



WPS Update

February 2018

The mission of the Wolcott Public Schools is to promote the academic, social, and emotional development of all students to become contributing members of the global community.

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From the Board Chairman & Superintendent:

The creation and adoption of the Board of Education Budget is one of the most important tasks that the Board of Education and Superintendent undertake in any school year. Every aspect of our programs is driven, in some way, by resources, personnel, and/or finances. We take seriously our duty to the community to provide the best possible educational experience that we can within a limited budget. We must weigh the needs of our students with fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers of Wolcott. We are committed to proposing a budget to Town Council that focuses on services that students need. We know that this year our Town Council will have a very difficult job in their decision making because of poor decisions made at the state level regarding funding for towns' programs. Despite this, we must fulfill our responsibilities to keep the school district moving forward and providing Wolcott's children with skills that will help them to be contributing members of our community and ensure that they are competitive in the workplaces of the future.

We encourage you to follow the budget process as we move through it over the next three months. We encourage you to participate and to make sure that the Board of Education and Town Council are aware of what you feel is important for our school system.

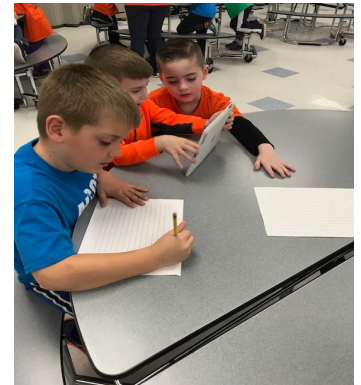
In partnership,

Lori Delbuono Bartlett, Board of Education Chairman

Tony Gasper, Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools

Alcott School:

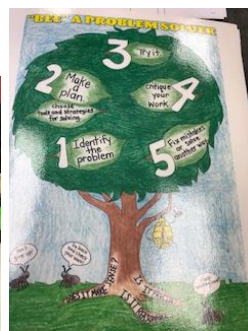
During the month of February, The Olympic games came to Alcott School! Kindergarteners, First and Second graders worked together in cross grade level groups to represent various countries as they moved through 18 centers among 6 different classrooms. Centers covered various areas of learning including Math, Language Arts, STEM, Social Studies, and Art. Students began the week by creating a flag representing their country and using the iPads to gather information regarding their country. Students used digital tools to learn about different Olympic athletes and sports. Students also compared and contrasted multiple Olympic Sports. Other centers required students to build words and sentences and use pictures to identify parts of speech. One center even enabled students to conduct an experiment and record results as they created a liquid Olympic torch in a bottle. All of these activities are designed to encourage our students to become global citizens and realize how nations and communities impact one another.



Contact Shawn Simpson, Principal of Alcott School: ssimpson@wolcottps.org

Frisbie School:

February has been a month filled with data collection and analysis. Teachers have administered the midyear i-Ready diagnostic assessment to all students in math and language arts. At our instructional data team meetings, teachers have compiled the results and analyzed students profile sheets to identify their strengths and areas of growth. Using the data, teachers are adjusting their instruction to meet the needs of their students. Teachers are altering their skill groups to include more vocabulary word work and math centers are continued to focus on problem solving. While working on real world problems, teachers are emphasizing the Bee A Problem Solver process outlined in our math tree. Students are using accountable talk to explain to their peer whether their partner's answer is reasonable and precise. Thus providing specific and helpful feedback to their peer to improve their solution. Frisbie students will continue to concentrate on vocabulary word work and problem solving strategies throughout the year.



Contact Kim Murtaugh, Principal of Frisbie School: kmurtaugh@wolcottps.org

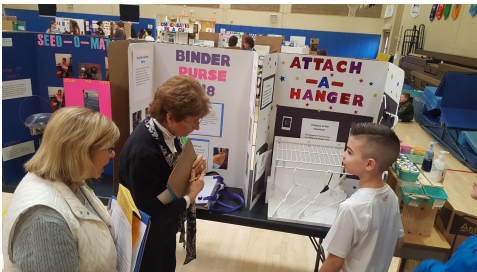
Wakelee School:

The Connecticut Invention Convention enables students to research, analyze, and effectively focus on and solve their real-life problems. Along the way they experience new skill sets and learning techniques, and creatively apply these in real-life settings.

The fourth grade students presented their inventions on Wednesday, February 21st. The students have been working through the steps and process of creating their invention since November. Our judges were retired teachers and engineers with various scientific backgrounds. The criteria they used for scoring is Originality, Attention to Detail, Purpose & Practicality and Presentation.

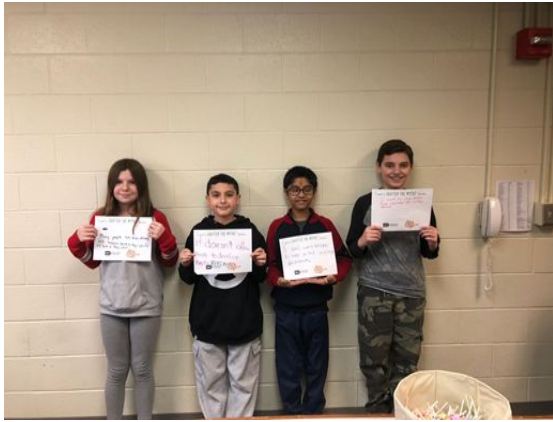
Nine students were chosen by our judges to represent Wakelee School in a regional Connecticut Invention Convention at Hamden Middle School on Sunday, March 18th. A percentage of inventors from the Regional Convention may be chosen to represent Wolcott Public Schools at the state level Connecticut Invention Convention at the University of Connecticut Gampel Pavilion. The Wakelee students moving on to the Regional Invention Convention on March 18th are:

- Taylor Plourde - Sensory Go
- Ava Santulli - At Your Fingertips
- Donovan McNamara - The Trail Cleaner
- Jovie Messina - The Bounce Back Box
- Cameron Cleary - Clean to the Point Pencil Sharpner
- Carrigan Efrece - Nurse's Assistant
- Kaitlyn Grasso - The No Hair Hair Brush
- Jackson Lee - Rite Here
- William Wagner: Attach-A-Hanger



Contact Deborah Osvald, Principal of Wakelee School: dosvald@wolcottps.org

Tyrrell Middle School:



Tyrrell students recently participated in National Drug and Alcohol Chat Day. Ms. Ciarlo and several other members of Wolcott CASA met with selected students in grades 6-8 and afforded them the opportunity to ask questions they may have about drug and alcohol use. This event was part of a national video conference forum where students participated in interactive activities, viewed videos, and discussed issues relevant to them. As a result of participating in this event students made posters, which were hung in hallways and the cafeteria, in an effort to dispel myths and misconceptions related to alcohol and drug abuse.

In other community partnership news, I am pleased to report that Officer Spiotti from the Wolcott Police Department has been visiting our health classes to teach students about the dangers of drug and alcohol use. Included in his lessons are ways to resist peer pressure and the effects of specific drugs on the human body. In addition to his health class visits, Officer Spiotti has been visiting each lunch wave weekly to circulate about the cafeteria, conversing with our students about their interests and current events relevant to the lives of young adolescents. Officer Spiotti's visits are being conducted in an effort to build positive ongoing relationships between our students and our police officers. The students seem to genuinely enjoy having Officer Spiotti as a regular visitor to our lunch waves!

Contact Joseph Norcross, Principal of Tyrrell Middle School: jnorcross@wolcottps.org



Wolcott High School:

I want to commend the faculty and staff at the high school for their continued work on our self-evaluation based on the New England Association of Schools and Colleges new 2020 standards. They have been working in committees to gather data and write reports related to how well we are addressing these demanding standards. Most recently we have been working on creating our "Vision of a Graduate". The administration has met with our Parent Action Council and sought input from all of our students to help develop this document that will align with the Board of Education's vision. The self-evaluation continues to be a rigorous but informative exercise for our school to undertake.

I would like to congratulate Senior Emily McEvoy for being named a finalist for the National Merit Scholarship. This is a prestigious recognition based on students performance on the PSAT and sponsored by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation in order to recognize and honor the most academically talented students of the United States. Scholarship winners will be announced later this spring. Best of luck to Emily and congratulations.

Recently 19 students in the First Aid & CPR class completed their First Aid & CPR training and are now First Aid & CPR Certified through the American Red Cross. This is an example of the type of authentic real life learning opportunities our students are taking advantage of at the high school.

UCONN Medical terminology recently worked on the nervous system, the anatomy, its function, medical word parts, diseases and diagnostic tests. The students made brain caps to apply the different parts of the brain and its function to enhance their understanding of the brain.

Dr. Sarita Arteaga DMD, MA, MAGD from the UConn School of Dental Medicine came in to Wolcott High School On January 26th with three of her dental students to speak with our students interested in the Health field. She had information on how to decide on a specific medical field and provided helpful sites for students including the US News and World Best Jobs Report. They also discussed their reasons for choosing the dental field over other medical fields.



Contact Walter Drewry, Principal of Wolcott High School: wdrewry@wolcottps.org

Student Services:

Special Education teachers from all grade levels of the district participated in 2 recent valuable trainings regarding the improvement of Individualized Education Programs or IEP's.

The first involved the analysis of the IEP Rubric, designed by the State Education Resource Center (SERC) to Look Beyond Basic Compliance. This training worked to define fourteen indicators which allowed staff the ability to assess the quality of their IEP development. In the session, Wolcott Special Educators became familiar with SERC's IEP Rubric and how to use it to review and reflect on their own IEPs for quality development.



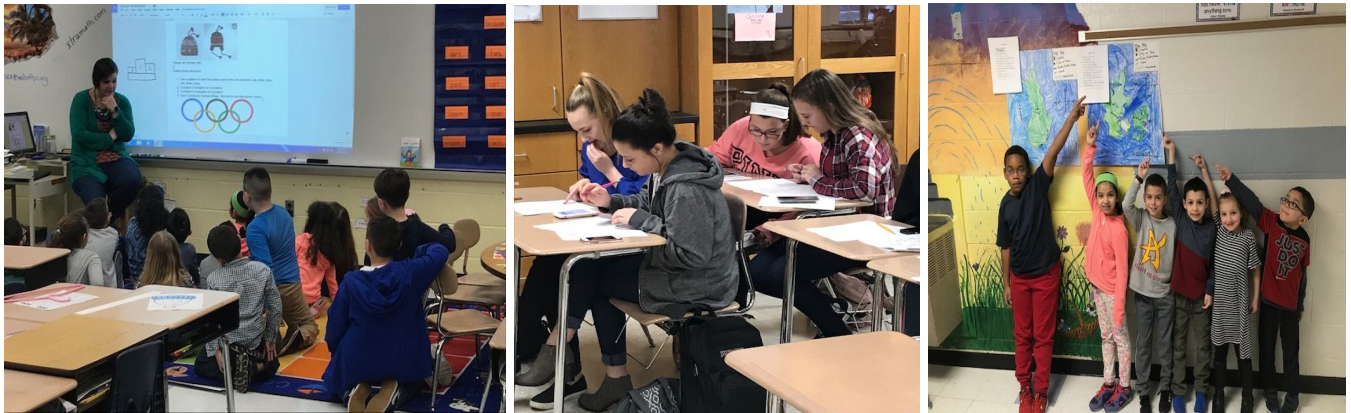
The second training, also through SERC, was A Reflective Process to Examine the Quality of IEP. The purpose of this Educational Benefit Review Process was to provide a structured reflective process to assess whether an IEP is reasonably calculated to provide educational benefit over time. This process assisted Wolcott staff in examining the characteristics of IEPs that increase student access to, participation in, and progress in general education by providing an appropriate education. Training facilitators complimented Wolcott Public Schools for sending members representing all levels, truly making the training a collaborative experience.

These trainings are in alignment with the Student Services Department Growth Plan to provide quality professional development to improve services for our students and close the achievement gap.

Contact Kevin Hollis, Director of Student Services and Alternative Education: khollis@wolcottps.org

Student Learning & Teaching:

Spotlight on Instruction: In order to promote the sharing of classroom instruction and to encourage a more collaborative learning environment within our schools, the district continues to support the practice of Learning Walks. The Learning Walk process consists of 10-15 minute classroom visits by small groups of administrators and teachers with a specific instructional focus in mind. District-wide the Learning Walk process is used to collect observable data associated with: teacher assessment techniques, student grouping, and lessons that incorporate high-order thinking. Thus far, administrators and teachers have conducted 422 Learning Walks throughout the district. The evidence that collected from this process is shared at district and school-wide data team meetings. The information is also extremely useful in identifying areas of instructional strength and areas that are in need more focused professional development and attention moving forward. Additional benefits of the Learning Walk process includes: Monitoring curriculum implementation and pacing and assessing the effectiveness of professional development. The photos below were taken at recent Learning Walks conducted at Wolcott High School and Alcott Elementary.



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