

April 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

Distance learning, distance working, and distance teaching are certainly new challenges that we all are now facing. But there is a wonderful professional - within Beecher Road School - who sure is making the transition so much more palatable.

Even during the past Spring Vacation week.

That person is **Larissa Crocco**.

Larissa has many job titles within Beecher Road School. She was hired as a Library Media Specialist, and it is her fourth year in that position. She is extremely involved and committed to Beecher. She loves to work with teachers and staff. She does so much more than teach her daily specialist classes. She currently serves on:

- Superintendent's Community Diversity Committee
- Empathy Across America Committee
- TAG Committee

- WEA Social Action Committee
- Professional Development Committee
- She is the "T" in our PTO serving as teacher representative to the PTO

She is wholly committed to her profession, and after working at Beecher for the past 25 years, I personally can tell when a teacher is truly devoted to our unique Woodbridge community. It's not enough that she is a Peaceful Bus Mentor, a TEAM Mentor, and organizes World Read Aloud Day.

She also attends national events in her field at her own expense, for example: School Library Journal Leadership Summit in Brooklyn in 2019 and in Baltimore in 2020.

2019 was a very busy year for Larissa Crocco. After attending the 2019nErD (Nerd) Camp in New Jersey, she brought the idea of this teacher directed style of professional learning to our Professional Development Committee and there are now plans to hold our own "Beecher" version.

Larissa wants our beautiful library to be a safe haven for kids. For example, she created unique but essential jobs for our young and most vulnerable group of students – in the library in the wee hours of the morning.

What do these students do?

They do everything from setting up for classes to organizing materials to shelving books. What a magnificent way for these students to feel successful, even BEFORE their school day begins.

Larissa Crocco is not a typical librarian.

She is that bridge Between Beecher and the Woodbridge Community.

Her first year here she worked with the Woodbridge Town Librarians on co-hosting Book Clubs for different grade levels - these events are held in the evening at the town library.

She is the de facto liaison between the Amity Historical Society and Beecher Road School. You may have seen her in an authentic recreated school house outfit at the Darling House for a 3rd Grade field trip on Children's Day.

She still shows up "in character" at the request of the Society for their weekend children's events.

The reason I am sharing all of this with you is because there is currently a shortage of Library Media Specialists in the state of Connecticut. The chances of finding a Library Media Specialist who can afford to work at .7 AND who is as *qualified* as Larissa are extremely slim.

Ashley Wagner, another incredible staff member whose full time position is also in jeopardy, and Larissa Crocco created an amazing town wide art project "**Beecher Takes Heart.**"

It's my hope that you all will consider keeping ALL of our current staff positions at full time and please... **"take heart."**

Sincerely,
Teresa Nakouzi
Reading Specialist

Details here:

<https://woodbridgect.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=662>