

## Connections

with the West Hartford Public Schools

*Connections is a districtwide publication presented to you by the Office of the Superintendent,  
West Hartford Public Schools, 50 South Main St., West Hartford, Connecticut 06107  
Phone (860)561-6651*

### Emergency Closing Information:

- The Superintendent determines the necessity for the emergency closing or delayed opening of school due to weather conditions or other emergencies.
- Announcements regarding such closings air over local radio stations WTIC 96.5 FM and WTIC 1080 AM by 6 AM.
- Notices also air via television on WVIT channel 30, WFSB channel 3, and WTNH channel 8.
- You may also call West Hartford Source Line after 6:00 AM at (860) 233-2334.
- You may go to our website, [www.whps.org](http://www.whps.org), click on Communications and Cancellations.

#### In the event of early dismissal:

- The principal, via the Connect-ED Rapid Notification Service that we have used in the past, will notify parents. This allows all parents to be alerted by phone within minutes.
- Parents should discuss ahead of time with their children what the plan is for the family if school is closed early.
- Note: When school is closed early, all afternoon and evening activities are cancelled.

### Character Counts at Duffy

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Duffy Elementary School be a kinder place. The *Put Ups* students learn the facts about bullying and how peers can help peers. They monitor the climate on the playground and help students who are having problems on the playground, at lunch, in the halls and in the bathrooms. The *Put Ups* leaders teach their peers about bullying prevention and intervention during classroom presentations, as mentors for other students, through posters and through skits performed at the Character Education assemblies. Serious discipline issues have dropped significantly during the past 10 years. Over the same period, Duffy students have continued to improve academically, as reflected in both internal and external assessments such as CMTs. After being named NSOC, it is Duffy's goal to serve as a model and mentor, helping other educators transform their school cultures and improve academics and behavior.

#### Distribution Of *Connections*

An on-line version of *Connections* With the West Hartford Public Schools is now available at <http://www.whps.org/connections.pdf>. If you do not wish to have a copy of *Connections* mailed to your home, please email [connectionsout@whps.org](mailto:connectionsout@whps.org) with your name, address, child's name and school. Thank you.

*Connections* is printed on 100% recycled paper.

First Issue

11-12

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# Connections

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Joyce St. Germaine

### Teacher of the Year

The Teacher of the Year process is rigorous, beginning with nominations from other teachers. Nominees then submit a resume, essay and recommendations. Finalists have a lesson videotaped, and the Teacher of the Year Committee formally interviews the final three candidates. Selected from an impressive pool of finalists, Joyce St. Germaine, an Art Teacher at Bristow Middle School, has been named West Hartford Teacher of the Year for 2011.

Joyce has been teaching in West Hartford since 1975 at both the elementary and middle school levels. She decided at the early age of 7 that she wanted to be an art teacher. Her passion for art and teaching is coupled with a unique ability to connect with students, parents, and co-workers. Always demonstrating compassion and care, she creatively inspires others to recognize their strengths. Joyce has always been active with the community. At Bristow she offers a weekly art club for students and holds a monthly "Family Art Night" where parents, grandparents, siblings and other community members can come together to participate in evening art activities.

*Mission* To inspire and prepare all students to realize their potential and enhance our global community

Please take a moment to review the accompanying graphic insert which reflects the West Hartford Public Schools' Mission Statement, along with our district goals.

First Day of School  
Thursday  
September 1, 2011

### A Look Inside:

- National School of Character
- Recent Retirees
- New Administrators
- Technology Resources
- International Baccalaureate World School
- Emergency Closing Information



## Character Counts at Duffy

In May, 2011, Duffy School was named a National School of Character (NSOC). This October, representatives will travel to the National Forum on Character Education in San Francisco to accept the award and a banner with a five-year designation as a NSOC. Beginning in 1997, the school community participated in a yearlong, site-based planning process that identified Character Education as important. An important first step was the establishment of a goal: "We will develop the character of each student

with emphasis on caring, fairness, trustworthiness, responsibility, respect and citizenship."

All staff agreed that *Character Counts* provided the appropriate umbrella for Duffy's character education program and that *Second Step* and *Love & Logic* were valuable additions. In 2004, Duffy created a 30-minute video, "Character Counts



at Louise Duffy School", that chronicled the beginning stages and successes. Each year the Character Education Committee works to accomplish the action steps in the Site-Based Plan that focus on Character Education. Early on, the school psychologist and social worker held weekly "Circles of Respect" in every classroom to teach students about character and give them opportunities to role play and problem solve when issues came up. Parent involvement on the committee has resulted in a strong home/school connection.

Teachers have advanced the learning of Character Education through Second Step lessons and integrated material created by the Duffy staff. Also, Circles of Respect are still held in grades K-2 every other week to give these students a sound foundation. Each year Duffy holds two Character Education assemblies with every grade participating, and students are empowered to teach others about good character.

Recently, as a response to issues of bullying, Duffy established a group of students called *Put Ups*, a student leadership group made up of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders who develop whole-school activities to help

*(continued on back page)*



Julio Duarte

## Two New Assistant Principals Chosen

For effective teaching and learning to take place in the classroom strong leadership is a must. Administrators in the West Hartford Public Schools focus their attention on the actions of teachers as they directly relate to the education of students. Our administrators understand the West Hartford Public Schools' Mission, and they inspire a shared vision throughout each of their respective schools and departments. Two new administrators joined the West Hartford Public Schools Leadership Team this summer. Julio Duarte has been appointed the Assistant Principal at Conard High School, and Patrick Gustafson is the Assistant Principal at King Philip Middle School, replacing Bruce Barger, who is retiring after 37 years in West Hartford.

Julio, prior to assuming his role as the Interim Assistant Principal at Conard High School, served as school counselor at Conard. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut, his Master's from the University of Hartford and his Administrative Certificate from Southern Connecticut State University. In his interim role, Julio has established effective relationships with parents and demonstrated his collaborative leadership style and passion for teachers and students.

Patrick received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Curry College and his Master's Degree in Administration and Supervision and his Administrative Certificate from Central Connecticut State University. He has taught English at King Philip and Hall High School for over 20 years prior to becoming an Assistant Principal in Farmington, CT two years ago. Patrick was also the Assistant Principal of the West Hartford/Bloomfield Collaborative High School Program from 2007-2009. He brings a sound knowledge of our district and our expectations, along with his ability to relate to teachers and students.

Our Comprehensive Mentoring Program offers new administrators the support structures, resources, and administrative training they need to reach their potential. Each new administrator is carefully assigned a mentor whose purpose is to provide professional support through mentoring and other complementary programs. We are confident that Julio and Patrick bring a skill set that blends well with our current group of administrators and are excited for what the future holds.



Patrick Gustafson

## IMAGINE the Possibilities



West  
Hartford  
Public  
Schools

## Charter Oak International Academy: International Baccalaureate World School

The International Baccalaureate was founded in 1968. It has three programs to address the needs of children ages 3 to 19 and helps develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world. There is the Primary Years Program (PYP), the Middle Years Program (MYP), and the Diploma Program (DP).

Charter Oak, an authorized PYP school, began its IB journey in 2008. Teachers attended training in cities all over the United States where they not only were immersed in the IB program, but they also were able to collaborate with teachers from all over the world. The staff worked tirelessly to meet the requirements of the application process to become a candidate school. In September of 2010, IB sent two representatives to assess the school and meet with all stakeholders. The representatives were very impressed with the school and the support that the district provided.

As an IB World School, Charter Oak focuses on the implementation of an inquiry-based and student-centered teaching and learning process. Students experience many real-world opportunities that connect to their learning through on-site and off-site field trips, visits, and expert forums. Alternate assessment formats such as Invention Convention, classroom community projects, student-led conferences and International Night provide students with the opportunity to "show what they know."

Charter Oak International Academy is helping to change the face of education by preparing the students to be active participants in their learning, leading them to be active participants in their community. As global citizens, they are also preparing to participate in the growing international community. Charter Oak students can be characterized as curious and inquisitive, thinking before they act. They are open-minded to the people around them and constantly communicate their thoughts and emotions. They embrace their own cultures and the cultures around them, striving to make a positive difference in the world in which they live.



## Congratulations to Recent Retirees

This year we have had 34 teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, nurses and central office personnel retire from the West Hartford Public Schools, many with over 35 years experience. A high performing school district that supports public education for all children can only function with highly motivated, committed, and dedicated professionals. The following will be greatly missed:

Sally Alubicki	Director, Teaching and Assessment	Thomas Hine	Teacher, Sedgwick
Bruce Barger	Assistant Principal, King Philip Middle School	Anna Illescas	Nurse, Norfeldt
John Bennett	Teacher, Sedgwick	Pauline Jennings	Paraprofessional, Early Learning Center
Anna Braginski	Paraprofessional, Whiting Lane	Richard Joseph	Teacher, Hall High School
Debby Burian	Teacher, District-wide	Katy Klarner	Teacher, Conard
Martha Calef	Teacher, King Philip Middle School	Marilyn Krentzman	Teacher, Aiken/Bugbee
Kathy Cloud	Teacher, Hall High School	Joseph Mancini	Teacher, Hall
Barbara Davis	Teacher, Sedgwick	Kerry Meehan	Department Supervisor, English
Eleanor DiPietro	Teacher, Conard High School	Laurel Mills	Curriculum Specialist, Aiken
John Edmonds	Teacher, Hall	Trisha Morris	Teacher, Bristow Middle School
Robert Fleming	Teacher, King Philip Middle School	Candice Price	Teacher, Conard High School
Charles Gagne	Paraprofessional, Hall	Kate Schress	Teacher, King Philip
Robert Gallagher	Teacher, Duffy	Haig Shahverdian	Department Supervisor, Fine and Performing Arts
Collete Gardner	Nurse, Sedgwick Middle School	Linda Sitaro	Accounting Manager, Ed Center
Robert Groff	Teacher, King Philip	Jeanne Warner	Curriculum Specialist, Ed Center
Deanie Hajdasz	Paraprofessional, Wolcott	Melanie Yalanis	Teacher, Bugbee
Olivia Harvey	Transportation Coordinator, Ed Center	Trudi Zandes	Teacher, Aiken

## Improved Technology Resources

The Information Technology Department has been working to improve the technology resources and services available to students and staff. We are pleased to share the updates on several projects.

### PowerSchool

- Elementary level – for attendance
- Secondary level – for attendance, teacher grade books, data reporting, scheduling
- Pilot of parent communication tool, Parent Portal, opened April 25<sup>th</sup> (provides parents with online access to class assignments, attendance, and grades, fostering timely communication between home and school).

### High-Speed Internet Access

- We identified a need to address slow performance of internet in our schools.
- Major infrastructure project is now underway.
- Fiber connections to be delivered to every school, increasing speeds from the 1.5 megabits per second currently in most schools to 1 gigabit per second.
- High-speed access will be operational for the opening of the 2011-2012 school year.

### Technology Blueprint

- District is working with the Center for Educational Leadership and Technology (CELT) in the development of a comprehensive Information Technology Blueprint to improve the technology resources and services in the district.
- CELT reviewed key documents and collected data through interviews, focus groups and school sites visits.
- Final report from CELT will be presented to the Board of Education in October.

### Google Apps for Education

- *Google Apps* - a set of online tools for communication, collaboration, time-management and document storage
- Provided by *Google* to the district; tools are all Internet based (in the current vernacular "in the cloud") and are available from any

Internet connected computer or mobile device

- Staff is in the process of learning how to use some of the many tools available: Email, calendar, Contacts, Google Docs.

### New Community Communications Service Selected

- After an extensive review process, *SharpSchool* selected
- Web-based application provides a number of up-to-date communication services: web site content management, information tools (e.g. photo gallery, calendar, online document storage), communication tools (e.g. forums for collaboration, surveys, newsletters)
- Teacher Tools (e.g. drop box, lessons)
- Implementation of this set of tools will begin in the fall of 2011.