



# Baldwin's Bulletin

March 2016



## Superintendent's Corner

### STEEP Update

During the past several months, the Warren Township Board of Education has been carefully reviewing the district's declining enrollment and its impact on the district through the Study to Examine Enrollment Project (STEEP). Board goals for STEEP include deciding the feasibility of our current structure, closing a school, reconfiguring with duplicated or unduplicated grade levels or another alternative based upon:

- Enrollment Decline
- Educational Advantages
- Community Impact
- Facility Capabilities
- Transportation Needs
- Financial Savings

Committees with goals were formed as part of STEEP to provide the board with relevant information and data. The committees and goals are:

**Educational Committee** - To determine the educational, social, and emotional advantages and disadvantages of our current structure, identified reconfiguration models or any other alternative models.

**Facilities Committee** - To determine school building viability in terms of our current structure, closing a school, reconfiguring with duplicated or unduplicated grade levels or any other alternative models.

**Finance/Budget/Transportation** - To determine potential district savings based on the alternative models agreed to by the Board of Education; to maximize transportation efficiency while ensuring safe routes consistent with state guidelines if a school building is closed and/or reconfigured, based on the alternative models agreed to by the Board of Education.

To date, both the Facilities Committee and Finance/Budget/Transportation Committee have presented their findings to the board and public. Copies of these presentations can be accessed on the district's website. At the March 7th meeting, the Educational Committee will present its findings to the board and public. Once each committee has reported to the board, the board will discuss its next step.

In early April, the board will share its information with the community through a public forum. Community discussion will be facilitated by New Jersey School Boards Association Field Service Representatives Charlene Peterson and Gwen Thornton. Community members will have an opportunity to provide the board with feedback based on the information presented.

Determining the appropriate action in response to the district's enrollment decline is difficult and challenging. The Warren Township Board of Education remains committed to keeping the community updated on the STEEP initiative, the steps involved in the process of examining declining enrollment, and a decision for moving forward.

Dr. Elizabeth A. Nastus, Ed.D.

## Principal's Corner

What a month it has been to join Central School! Omega Man assemblies, Valentine's Day, and JA BizTown headlined some of our special events this month. Each day I saw students with smiles on their faces engaged in learning and trying new things. And while they enjoyed an extended break after President's Day, the teachers were back, learning about new instructional tools and methods and improving their practice.

This month we look forward to Read Across America Day, our 2nd grade concert, and the PTO Adult Social to name just a few. Additionally, I will be at the PTO meeting on March 9th at 7:00 PM for a *Meet and Greet*. If you have a few minutes, please stop by the meeting and say hello. Speaking of the PTO, they recently contracted with a local artist, Jim Houba, to have a beautiful mural painted in our front lobby. The artist's talent and attention to detail has brought Baldwin to life. A huge thank you to the PTO for supporting and overseeing this project.



Finally, when we return from Spring Break, we will begin this year's PARCC administration. Please keep in mind the importance of students arriving to school on time so they do not miss any of their sessions. The anticipated schedule for this year's administration is as follows:

- April 6th: Grade 3 Math Unit 1
- April 7th: Grade 3 Math Unit 2
- April 8th: Grade 3 Math Unit 3
- April 11th: Grade 3 Math Unit 4
- April 12th: Grade 4&5 Math Unit 1
- April 13th: Grade 4&5 Math Unit 2
- April 14th: Grade 4&5 Math Unit 3
- April 15th: Grade 4&5 Math Unit 4
- April 18th: Grade 3 ELA Unit 1
- April 19th: Grade 3 ELA Unit 2
- April 20th: Grade 3 ELA Unit 3
- April 21st: Grade 4&5 ELA Unit 1
- April 22nd: Grade 4&5 ELA Unit 2
- April 25th: Grade 4&5 ELA Unit 3
- May 10th-13th: Make Ups

As with previous state assessments, there is nothing out of the ordinary that students or parents need to do to prepare for the test. The teaching and learning that has been going on since September is all of the preparation needed. A good night's sleep and breakfast will do the trick.

I look forward to meeting many of you at this month's PTO meeting and Adult Social.

Sincerely,

Alison Watkins

Central School Principal

## **Grade Five**

### **Writing**

The freedom to argue is one of our most important freedoms. As long as we can write and talk to create change, we have a precious freedom. Fifth grade students are immersed in the Research-Based Argument Unit where their writing is structured so that it includes claims that are supported by reasons and by evidence. Students are investigating whether or not chocolate milk should be served in schools. The first bend focuses on moving students away from opinion and preferences to evidence based argument. They researched both sides of the issue, considered the warrant behind each argument, selected a side to support, and are almost done drafting letters to Miss Watkins. In Bend II, students will bring the argument that they made in Bend I to a bigger audience, developing their writing into essays that are position papers. In the final bend, students will do their work with more independence, taking a stand in the world. They will learn to find evidence, using surveys and interviews, as well as reading to learn from varied perspectives on a topic.

### **Reading**

Reading is taking us to new heights! Fifth grade students are continuing to apply their reading comprehension strategies to all reading assignments, including Book Clubs. Upon completion of these Book Clubs, students have enjoyed making creative book projects to display the important components of their novels. Students have become extremely independent and responsible for their reading practice throughout a variety of resources including RAZ Kids and Study Island. We love discussing our reading through shared read alouds, Book Club discussions, and Book recommendation presentations. We are eager to be moving into our Mystery unit so we can continue implementing strong reading skills and discussions!

### **Math**

Fraction fun! Fifth graders have done a terrific job learning to multiply and divide fractions. They used area models and diagrams to make sense of the algorithms for conducting these operations. Most recently, we have been classifying geometric figures by their properties. Through interaction with each other, students are able to critique the reasoning of their peers, which is an important mathematical practice. We are wrapping up our study of Geometry by investigating the concept of volume. Students are relating volume to multiplication and addition. Measuring volume is a highly valuable real world skill. We are enjoying making sense of problems and persevering to solve them!

### **Science and Social Studies:**

Did you know that the human eye's limit of vision is the tip of a pin at an arm's length? Beyond that, there is an invisible world waiting to be explored. In science, students just finished our "Microworlds" unit, one in which they first learned to communicate observational properties. Next, we analyzed what shapes make good magnifiers. Once having learned the parts of a microscope, pupils examined objects such as common table salt and onion skins. Finally, they gazed in wonder at microscopic critters including volvox (a primitive algae), blepharisma (a sometimes cannibalistic filter

feeder), and vinegar eels (which can be found in unpasteurized vinegar). We had such a wonderful time making discoveries together.

Boy, life sure was tough in early America! In social studies, students are just beginning Unit 3 which will examine, coincidentally, three chapters: “The Lives of the Early Colonists”, “Breaking Ties with Britain”, and “The American Revolution”. This area of study will be conducted as Project-Based Learning in which pupils will collaborate in groups and then hone their presentation skills to teach the lessons that they have prepared to the others in the class. Research shows that there is ninety percent knowledge retention when one instructs someone else. They will focus on vocabulary, questions and answers, and making summary notes which will then be used as a study guide for an end-of-the-unit test. As a final point, this is bold adventure for all of us, as we are creating a “paperless classroom” in which everything will be posted online. Onward and upward, everyone!

### **Artist of the Month - Mrs. Davenport**

The artist of the month of March are:

Kindergarten – Mason Bianchi

1<sup>st</sup> Grade - Aiden Lin

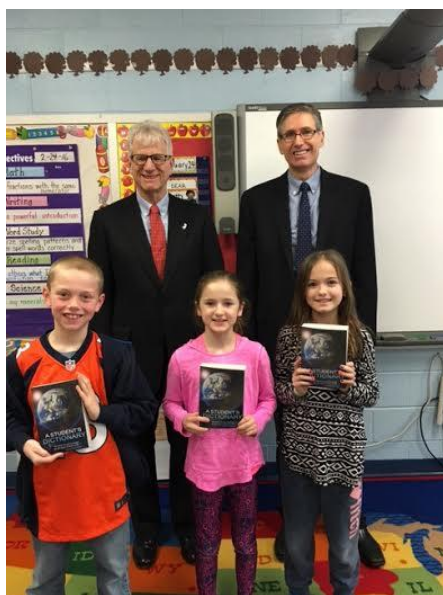
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - Megan Lehal

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Kyle Son

4<sup>th</sup> Grade - Lianna Bartnick

5<sup>th</sup> Grade - John Doucette

The student artwork will be on display all month across from the main office.



The Rotary Club of Warren and Watchung delivered dictionaries to our 3rd grade students.

**March 18-24 is Poison Prevention Week**

**Call the Poison Control Center IMMEDIATELY if a child eats, touches, or drinks something harmful.**

**1-800-222-1222**

**Do:** Lock up ALL medications (prescription and OTC).

**Do:** Teach children to ask before trying something new.

**Do:** Keep young children in sight at all times.

**Do:** Remain calm and call Poison Control if you suspect a poisoning

**Don't:** Call Medicine "candy"

**Don't:** Leave cosmetics and medicines open

**Don't:** Keep household supplies under the sink

**Don't:** Drink milk or water if you think you've consumed a poison (Call poison control instead)

**Reminder to 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents:** Please send in documentation of the (2) vaccines *required* for 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

If you have any gently used girls pants/sweatpants in sizes 7-10 or boys sweat pants in sizes 7-12, please consider donating them to the health office.

Although there have not been any new reported cases of lice, please continue to check your children's head **AT LEAST** one a week.

Happy Spring!

Ms. Sacks, MSN, CSN, RN