

Canterbury Public Schools

45 Westminster Road, Canterbury, CT 06331 phone (860) 546-6960 fax (860) 546-6423

Dr. Lois C. Knapton, Superintendent of Schools

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Office of the Superintendent

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2 – Touch Lives

4 – Ever

It is with great pleasure that I write this column for the town newsletter. I started my work as Superintendent of Schools in Canterbury on August 21, 2013. I was born and raised in New Hampshire and Canterbury reminds me of “home”. The community has welcomed me with open arms and I am thoroughly enjoying every moment of life in Canterbury. Don’t get me wrong, there are always challenges; I just choose to see every challenge as one step closer to where I am headed. So it is good to have a plan. And speaking of plans, the Board of Education participated in a 4 hour facilitated retreat last week in the Community Room. A big thank you goes out to the town for providing us a comfortable space outside of the school setting to hold our meeting. The purpose of the retreat was to discuss our mission, vision, and goals for the future. This will be discussed in more detail at our next regular BOE meeting on February 25, 2014. As you may know, February is Budget month. We will hold two or three community budget hearings to provide detailed information on the upcoming Board of Education budget. I hope to see you at one of our upcoming budget hearings on February 4 or February 11. I will be explaining the entire school budget and actively listening to feedback and documenting questions. Our new bus arrived in November. It is up and running now. Also, we have implemented numerous technological advances in our district. We are now using *PowerSchool*: a data warehouse for all our students and parents contact information; we are using *My Learning Plan*: a data warehouse for teacher goals, artifacts, observations, mid-year conferences, and annual summary of performance; we have also implemented the use of our *BlackBoard Connect* system: a computerized communication system that can send automated messages to school and community members regarding school related events and necessary communication regarding snow days, early releases, and delayed entry. Be sure to contact the front office in your school if you have NOT been receiving these automated phone calls or if you would like to STOP receiving these automated phone calls.

CES

What is going on at Canterbury Elementary School? Lots! We love our new roof and the facility committee is looking into adding some clip-on solar panels to assist in our electric bill. We are so sad to see Cathy Ferguson resigning and leaving at the end of this school year. She has been our principal at CES 14 years. Wow, we are so grateful for her long time commitment to our school and our children. In August, full day Kindergarten started up again and the kids are thriving. Did you know that half day Kindergarten was first introduced in 1940? And full day Kindergarten was added in 1980? The Parent Teacher Organization held a book fair and it was very successful. Thanks to all who volunteered,

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attended and participated. In order to prepare our students for the new state test, Smarted Balanced Assessment (SBAC), in the Spring, all our teachers actively participated in the taking the SBAC test in October and are spending the rest of the year working closely with EASTCONN staff using job embedded professional development. EASTCONN consultants come into our school and classrooms to assist the teachers in implementing new teaching strategies and assisting in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) **Kindergarten registration will be held on March 7** from 8-noon. Parents may call the school at 860-546-6744 beginning February 3rd to schedule an appointment. Registration packets will be mailed once an appointment is scheduled. **PreKindergarten Registration** April 10th and April 11th - 8:45 a.m. – Noon Parents may call the Pupil Services Office at 860-546-1040 beginning March 17th to schedule an appointment. Registration packets will be mailed once an appointment is scheduled.

Baldwin Middle School

We have lots happening at BMS...First and foremost, due to our high Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) scores, we have been designated as an *Excelling School* with the additional label of being a *School of Distinction*. Only 123 schools out of 820 schools, have been designated as excelling and only 73 of those are designated as school of distinction. To view reports of all schools and district, please refer to the website: <http://www.sde.ct.gov> This is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of the teachers and administrators in the district in preparing our students for the test. We are very proud of our accomplishments. BMS staff also participated in taking the SBAC test in the Fall. As quoted from BMS Principal, Brian Tedeschi, "The practice test provides an opportunity for teachers, students, parents, and other stake holders to experience the features of online testing and gain insight as to how the SBAC will assess our students' mastery of the Common Core State Standards". Just like CES, EASTCONN consultants are also working with BMS staff. Anyone who wants to see what the test will be like in the Spring, can log onto the following website: <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/> This test is primarily given on a computer. As you may or may not know, the CMT will only be given in grade 5 science. The SBAC will be given to all students in grades 3-8. This is a new annual test; and the test is being "tested" this Spring, so it is unlikely that individual student scores will be distributed.

Special Education

As our Special Education populations continue to increase, so do our costs. Did you know *Special Education* laws were first passed in the 1970's and *English as a Second Language Instruction* was added to education in 1980? And in 1990, *the Individuals with Disabilities Act* (IDEA) was revised and greatly expanded the scope of special education? Canterbury provides a wide range of supports for our students with special needs, including both academic and behavioral interventions on all levels. In addition, for some of our more challenging situations, we contract with the New England Center for Children (NECC). Even with all these supports, there are still some students who require more restrictive settings and we contract with regional programs and other area private special education school to provide the appropriate education for all our students with special needs.