



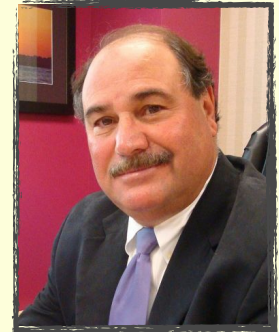
**WILD WEATHER CAUSES SCHEDULE CHANGES**

This has been an extraordinary start to the school year, requiring immediate attention and Board of Education action in order to better meet the instructional needs of our students. Due to the storms in late August and the most recent storm, our last day of school for students is currently scheduled for Monday, June 25, 2011. This means that there are only four available weekdays left in the 2011-2012 school year that can be used for emergency closings. Given the likelihood that we will see more severe weather throughout the winter, and the fact that our schools become excessively hot in late June, it is necessary to identify additional days in the adopted calendar that can be modified to makeup for some of the lost days.

The changes that were implemented allow us to recoup four instructional days, making the last day of school June 19<sup>th</sup>. These four days coupled with the remaining four days left in June (June 26 – 29) will provide eight days that can be used in the event of severe weather or other emergency conditions. As previously indicated, if additional days are needed to meet the 180-day school year requirement, days will be taken from the April vacation. This plan will also provide more contiguous time for instruction prior to the CMT and CAPT testing

**DHS HOSTS TELEVISION STATION**

Did you know that you can watch some events at Danbury High School on TV? Danbury High School Video Production classes and the after school video production club plan and produce videos for broadcast on local cable Channel 26 (Comcast only). Students gain hands-on, real-world experience as they set up video shoots, operate cameras, run switchboards, edit, and produce videos to share events at DHS with the school community. Students record and show various sporting events, assemblies, interviews, highlights of lessons, and musical performances on Hatters TV. This year students have begun a weekly show, Hatters' Nation, which highlights various events and student achievements throughout the school and is shown in the cafeteria on Fridays. To see some of the broadcast events that students have created tune in to Channel 26 on Wednesdays, Friday Evenings, and Sunday Evenings.



**Superintendent's Message**

*Despite a very difficult opening this year due to erratic weather conditions, students, teachers and administrators, along with parents, are hard at work preparing students for their future.*

*As you know we have been challenged for the past few years with our school space needs. The Mayor's 2020 Task Force was established to review our facility needs. The Committee will be issuing a report and recommendations in the very near future. Their recommendations will attempt to address the facility expansion needs that our principals and teachers are facing everyday. Personally, I am proud of the great teaching and learning occurring in all of our schools despite these facility challenges and I encourage you to visit your local school and witness the outstanding work being done by our teachers and administrators.*

*Enjoy the holidays*



**FROM OUR INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM (IDT)**

In 2009 the district applied for a Math Science Partnership (MSP) Grant that is provided from the US Department of Education and administered through the CT State Department of Education. We were awarded the three-year grant to train elementary classroom teachers to become science and STEM specialists. Dr. Harry Rosvally is the Principal Investigator (PI) of the grant, which serves not only Danbury teachers but also New Milford and Newtown. He designed the professional development to include subject content courses through Western CT State University (WCSU), pedagogical training in Inquiry from the CT Science Center and in Designing Effective Science Instruction (DESI) from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), and coaching training provided by the Center for Cognitive Coaching in Colorado. The Danbury Elementary Math Specialists joined the MSP cohort in receiving the recently completed training in Cognitive Coaching.

Cognitive Coaching is a peer coaching model that helps teachers to reflect, mediate their thinking, and become metacognitive. It is widely advertised as a powerful approach to building learning organizations (which clearly includes the Danbury Public School System). MSP cohort teachers and Math Specialists went through eight full days of training over the course of eight months. They rehearsed certain strategies in the safety of the training workshops and have begun to utilize those strategies back in their own school buildings. All participants reported that the coaching training not only changed their own practices, but even changed the way they conducted personal conversations.

We look forward to the math specialists and MSP cohort members practicing the Cognitive Coaching strategies in the coming months and years. More information about Cognitive Coaching is available from: <http://www.cognitivecoaching.com/>

**DISTRICT PROPOSAL FOR ENROLLMENT CHALLENGES**



The district has been experiencing unprecedented growth in student enrollment. Many schools have outgrown their classroom capacities and have been forced to repurpose special subject area rooms to accommodate students. This has resulted in the special area subjects being relocated to non-traditional areas, such as implementing “on a cart” programs. These modifications have limited the scope and depth of the programs, and have fostered an overall reduction in the quality of services being offered to our students.

It is recommended that the BOE continue the Sister School pilot that was implemented this year between Shelter Rock School and Great Plain School. It is recommended that this model be replicated with Mill Ridge Primary and Hayestown Avenue Schools, and that it be considered

whenever and wherever similar conditions exist. The 2020 Space Utilization Task Force will continue its work to develop a long term solution for the enrollment challenges that our district is experiencing.

Parents and staff have favorably received the Sister School approach. It is minimally disruptive, and is an efficient and cost effective way to address minor overcrowding concerns. Students have acclimated quickly to the receiving school, and parents and students report that they feel welcome in the receiving school community.



**PRINCIPAL'S CORNER - DANBURY HIGH SCHOOL**

On November 10th, DHS had an amazing assembly of the entire student body in the outdoor stadium. It was a celebration of Veterans Day at which time students presented a check to the Kick for Nick Foundation to benefit the Female Fallen Soldiers Initiative in the amount of \$1,500.00. Student behavior was outstanding, and the program was flawless and powerful. It will be airing on Hatters TV. It is a must-see.

For the past few weeks during advisory, students were given the name of a CT fallen hero. Their task was to create a wreath to honor this person. They are all hanging in the school cafeteria. You must stop by to see this incredible display. All the credit for this initiative goes to Carmela Calafiore, Diana Galletta Bruno and Betsy Petrone who mobilized the BOG and DECA.

\* Note: Principal's Corner featured school will rotate monthly

**DANBURY WELCOMES NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION**

November elections brought us a new Board of Education. Members were sworn in on December 1, 2011, and the new Officers were seated on December 7th, at the Annual Meeting.

Please welcome: Eileen W. Alberts, Shirley Chilian, Gladys Cooper (Chairperson), Gary Falkenthal, Annrose Fluskey-Lattin, Richard Hawley (Secretary), Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro (Vice Chairperson), Sandy Steichen, Robert Taborsak, and Phyllis Tranzillo.

Our next scheduled BOE Meeting is January 11, 2012

**GRANT HELPS SOUTH STREET SCHOOL**

Rebecca Iwasaki, a first grade teacher, with the help of Margie Jones, media specialist, was awarded a \$700 Target field trip grant. Margie sent classroom teachers several emails reminding staff to apply for the grant, and it was worth the effort...

In October Ms. Iwasaki applied for a grant to take her first graders to a musical. Just last week an email appeared with the wonderful news!

This generous grant will give 21 first-graders at South Street the opportunity to see "The Rainbow Fish" at the Ridgefield Playhouse in April. What a gift for these first-graders, who have been singing DAILY (at home and at school) and practicing reader's theater so that they can become more fluent readers!

**Calendar**

**Thursday December 22:**  
Full Instruction Day

**Friday December 23:**  
Early Dismissal

**Monday December 26 -  
Monday January 2:**

Winter Recess

**Tuesday January 3:**  
Classes resume

**Monday January 16:**  
Martin Luther King Day  
Schools & Offices closed

**Tuesday January 17 and 31:**  
Early Dismissal

**Did you know ??**



80 % of the Middle School Students are Proficient in Reading



ELL(\*) Growth in Reading at the Elementary and Middle Schools was Greater than the State Average



Participation in SAT's Increased from 411 to 452; 39 more Hispanic Students Participated



Over 85 % of Elementary Students are Proficient in Math

\* English Language Learning