturing In Motion presentation, which focused on engineering and manufacturing in the healthcare industry. Keith Sevigny, STEM Career & Technical Education Coordinator at Goodwin University Magnet Schools, explored the healthcare engineering and manufacturing industries with students. He got them thinking about careers that help create solutions to problems with the human body and the relationship between engineering and manufacturing. All students visited the mobile learning lab and interacted with a variety of high-tech tools, microscopes, robotics, and automation arms.

This is the second year WMS has partnered with Goodwin University to give students Advanced Manufacturing elements embedded into the Tech Ed curriculum. This year, the students in TechEd will focus on solving a healthcare-related problem by creating a device to help unclog arteries. Goodwin University educators will visit WMS Tech Ed classes and work with students and teacher Will Michael several times throughout the school year on various topics related to this project.

WMS Principal Bill Nemec said this year's theme with Goodwin also works well to supplement the WMS curriculum already in place for students in health and PE.

"Students learn about concepts including heart health, healthy eating habits, and taking blood pressure and other health screenings, as well as First aid and emergency preparedness," Nemec said. "Having Goodwin educators here with the healthcare focus will be a wonderful add-on for our lesson plans."



WMS ALLIANCE ATTENDS STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

On September 25, members of the Woodbury Middle School Alliance leadership group headed to the Connecticut State House for the CT Association of Student Councils 2025 President's Symposium, focusing on citizenship and leadership. Students took part in workshops and breakout sessions to help turn their school visions into action. Student leaders, state officials, and mentors also shared real experiences and strategies for creating change and leading with impact. The WMS Alliance student leaders left feeling inspired and equipped with new strategies to promote positive change within the school community.

WMS Alliance member Katie Kulesza was recognized as a student leader who stood out within the middle school group and received a certificate for her valuable input.



BACK TO SCHOOL EVENTS BRING SCHOOL FAMILIES TOGETHER

Our Region 14 elementary school PTOs are amazing! The back-to-school MES Ice Cream Social and the BES Hot Dog Roast were terrific events for school families to gather and socialize, and celebrate their school pride with their classmates, teachers, and, of course, their favorite school mascots!

Thank you to the volunteer parents on the [Mitchell Elementary School PTO](#) and [Bethlehem Elementary School PTO](#) who organize these and other wonderful activities for our elementary school students and their families throughout the year. These events are made possible through donations and volunteers. They help create a terrific and positive start to the new school year, and serve to help build community and nurture connections between students, families, and teachers.



NONNEWAUG ATHLETICS LAUNCHES CASHLESS ENTRY

Nonnewaug High School has moved to using the GoFan cashless ticketing system for most athletic events at Nonnewaug for the 2025-2026 school year. This fall, Chiefs fans attending home football games and girls' volleyball matches at Nonnewaug will need to pre-order their entry ticket using GoFan. Tickets will also be required for winter athletic events for boys' and girls' basketball and wrestling. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$4 for seniors/students. Cash will no longer be accepted. Please note that tickets are not needed for soccer games, field hockey, or cross-country events.

The Nonnewaug High School GoFan link for athletics can be found at:
<https://gofan.co/app/school/CT17442>

The Nonnewaug Chiefs Athletics Calendar can be found at:
<https://nhs.ctreg14.org/nhs-athletics/nhs-athletics-calendar>



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