



Norwalk Public Schools

Fall 2008

Building minds...one child at a time

www.norwalk.k12.ct.us

CONTACT INFO:

Norwalk Board of Education Members

Susan Hamilton, Chair

866-9996, HamiltonS@norwalkps.org

Rosa Murray, Vice-Chair

847-0498, MurrayR@norwalkps.org

Glenn Iannaccone, Secretary,

866-5813,

IannacconeG@norwalkps.org

Jody Bishop-Pullan, Chair

852-1655, PullanJ@norwalkps.org

Migdalia Rivas

981-7367, RivasM@norwalkps.org

Greg Burnett

840-1931, BurnettG@norwalkps.org

Bruce Kimmel

847-2301, KimmelB@norwalkps.org

Shirley Mosby

956-7799

MosbyS@norwalkps.org

Jack Chiaramonte

984-7293

ChiaramonteJ@norwalkps.org

Superintendent of Schools,

Dr. Salvatore J. Corda, 854-4001,

Email: Corda@norwalkps.org

Published by the Public Affairs Office,

Editor, Sheri McCreedy- Brown

Email: mccreadys@norwalkps.org

125 East Avenue

Norwalk, CT 06852-6001

Phone: 203-854-4015

Fax: 203-854-4005

2008/2009 – Continuing to Go Forward



The opening of the 2008/2009 school year brings with it a continued focus on meeting our principal goal—high achievement for all students. Over the last five years, students in our district have shown a continued trend of improvement in our CMT and our CAPT scores. While this is not, and should not be, the only measure by which we assess our progress as a District, it is fair to say that it is the measure that gets the most attention both because of its importance as a Statewide assessment and its implications under the No Child Left Behind legislation.

We have used a model where each of our schools has been responsible for developing a school growth plan. Based on an analysis of student performance data, schools have developed specific goals related to improving performance for all students in math and language arts. Over the past two years, we have developed a specific plan for our District, again using data as the basis for identifying our specific goals. Because we are a District in Need of Improvement under the No Child Left Behind legislation, we have been the recipient of help from the State Education Department in doing this work. Their assistance is much appreciated.

Our district plan focuses on three areas: improving student performance in language arts and mathematics, and enhancing the involvement of parents and the community in the life of our schools. The plan is detailed, identifies specific time-lines by when certain tasks are to be completed, and contains specific outcomes that we intend to realize as we proceed. Beyond that, there will be a broad involvement by teachers, administrators, and parents in the work that must be done, if we are going to achieve our goals. The plan is on our website and we encourage our community to become familiar with it.

We are blessed with an outstanding staff—administrators, teachers, aides, nurses, secretaries, and custodians who are dedicated to our kids. With this commitment and the knowledge that is essential about how to ensure high student performance for all students, we cannot help but succeed. The progress we have made already is clear and the resolve is firm. Our students will succeed. Nothing else is acceptable.

Sal Corda

Research based tips for high achievement parenting

Ronald F. Ferguson, PhD, Co-chair and Director, the Achievement Gap Initiative, noted the following during his visit to the District last spring. We hope you will find this information useful.

1. Promote daily leisure reading at home
2. Try to ensure that your child gets enough sleep not to be sleepy at school. Consult local experts about how much sleep a child needs at your child's age.
3. Make sure that your child eats a nutritious breakfast
4. Express warmth regularly. This means (for example):
 - a. Spend time together
 - b. Listen carefully to what your child has to say
 - c. Respond thoughtfully and sensitively to what they say
 - d. Hug your child
 - e. Tell them you are proud that they are good people
 - f. Tell them you are proud when they try to do their best
 - g. Tell them that you love them
 - h. Allow the child to help set rules, when appropriate
5. Balance warmth with structure and demandingness. This means have clear and firm rules about (for example):
 - a. Doing homework (and seeking help when needed)
 - b. Television watching (not too much)
 - c. Friends (children who respect your values)
 - d. Time to be home
 - e. Chores and responsibilities
 - f. Treatment of siblings
 - g. Respect for adults
 - h. Bedtime on school nights (early enough to avoid being sleepy in school)
6. Discuss reading materials with children in ways that encourage them to enjoy learning
7. During bedtime reading, ask both easy and more difficult (but not stressful) questions about the story (the more difficult questions help with comprehension). Try to make it fun.
8. Have a variety of reading materials for children, especially materials that are related to your child's special interests. (for younger children, the variety is important because it is difficult to have thoughtful bedtime discussions over and over about the same story. There need to be new stories that raise new questions.)
9. Try constantly to reinforce the idea that learning can be enjoyable/fun/stimulating.
10. Don't overemphasize getting things correct; emphasize effort and comprehension instead.
11. Seek opportunities at home to discuss and apply what your child is learning at school. For example, having them help with cooking and recipes is a good way to reinforce elementary math lessons (adding, multiplying, fractions, dividing). Discussion of current events in the newspaper may connect to what your child is doing in social studies. Ask teachers for ideas that you can use in connecting home life to school life.
12. Actively seek out-of-school time opportunities for:
 - a. Tutoring and reinforcing school lessons
 - b. Extra-curricular opportunities with freedom to explore and be creative
 - c. Extra-curricular opportunities to develop special talents
13. Know your child's close friends and try to know their parents.
14. When it seems necessary, be a role model and caring adult for your child's friends.
15. Encourage your child to think about his or future and to set goals. Help your children develop the habit of planning for both near-term and longer-term goals.
16. Try to limit TV watching by substituting other constructive and interesting activities.
17. Build up your child's sense of being a valued person. Avoid using negative nicknames such as "Dummy" or "knucklehead" or "lazybones" or "good for nothing." Instead, use names like "sweetheart" or "honey" or "my bright boy" or "love of my life."
18. Try to end every reprimand with a positive statement that lets your child know how you have separated disappointment about their behavior from your pride about what a good person they really are.



Dr. R. Ferguson

Consejos basados en una investigación para ser padres de altos logros

Ronald F. Ferguson, Phd, Vice presidente y Director, de la Iniciativa del Cierre de la Disparidad de Logros Académicos notó lo siguiente durante su visita al Distrito la primavera pasada. Esperamos que usted encuentre esta información útil.

1. Promueva pasatiempos de lectura diaria en el hogar.
2. Intente asegurarse de que su niño(a) obtenga suficiente descanso para que no esté soñoliento en la escuela. Consulte expertos locales acerca de cuanto tiempo de sueño su niño(a) necesita a su edad.
3. Asegúrese de que su niño(a) consuma un desayuno nutritivo.
4. Expresé calor regularmente. Esto significa (por ejemplo):
 - a. Pasen tiempo juntos
 - b. Escuche atentamente a lo que el niño(a) tiene que decir
 - c. Responda cuidadosamente y sensitivamente a lo que ellos dicen
 - d. Abraze a su hijo(a).
 - e. Dígale que usted se siente orgulloso(a) de que ellos sean buenas personas.
 - f. Dígale que usted se siente orgulloso(a) cuando ellos hacen su mejor esfuerzo
 - g. Dígale que los quiere
 - h. Permítale al niño(a) ayudar a establecer normas, cuando sea apropiado
5. Mantenga un balance entre la estructura y la necesidad. Esto significa tener reglas claras y firmes acerca de (por ejemplo):
 - a. Hacer tareas (y buscar ayuda cuando la necesite)
 - b. Ver Televisión (no demasiado)
 - c. Amigos (niños (as) que respeten sus valores)
 - d. Hora de llegar al hogar
 - e. Tareas y responsabilidades
 - f. El trato a sus hermanos(as)
 - g. Respeto a los adultos
 - h. Horario de dormir durante las noches de escuela (suficientemente temprano para evitar estar soñoliento en la escuela)
6. Discuta los materiales de lectura con los niños de forma que los estimule a disfrutar la lectura.
7. Durante la lectura de la hora de dormir, hágale preguntas fáciles y un poco difíciles (pero no estresantes) acerca de la historia (mientras más difíciles las preguntas más los ayudará en la comprensión). Trate de hacerlo divertido.
8. Mantenga una variedad de materiales de lectura para los niños(as), especialmente materiales que estén relacionados a los intereses especiales de su niño(a). (Para niños más jóvenes, la variedad es importante por que es difícil tener una discusión de la misma historia una y otra vez. Tiene que haber nuevas historias que saquen a flote nuevas preguntas.
9. Trate constantemente fortalecer la idea que el aprendizaje puede ser disfrutado/divertido/estimulante.
10. No sobre enfatice el hacer siempre las cosas correctamente; enfatice mejor el esfuerzo y comprensión.
11. Busque oportunidades en el hogar para discutir y aplicar lo que su niño(a) está aprendiendo en la escuela. Por ejemplo, permitiéndoles que le ayude a cocinar con recetas es una buena manera para reforzar las lecciones de matemáticas de escuela elemental (sumando, multiplicando, dividiendo, fracciones). Discusión de eventos actuales del periódico pudieran estar conectados con lo que su niño(a) está haciendo en la clase de estudios sociales. Pregúntele al maestro por ideas que usted pudiera utilizar para conectar la vida del hogar con la vida de la escuela.
12. Activamente busque por oportunidades fuera de la escuela para:
 - a. Tutorías y reforzar las lecciones de la escuela
 - b. Oportunidades extra-curriculares con libertad de explorar y ser creativo.
 - c. Oportunidades extra-curriculares para desarrollar talentos especiales
13. Conozca a los amigos cercanos de su niño(a) y trate de conocer a sus padres.
14. Cuando parezca necesario, sirva de modelo y adulto que cuida de los amigos de sus niño(a).
15. Estimule a su niño(a) a pensar acerca de su futuro y a establecer metas. Ayude a su niño(a) a desarrollar metas a corto plazo y metas a largo plazo.
16. Trate de limitar el ver la televisión sustituyéndola por otras actividades constructivas e interesantes.
17. Construya los sentidos de sus niños(as) para ser una persona valorada. Evite el uso de sobre nombres negativos tales como "tonto" o "cabezón" o "vago" o "bueno para nada." En vez, utilice nombres como "dulce corazón" o "honey" o "mi brillante hijo" o "amor de mi vida."
18. Trate de culminar cada reprimenda con un estado positivo que le permita a su niño(a) saber que usted ha separado sus disgustos acerca de su comportamiento de su orgullo acerca de lo buena persona que realmente ellos son.

*** The Spot Light Corner ***

Columbus Magnet Elementary

On June 5, 124 fourth and fifth graders carried the Olympic Torch through Norwalk. The Olympic Torch Run, created in 1984 by physical education teacher Tom Kretsch, has taken place every four years during the years of the summer Olympic.

Beginning at Columbus, two runners circled the school field and then proceeded down Concord Street to begin a 25 mile relay run through all districts of Norwalk. Parent volunteers shuttled students to predetermined points on the course where they waited for the torch and their turn to participate in this realistic reenactment of the Olympic Games.

The run corresponds with the philosophy of the school which strives to give students hands on learning experiences that make learning real and memorable.

CT Invention Convention

Students from Kendall, Jefferson, and Fox Run attended the Connecticut Invention Convention last spring. They competed with about 700 other student inventors from throughout Connecticut.



Stathi Panagiotidis—Kendall Elementary participant

Norwalk Mentor Scholarship Fund

The Board of Directors of the Norwalk Mentor Scholarship Fund conducted a press conference during the spring to announce this year's seventeen recipients of scholarships for 2008 totaling \$56,000. Created in 1982 with the goal of granting college scholarships to students in the Norwalk Mentor program, the first mentor scholarship was awarded in 1995. Since then, the number of scholarships has increased as the Board has elected to offer scholarships to students who have participated in a broader range of individual mentoring programs within Norwalk Public Schools. "This is an extraordinary year with the award of the 100th student to receive a scholarship from the Norwalk Mentor Scholarship Fund," noted Nancy Fuzesi, president of

the fund. The scholarship categories include the Norwalk Schools Mentor Program with four winners; William Rosenbloom Scholarships, which is given to high achieving students who want to pursue a career in science or engineering; The Board of Directors Special Scholarship Award, School to Career Mentor Scholarships, which is awarded to students in the School-to-Career program; and the Briggs Young Lives Mentor Scholarships are awarded to young women who are balancing raising an infant while fulfilling their dream of getting a college degree.



Ed Musante, Chamber of Commerce president with School to Career students

Happenings around NPS

News from Central Office

Congratulations to Norwalk Public Schools central office team member Nicole Davis. Nicole graduated from Sacred Heart University on Sunday, May 18. Nicole has earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and she graduated with a 3.776 grade point average. Due to her hard work and determination, Nicole was inducted into the Beta

Gamma Sigma International Honor Society. Membership in Beta Gamma Sigma is the highest recognition a business student anywhere in the world can receive in a business program. Only 10% of the Sacred Heart undergraduate graduating class was considered for this honor. She also received an award for Outstanding Academic Achievement,

which was only awarded to about 20 students in the undergraduate graduating class.



Important dates

September 30-Oct 1 — Rosh Hashanah

October 9 — Yom Kippur

October 13 — Columbus Day

November 4 — Prof. Day/Election Day

November 11 — Veterans' Day

Future Board Meetings

October 7, 2008

October 21, 2008

November 4, 2008

November 18, 2008

Note: All board meeting locations and minutes can be found on the NPS website.

News at your Finger Tips!

- For frequently asked questions, please refer to the handbook.
- The autodialer will be used for important announcements
- There are afterschool programs in all 19 schools. For more information visit our website at norwalkpublicschools.k12.ct.us and click on afterschool programs
- Check us on Cablevision channel 78

NPS Suggestion Box

The Public Affairs Office seeks your suggestions.

Please call 854-4015

or mccreadys@norwalkps.org