



Norwalk Public Schools

Winter 2008

Building minds...one child at a time

www.norwalk.k12.ct.us

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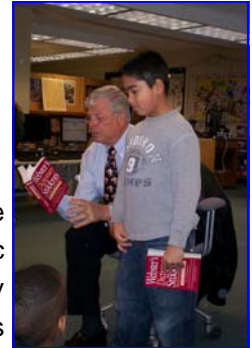
Budget Development 2009/2010

As we go to press with this newsletter, we are finalizing the budget that will be presented to the Board and the public beginning on January 6, 2009. That process is usually accomplished over two or three days and the Board is scheduled to adopt the budget on January 13, 2009. The public is invited to hear the presentation and the share their comments and suggestions during the process.

As we are all painfully aware, we are in a recession and the prognosis for 2009 is one that suggests times will be difficult for all of us. Many have lost their jobs, costs are rising and, as a country, we are being told that we will be facing the most difficult economic times since the Great Depression. None of this makes the development of the 2009/2010 school budget easy. We are faced with the dilemma of protecting our educational investment in our children's future and the very real situation that our community is in a difficult financial time and resources are very scarce.

I want our community to know that we are aware of the financial realities of our times and respectful of the need to be as frugal as possible. We have prepared a budget that does include reductions and will have an impact on our educational program because of these reductions. We have tried to minimize these reductions wherever possible. We have tried to: (1) be as creative as possible in reconfiguring how we provide service; (2) take advantage of every opportunity to secure the lowest possible prices in purchasing what we need, working with the City whenever we can; and (3) examine all options to keep our increase as low as possible.

As we go through the budget process, we encourage the active participation of our community in understanding our budget requests and offering whatever suggestions they might have to continue to reduce our costs without seriously damaging the academic progress we continue to show.



Dr. Corda and student at Wolfpit Elementary School

Sal Corda

Scholarship named in honor of veteran NPS employee



The **Natalia Rodriguez Scholarship English Language Learner Scholarship** was created on **October 15**. Ms. Natalia Rodriguez passed away on June 15 after a 33-year career serving Norwalk Public Schools. In her most recent position, Ms. Rodriguez held the position of bilingual parent coordinator in central office. In this position, she assisted new families getting adjusted to Norwalk schools. Throughout the years, she helped hundreds of families coming from countries around the world to figure out how to register their children for school, how to get the required immunizations, and how to access community services. "The purpose of the **Natalia Rodriguez Scholarship English Language Learner**

Scholarship is to continue the legacy of the good works of Natalia Rodriguez," noted Migdalia Rivas, Norwalk Schools board member. "Natalia always went above and beyond the call of duty to nurture and advocate for students and ELL families. It is my hope, that through this scholarship, we can identify students with similar attributes and provide needed support so they can reach their fullest potential. We need more people like Natalia today and in the future," said Bruce Morris, director of human relations. "I will always remember Natalia's welcoming heart to all of the families entering the Norwalk Public School system," commented Dr. Lynne Moore, principal of West Rocks Middle School. The Scholarship Committee intends to award a \$1000 scholarship to a graduate from Brien McMahon High School, Briggs High School and Norwalk High School. In order to obtain the \$1,000 scholarship, prospective scholarship recipients must have a grade point average of 2.0 or higher; he/she must be a current or former ELL student; he/she must demonstrate community involvement; and he/she must have the ability to demonstrate leadership and motivational skills. The members of the Norwalk Public Schools Natalia Rodriguez ELL Scholarship Committee include Bruce Morris, Rosa Murray, Migdalia Rivas, Dr. Lynne Moore, Shirley Mosby, Yvonne Rodriguez, Chester Dawson, Helene Becker and Sheri McCready. Scholarship donations may be sent to Norwalk Public Schools, Human Relations Office, c/o Mr. Bruce Morris, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06852. Make checks payable to NPS Natalia Rodriguez ELL Scholarship.

The news to know

Parent Leadership Training Institute

Applications are being accepted for 2009 PLTI classes. An all day retreat will take place Jan. 17, with classes beginning January 20. Call Shirley, 854-4114 for information.

Also, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) will offer the People Empowering People (PEP) that will run every **Thursday, from 5 pm to 9 pm**. The program will continue every **Thursday until Jan 22, 2008**. Childcare and food will be provided. Please note

Students perform at advanced level on CAPT

A distinguished group of students performed at the Advanced Level on the 2008 Connecticut Academic Per-

formance Test -- Sara Adams, Sarah Anderson, Nicole Brancaccio, Nicholas Cafero, Jessica Camhi, Daniel Faugno-Fuscj, Ellen Foster, Rachel Hamilton, Dhruv Jani, Shannon Kiebertz, Dominic Kruszewski, Emily Lavins, Eloise Libre, Emma Lott, Meghan Mulvehill, Jeremy Rotner, Taylor Scicchitano, Felicia Tam, and Ryan Touger

Cool website for 9th and 10th grade families

Know the facts about college. Find great information here: www.KnowHow2Go.org.

College application time

1. Narrow your choices — visit websites like petersens.com,

usnews.com or collegeboard.com

2. Visit the colleges that interest you
3. Fill out applications online
4. Keep your counselor informed

Interested in being a mentor?

Call Sheri, 854-4015 or email mccreadys@norwalkps.org

Send us the news!

If you have news or would like to contribute information for the next newsletter, contact Sheri McCready, mccreadys@norwalkps.org.

NPS Congratulates:

Schools make safe harbor

West Rocks and Ponus Ridge Middle Schools, identified as schools in need of improvement, have achieved the designation of *safe harbor* as defined by the No Child Left Behind standards. *Safe Harbor* is identified as schools that achieve a 10% decrease in the number of students below proficiency in specific subgroups.

Graduate News

Heeren Makanji, a 2005 Norwalk High School graduate, was selected as one of fourteen students named as University Scholar at the University of Connecticut. This distinction gives Heeren the opportunity to design a plan of study to receive a B.S. in molecular biology, and M.S. in biochemistry in four years. Heeren is currently applying to medical schools.

Alexa DiCambio, a 2008 Norwalk High School graduate, presented her award winning film, 'Autism in Our World' at the Westport Arts Center. The documentary centers around the life of Cole Horne, a 10-year old boy with autism.

*** *The Spot Light Corner* ***

Schools get special recognition

Kudos to **Kendall, Tracey, Brookside, and Nathan Hale** each have been recognized by ConnCan in their 2008 Report Card for Connecticut Schools as being among the top ten schools in the state for the performance of African American and Hispanic students. Specifically, **Kendall** has been ranked fifth in the state for the achievement of its African American students and fourth in the state for the achievement of its Hispanic students. **Tracey** was recognized as sixth in the state for the achievement of its Hispanic students on the CMT. **Brookside** has been ranked third in the state for the performance of its Hispanic students. This is in comparison with all elementary schools in Connecticut. In addition, beyond the top ten, Brookside received the honor of being chosen as a "Success School" story. This year **Brookside** and thirteen other schools in the state were recognized and ConnCan has videotaped individuals at **Brookside** as well as classes. The DVD of the fourteen schools will be out very soon and copies will be made available to the public.

Nathan Hale has been ranked ninth in the state for the performance of its African American students and seventh for the performance of its Hispanic students. Again, this is in relation to all middle schools in the state.



became the coordinator in 1989, was nominated by the Western Connecticut Nursing Department. Ms. Turner earned a B.S. and M.S. from Western Connecticut State University. She has been a NCSN – Nationally Certified School Nurse since 1990.



NPS Social Worker is Honored

Ms. Jacquelin Roberson, **Norwalk High School** social worker, was recognized for her efforts recently for being the **Most Inspirational Teacher** of the Horizons Student Enrichment Program. Horizons is a network of partnerships between inner-city public schools and independent schools around the country. Horizons Affiliates offer summer programs and school-year activities that are designed to increase academic achievement and personal confidence for a broad cross-section of low-income children, starting in Kindergarten and continuing through 8th grade.

At the end of each summer, the eighth graders from the Horizons program nominate and then select a teacher who has been the most inspirational to them as an Horizons participant.

Educator presents paper

Dr. Patricia Lawler, a Housemaster at NHS, was honored and represented Norwalk at the Northeastern Educational Research Association's 39th Annual Conference in October at Rocky Hill, CT. Dr. Lawler presented a paper, "Effect of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act on Student Performance in Connecticut Schools."



District health services coordinator is recognized

Ms. Leah Turner, NPS health services coordinator, was honored at the Western Connecticut State University School of Professional Studies Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award Celebration. Ms. Turner, who

Students give back

Douglas Streat, Olivia Schlater and Pavlina Schriel, Roton Middle School students, were selected to receive a Young Heroes Award from the National Liberty Museum and Commerce Bank. They were selected for this special award as one of only 25 winners. The students were selected because of their work with the American Belarusian Relief Organization that provides respite visits for orphans and impoverished children from Belarus.

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 email mccreadys@norwalkps.org

Important dates

- Feb 16-20 Winter recess**
- Feb 16 President's day**
- April 10 Good Friday**
- March 27 Professional day**
- March 23- April 3 Kindergarten registration**
- April 13-17 Spring recess**
- May 25 Memorial day**

Future Board Meetings

- February 3, 2009**
- February 17, 2009**
- March 3, 2009**

Note: All board meeting minutes agendas can be found on the NPS website. The board meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:45 pm in room A-300

Happenings around NPS

Center for Global Studies

Abantu Mu Buntu, a troupe of dancers, singers and drummers from Uganda as part of their three-week tour of the U.S., perform at the Center for Global Studies. Organized by Creative Connections, they bring talented young performers from their partner countries to perform in the USA.



Students/staff perform with Abantu Mu Buntue



Abantu Mu Buntu performs

Briggs students create journal



Briggs High School, Norwalk's alternative high school, is a place where students can reinvent themselves into creative, accomplished learners in a small, safe, supportive atmosphere. In 2005 writing across the curriculum was a school-wide initiative. From this start students found their creative 'voice' in both writing and art. Their creative writing continues. Under the direction of Nan Lenore, Briggs' art teacher, staff collected some of the best writing and added some of the exceptional art work that students had created in her class. From the project came the premier edition of *The Phoenix*, a creative journal of art and writing by students at Briggs High School.



Left — September 11 memorial at West Rocks Middle School



Several School to Career students explored the concept of self portrait at a workshop held at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking.

National Merit Scholarship News

Six high school students were named Commended students in the National Merit Scholarship Program. At Brien McMahon High School the students are Zachary Gerweck, Jennifer Liu, and Hilary Livingston. At Norwalk High School the students are Elizabeth McLean, Marshall Weiss, and Malik Miller.

The **National Merit Scholarship Program** is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. The National Merit Scholarship Program is

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According to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, approximately 1.5 million students entered the 2009 National Merit Program by taking the 2007 PSAT. Of the 1.5 million, approximately 16,000 Semifinalists and 34,000 Commended students were identified. Semifinalists alone have the opportunity to continue in the Merit Scholarship competition.



NHS scholars — Marshall Weiss, Elizabeth McLean, and Malik Miller

Quotable:
 "Eating words has never given me indigestion."
 — Winston Churchill

The Semifinalists and Commended students represent the top 3% in the country.



BMHS scholars — Hilary Livingston, Jennifer Liu, and Zachary Gerweck

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 Your Community
 Credit Union
 Call or visit the website for hours and information
<http://www.mscu.net/>