

Connections

With the West Hartford Public Schools

Connections is a districtwide publication presented to you by the Office of the Superintendent,
West Hartford Public Schools, 50 South Main St., West Hartford, Connecticut 06107
Phone (860)561-6651

Emergency Closing Information:

- The Superintendent determines the necessity for the emergency closing or delayed opening of school due to weather conditions or other emergencies.
- Announcements regarding such closings air over local radio stations WTIC96.5 FM, and WTIC 1080 AM by 6AM
- Notices also air via television on WVIT channel 30, WFSB channel 3, and WTNH channel 8
- You may also call West Hartford Source Line after 6:00 AM at 860-233-2334
- Click on www.whps.org on Communications and Cancellations

In the event of early dismissal

- Parents will be notified by the principal via the Connect-ED Rapid Notification Service which we began last year. This allows all parents to be notified by phone within minutes.
- Be sure to discuss ahead of time with your children what the plan is for your family if the school is closed early.
- When school is closed early, all afternoon and evening activities are cancelled.

Summer Projects Improve Schools

We have undertaken some major work at four of our elementary schools this summer.

At Bugbee: We are installing two new modular classrooms, and we are making improvements in the parking lot that will facilitate an easier pick up and drop off.

At Charter Oak: We are replacing floors in five classrooms and completing exterior masonry work.

At Norfeldt: We are in phase two of roof replacement, and the outdoor ramp is being replaced to reduce the steepness of the incline.

At Whiting Lane: We are replacing the exterior concrete patio and stairs.

All of this work is in addition to the cleaning and minor repair work that is normally done during the summer months.

Distribution Of *Connections*

An on-line version of *Connections With the West Hartford Public Schools* is now available at <http://www.whps.org/connections.pdf>. If you do not wish to have a copy of *Connections* mailed to your home, please email connectionsout@whps.org with your name, address, child's name and school. Thank you.

First Issue

10-11

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Teacher of the Year

Teachers nominate their peers as part of the Teacher of the Year process. Nominees submit a resume, essay and recommendations. Finalists then appear in a videotaped lesson, and the Teacher of the Year committee formally interviews the final three.

Selected from an impressive pool of finalists, Scott Ferguson, an English teacher at Hall High School, has been named West Hartford Teacher of the Year for 2010. Scott, who also coaches the Hall girls' varsity soccer team, has been teaching in West Hartford since 2002. Colleagues note that he is highly respected by peers and students alike; he is a dedicated team player and a major contributor to curriculum development. Supportive and nurturing, he also has a quick wit and is skilled at identifying teachable moments. Scott establishes strong connections with his students and at the same time is demanding. He clearly demonstrates genuine concern and caring about each student's academic success.



Scott Ferguson

Conard and Hall – Two of America's Best High Schools

Each year *Newsweek* magazine releases a report on "America's Best High Schools" based on how hard school staffs work to challenge students with advanced placement college-level courses and tests. For 2010, both Conard and Hall have made the list, a ranking achieved by only 6% of all high schools in the country. In Connecticut, only fifteen high schools were included on the list; Conard captured the number 2 spot, and Hall was in at number 10.



Mission To inspire and prepare all students to realize their potential and enhance our global community

First Day of School:
Wednesday,
September 1, 2010

A Look Inside:

- New Administrators
- PowerSchool Overview
- Intercambio Program
- Recent Retirees
- Summer Programs
- Emergency Closings
- Summer Projects



New Administrators Join Bugbee, Charter Oak and Smith Schools

Three new administrators have joined the West Hartford Public Schools Leadership Team. Effective leadership is crucial for teaching and learning to be effective in classrooms. These new administrators focus their attention on the actions of teachers as they relate to the education of their students.

Noam Sturm, the new Principal at Lloyd H. Bugbee School, received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees and his 6th year Certificate in Educational Leadership from the University of Connecticut. No stranger to West Hartford Public Schools, he has spent the last ten years in teaching and leadership roles throughout our district: teacher at Aiken Elementary School, ESOL Summer Program Coordinator at Florence E. Smith School of Science, Math and Technology and Charter Oak International Academy, Curriculum Specialist at Whiting Lane School, Assistant Principal at Florence E. Smith School of Science, Math and Technology. His passion for seeing teachers and students succeed, as well as his collaborative leadership style, will serve the Bugbee community and our school district well.



Teresa Coursey, the new Assistant Principal at Charter Oak International Academy, received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut, her Master's degree from St. Joseph College and her 6th year Certificate in Educational Leadership from Central Connecticut State University. Her career in West Hartford began with her assignment as a second grade teacher at Braeburn. She has spent the last five years as the Curriculum Specialist at both Smith and Duffy Schools. Known for having high standards and a knowledge of pedagogy that includes discipline, her instructional experience makes her a natural fit for the Charter Oak community.



Clare Kennedy, the new Assistant Principal at the Florence E. Smith School of Science, Math and Technology, received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Rhode Island, her Master's degree from the University of Hartford and her 6th year Certificate in Educational Leadership from Central Connecticut State University. She began her career in West Hartford as a pre-school teacher at the Early Learning Center, taught at Norfeldt and has spent the last eight years as both a Department Supervisor for Pupil Services and Summer School Principal for pre-k to grade 8. Her expertise in Scientific Research-Based Decision Making, as well as her ability to forge positive relationships with students, staff and parents will be a tremendous asset to Smith School and our district.



IMAGINE
the Possibilities



Intercambio Program Brings Students Together

The Intercambio program offers students from West Hartford and Madrid a unique linguistic and cultural experience through a home stay enriched by travel and educational activities. The program sends a group of West Hartford students to Madrid during odd-year summers, and during even-year summers we host a group from Madrid, pairing them with families in West Hartford. The coordinators match participants based on age and interests, taking into account family and home situations as well. There are 46 Spanish students (32 girls and 14 boys) scheduled to visit West Hartford this summer.



The hosting and traveling opportunities offer potentially life-changing experiences. It is not uncommon for participants to keep visiting each other for years after the initial exchange and to stay in touch for life. The program in West Hartford is coordinated at Hall by Eric Collins and Mark Grudzien (who participated in the program years ago while a student at Hall) and at Conard by María Di Poi. This tireless team of Spanish teachers also takes students to Spain and Argentina during the school year. Activities for the summer include: a welcoming party, day trips to Boston and New York City, special classes at Hall during summer school hours and a final farewell gathering.

PowerSchool Overview

PowerSchool is a web-based student information system that supports more than 8.5 million students in 50 states and over 50 countries. The system enables educators to make timely decisions that impact student performance while creating a collaborative environment for parents, teachers and students to work together in preparing 21st century learners for the future. PowerSchool is comprised of several "modules":

PowerTeacher - a web-based classroom management and gradebook system that can be accessed by teachers from any Internet connected computer. Functions include: attendance, assessment, grading, discipline management, parent communication, classes, rosters, student demographic information, grading periods, standards, rubrics and grade scales.

PowerScheduler - a web-based, automated master schedule builder that

allows a school to build a schedule that maximizes flexibility and makes efficient use of resources.

Parent and Student Access - Though not available at the start of the 2010-2011 school year, the Parent and Student Portal will permit parents and students to view grades, attendance, comments, assignments, scores and more. First we need to ensure that all the systems are operational and training of all staff has been fully completed.

The new system will go 'live' for staff at the start of the 2010/2011 school year. To effectively manage the implementation of this new system, we are phasing in the features of PowerSchool over a two-year period. For the 2010/2011 school year, we will begin with those basic features that replicate what we currently have in SASI. Teacher access to PowerSchool will be implemented only at the middle and high schools for the first year.

Administrators need appropriate support structures, resources, and administrative training at the district level. Our Comprehensive Mentoring Program carefully assigns a mentor to provide professional support for the new administrator through mentoring and other complementary programs. We are confident that these new administrators bring a skill set that blends well with our current group of administrators, and we are excited for what the future holds. These new leaders understand the West Hartford Public Schools' Mission and will inspire a shared vision throughout each of their respective schools.

Congratulations to Recent Retirees

Being a part of a high performing school district which values great teachers and supports public education for all children is a highly motivating and rewarding experience. This year we have had 21 teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals and nurses retire from West Hartford Public Schools, many with over 35 years in West Hartford. The following committed and dedicated professionals will be sorely missed:

Pat Anderson, Occupational Therapist, Early Learning Center
Karen Bachman, Social Worker, Smith
Peg Beecher, Principal, Bugbee
Floyd Campbell, Teacher, Sedgwick
Nancy Cornell, Teacher, Morley
Tim Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Administration
Anthony Garofalo, Teacher, Conard
Lorraine Grenier, Paraprofessional, Wolcott
Carol Lantz, Nurse, Hall
Joyce Leibert, Guidance Counselor, Conard

Susan Loveland, Teacher, Conard
Dorothy Ostroski, Paraprofessional, Braeburn
Nancy Pacht, Teacher, Whiting Lane
Joan Pease, Teacher, Hall
Maureen Pohl, Teacher, Hall
Joyce Roy, Paraprofessional, Wolcott
Janet Sherfinski, Teacher, Whiting Lane
Joyce Suffish, Teacher, Norfeldt
Debby Szajnberg, Teacher, Wolcott
Rose Zbikowski, Curriculum Specialist
Judith Zepke, Teacher, Conard

Summer Programs Provide Opportunities for Growth

From June 28 through July 23 students in our elementary and middle schools have the opportunity to hone and improve their basic skills. Our Summer ESOL program includes students from grades 1-7 who receive ESOL support during the school year and are recommended by their ESOL and classroom teachers. Students are grouped in classes based on their English proficiency. Beginners focus on basic language skills and vocabulary development; intermediate and advanced students focus on reading and writing skills and content vocabulary. For Smith and Charter Oak students in grades 2-5, Summer Connections is a program geared to maintain and increase literacy skills; students are grouped based on their assessment levels at the end of the school year. The curriculum consists of sight word practice, vocabulary development, fluency practice and guided reading with leveled texts.

Summer Prep is rigorous program that includes a mathematics and language arts component and is designed to address educational programming needs for middle school students who, without successful completion of this program, would be retained in their grade for the following school year. This regular education, goal-oriented program reinforces core academic subjects, strengthens study skills, and develops positive cognitive and effective habits that will enable participants to reach academic and personal success in the upcoming school year. Additionally, there is a study skills/ personal responsibility piece that includes a service/ learning requirement. This "Pay It Forward" focus must be approved by the Prep teachers and be completed outside of the school hours. In all of these programs, progress reports are sent home at the end of the program and copies are provided to the appropriate teachers to inform future instruction.

