

CANTERBURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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CES Report to the Board of Education for March 2022

Celebrations

The students rejoiced taking off their masks! On February 28th, the energy of the children looked like a combination of a holiday and the last day of school! **The smiles were everywhere.**

In February, we focused on the CES attribute of Honesty. 71 students received an accolade this month. In March, we turn our attention to **Showing Appreciation**, part of our responsibility as CES Citizens. Our Spirit Day will be March 31st, and we will wear BLUE for Autism Awareness.

We also celebrated Black History month in February. The celebration started with projects for Martin Luther King Day in January. Second graders thought about and created their own "I have a Dream" and displayed it in the hallway. Mrs. Vicker's 3rd class read biographies about famous African Americans in history and created a whole class quilt to display what they learned. In Ms. Huband's 4th grade classroom, they studied 30 notable African Americans who made a positive impact on our society. Students then selected an individual to research and learn about, and created a Google Slideshow to share that person's legacy with the class.

We celebrate that 5 Canterbury parents have joined a program offered by our regional Readiness Council. The program is called PEP which means Parents Empowering Parents. These spring workshops are designed to encourage participants to identify their strengths and the ways in which they want to help their communities.

We celebrate planning events for the end of the year that include families!

-PK Screening on April 7th and 8th: Families can call our Pupil Services office to schedule an appointment. Many families have already reached out! Kindergarten screening will be in late April.

-Celebration of the Arts on May 25th (rain date May 26th). School-wide art show and CES Chorus outside performance.

-PTO Family Fun Nights. Planning outside play events for students and families in June to celebrate!

-4th Grade Send Off. PTO and CES planning for the event to be held outside again with families making posters for 4th graders. Planned for the next to last day of school with a rain date of the last day of school.

Professional Development

Our February 18th professional development day went well! Ms. Aforismo led two workshops designed to increase our mathematical vertical alignment from one grade level to the next. Mrs. Dean offered a workshop in data collection and analysis using I-Ready data. Mr. Burke offered a workshop to para professionals regarding how to help students facing behavioral challenges. Our related services team presented to the bus drivers, and Ms. Beckwith reviewed the district SAT process. In the afternoon, we completed the required sexual harassment training.

Our Principal's Advisory Committee met again and focused student-learning characteristics described in Canterbury 2030—a vision for what we want our 8th grade students to experience and demonstrate. The team discussed their attributes and the responses on the family surveys. The survey responses reflected an acceptance of all the attributes listed, and reflected different viewpoints of which ones we are good at now, and which ones might be harder for us.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

We completed our winter assessments and conducted data team meetings for reading and mathematics, changing some intervention groups and noting progress in our students. Our I-ready results for midyear are promising, indicating the students are making progress towards their annual goals.

The new math curriculum was approved the Board of Education at its February meeting and a proposal regarding the phonics program is before the BOE at this March meeting. Many thanks to all the participants of these important committees.

Plan for our Smarter Balance Assessments later this month and in April are underway. Students will take the test in their classrooms this year with support from our technology teacher, Mrs. Giuliano. She prepares students for the test by teaching them how to use the embedded tools in the test and she trains teachers in test protocols.

On-going Projects at CES

1. Beautification project: Two staff members, Mrs. Craig and Mrs. Sabrowski, have almost completed a make over of our phone room in the staff lounge. We use this room for remote meetings. They have been working for weeks and it looks great!
2. Scheduling Committee: We have volunteers for this committee and the faculty will participate next week in talking about and identify the requirements we must meet by the schedule and the wishes we have for our schedule.
3. SAT process renewal: Our Student Assistance Team (SAT) continues to work with teachers and families as new referrals come in. We are meeting internally with teachers and also conducting family meetings.
4. Canterbury Cares Food Drive: Our social work interns are leading a food and toiletries drive this month. Thanks in advance to the generosity of our families in helping others.

Respectfully submitted by Principal Sarah Cary

Dr. Helen Baldwin Middle School

⇌ Respect ⇌ Responsibility ⇌ Community ⇌

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Celebrations:

Students

This month I would like to focus my student celebrations on our two student recipients of the CAPPS award. Every year, the CAPPS awards recognize two outstanding 8th graders in our middle school. This year, BMS is recognizing Annalis Valdes and Cole Arnio.

Our first recipient was Annalis Valdes. In the words of her teachers and family, Annalis is “a creative soul who is consistently adding to her artistic repertoire. She uses bright colors to tell a story whether it is through painting, drawing, or sculpting. She is also heavily active in band and can play the piano, ukulele, clarinet, and guitar... [Annalis is also] a very energetic person who is a reliable shoulder to her peers. She is willing to stand up to other students in order to grow the circle of acceptance in the school. She believes that everyone should be accepted for who they are, and she practices that philosophy every day.” Annalis was also selected to paint a mural in my office. The mural, which features a space theme, is beautiful and has added an amazing and colorful energy to my office.

Our second award winner is Cole Arnio. In the words of his teachers and family, “Cole is a student who participates in many activities including playing basketball, baseball, and band...he loves to help others and encourage them to improve on and off the field...[he is also] a member of the National Junior Honor Society. He has helped with the food drive amongst various other activities to better the community. A volunteer job that he has taken on is helping his father’s baseball team. He likes to help out the team to help them improve. Cole is always happy to see others succeed from learning new skills.” One of the best parts of BMS is the kindness of our students. As the principal, I love walking the halls and engaging with our kids and Cole is one of the kindest students I have had the pleasure of meeting over my 16 years in education. He always has a smile and a kind word for everyone.

Staff

This month I would like to bid farewell to a staff member who has been with the DHBMS staff for close to 18 years, Joe Brady. Mr. Brady will be leaving us at the end of March in order to spend more time with family and to pursue other passions in his life. His impact on students has been lasting, with many of my students sharing that they have loved learning from him and hearing the ways that he has brought social studies to life for them through vignettes and his own wealth of knowledge. This year in particular, Mr. Brady has been running a mindfulness and Tai Chi activity with 5th and 6th graders during our X Block period. For the first two trimesters of the year, this has continued to be one of our most popular activities, driven in large part by Mr. Brady’s connections to our students. It is with respect and gratitude for all he has done that I wish Mr. Brady well and hope that he has success in his future endeavors.

Black History Month

Our focus will continue to be on connecting the historical and cultural themes for each month to our curriculum in an effort to enrich our students' cultural awareness and experiences.

February was Black History Month and staff across the building worked to integrate connections to this theme within the curriculum. From discussions around important historical black figures, to examination of civil rights issues through the lens of novels, staff focused on embedding connections to black history into the content they taught. Some examples of how Black History Month was integrated include:

- A snapshot of important, historical black figures displayed prominently in our library.
- A biographical examination of Victor Glover, the first black astronaut to stay long-term in the space station.
- An in-class read-aloud of The Watson's go to Birmingham, a historical fiction book outlining a sad time in our history where four young girls were killed in a church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama.
- A classroom discussion centered on family, bullying, perseverance, and kindness and tied to civil rights, and the struggle for equality in the south.
- A student choice book titled Henry's Freedom Box, a true story about a young boy who escaped slavery by mailing himself to freedom.
- Each morning during morning announcements, students heard a prominent quote said by a famous or historical black figure.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Updates:

In February we wrapped up our PD schedule for the year. BMS Staff had a range of choice learning to attend, including:

- How student brains influence the learning environment
- Using iReady data to drive instruction
- Grant writing
- Google suite training
- Math curricular alignment
- PBIS work

As the year winds down, I will continue to look for appropriate times for our staff to engage in curricular reflection and writing so that we have strong momentum heading into the summer months to engage in targeted professional learning that will be helpful for guiding our practices in the 2022-2023 school year and beyond. Some areas that I am focused on at this point include:

- Strengthening the use of data in our ELA classrooms through the use of iReady as well as the Teacher's College approach to writing
- Fully aligning the social studies curriculum to the next generation social studies frameworks
- Continued emphasis on improving math, through grade-to-grade data teams as well as targeted opportunities for math across the curriculum areas
- Supporting our fledgling World Language program.
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Climate Update:

- Last month, our PBIS team planned a "Guess Who" event, where staff members brought in childhood pictures and staff had to "guess who" was who. It was a successful event, with a lot of laughs; in the end, Mrs. Rizer came out as the winner with the most correct guesses, followed by Mrs. Jodoin in second place.

- We continue to hold monthly staff breakfasts hosted by specific departments within the school. Last month, the 7th and 8th grade team provided a delicious breakfast for all and this month will be hosted by the office staff.

Upcoming Events:

- March 10-11: Spring parent conferences
- March 11- 4th grade open house to BMS
- March 14- 3rd trimester afterschool programs begin



Canterbury Public Schools

Pupil Services Office

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Board of Education Report

March 8, 2022

Celebrations

- We would like to welcome Kacey Lindell to Canterbury Elementary School as our newest paraprofessional. Kacey joins us with a much needed skill set using behavioral techniques to build frustration tolerance and increase academic skill acquisition using a specific, systematic approach with children. She will be working with our young learners with communication, behavioral, emotional and academic needs due to the impact of Autism, Developmental Disabilities, and trauma. Kacey will be a great asset to our special education team, and we are excited to have her join us.
- The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) returned to regular meetings in September 2021. The mission of SEAC is to advise our committees and board on matters pertaining to the education and safety of students with disabilities. SEAC provides information to parents, family members, caregivers, school professionals, Board of Education and community members relating to special education. The council creates a network to serve as a forum in a supportive, respectful and confidential environment. SEAC is currently seeking to increase family membership and elect a co-chairperson. We are excited about the renewed link into our Board of Education, with the addition of board member Jamie Kleinman to our council. Communication will go out during conferences to encourage parents to attend our next meeting on May 3 from 4:30-5:30.
- Over the last four weeks, our team of special educators, regular educators, and related service providers have seen significant growth in students who have demonstrated great need. This is a testament to the scientific, brain-based instruction in academic, behavioral and social/emotional areas they provide on a consistent, day-to-day basis. They are using evidence-based assessments, analyzing data to determine the effectiveness of instruction, and redesigning instruction based on growth measures. DRA, iReady, simple progress monitoring, data driven Student Assistance Team processes, coplanning and much more have contributed to the significant growth seen in our students.
- Professional development was provided to bus drivers, certified staff, and paraeducators on February 18, 2022. Bus drivers worked with our CES social worker, and district speech pathologist and school psychologist on recognizing and working with students with ADHD, Autism, or Communication Disorders. The three disability categories are most prevalent in our district, and bus drivers requested training to more effectively work with all of our children in Canterbury. Paraprofessionals worked with special education teacher Dan Burke to learn how to use Applied Behavioral Strategies to effectively manage challenging behavior. Through the Pupil Services department, certified staff participated in training on our revamped Student Assistance Team SAT

process. The SAT process has evolved over last year and this, and is functioning as the gateway to tiered interventions. For example, the SAT includes a team of educators who reviews and “triages” referrals made by a teacher to analyze the needs of a struggling learner. The team collects data, and prescribes an intervention plan that is then followed up with baseline and intervention data over the course of 6-10 weeks to determine if students have made adequate progress or if they need a higher tier of intervention. This “pre-referral intervention process” is critical to supplying necessary intervention without moving directly to a referral for special education, documents attempted interventions and the student’s response to tiered instruction, and provides a wealth of intervention should a child ultimately need a referral to special education. Lastly, our speech pathologist engaged in a reflective practice encouraged by the CREC audit from last summer where she reviewed our battery of speech and language assessments, screeners and instructional tools to determine if they were current, evidence-based, regarded as part of a pre-referral process, and culturally responsive. This exercise will help us build a library of speech and language tools that accurately identify speech and language needs based on current standards and best practice.

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment Updates

- In honor of Black History month for February, the Pupil Services Department engaged in a reflective exercise related to culturally responsive assessment practices. The team analyzed our population for proportionality, that is, we determined whether students identified for special education were represented to the same degree in our overall student body population. We also reviewed our assessment practices in light of landmark cases Larry P. v. Riles and PASE v. Hannon which raise questions about the responsiveness of standardized assessments when testing students of races other than white. The department was prompted to reflect deeply when answering the “rule-out” questions on State of Connecticut special education eligibility forms that read, “Have other causes/contributing factors such as medical problems, environmental or cultural factors and emotional disturbance been ruled out as the primary cause of the student’s educational difficulties? And “Did interpretation of evaluation results consider factors that may affect test performance including: i. Limited English proficiency ii. Cultural background and differences, etc.” These are posed as one question, but have significant implications and require work to truly answer the question.

Program Updates

- Pupil Services Department by the Numbers

Number of PPTs Since Start of School	Number of New Referrals since Start of School	Number of Assessments Completed since Start of School	IEPs at the Start of the 21-22 School Year / Currently	Out of District Placements at the Start of School / Currently
124	18	24	74 / 85	<div>Clinical 3/4</div> <div>Transitional 4/7</div> <div>Academic Intensive 1/0</div> <div>Alternative 0/0</div> <div>Ag/ Magnet 3/3</div>

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- The use of the new IEP for all of Connecticut schools will begin on July 1, 2022. The new IEP is intuitive, meaning it will supply us with the correct paperwork to complete based on the type of IEP we are having. This leaves less room for error, and a greater chance that IEPs will be written for the child's educational benefit. The New IEP can be found using this link:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/New-IEP/Draft-IEP-August-2021.pdf>

The formatting is very different, and it will certainly take some getting used to. We look forward to the challenge and the opportunity of going through this IEP evolution. Three staff will be trained as experts this summer, and will lead the training of the rest of the district at the beginning of and throughout the year.