

REGION

SCHOOL DISTRICT

CORNWALL KENT FALLS VILLAGE/CANAAN NORTH CANAAN SALISBURY SHARON

WONDERMENT AND AWE



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

THE IMPORTANCE OF WONDERMENT AND AWE

Region 1 schools have been full of positive energy and excitement as we have been able to return to nearly normal operations this year. Yes, we must remain vigilant about the presence of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses in our communities; but fortunately the virus, while still highly contagious, appears to be less virulent.



Responding with
Wonderment
and Awe

*Become
intrigued!*

Finding the world
awesome, mysterious
and being intrigued
with phenomena
and beauty.

Additionally, thanks to the efforts of parents/caregivers and staff, our incidence of reported COVID-19 virus is far lower than the State averages. Thus, we are thankful for the renewed and restored learning environments for all.

The return to greater freedom of movement and interactive classroom communities re-opens the door for teachers to conduct authentic learning activities that inspire students to *Respond with Wonderment and Awe*, one of the 16 Habits of Mind that is embedded in classroom instruction throughout the Region. We focus on this Habit of Mind because, as noted by the staff at the Habits of Mind Institute, "The capacity for wonderment and awe represents the best of humanity, the heights of what we can accomplish through ingenuity, persistence, and cooperation...When the world around us sparks our interest and ignites our sense of wonder, we are inspired to learn, to explore, to imagine possibilities." We know that finding connection to others and to the world around us, while always important, is especially essential in the post-pandemic environment. And we are finding that students are eager to engage with staff and their peers when we create learning opportunities that ignite their curiosity.

This issue of the newsletter describes the activities and learning experiences that are full of opportunities to respond with wonderment and awe. Our small class sizes facilitate instruction that address learning standards necessary for all students while addressing individual interests. We hope that you enjoy reading about the experiments, trips and projects taking place throughout the Region. And we thank our teachers and support staff for their commitment to making their classrooms centers of exciting inquiry and discovery.

In addition to describing the remarkable learning opportunities occurring throughout the region, we are also pleased to provide The New Faces of Region 1- photos, school assignments and academic training of the recently hired teachers. We welcome them to the Region 1 community.

Finally, I would like to thank Nancy Hegy Martin for continuing to develop and edit the Region 1 newsletter. Her creativity, depth of knowledge about our schools and admiration for our staff and students helps us showcase student and staff achievement so that all stakeholders can see the wonderment and awe that makes us Region 1 Strong.

Lisa Carter, Superintendent, Region 1 Schools

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF TEACHING

I was once asked if I thought teachers were made or if they are born? I answered “both;” at the time, I was just making sure I got the answer right and did not know exactly how true this was or that it would become a theme in my career as an educator.

The field of education is fertile ground for research into the best instructional practices that produce the greatest potential for student growth. The number one factor in potential for student growth? Collective teacher efficacy translates to the perception that teams of teachers working together can organize courses of action to have a positive impact on students and on student achievement. (<http://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>).

This year teachers opened the year with a focus on student data. They meet in teams during school, after school, and on professional development days to analyze the data, which gives them the information they need to determine the best instructional practice. This focus on data may appear to take the focus off kids, but the opposite is true – it puts the focus directly on them. When teachers focus on data, they are looking deeply and analytically at evidence that demonstrates what students know and can do. Teachers can then make purposeful responsive adjustments to their instruction.

Data occurs in all sorts of forms. Teachers have “big data” from large-scale summative assessments given annually like the Smarter Balanced (SBAC) and Next Generation Science (NGSS) Assessments or the Scholastic Achievement Tests (SATs). These assessments provide teachers and administrators with aggregate data showing trends across the district, in student cohorts, and with individual students toward national standards. This data is used to make large-scale decisions about curriculum and student services.

Teachers also collect “medium data” during the school year with district performance assessments, which track student progress toward benchmarks in reading and mathematics. The assessment results provide important information on reading and mathematical fluency, letter sounds and letter name recognition, reading comprehension, and mathematical reasoning, etc.

Most importantly teachers collect data in their daily personal and interpersonal exchanges with students. This “small” and “in the moment” data is grounded in day-to-day interactions, all of which help teachers get to know students. It may include academic performance such as classroom curriculum-based assessments or interim SBAC assessments. It may also include social-emotional behaviors. Are students developing strong Habits of Mind? How do students engage with learning? Do they take care with their work? Is homework complete? What is a child’s interests? How do they engage with their peers?

A Teacher’s art is founded in collecting data points that paint a picture of your child to support student learning. As you meet with teachers in conferences over the next month, they will be able to share with you a great deal about how your child is performing and progressing in school, and what that information reveals about their progress toward grade-level standards and expectations.

Jeanine Rose, Assistant Superintendent

THE NEW FACES OF REGION 1

CORNWALL CONSOLIDATED



Kirsten Grey
1st Grade
S CT State University



Helena Sweet
MS ELA
MA,
G Washington U

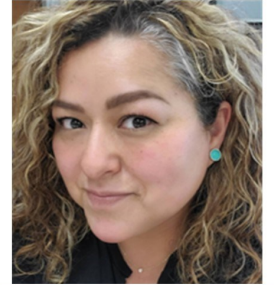


Joseph Markow
MS Science
BA, CT College
MA, U Conn



Nicole Felino
School Counselor
BA, Castleton U
MA, U of New England

CORNWALL & KELLOGG



Susana Martinez-Bauer
Art
BA, Adelphi University
MA, Long Island U

LEE H. KELLOGG



Becky Perugini
MS Science
BA, U CONN
MA, Bridgeport U

KENT CENTER SCHOOL



Amanda Jacquier
3rd Grade
BA,
Grand Canyon U

PUPIL SERVICES



Julie Browning
Special Ed
BA, Rutgers U
MA, Centenary College



Linda Tanuis
School Psychologist
MA,
Fairfield University



Rachel Palmer
Special Ed
BA,
S CT State U

NORTH CANAAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Abby Fifer
Art
BA,
U of Vermont



Melissa Asselin
5 & 6 Science
BA, St. Joseph College
MA, U of St. Joseph



Amanda Richard
Pre-K
BA,
Sam Houston State U



R. Jack Weber
5-8 Social Studies
BA & MA, U CONN

NCES & KELLOGG



Danielle O'Neil
Music
BA & MA,
Boston University

THE NEW FACES OF REGION 1

SALISBURY CENTRAL SCHOOL



Rachel Incillo
Kindergarten
BA, C CT State U
MA, U of St. Joseph



Taylor Hurley
2nd Grade
BA, Southern CT State
University



Elizabeth (Liz) Houck
MS Science
BA, Adelphi U
MA, Grand Canyon U



Jeffrey Beck
MS ELA
BA & MA,
Boston College



Rebecca Wilczak
4th Grade
BA, Providence College
MA, U of Bridgeport

SALISBURY CENTRAL SCHOOL



Julianne O'Connell
3rd Grade
BA, New York U
MA, Grand Canyon U



Marie Herow
Art
BA, Elmira College
MA, Boston University



Brigid Garcia
Special Ed
BA, Hartwick College
MA, Simmons College



Melissa Colman
Special Ed
BA, Eastern CT State
MA, U of St. Joseph



Jade Colling
Wellness Counselor
BA & MA,
SUNY Albany

SHARON CENTER



Kaitlyn Palumbo
Special Ed
BA, Quinnipiac U
MA, Central CT State U



Micah Conway
Mathematics
BA, Eastern CT
State University



Kyle Farrell
Mathematics
BA, U CONN



Sheri Lloyd
Ag Ed
BA & MA,
Cornell University



John Connelly
Social Worker
BA, Lehigh University
MSW, Springfield
College

HOUSATONIC VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (HVRHS)

CORNWALL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

REG1ON
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FIELD TRIP ADVENTURES

Students at CCS expressed their curiosity about the world around them while sharing in its beauty all through field trips this fall!

PUMPKIN PATCH

- Kirstan Grey and Kristi Pramuka



Kindergarteners, first and second graders all went to Ruwet's Pumpkin Patch this year. The students got to explore a haunted house, the corn, and sunflower mazes, as well as experience new games and saw how they were made from old farm equipment before going to the pumpkin patch. They stared in awe at all the pumpkins in the patch before choosing what they considered to be their "perfect" pumpkin. Some were small while others were huge. Colors ranged from orange to green to spotted. It was the perfect day for them to experience and learn about nature!

COVERED BRIDGE

- Cathy Binkowski and Vicki Nelson

One of Cornwall's most famous features is the Covered Bridge. In the study of our town, we took a field trip to the Bridge on October 11. We could not have picked a better day. The weather was stunning, warm in the sun and cool in the shade. The third and fourth grade students were accompanied by their classroom teachers Ms. Nelson and Ms. Binkowski and their art teacher, Ms. Susana Martinez-Bauer. With art supplies in hand the children got underway creating impressive renditions using perspective and details. It was a morning to remember.



SHEAR MADNESS!

- Helena Sweet

The 8th grade students were afforded the opportunity to attend a performance of *Shear Madness* at the Sharon Playhouse in September. This play was a nice mix of genres – a murder mystery and an improv comedy. Students enjoyed the live theater performance; this was the first play for several of them. The cast made a point of interacting with the audience at intermission and answered questions about their characters. Many students were delighted to have their playbills autographed by the actors, as well. Thanks to all who made this wonderful trip happen.

THE BIG DIG

- Will Vincent

How do we know what we know about the past? This question was posed to CCS's 5th and 6th graders as they began a new year in social studies. Students created "ancient" artifacts (pottery) with messages and images from their own imaginary civilizations. We then mimicked the passage of time on their creations (with a hammer). The "shards of the past" were unceremoniously mixed and buried. Rules, tools, and purposes of an excavation were previewed before students put on their fedoras and leather jackets to be part of a dig. The glove-wearing, trowel-toting archaeologists discovered many buried treasures. Knowns and unknowns were analyzed as fifth and sixth graders tried to piece together the story, the meanings, and the importance of their discoveries. Theories and conclusions about what the artifacts could tell us about the past were presented in a Model of the Mysteries-style booklet in which wonderment and awe were explicitly expressed.



ALPACAS & SHEEP AT CCS!

- Tricia Collins



Clover Hill Alpacas came to visit the CCS After School Program. Former CCS student, Fiona Ocain, and her mom, Kathy, brought two of their sheep and talked to the kids about caring for their animals and how they use the beautiful wool. The students learned a lot about the sheep including that their wool coat does not make them hot and that they are sheared twice a year. After they are sheared, the wool is used to make different types of garments such as socks, mittens, and shawls. Students learned about the steps to take wool and make it into these garments!



The students also loved meeting their two sheep that they brought with them, Peanut and Stormy! The kids were wowed by how soft their wool was! They enjoyed having time to sit with the sheep and pet them! Another fun fact that the students were surprised by, and noticed, with the sheep was that they have rectangular pupils! It was such a fun day for our After School students and they learned so much!

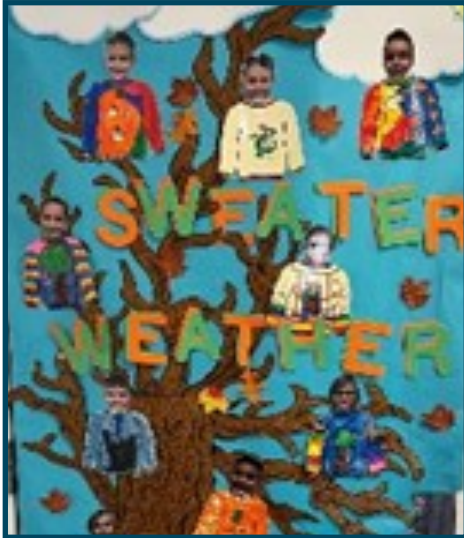


KENT CENTER SCHOOL

REG 1 ON
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BUILDING A COMMUNITY

- Michelle Mott, Principal



At KCS, we think of our school as its own community. We work together on our Cougar Promise of being safe, responsible, and respectful. We also love to participate in activities that bring our staff and students together. These activities encourage teamwork, creativity, and perseverance!

Our first activity this month was a door decorating contest. Staff and students have the option to decorate a door in their learning environment that represents our current season - Fall. Winning doors were chosen for homeroom classes as well as individual staff rooms!



Our second activity was community building day. On this day, all students in grades K-8 are split into groups and scattered around the building. The groups participate in an icebreaker activity to get to know each other, and then are split into teams to participate in a challenge.

This month's challenge was the "Spaghetti and Marshmallow Tower." Students worked together to build the tallest tower in their group! Our tallest tower was 22.75 inches high!

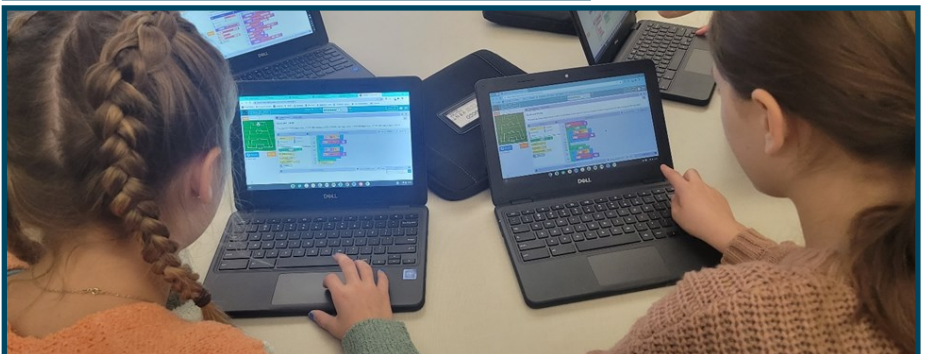
COMPUTER SCIENCE ADVENTURES

- Scott Eldridge

Kindergartners are working with Beebots. Students learn to sequence code to get the bot from one room to another on a floor map of a school.

Second graders are working with a humanoid robot called Marty. Students sequence code to make Marty dance, make noises, walk, and change its appearance.

Sixth graders are in their first year of working on animation and gaming. They are learning to code sprite actions based on user input.



LEAP DAY, THE MUSICAL AT KCS

- David Poirier

3rd and 4th Graders are already hard at work on their musical *Leap Day* at Kent Center School. The students are excited to be putting on their first live performance since before COVID, and they have been working diligently on memorizing their lines and learning their songs. The show is directed by David Poirier who is delighted to be working with such a talented and enthusiastic group of 3rd and 4th graders.

An exciting new development this year, the show's assistant director is HVRHS 9th grader Elizabeth Forbes, and one of the costume designers is fellow HVRHS 9th grader Taylor Green. Mr. Poirier is very happy to be working with the two KCS alumni in this new capacity.

There will be two performances of the 35-minute show on Friday, November 4th. A school performance during the day and an evening performance at 7:00pm for family and guests. The book, music and lyrics were written by Denver Casado. The show is very loosely based on a fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen.



7TH GRADE NATURE'S CLASSROOM

- Brian White



This year, Kent Center School seventh graders embarked on their annual journey to Nature's Classroom during the first week of October. The weather was on our side as the mountains of New Hampshire provided the perfect autumnal backdrop to the trip of a lifetime. The opportunities for new learning were seemingly endless. The students built DaVinci bridges; they learned how to start fires by friction, among other back-to-basics skills. They hammered their own "S" hooks during blacksmithing classes and worked cooperatively during a canoe odyssey. Additionally, and always most importantly, the students had a chance to bond with each other and learn a little about themselves throughout a plethora of skill/trust-building activities during their field groups. Of course, we also enjoyed many games of "ga ga", sang, danced, laughed, screamed, and ate until we couldn't anymore. This will be a trip they talk about for many years to come. Thank you to everyone who continues to make this possible!

LEE H. KELLOGG SCHOOL

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BEGINNING OUR YEAR WITH WONDERMENT AND AWE

- Becky Perugini

Lee H. Kellogg has introduced a new and exciting program... STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) is an opportunity for students to enrich their learning with exciting tasks, science experiments, art exploration, and problem solving. Kindergarten through eighth students have one class a week where they are presented with STEAM challenges. Kindergarten students are exploring through art activities and buddying up with older peers.

First and second graders have been able to explore their problem-solving skills like adjusting the weight on their handmade helicopters to see how the weight affects the flight of the helicopter. Students in grades 3 & 4 have been helping with our community garden. In the beginning of the school year, students planted spinach seeds to be harvested at the end of October. Our students took the opportunity to explore plants when we weeded the garden. The students took in a variety of the weeds we pulled, and we looked at different parts of the plant under the microscope. Students were amazed by what they saw.

In middle school, students worked together to explore the science of making ice cream! We studied the chemical reactions of salt and ice and were able to harness this reaction to turn milk into ice cream (with added sprinkles of course)! We are off to a sensational start, exploring, creating, and problem solving here at LHK.



LHK Teachers are teaching to facilitate standard based learning activities for all K-8 students. These experiences promote creativity, and innovation through guided inquiry, where students create, plan, test, and retest. Our STEAM initiative provides an experiential approach through student choice and enrichment opportunities that allow our Falcons to be at the center of their own learning.

8TH GRADERS BRING THEIR QUESTIONS TO TOWN HALL

- Eliza Paolucci

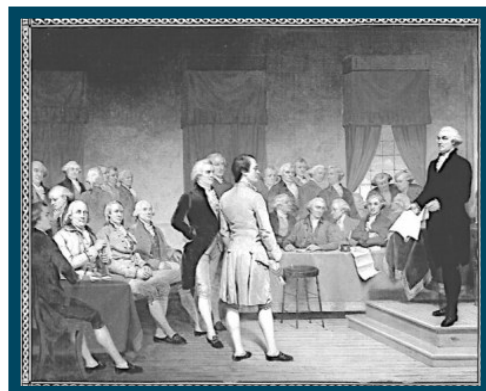
The 8th graders at Kellogg School had practiced inquiry. They had looked at images, videos, and texts, writing dozens of questions in response to the material. They were ready, ready for THE document, the law of our land, the United States Constitution. With what I thought would be plenty of time to read and decode the meaning of this small book, we plunged in. Two weeks later, we were still on Article I, and Article II went even slower- the questions! For every note taken, there were dozens of questions, comments, and personal references. This is a document to awaken the inner scholar in an 8th grader, to produce wonderment and awe, and even to connect students' lives with the hopes and dreams of men 235 years ago.



When we eventually began our elections discussion, I needed reinforcements, and the students recommended a trip to town hall where voting happens. We marched down one morning, each student holding a list of questions, and spent the next hour with the Registrars of Voters, Ms. Kelsey and Ms. Steinberg-Whitaker, who answered queries on eligibility, process, ballots, political party membership, electoral college, and historic shifts among voters in Falls Village. The students saw the padlocked box where the ballot box scanner is kept and learned the process of recounting ballots if there is a tie. They grasped the importance of the Voters' Bill of Rights hanging in every voting center in America. They left understanding the privilege of this vote and also the duty each citizen has to participate in our democracy through this process.

The field trip was a great way for students to practice being curious and allow new material to be mulled over and broadened. More importantly, their questions brought them to an understanding of their role as citizens who give the Constitution, our Federal Government, its power.

We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union,
establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility,
provide for the common defence,
promote the general Welfare,



THE BEAUTY OF NATURE BRINGS WONDERMENT AND AWE

- Linda Peppe

First and second graders had the opportunity to see the magic of metamorphosis take place in their NCES classrooms this fall. First graders watched the miraculous transformation from caterpillar, to chrysalis, to adult with Painted Lady Butterflies. For the children to understand the whole life cycle and to support our school focus of being globally and environmentally aware, they acted out and witnessed each stage. We watched, mesmerized, as the butterflies emerged from their chrysalises, with wet, crumpled wings and enormous-sized abdomens filled with the liquid that eventually is pumped into their wings. Amazingly, we were also able to watch the incredible feat as one butterfly fit the two halves of its proboscis together; this is a necessary step to ensure that the adult butterfly can sip nectar from flowers.



Once the butterflies were strong and nearly ready to fly, each child had the opportunity to hold the adult on their finger and see it up close. Their eyes glittered with wonderment and awe as they looked at and felt the delicate butterfly's feet. We released the Painted Ladies on a glorious, sun-filled day. Each butterfly, warmed by the sun, spread its wings then took off to find nectar and to begin the magical life cycle again.



Second graders also witnessed metamorphosis, but of Monarch butterflies. The children watched as their caterpillars munched milkweed leaves and grew exponentially within a matter of days. They also saw how the caterpillar spins a pad of silk thread from which it hangs to change into a beautiful green and gold chrysalis. By a stroke of good fortune, the children were able to see the moment when, by frantically wriggling "to and fro", the old striped caterpillar skin zipped off to reveal the emerald-green chrysalis underneath. As the children watched, they were shocked to see a black object drop to the cage floor. One child shouted, "Was that it's head? Did it lose its head?" This led to a discussion about an exoskeleton and that during metamorphosis the exoskeleton is molted as the caterpillar grows and changes. Students also discussed how animal adaptations help creatures to survive. The Monarch caterpillar for example, has antennae at both ends of its body. This serves to confuse predators. Female butterflies tend to lay their eggs on the underside of leaves to both conceal and shelter them. They also lay their eggs on the exact plant their young need to eat. We were able to discuss the idea that the underside of a butterfly's wings is dull in color so that the butterfly is better able to camouflage itself from predators.

NATURE BRINGS WONDERMENT AND AWE (continued)

Being Globally and Environmentally Aware, which is part of Region One's Portrait of a Graduate, has also been highlighted in the study of butterfly metamorphosis. Students talked about the necessity for the butterflies to find the correct plants on which to lay their eggs and the availability of nectar from host plants as well as appropriate shelter in the natural world. Further, through a connection with the Audubon Center in Sharon, second grade students have learned about a deadly and very contagious parasitic infection *Ophryocystis elektroscirr* (OE) that has been affecting the Monarch butterfly population.



"The infection causes wing deformities, reduced flight performance, lower reproductive success and shorter lifespans." (The Royal Society Publishing Organization, author: Karis Mahaffey) The infection occurs when Monarch caterpillars ingest spores of the protozoan which have been inadvertently left by infected adult Monarchs. Mother Monarchs who are infected with the parasite can further infect their own offspring through spores shed during the egg laying process. Spores can also be acquired through contact among adult Monarch butterflies. To release only healthy Monarchs, our second-grade teacher, Mrs. Denise Sorrell, and her students tested the butterflies for the parasitic spores. We are happy to report that according to the Audubon none of our butterflies had the virus, so all were released to add their beauty to our environment..

BEING ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE AT NCES

- Dr. Alicia Roy, Principal



Being globally and environmentally aware is the first Region 1 Portrait of a Graduate skill NCES is focusing on as a school. We know this skill is fundamental as we need to protect the beauty around North Canaan.

One example of students being aware of the environment is the traditional seventh grade hike to Bear Mountain.

On Friday, September 23rd, the first full day of fall, seventh graders made the annual excursion, a true bonding experience. Even though it was a cold and windy day, the students enjoyed the warmth of each other's company. Thanks to Mrs. Johnson for leading the hike along with Mr. Nelson and Dr. Braun. How can you not respond with wonderment and awe at the vistas seen at the top of Bear Mountain on a clear and cool fall day?

SALISBURY CENTRAL SCHOOL



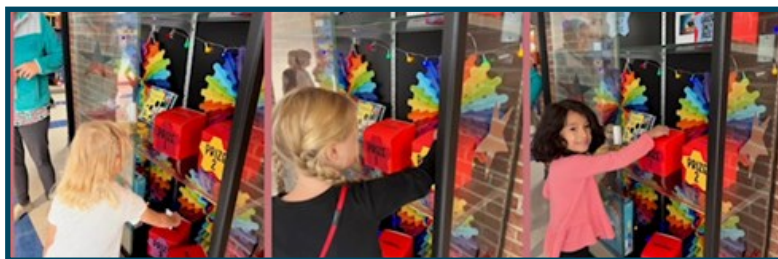
INTRODUCING SALISBURY STARS!

- Stephanie Magyar, Principal



On September 21st, SCS staff and student leadership members were excited to reveal our new student expectation and recognition system, Salisbury Stars! Salisbury Stars focuses on the 5 pillars of our regional Portrait of a Graduate (POG): Confident, Problem Solver, Communicator, Self-Advocate, and Globally & Environmentally Aware. With these 5 as our anchor attributes, we can fold in Habits of Mind and our 4-8th grade Learning Practices as well. All K-8 students and staff have had a chance to contribute to what the attribute expectations look like in various areas of the school (ex: What does it look like to be a good communicator in the classroom, on the bus, at recess, etc.)

Our counselors, Mrs. Begley and Mrs. Colling, will work with classes to deliver lessons about each attribute during the year. When students demonstrate the attribute behaviors, they may receive a punch on their Salisbury Star card. After earning a designated # of punches (tiered by grade level), students can put filled tickets into raffle bins in the main lobbies. Every Friday raffle winners are selected and read over announcements by 5th graders and members of student leadership. Elementary students get to visit me in my office to collect their prize and here a big “thank you for being a Salisbury Star”! Some of the prizes this year have been books, jump ropes, extra recess, craft supplies, light up balls, a chance to read to younger students, and being 1st in line at lunch. While students are understandably excited about the prizes, they are also proud just to be recognized for meeting and exceeding expectations.



UPDATES AND INFO FROM SALISBURY CENTRAL PTO

- Julianne O’Connell

The Salisbury Central PTO has decided on a dual focus this year of building community through activities and events that bring people together while raising funds to support the school and our children. The PTO is always looking for new ideas to help strengthen the SCS community. Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 5pm. So far, we have helped fund field trips for middle school to attend Shear Madness at Sharon playhouse and the seventh-grade class to see the Van Gogh exhibit in Hartford as well as making a contribution to the Salisbury Stars program.

In addition, We are collaborating with student leadership to host a family square dance on 11/4, followed by a Thanksgiving Pie Sale and our No-Fuss Fundraiser has already begun. The PTO is also planning a book fair, spirit wear sale, winter dance, parent/caregiver night out and a kids paint night (and that’s just the first half of the year!) Save April 29th for our spring Family Festival!

A DAY EXPLORING NEW ENGLAND!

- Barbara Carr and Becky Wilczak



The SCS fourth graders have been learning about regions of the United States, starting with the Northeast. To better understand the economy of the New England states, students explored the state houses at the Eastern States Expo, better known as the Big E!

Our morning was dedicated to the six New England state houses. Each group had to complete a scavenger hunt that asked them to identify natural resources, agriculture, and manufactured goods from each state. It was exciting to watch students communicate with vendors, investigate pamphlets, and use their senses (including taste) to learn about the economy of each unique location. Storrowton Village, a small collection of period buildings from the area, allowed fourth graders to understand what life was like in the 1800s. Finally, groups had an opportunity to explore some of the farm exhibits that highlighted the importance of agriculture in New England.

This experience allowed the students to learn more about their region and the role its economy plays in our lives. Back in the classroom, this knowledge was shared through group posters and presentations based on what was learned on this exciting field trip!

SEVENTH GRADE GOES TO VAN GOGH

- Jen Segalla

On September 15th, 7th Graders visited *Beyond Van Gogh* at the Convention Center in Hartford, an immersive multimedia experience that dives into the history, life, and art of Vincent Van Gogh. Prior to the field trip, students learned about the artist's life and artistic works in art class and from Kendra Percy of the Scoville Library. Having background knowledge of this prolific artist helped students appreciate the exhibit.

Beyond Van Gogh is an incredible and truly experience. Imagine a room larger than a high school gymnasium filled with projections of over 300 of Van Gogh's works. The images surround you, moving along the floors and walls in sync with music and words from the artist's writings. The artwork flows along the walls, appearing and disappearing, moving, and growing in an emotional play of light and color. The seventh graders soaked in the images and sat amongst the sunflowers and irises as they grew and faded. On one of the first field trips, since the Covid protocols had lessened, the students were respectful, enjoyable, and joyful. It was a day of wonderment and awe and all who went left with a new appreciation for the incredible art of Vincent Van Gogh. Immense thank you to SOAR Enrichment and the Salisbury Central PTO for funding this trip.



SHARON CENTER SCHOOL

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SOARING AT SHARON CENTER SCHOOL

- Carol Tomkalski, Principal

“The capacity for wonderment and awe represents the best of humanity, the heights of what we can accomplish through ingenuity, persistence, and cooperation.” -The Institute for Habits of Mind

What a wonderful theme for the first Region 1 newsletter of the year! At Sharon Center School, we have begun our year SOARING to new heights as a school community. Our focus of building on our STRENGTHS; capitalizing on our OPPORTUNITIES; maintaining a positive ATTITUDE; and cultivating our RELATIONSHIPS is opening the doors to transformation and renewed energy in our school.

The first couple months have welcomed past school traditions from our Open House/Back to School Picnic event; to student field trips that focused on team building and communication skills; to a host of other activities shared in this edition of our newsletter. These adventures create the wonderment and awe we experience each and every day here at Sharon Center School. We love sharing what we do and who we are as a school community and hope you enjoy learning more about us too!

UPCYCLED ART @ SHARON CENTER

- Lilly Barnett



Upcycling is the process of taking unwanted things that normally would be trash and using them to make new things, like art or furniture. At Sharon Center, we have been focusing on the environmental impact of what we use and what happens to trash when it gets thrown away; how recycling works; and why it is so important to the planet's survival

Each of our students created a mini collage using upcycled objects—cardboard boxes, scraps of leather from a local leather shop (Reeves Leather); wood circles from the ukelele factory (Magic Fluke); vial caps (Sharon Hospital); marker caps (SCS); plastic drum siding from an instrument factory; corks; and more.

GET IN YOUR PJ'S FOR A GOOD CAUSE!

- Student Council

On December 9th Sharon Center will be hosting our annual PJ Day for the Kids! Students and staff will have the opportunity to wear PJs to school for a great cause. The funds raised through PJ Day for the Kids are donated to the children fighting cancer at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Visit www.sharoncenterschool.org for more information or to support our students.



PROJECT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Liz Foster

Project Make a Difference, SCS's peer-to-peer mentoring program, is up and running. Middle school student volunteers are paired with a younger buddy for an activity block where they play games and make connections with one another. The program will run until spring break, and involves all early kindergarten; kindergarten; first and second grade students; and our middle school students who volunteer. It is a WIN WIN for everyone!



FROM THE KINDERGARTEN

- Allison Bryant



The EK and K classes joyously released all the monarch butterflies they raised in their classrooms and are now turning their attention to seasonal things such as leaves, pumpkins and graphing their favorite types of apples. Together, they will make and taste applesauce, do some pumpkin art, and science. As always, kindergarten teachers focus on developing their students' interpersonal skills and ability to use words to solve problems and share feelings with others. As their time at school progresses, they are adjusting to school rules and routines.

FROM THE SECOND GRADE

- Sarah Ives



Second graders have started their annual visits with Miss Sam from the Hotchkiss Library; they helped her make stars for her new display. They are looking at matter and getting ready to build things using what they observed about materials and their properties.



SIXTH GRADE TRAVELS TO CAMP JEWELL

- Sue Bayer and James Smith

On September 26th, sixth-graders traveled to Camp Jewell in Colebrook, CT. Students participated in two days of team building and adventure education.

The overnight trip focused on building character, confidence, resilience, and leadership as students worked together to complete a variety of team initiatives and high rope climbing challenges.



HOUSATONIC VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

REG1ON
SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEARNING HOW TO EXPERIENCE AND ENJOY WONDER AND AWE - Ian Strever, Principal



Left to right: Students observing chemistry demonstration; Geometry students creating “human” perpendicular bisectors; and students working with volunteer Abby Auerbach to develop internships and cultivate professional dispositions.

Last Friday, I stopped into two classrooms where the students were paying rapt attention to something the teacher was doing. It was the last block of the day— not a time when students are known for producing their best work. Yet here they were, talking about sine waves in their Pre-Calculus class, and across the hall, huddled around a Chemistry demonstration. Their questions were natural, organic, and full of sincere curiosity about how those phenomena work.

We are now in our second year of working with the sixteen Habits of Mind, a framework created by Art Costa and Bena Kallick to describe the qualities exhibited by successful people in all walks of life. Some of those qualities are unsurprising: persisting, communicating with clarity and precision, and thinking flexibly are traits that have served everyone from CEOs to electricians.

There are clear pathways to developing some of these qualities, but others are more elusive. “Responding with wonderment and awe” is one that requires the artfulness of the classroom teachers that I saw during the last block on Friday. It entails “finding the world awesome, mysterious, and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty,” and excitable, interested teachers can make the quality infectious.

Our STEM courses also provide opportunities for students to cultivate this habit through “notice and wonder” activities that ask students to simply observe a phenomenon and describe what is interesting about it for themselves. Such strategies not only provide a foothold for investigating a topic, but they also afford an opportunity for students to understand themselves: what they find fascinating and why.

The Class of 2023 is moving ahead with Capstone projects that embody this habit. Last year, our students identified topics that interest them - things that they find awesome and wonderful. Over the past year, they have explored them and expanded them into projects that they are now executing. Peer counseling, social media careers, and a more sustainable cafeteria are three projects that come to mind where students are wondering about their immediate surroundings and finding ways to make the world a better place, now.

The Class of 2026 is seeing how awesome our immediate surroundings are already. Their outdoors education included hikes to Rand’s View and the Overlook Trail along the Mohawk Trail, where they experienced the wonder of nature and, on the following Friday, they debriefed their experience with their guide, Ed Thorney, to appreciate what they learned about themselves and their classmates. A wondrous experience, inside and out.

The Value of Integrating Outdoor Education into the Traditional Classroom



MY WORK WITH ED THORNEY

- Caitlin Messina

In my Social Studies classroom at the high school, I see the value of engaging students in discourse about both what they are learning as well as the transferable skills they are developing. Part of our responsibility as teachers is to help students build the toolkit of behaviors and mindsets demonstrated by successful young people and adults. In this spirit I prioritized the following *Habits of Mind* in my ninth-grade history classroom: persistence, taking responsible risks, managing impulsivity, thinking flexibly, responding to the world with wonderment and awe, and finding humor in oneself. In the classroom we appropriately scaffold student acquisition of these important coping skills -- or their responses to the academic and social challenges they face daily. To be able to transfer these skills beyond the classroom walls, however, is even more powerful.

This year I have worked with community member and veteran outdoor educator, Ed Thorney. Ed's kind and endlessly patient demeanor immediately draws students in and provides a safe space for them to take responsible physical and social risks. Ed and I have taken every member of the freshman class on an outdoor excursion in which the students hike alongside their freshman teachers and support staff. While hiking our local trails, we fostered in our students an appreciation, even wonderment, for the beauty of our surrounding area. When the trail got difficult, we encouraged the students to persevere. When students considered sitting down rather than hiking on or engaging in disruptive social behaviors, we provided them with the opportunity to self-manage their impulsivity and to think flexibly about the challenges they were facing. When a student tripped on a root or stone, they were given the chance to respectfully find humor in themselves. Each of these moments provided students with an opportunity to make connections between the coping skills that help them manage their world within school and beyond.

THE HVRHS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL CLUB

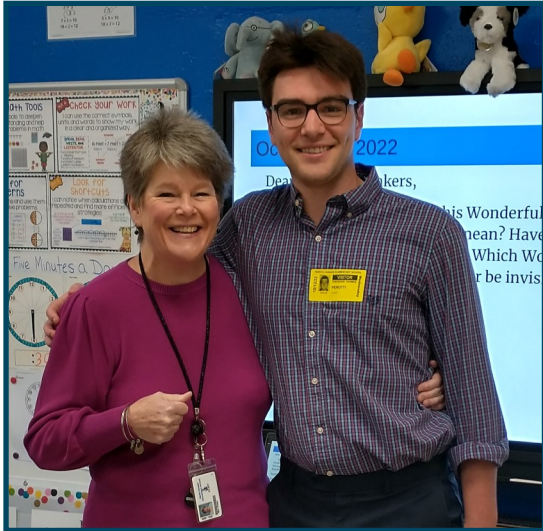
- Margot Minton

The Travel Club offers students like myself the option to travel to places that I wouldn't think of going to on my own. For instance, as a student who is going on our trip to Japan in Spring of 2023, it is an opportunity that most schools do not offer. To not take advantage of these opportunities would be upsetting. Being able to go to Japan is an experience that will stay with me for the rest of my life and a chance to visit a new country in an educational manner. It is a wonderful way to learn about a country, more than you would on a normal vacation. The HVRHS Travel Club gives us chances to raise money for our trips and provides us with skills in communication and organizing finances, skills that can help us outside of high school.

REGION 1

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Region 1, The Tie That Binds



This fall, Region 1 was awarded grants from the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and the Foundation for Community Health to create a series of videos that showcased Region 1 and the diversity of its schools, programming, extracurricular opportunities as well as the resources available to Region 1 students and families.

The project was conceived by Nancy Hegy Martin who paired up with videographers, Ted Perotti HVRHS Class of 2016 and Elias Hill, Class of 2018 to capture on tape the life within the walls of Region 1.

The three “man” crew spent a day at each of the six elementary schools, Central Office, and with the various after-school clubs and enrichment classes at HVRHS. They also spent time with the staff at Housatonic Youth Service Bureau (HYSB). The crew quickly realized it would be impossible to showcase all that is going on within the region but they did their best to capture as broad a range as they could. The videos will be available on Region 1’s website by Thanksgiving.

As the group traveled from school to school, each had a chance to reunite with old friends and acquaintances. At NCES Perotti caught up and thanked elementary teacher, Linda Peppe, who got him to participate in his first school musical. A door that once opened, became a constant of his years in Region 1 and college as Ted joined every school production he could.

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