

# Region 16 Insider

## Fall Issue

Volume 1, Issue 1

November 2013

### Special points of interest:

- Best Buddies Program taking off at Woodland
- Alternative Education gains momentum in 2nd year
- Common Core Understanding
- New Clubs at Woodland

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## WELCOME!

Dear Friends and Colleagues,  
I am pleased to present the first edition of a new district newsletter – **The Region 16 Insider**. The newsletter’s name was suggested by Nicole Salvatore and was one of 28 submitted for consideration by Region 16 students, staff and parents. The newsletter will be published at least three times annually and is intended to keep you informed about a variety of programs, activities, and initiatives planned and underway in Region 16. **The Region 16 Insider** will be delivered to each residence in Beacon Falls and Prospect as an insert in the *My Citizens News*. The 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 school year will be an exciting time in public education in Connecticut. New reforms, mandates from the State Legislature, and initiatives begun in Region 16 will continue to provide our students with the finest educational opportunities and advantages. Our staff looks forward to working closely with students, staff, parents and citizens as we move forward during these challenging times.

I wish you a very safe and enjoyable year as the events and activities of Region 16 unfold.

Sincerely,  
*Tim James*  
Superintendent of Schools

## Breakfast is Served!!

Long River Middle School is excited to offer students breakfast. Long River became eligible for state grant breakfast funding. Students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch may participate for free or reduced price breakfast at \$0.30. Full price student breakfast is only \$1.50. The breakfast program is governed by USDA’S National School Breakfast Program. Long River is hosting a breakfast “kick-off” contest entitled “Get off the Bus for

Breakfast” during the month of November. Students who participate may enter their name daily for an opportunity to win free snack coupons. Our Grab N’ Go Breakfasts are nutritionally complete. We offer a variety of whole grain muffins, rolls, pancakes, bagels and cereal. Milk and fresh fruit or 100% fruit juice is included in the price of breakfast. Students who wish to participate in breakfast get off the bus and report to the cafeteria before going to

their homerooms. Parents/guardians may deposit funds into their children’s lunch account for breakfast. We accept checks, cash or deposits through mySchoolbucks.com. Research has shown that students who eat a good breakfast perform better academically. The Long River School Nutrition Staff is delighted to be able to offer their students this important meal each day.

## Curriculum and Instruction-Looking Forward



Implementing the Common Core State Standards in Region #16 is generating great conversation and planning about what it means for our students to be well prepared to persist in meeting the academic rigors of the standards to be successful in college and careers. Teachers, principals and our new Director of Curriculum are designing a multi-year plan to continue the development and refinement of our curriculum, instruction and assessments

aligned to the standards. This is our opportunity to push the “refresh” button and “reboot” teaching practices that engage students in relevant and rigorous learning experiences. Both the English language arts and mathematics standards require that our students solve complex problems, think critically, read and write proficiently, and develop and defend their ideas effectively, orally and in writing. We believe that all students can successfully meet the

standards for their grade level if we teach and expect persistence and effort and help students to set incremental goals for their learning and track their progress in meeting those goals. In today’s world, it’s no longer how much you know that matters; it’s what you can do with what you know.

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### Region 16 Schools Receive PBIS Grant

Algonquin School, Community School, Laurel Ledge School and Long River Middle School have been selected as recipients of the **State Personnel and Development Grant (SPDG)** by the State of Connecticut. As part of the grant our schools have become **Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)** schools. The philosophy of the grant is to implement a systems approach to behavior and academics for all students.

Improving student academic and behavior outcomes is about ensuring all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. PBIS provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes. More importantly, PBIS is **NOT** a curriculum, intervention, or practice, but **IS** a decision making framework that guides selec-

tion, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students. To learn more about PBIS, please visit [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).

### Deb Flaherty—Region 16 Teacher of the Year



Congratulations to Deb Flaherty, 2013-2014 Region 16 Teacher of the Year. In the spring of 2013 a committee of teachers and administrators screened the applications of several qualified teachers and selected her. This fall, a committee at the state level selected Deb Flaherty to be one of four finalists for Connecticut

Teacher of the Year. On September 30<sup>th</sup> a team from the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Committee visited Woodland Regional High School. In addition to a classroom observation, the team interviewed administrators, students, parents, staff, and board of education members. Mrs. Flaherty would like to extend her

thanks to all those who supported her on this exciting quest. A teacher from another district was ultimately chosen, but as evidenced by the “Team Flaherty” buttons donned by students and teachers throughout the team’s visit -she is still #1 in our book.

## Rosetta Stone Helps Region 16 Keep Pace with the World Languages

The need to produce global citizens is increasing, and proficiency in multiple languages is essential for our students to compete in the 21st century. Region 16 has found a cost-effective language-learning solution can extend our World Language instruction to the 6th grade and offer the course credits and breadth of offerings that our students need at the high school level. The Rosetta Stone web-based educational software provides in-school and optional at-home instruction for all of our 6th graders as well as for eighteen students at WRHS. The sixth graders are being introduced to Spanish and Italian and the WRHS students are learning, Arabic, German, Russian, Polish, Latin, Japanese, Portuguese and Swedish. We also plan to enroll our English Language Learners in the program so that they can practice and boost their English skills. The Rosetta Stone solution provides the perfect opportunity for our learners to experience self-paced language learning and monitoring for success.



## Woodland Undergoing Accreditation Process

A team representing the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is scheduled to make its second accreditation visit to Woodland Regional High School in 2016. The school received its initial accreditation when the Association conducted a visit in 2005. The Woodland NEASC Committee has worked hard to revise the academic, social, and civic expectations for Woodland's students in an effort to align them with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations. The staff is currently working on creating school-wide rubrics which will be used to assess students on these expectations. During the next step in the process, staff will embark on a rigorous self-study of the seven standards of accreditation. If you would like more information on NEASC please visit their website at [cps.neasc.org](http://cps.neasc.org)

*"The school received its initial accreditation when the Association conducted a visit in 2005"*



## Alternative Education Serving the Needs of Students

The Alternative Education program was started mid-year during the 2012-2013 school year. The program is off to a great start for 2013-2014. Currently 15 students attend school in the afternoon program completing the Woodland curriculum using an online software package called Odysseyware. Students are able to work at their own pace and skill level with support from certified staff. Part of

the students' program will include a work component for which students will earn credit and valuable work experience during the regular school day hours. The work component is just getting off the ground and the school continues to look for community based businesses that can provide students with meaningful workplace opportunities. If interested in knowing more about the program or to

express an interest as a business owner in the work component of the program, please contact Chris Albini, Alternative Education program counselor at 203-881-5551 ext. 246.



**Alternative Education Staff**



### Research and Design Club Supports S.T.E.M.

Schools are working diligently to incorporate programs that promote and support Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) activities and programs. The new Research and Design Club is a dual-school collaboration where WRHS and LRMS students will participate in a responsible design challenge project. The club members will develop a team project and showcase it at the annual Student Innovation Expo held at the Hartford Armory in May. The event is attended by more than 2,000 middle and high school students from across Connecticut. The team's objective is to create a functional mobile app, marketing campaign, white paper, exhibition space, and presentation. Our students will also have the opportunity to attend 3 experiential events where workshops are offered led by app developers, designers, and industry researchers. For more information you can visit [Skills21.org](http://Skills21.org) and view the Expo 2013 Video Special.

### Innovative Grants Awarded to Teachers

The Region 16 Board of Education earmarked funds to support the second year of an Innovative Grant program. It enables teachers to seek funding to teach a unit of study or instructional activity that supports the curriculum and enhances student learning by utilizing innovative strategies. The budget guideline for each application is \$650. A committee of district and building administrators screened the numerous applications and selected 8 projects for funding. The projects include, but are not limited to, Historical Tours of Prospect and Beacon Falls (third grade students at Laurel Ledge School); Inspiring Future Engineers (third grade students at Algonquin School); Writers in the Round (English Classes at Woodland High School); and Improving Social Skills Development Among Elementary School Students Utilizing iPad Technology (fourth and fifth grade students at Community School). A complete list and description of the 8 projects is on the district website ([www.region16ct.org](http://www.region16ct.org)).

### 2COM Promotes Healthy and Safe Behaviors

**“ Each month,  
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comes up with  
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Awareness  
Topic to  
focus on”**

The goal of the Region 16 Community Prevention Task Force-nicknamed 2COM, meaning 2 Communities 1 Mission, is to provide programming and information to the communities of Beacon Falls and Prospect about healthy behaviors, good decision making, safe driving, refraining from alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. This group of parents, teachers, administrators, students and Board of Education members has already sponsored a number of awareness campaigns this school year. Each month, the task force comes up with a Prevention Awareness Topic to focus on. During the month of September they advocated for texting and driving prevention. During October they chose to focus on Red Ribbon Week, an anti-drug campaign. 2COM sends out monthly educational information to parents and to the schools to spread awareness about their topics. The task force hopes that these campaigns will help youth in Beacon Falls and Prospect make good decisions. 2Com meetings are held the first Monday of every month at Woodland Regional High School at 2:15. For those interested in attending a meeting, contact Wendy Oliveira at [wendymoliveira@yahoo.com](mailto:wendymoliveira@yahoo.com).

### CSI: WOODLAND

Interest and popularity in forensic science have grown tremendously recently. Part of the fascination comes from the immense popularity of television shows like “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation,” “Bones” and “Criminal Minds”. Currently, Woodland Regional High School offers a half-year forensic science elective course that many students are excited and eager to take. Clara Atallah, a junior at Woodland Regional High School has been the driving force behind the creation of a new forensic science club. The new club will be called *CSI: Woodland*. The purpose of the club is to encourage students to be creative in deductive reasoning and problem-solving, while fostering leadership, character, and teamwork. *CSI: Woodland* hopes to foster an environment where students can develop working relationships with each other by setting professional goals, developing real world skill sets and connecting with the scientific community through a shared love of forensic science.

One of the main goals of the club is to compete in the Civics First High School Forensics competition in the spring of 2014. This is a realistic, hands-on competition designed for students with the opportunity to conduct a full-scale investigation of a fictional crime scene. *CSI: Woodland* also plans to host guest speakers in the field of forensics, share information on student jobs and internships in the field, and participate in field trips.



## Woodland Establishes a *Best Buddies* Chapter

*Best Buddies* is a nonprofit international organization dedicated to establish the opportunity to create friendships between students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their typical peers. *Best Buddies* also helps to create integrated employment opportunities benefiting transition planning that is an important part of a student's Individual Educational Program (IEP), thus breaking down barriers students face when integrated in academic, work, and community environments. There are approximately 1500 middle school, high school and college chapters worldwide.

Woodland Regional High School is launching *BEST BUDDIES: Woodland* due to an enormous response of interest from students, parents, faculty, administration, and generous businesses, individuals and families that have been so willing to help initiate the program. The Woodland chapter began by convening its first meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2013. We plan to participate in events with other schools that have *Best Buddies* chapters while also planning our own. Parent volunteers will also be called upon to help our Chapter continue to grow. One of the goals is to expand the program next year to include students at Long River Middle School. Watch for updates in the months to come about this exciting initiative!



Christina MacSweeney and George Meyers



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# December 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 <i>LRMS: 6th Grade Chorus and Band Concert</i>	11 <i>Comm: Winter Concert</i>	12 <i>LLS: Winter Concert WRHS: Winter Concert</i>	13	14
15	16 <i>LRMS: 7th &amp; 8th Grade Chorus Concert</i>	17 <i>LRMS: 7th &amp; 8th Grade Band Concert</i>	18 <i>Alg: Winter Concert</i>	19	20	21
22	23 <i>Holiday Break</i>	24 <i>Holiday Break</i>	25 <i>Holiday Break</i>	26 <i>Holiday Break</i>	27 <i>Holiday Break</i>	28
29	30 <i>Holiday Break</i>	31 <i>Holiday Break</i>				