

Community Outreach Subcommittee

Thursday, January 12, 2012 6:00 PM

Board of Education Conf. Room E, 1 School Street, PO Box 253, Bethel, CT
06801

1. **Review of committee's activities/purpose to date**
2. **Discussion of new goals and purpose**
3. **Begin to develop short and long term Community Outreach Plan (year long)**
 - 3.A. Channels of communication
 - 3.B. Communication topics and timing
 - 3.C. Communication vehicles/materials
4. **Adjourn**

Agenda support (all information for discussion purposes, below are my thoughts as a starting point for conversation).

Activities/purposes to date:

1. 2x per year communication via mail piece
2. Budget communication
3. Minimal realtor/town support
4. Parent/PTO focus group (1)

Committee mission (to be discussed, below are suggestions):

1. Our job is to communicate and inform on BOE goals, objectives, programs and status of how these programs are working.
2. Communicate with all interested in our message – townspeople, parents, students, business people.
3. Form a better connection to teachers and administrative council as appropriate for input and conversation.
4. Enhance and utilize the relationship with PTO's to assist with communication efforts to the school community.
5. Support the communication needs of all committees working in tandem with chairs of each group to communicate key topics to the public(i.e. Building and Grounds and DRA Study, Bullying Task Force and Climate Plan, New Curriculum, etc...)

Others?

Channels of communication, vehicles and materials:

1. Audience

a. Townspeople

b. Parents

- PTO

c. Students (particularly at HS level)

- Exiting or graduated student input

d. Teachers/administrators

- Ongoing communication with administrators, this came to light during the superintendent search and our focus groups of teachers and administrative council

e. Realtors

f. Others?

2. Communication channels:

a. Mail:

- newsletter (2x per year as of now)

b. Email:

- A BOE only quarterly newsletter (not to send out via mail, perhaps email, but definitely to live on the website)

- Could include updates on key subjects/programs (kindergarten program, STEM, etc...)day's BOE meeting.

- Opportunity to allow townspeople to opt into BOE communication via email address (rather than search out on websites)

c. Websites:

- Better use of BOE navigation on school website as well as better communication to the general public that this exists

- BOE Blog?

- Information on town website

d. Social media

- How is our Facebook page working?

e. Face-to-face discussions (our version of fireside chats)

f. TV

- Regular pattern of TV appearances by superintendent, chair, other board members

g. PTO

- Better partnership with PTO's and interested parents to garner support and input on communicating initiatives

Communication topics and timing:

1. Key topics over next 3 months

a. Kevin's 100 day plan

b. Reinforcing Kevin as CEO of education in upcoming months

- c. Budget communication
- d. Safe School Climate Plan communication

2. Key topics over next 6 months

- a. How we're doing on key programs and initiatives (report back on success or failure and how addressing)
- b. Spotighting new programs
- c. DRA update

3. Key topics over next 9 months

- a. Vision document (meaningful version for town and parents)

Short term/long term goals/plan (3 month/6 month/9 month plan)

3 month goals:

1. Branded look and feel for all BOE communications
2. Explanation to the board how to involve Community Outreach in communicating key info from individual committees
3. Dissemination of Kevin's 100 day plan as appropriate
 - a. TV
 - b. Email
4. Determine key budget info to be communicated via emails and mail piece
 - a. Community Outreach to participate in vetting of communication to parents and town
5. Get analytical data on how website and Facebook used as tool to search out information from BOE
6. Determine if there is a way to gather email address (legally) from townspeople
7. Work more closely with the PTO's to help ensure that communication is reaching parents and schools.

6 month goals:

9 month goals:



A Report to Bethel Taxpayers

2011-2012 Budget Information



Summary From The Selectmen: Extraordinary efforts went into keeping the municipal operating budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 as low as possible without sacrificing services or laying off employees. Many departments were able to produce “zero increase” budgets vs. the current year, and a few departments were able to drop expenditures below the current year.

The total proposed town operating budget for FY 2011-2012 is \$20,262,282, which represents an increase of \$38,476, or 0.19% over the current year. The operational areas that have the largest impact on the budget appear in the chart and brief narrative below:

Utilities: Heating oil is the largest driver of this increase, jumping from \$2.08 to well over \$3.00 per gallon since last year. In addition, we expect water costs related to fire protection to go up when the State issues its final ruling on United Water’s recent rate increase. Electricity rates will remain fairly stable.

Health Insurance: Increases in prescription drugs is a major factor in this account. Town employees will share a greater percentage of health insurance costs to help offset some of the increases.

Information Technology: Several years of neglect left this vital department highly vulnerable to failure, requiring investments in servers, switches and security software, as well as a complete revamping of department operations. In the spring of 2010, a major system failure came very close to wiping out all of town’s water and sewer billing records. These problems have been corrected, and all I.T. related items were consolidated into this department for efficient budget control.



Parks and Recreation: The increase in this department is reflective of new programming and minor capital improvements.

Road Construction: The large savings derived from this account stems from use of the \$2 million Road Renewal Plan bond approved last fall. At press time, the Highway Department has preconstruction activities well under way for the first seven miles of reconstruction. The remainder of the original \$8.5 million reconstruction plan is not included in this budget proposal. It will be resubmitted again to the Board of Finance this fall.

We urge all Bethel residents to participate in the annual Town Budget Meeting on May 2nd 7:30 pm at Bethel High.

		APPROVED FY 2010-2011:		\$20,223,806		
Acct. #		Changes vs. Prior Year	% Change	Sub-Total	% Impact on Total	Cumulative Total %
410	Utilities (Oil, Elect., Water)	235,143	9.88%	20,458,949	1.16%	1.16%
390	Employee Benefits	188,176	3.72%	20,647,125	0.93%	2.09%
190	Information Technology **	81,955	12.6%	20,729,080	0.41%	2.50%
380	Parks & Recreation	35,064	3.98%	20,764,144	0.17%	2.67%
210	Town Insurance	32,442	4.20%	20,796,586	0.16%	2.83%
240	Road Construction	(410,589)	-26.2%	20,385,997	-2.03%	0.80%
	Total Other Depts	(123,715)		20,262,282	-0.61%	0.19%
	Total \$ Chg.vs. PY:	38,476				
		Total Town Operating Budget 2011-2012:		20,262,282		0.19%

** A portion of the increase in the IT line (65,024) is due to the consolidation of all IT costs into one department for more long-term efficiency. The percent changes shown are net of all department consolidations.

Municipal Goals Direct The Work Of Town Government

The Selectmen have worked in a bi-partisan partnership to establish a set of strategic goals aimed at providing sound, professional management for the Town. This is what we are trying to achieve:

- 1) **Economic Development** --- Last year, the Economic Outreach Commission was established to work cooperatively with the business community and Bethel's two Chambers of Commerce (Bethel Chamber and Stony Hill 4 Corners Chamber) for the purpose of "marketing" our community and increasing retail visits to our local businesses. That commission is extremely busy surveying current business owners to help refine our marketing message about the town. They have also developed a number of new programs to increase visits to Bethel. These include new "wayfinding" signage, a new website soon to be launched, as well as an upcoming "Historic Walking Tour" program, being developed in conjunction with the Bethel Historical Society. The goal is to make Bethel a better place to do business.



- 2) **Maintenance of Town Roads** --- Work on phase-one of the \$2 million Road Renewal Plan begins in May when area asphalt plants reopen. Work is already underway clearing dead trees and brush along roads to allow widening and improved drainage on the first seven miles of reconstruction. Although the Board of Finance rejected the four-year, \$8.5 million comprehensive plan, choosing instead to break the project into one year increments, this season's work will keep our highway crews busy from mid-May all the way through November. This fall we will bring forward a proposal to fund the remainder of the Road Renewal Plan.



- 3) **Protecting the Quality of Education** --- Since taking office, the Board of Selectmen has worked cooperatively with our Board of Education and school administration to support budgets that meet the goals of improving student achievement and protecting the investment our community has made in our excellent school system. In addition, town and school officials are working together to share services and reduce costs. Our new Information Technology partnership is now providing outstanding service at a lower cost to the town.

- 4) **Maintenance of School and Town Buildings** --- A Capital Improvement Plan has been assembled so that we have a longer term understanding of what is required to maintain our \$150 million in facility assets. The work on both the Municipal Center and the YMCA Children's Center is completed, an architect has been retained to begin planning for the final phase of the Bethel Public Library renovation, and a facilities study of Johnson and Rockwell Schools is to begin soon.

- 5) **Work Cooperatively With State Officials** --- We have met multiple times, along with members of the Board of Education, to provide our legislators with guidance about how they can best serve Bethel interests. We are in contact with our representatives constantly as legislation reaches committees in Hartford.



- 6) **Team with Neighboring Towns to Reduce Expenses** --- Bethel has once again rejoined our neighbors in addressing common regional problems. We are currently working with our nearby towns to study the feasibility of creating a regional public safety dispatch center, a concept that has tremendous potential for cost savings as well as improved interdepartmental coordination. The First Selectman is an active member of Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, Council of Small Towns, Housatonic Resource Recovery Authority and the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials, on which he also serve as Secretary/Treasurer.
- 7) **Welcoming New People and New Ideas** --- Many new volunteers who have never before served our town are now active members of a variety of appointed boards and commissions. Want to be involved? Call the First Selectman's Office at 203-794-8501.

The 2011-2012 Proposed Education Budget

The Board of Finance approved an education budget that was presented to taxpayers at a Public Hearing on March 29 and will be presented for voter approval in May. Residents should know that the School Administration and the Board of Education spent many hours in the development of the proposed budget. Board members asked numerous (54) questions about various aspects of the budget. Their questions and the administration's detailed answers can be found in written form on the front page of our website under a link titled, "Board of Education Budget Questions." Also on the website you can see Dr. Chesley's budget presentation and detailed information about line items in the budget.

The Board of Finance complimented the detailed and transparent work on this budget. The recommended budget calls for a 1.30% increase. This budget does the following:

- *Maintains all existing academic programs and staffing levels
- *Maintains all existing athletic and activity programs and associated staff
- *Maintains "pay-to-participate" at existing levels
- *Maintains all existing programs for special needs children
- *Maintains existing remediation and intervention programs
- *Maintains all existing college partnerships, Advanced Placement college credit classes, and Internship Programs
- *Maintains existing world language, ROTC, and music programs
- *Maintains existing summer school programs
- *Provides the schools with necessary instructional supplies and technology
- *Implements a full-day kindergarten program in the Fall of 2011 **AT NO INCREMENTAL COST**



Description	Employees Actual	2010-11 Budget	Employees Proposed	2011-12 Proposed	Variance	%	% of Increase
Salaries	391.56	25,500,622	391.30	25,971,979	471,357	1.85%	48.94%
Benefits		6,200,257		6,485,635	285,378	4.60%	29.63%
Purchased Professional Services		508,498		520,828	12,330	2.42%	1.28%
Purchased Property Services		533,885		539,025	5,140	0.96%	0.53%
Other Purchased Services		3,612,898		3,780,907	168,009	4.65%	17.44%
Supplies		1,048,634		1,048,719	85	0.01%	0.01%
Equipment/Furniture		49,475		67,850	18,375	37.14%	1.91%
Dues and Fees		50,606		53,101	2,495	4.93%	0.26%
Total	391.56	37,504,875	391.30	38,468,044	963,169	2.57%	100.00%
Less Educational Jobs Funding		0		-476,994	-476,994	-1.27%	
Final Board of Education Budget	391.56	37,504,875	391.30	37,991,050	486,175	1.30%	

Education Unions Giveback

Dr. Chesley and Larry Craybas, Board of Education Chairman, held discussions with the leadership of the unions that represent school employees. They requested that union members consider "givebacks" in their negotiated contracts as a means to lower our 2011-2012 educational budget in the difficult economic year ahead. The working relationships that exist within our school system have always been highly professional, trusting, respectful, and productive. Once again, this was the case. As a result of these discussions, the administrators, teachers, and nurses agreed to salary givebacks for the 2011-2012 school year. Together these concessions have decreased our proposed budget by approximately \$100,000. The Board of Education is extremely grateful to these groups for their assistance in helping us keep the proposed budget as tight as we could make it.

Cuts In State Support For Special Education Hurt Bethel

The State of Connecticut is obligated by statute to pay a portion of the cost of high-cost special education students. The state has not met this obligation and so it falls to the Bethel taxpayer. In short, the state owes Bethel approximately \$400,000 or 1% of our school budget for 2011-2012. They simply have not met their obligation to fund these costs. The Board of Education has no legal recourse to pursue these funds. Without this cost the school budget increase would have been about 0.2%, or almost zero!

The Board of Education increased spending where we are legally or contractually obligated to do so. Most non-payroll expense lines have remained flat for several years.

Actual Enrollment March 1, 2011 = 2,977

Projected Enrollment 2011-2012 = 2,995

Our Schools Are Not Located In Wisconsin!

Recently 24-hour news channels focused non-stop on the situation in Wisconsin where the governor proposed a plan impacting the medical insurance and pensions of public employees and school teachers. In a number of states across the nation, commentators have suggested that public employees, universally through the collective bargaining process, have premium benefit packages at little to no cost to the employee. This is not the case in our schools. The collective bargaining process in our system has clearly recognized the needs of employees and taxpayers. Our teachers and administrators pay into the Connecticut State Teacher's Retirement System at a rate of 7.5%. Our teachers do not pay or collect Social Security as part of their employment. Additionally, our teachers pay an insurance premium share of 17% today and advance to a 20% share in the last year of the current contract. Our non-certified employees (custodians, secretaries, and para-professionals) are part of the town's retirement program. We have negotiated phasing in a "defined contribution" plan with these groups. Their insurance contributions vary, slightly different than teachers, but they too share appropriately in the cost of their health insurance.

In 2009, the Board of Education accepted the health insurance bid provided by Cigna. That has proven to be a very sound financial decision for the school system. Due to tough negotiating and a generally healthy staff, our annual premium increases with this company have been less than half of the national and regional average. All of this should clearly say to Bethel residents that all that you hear from the "talking heads" television about the state of economic affairs in other sections of the nation is happening in this town. Bethel should not be painted with the same brush!

Connecticut School Funding --- Bailed Out By Uncle Sam



During these challenging financial times, the State of Connecticut has relied on the federal government to fill the shortage in meeting the State's obligation to provide funds to towns to run their public school system. For Bethel this was \$1.2 million of ARRA funding in both 2009 and 2010. This funding allowed us to submit a 0% budget increase in 2009-2010 and a 2.56% increase in 2010-2011. Bethel taxpayers provide the approximately 76% remaining funds.

Recently the school system received \$476,994 in federal funds specifically for educational job retention. The Bethel Board of Education has chosen to direct *those funds to the 2011-2012 school year to retain jobs, keep the quality of our programs in tact, and to lessen the burden to Bethel taxpayers.*



The Board of Education Unanimously Supports Full-Day Kindergarten



Bethel students (grades 3-8) are some of the highest achieving in the State on the Connecticut Mastery Test. However; we must better equip the younger generation academically if we are to retain our predominant position in the world. We want to ensure that Bethel children can compete anywhere and any time. Here's what taxpayers should know: **1)** Federal and state governments adopted new academic standards in grades K-12. These standards raise the bar in reading, writing, math, and science. In simple terms, our students must know more at earlier ages. Entering kindergarteners must know letters (upper and lower case), numbers to 20, and phonemic sounds on day one of kindergarten. Teachers know that 2 hours and 40 minutes is not sufficient to teach foundational skills. They need 6 hours and 30 minutes to make every child ready to learn. **2)** Too many Bethel children start behind the curve. Only 75% of our children attend pre-school, a number far below our neighbors. We must make up lost ground. **3)** A full-day kindergarten, implemented using the strategies proven successful by our school administration, will hold down the cost of special education in future years. Early learning gaps are not closed by waiting. We know for certain we must intervene fast and effectively. **4)** The Bethel Board of Education is not breaking new ground by implementing a full-day kindergarten. Already 111 Connecticut districts, magnets, and charter schools have a full-day. **5)** A full-day kindergarten program represents a significant cost savings to many tax-paying parents, who pay up to \$2,500 for day care when their child is not in the current half-day program. **6)** Realtors advise that a full-day kindergarten program increases home values. **7)** The Bethel Board of Education voted unanimously (Republicans, Democrats, Independents) for this program understanding that it is budget neutral. Teachers will be transferred from other grades to implement this program. No new staff will be hired.

Bethel Schools Earn A Place Among The State’s Elite Performers

The Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now, a non-partisan public interest educational research group, rated 157 school districts in Connecticut based upon overall student performance. Bethel’s student performance ranked higher than Brookfield, Canton, Cheshire, Fairfield, Greenwich, Guilford, New Fairfield, Sherman, New Milford, Danbury and over 125 other towns in the State. Bethel High, Bethel Middle, and Johnson Schools were all cited as being among the 10 top schools in Connecticut in student performance.



Bethel Schools Labeled “Best Hustlers in Connecticut”

We were pleased to see a headline in the *Hartford Courant* entitled, Best Schools? How About the Ones That Are Really Hustling? Columnist Rick Green noted that a list of the so-called highest-performing schools in Connecticut just happens to also be a list of the most affluent towns. But Green goes on to say, “What about what really matters – districts that are showing significant achievement for students who don’t have all the advantages of wealthy families?” Green reports that the *Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now* (ConnCan) ranks the following schools as the “best hustlers in the State of Connecticut.”

The Bethel Schools were rated #1 and identified as having the highest rate of performance factoring the nature of the student body.



College Scholarship Dollars Cut Parent Costs!

Bethel High is rated among the top high schools in Connecticut! The Class of 2010 was awarded over \$2.5 million in scholarships. These are real-dollars that parents saved as their children went off to college. In studying the Class of 2010, we calculated that they completed 314 three-credit college courses before graduating. We did some tuition math to see what the real-dollar saving looks like to our taxpaying-parents. One three-credit course at WCSU or UCONN costs about \$975 (not including texts). Those 314 courses completed at Bethel High represents a real-dollar savings of about \$300,000 in college tuition. At a typical Connecticut private university, tuition is \$2,200 for a 3-credit course

(excluding texts). So our taxpaying-parents accrued a real-dollar savings of about \$680,000 in tuition on the basis of private school enrollment. This is one reason why we strongly encourage our students to experience college courses while still at BHS through our expanded AP, on-line, and college-partnership classes.

Bethel Schools Rank In Top 5% In A National Study On “Return On Taxpayer Investment”

A report released in January 2011 by the Center for American Progress examined 9000 of the nation’s school districts. The report cited the Bethel Public Schools for an exceptional **“RETURN ON TAXPAYER DOLLARS INVESTED IN EDUCATION.”** Our school system was among the **Top 5% in the Nation for “Return of Taxpayer Investment.”** Our students were cited for outperforming academic expectations. Bethel was listed as in the TOP TEN in Connecticut for **Student Achievement Realized Per Taxpayer Dollar.** Take a look at the following table of the top performing districts according to this report. The Center for American Progress states that these Connecticut school districts get the best student performance per taxpayer dollar. The State cost-sharing grant to Bethel is far greater than other high-performing districts receive which means Bethel taxpayers have to make up for a smaller share of the total cost/student to educate each child.

	<u>Overall Student Achievement Index</u>	<u>Total Cost Per Student</u>	<u>Local Revenue Per Student</u>	<u>Local % Paid/Student</u>
Bethel	0.91	13,733	10,453	76%
Ridgefield	0.97	14,381	14,321	99%
Darien	0.95	15,467	15,407	100%
Fairfield	0.93	15,533	15,693	100%
Wilton	0.95	16,154	15,696	97%
New Canaan	0.97	17,342	16,023	92%
Westport	0.96	17,697	18,584	100%

New Reports Says BHS Graduates Are Accepted Into The Nation's Top Schools

Here's what we know about the Class of 2011 --- a large number of our graduates are being accepted to their "stretch schools." Not just one of their stretch schools, but many of our students are being accepted to 3-5 highly competitive universities.



These students will be making tough decisions in the weeks ahead about which of these dream schools is really the best fit for them. We tell them to apply for every scholarship for which you qualify --- there is no limit on the amount of scholarship money you can earn. One of our students earned a \$180,000 scholarship recently. Colleges know that Bethel High produces highly competitive and competent students and they are being accepted at record rates.

Bethel Testing Continues To Be Very Strong

SAT	Reading	Math	Writing
Bethel High Average	522	520	516
Connecticut Average	509	514	513
National Average	501	516	492

3rd grade CMT

Math	95% proficient	88% goal	55% advanced
Reading	86% proficient	75% goal	24% advanced
Writing	93% proficient	78% goal	34% advanced

4th grade CMT

Math	95% proficient	83% goal	42% advanced
Reading	85% proficient	75% goal	24% advanced
Writing	95% proficient	80% goal	36% advanced

5th grade CMT

Math	96% proficient	88% goal	54% advanced
Reading	92% proficient	82% goal	34% advanced
Writing	96% proficient	89% goal	48% advanced
Science	97% proficient	85% goal	41% advanced

6th grade CMT

Math	95% proficient	89% goal	53% advanced
Reading	95% proficient	86% goal	36% advanced
Writing	93% proficient	79% goal	36% advanced

7th grade CMT

Math	97% proficient	78% goal	43% advanced
Reading	91% proficient	87% goal	50% advanced
Writing	89% proficient	73% goal	38% advanced

8th grade CMT

Math	96% proficient	80% goal	54% advanced
Reading	91% proficient	84% goal	45% advanced
Writing	89% proficient	77% goal	23% advanced
Science	88% proficient	79% goal	20% advanced

Bethel High Naval Rated Among The Nation's Very Best

The Bethel High Naval ROTC program remains the most highly-decorated in the Northeast, having earned "Distinguished Unit Status With Academic Honors" almost since its inception. The program serves 20% of the high school student body. The lessons taught in class provide students with the tools for success. The foundation is laid during year one as students learn to be solid citizens, and learn teamwork while marching, learn exacting attention to detail during marksmanship training, and learn social etiquette in preparation for the annual ball. Year 1 also includes some military history, survival training, physical fitness and health education, and basic leadership and follower-ship skills.



Cadets in year 2 learn seamanship, land and ocean navigation, take the boating safety course, study maritime geography and meteorology, and learn advanced leadership and communication skills.

Cadets in year 3 learn aviation fundamentals and go flying after using a flight simulator in class. They also learn advanced citizenship and leadership skills, have an intro to naval engineering, and learn to lead and manage events.

Year 4 is when the cadets take charge of the unit and plan numerous events and activities. They also serve in leadership positions and are responsible for the junior cadets assigned to them. They also learn many life skills like personal financial management, car buying, how to transition successfully from high school, public speaking, and ethics.

Throughout the course cadets are graded in their uniform appearance, manners and bearing. All cadets participate in marching drill, ball room dancing, etiquette classes, and marksmanship training each year, with increased expectations each year as well.

2010 BHS Graduates Are Accepted Into The Nation's Top Schools

(Red denotes "Most Competitive")

Alfred University	Florida International University	New York University	The Art Institute of Boston
Allegheny College	Florida Southern College	Newbury College	The College of New Jersey
American University	Fordham University	Norwalk Community College	The College of Saint Rose
Arcadia University	Franklin Pierce University	Norwich University	The Culinary Institute of America
Arizona State University	George Mason University	Oklahoma State University	The University of Alabama
Austin Peay State University	Georgia Southern University	Pace University	The University of Scranton
Bard College	Georgia Tech University	Pennsylvania State University	The University of Tampa
Barry University	Green Mountain College	Philadelphia University	The University of Texas, Austin
Becker College	Hamilton College - NY	Porter and Chester Institute	Thomas College
Binghamton University	Hartwick College	Purchase College	Unity College
Boston College	Harvard	Purdue University	University of Connecticut
Boston University	Haverford College	Queens University of Charlotte	University of Delaware
Brandeis University	Hofstra University	Quinnipiac University	University of Hartford
Bridgewater State University	Howard University	Radford University	University of Illinois at Chicago
Brigham Young University	Indian River State College	Ramapo College of New Jersey	University of Maine
Bryant University	Iona College	Randolph College	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Castleton State College	Ithaca College	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of Michigan
Central Connecticut State	Jacksonville University	Rhode Island College	University of Mississippi
Champlain College	James Madison University	Roanoke College	University of New England
Christopher Newport University	Johnson & Wales University	Rochester Institute of Technology	University of New Hampshire
Coastal Carolina University	Johnson State College	Roger Williams University	University of New Haven
Colgate University	Keene State College	Rowan University	University of North Florida
College of Charleston	King's College	Rutgers University	University of Pennsylvania
College of Mount Saint Vincent	La Salle University	Sacred Heart University	University of Rhode Island
College of New Rochelle	Landmark College	Saint Joseph College	University of South Carolina
Columbia College	Lasell College	Saint Joseph's University	University of South Florida
Connecticut College	Lehigh University	Saint Michaels College	University of Vermont
Cornell University	LIM College	Saint Peter's College	University of Washington
Dean College	Lincoln Technical Institute	Salem State University	Ursinus College
Drew University	Long Island University	Salve Regina University	Utah State University
Drexel University	Lynchburg College	Savannah State University	Valdosta State University
Duke University	Lyndon State College	Siena College	Vassar College
East Carolina University	Maine College of Art	Skidmore College	Virginia Commonwealth University
East Central University	Manhattan College	Southern Connecticut State	Virginia Wesleyan College
Eastern Connecticut State	Manhattanville College	Southern New Hampshire University	Wagner College
Eckerd College	Marietta College	St. Bonaventure University	Washington and Jefferson College
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical	Marist College	St. John's University -	Washington College
Emerson College	Marymount Manhattan College	St. Lawrence University	Wentworth Institute of Technology
Emmanuel College	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	State College of Florida	Wesleyan University
Endicott College	Massachusetts College of Pharmacy	State University of New York	West Virginia University
Erie Community College	Moravian College	Stonehill College	Western Connecticut State
Fairfield University	Mount Saint Mary College	Stony Brook University	Western New England College
Fashion Institute of Technology	Mount Saint Mary's University	Suffolk University	Wheelock College
Fitchburg State University	Muhlenberg College	Swarthmore College	Whittier College
Flagler College	New Hampshire Institute of Art	Temple University	York College of Pennsylvania

Bethel Music Program Wins National Honors --- One More Time

We are proud to announce that the Bethel music program has again earned recognition as one of "America's Top 100." The music program begins in kindergarten and continues through the elementary level where children learn to play the recorder (a simulated reed instrument), and the ukulele and can begin a string and band instrument. Our orchestra program enrolls almost 400 with the band drawing somewhat larger numbers. All of our students perform at numerous concerts throughout the year. The performance highlight occurs when both Bethel Middle and Bethel High Schools present musicals to standing room only crowds. The *Music Educators National Congress* singled out our program's performance opportunities and the consistently high quality of instruction as key factors in this recognition. BHS will introduce a college level music class in 2011. A significant number of our students continue performing at the university level.



Bethel Town & Board of Education Budget

	2010-2011 BUDGET	2011-2012 BOARD OF FINANCE RECOMMENDED BUDGET
TOTAL TOWN OF BETHEL OPERATING BUDGET	20,223,806	20,262,282
TOTAL BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET	37,504,875	37,991,050
TOTAL BOARD OF ED MAINTENANCE BUDGET	333,335	400,000
DEBT SERVICE	4,189,603	4,308,817
TOTAL TOWN & BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET	62,251,619	62,962,149
% EXPENDITURE INCREASE		1.141%

Estimated MIL Rate	23.18
Current MIL Rate	22.44
Increase in MIL Rate	0.74
Estimated Tax Increase on \$270,000 Assessed Home	\$197.77

Town of Bethel

Acct #111

The Bethel Public Schools

Acct #100.16.2310.101.5500

1 School Street · PO Box 253

Bethel, Connecticut 06801

(.36 per copy/household)

Non-Profit Organization U.S. POSTAGE PAID BETHEL, CT 06801 Permit # 70
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LOCAL POSTAL PATRON



Bethel Taxpayer Report Summer 2011



Message From The First Selectman

This has been an exciting and eventful year for the Town of Bethel. There are numerous infra-structure improvement projects currently under way. I want to take a moment of your time to bring you up to date on our progress.

Road Recovery Project

Voters approved a \$2 million Road Recovery bond package late last fall. While this is far short of the \$8.5 million needed to address all of our identified needs, the \$2 million bond did allow a full season of long overdue road repair for the first phase. Here is the project status to date:



Green Pasture	Completed*	Fawn	Spring 2012^
Quaker Ridge	Completed*	Hearthstone	Spring 2012^
Far Horizons	Completed*	N. Hearthstone	Spring 2012^
Walnut Hill	Under construction*	Buff	Spring 2012^
Weed	Under construction*	Budd	Spring 2012^
Ridgedale (small section)	Under construction*	Partridge	Summer 2012^
Linda Lane	Fall 2011*	McNeil	Summer 2012^
Reservoir	Fall 2011*		
Diamond Ave.	Fall 2011*		
Williams	Fall 2011*		
Aunt Patty's W	Fall 2011*		
Castle Hill	Fall 2011*		

(See town website BethelCT.org for remainder of the list.

Please remember that this schedule is subject to weather and other forms of construction delays)

Although this is a good start, many miles of roads needing extensive repair remain for which we still need to obtain voter approval for financing. This will be addressed during the 2011-2012 budget development process.

* Financed through \$2 million Road Recovery Plan, approved by referendum December 2010.

^ If funds are available.



An Economic Development Strategy Is Identified

Bethel now has two commissions focusing on the economic health of our town: The *Economic Development Commission*, established by Town Charter, whose job is to *bring new businesses to Bethel* and the *Ad Hoc Economic Outreach Committee* was established last year to coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce to *bring more shoppers and visitors to Bethel*. Here is a partial list of projects now under way:

- Development of new town and Chamber interactive websites with video clips of Bethel and links to local businesses.
- "Wayfinding" signage to guide visitors between the Stony Hill and Village districts.
- Working with the Chamber to schedule more events to bring people to Bethel.
- Review of regulations to insure Bethel is as "business friendly" as possible.
- Regularly scheduled planning and feedback sessions with commercial property owners.

As always, please feel free to call the First Selectman's office at 203-794-8501 if you have any other questions or concerns. Anyone can email First Selectman Knickerbocker, Selectman Straiten, or Selectman Szatkowski using the following address: firstselectman@betheltownhall.org. Wendy Smith handles the correspondence for all three from this address.



Farmer's Market Becomes A Community Asset

The new Municipal Farmer's Market, which was designed not only to provide fresh, healthy food choices, but also bring people downtown, continues to grow each week. The market operates on the Municipal Center lawn on Thursday afternoon throughout the summer and into the fall.

The Old Railroad Station Becomes An Asset

A successful Request For Proposal process with Bethel's historic "Old" Train Station resulted in a complete renovation of the beautiful old building, occupied now by a highly successful Bethel business that is bringing new visitors to town and a completely refurbished municipal

parking area that serves the village district *at no cost to Bethel taxpayers!* Some residents have asked how all this was accomplished without any financial contribution by the town. Here's how this unique relationship worked:

- Under the terms of the ConnDOT deed on the property, all funds collected from leasing the station *must be set aside into a separate account, and can be used only for property maintenance.* These funds cannot be added to the town's General Fund, they are not part of the annual operating budget, and they have no impact on your tax rate. They can be used for no other purpose except maintaining the old station.
- Funds accumulated in this maintenance account are from payments made by the former tenant, an art gallery that closed several years ago. *These remaining lease funds were used to install new drainage and resurface the parking lot, again, with no impact to the town budget.*
- Virtually *all costs* of renovating the old building were born by the business that now leases the station, and from this point forward, the town will realize positive cash flow from the lease that will be used to keep the lot maintained and plowed in the winter.
- *The Old Train Station building was not "put up as collateral" as part of the renovation, and the town can not "lose" the station in a seizure by the bank. The town maintains full ownership and control. Residents who may be concerned about this story are encouraged to call the First Selectman's office at 203-794-8501 for additional information.*

Energy Conservation Commission

This new commission has been working hard since last year, looking for ways to save the town money on energy. The chairman of the commission recently reported to the Board of Selectmen on a proposal to install a solar farm at the town's transfer station. The installation would power the town's entire Public Works complex, as well as use the state's new "net metering" law to significantly cut down the town's annual electric bill. Regulatory approvals are being sought now, and if all goes well, this could become a reality in 2012. The commission is also studying the possibility of installing a hydrogen fuel cell at the school campus in 2013 or 2014. This could provide virtually 100% of the electricity needs of the schools.

There would be no cost to Bethel taxpayers for the installation of either system. Financing would be provided through grants and power purchase agreements.

Teen Center and Senior Center

Pro Access, Bethel's Teen Center provides programs, activities and field trips for Bethel youth in grades 7-12. Hours are after school and Friday evenings. There is always adult supervision and a light fun snack provided during our open hours. In addition to social programs, they are planning to provide peer homework assistance, a leadership and a self esteem building programs. Please visit the website at www.bethelproaccess.org for further information or call at 203-778-7522. Hilda DeLucia, the Director can be reached at hilda@bethelproaccess.org.

After being without a place to call home for several years, Pro Access, Bethel's Teen Center, was temporarily relocated to the space formerly occupied by the visiting nurses association here at town hall. There was no cost to Bethel taxpayers, as the space was renovated by volunteers and equipped with donated furniture, games and supplies. Thank you to all who helped and donated!

The plan calls for the construction of a permanent teen center annex on the east side of the municipal gym wall, and we are aggressively seeking grant monies to complete this process. Once the annex is built, the temporary teen center will be turned over to the Senior Center to allow for expansion of their very popular programs and activities. The Board of Selectmen recently approved funding for a space study for the Senior Center to prepare for this future move.





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College Scholarship Dollars Cut Parent Costs!

Bethel High is rated among the top high schools in Connecticut! The 74 members of Class of 2011 earned \$3,119,544 in scholarship dollars. These are real-dollars that taxpaying-parents saved as their children went off to college. In studying the Class of 2011, we calculated that they completed 378 three-credit college courses before graduating. We did some tuition mathematics to see what the real-dollar savings looks like to our taxpaying-parents. One three-credit course at WCSU or UCONN costs about \$975 (not including texts). Those 378 courses completed at Bethel High represents a real-dollar savings of about \$368,550 in state college tuition after paying costs of enrollment at BHS. At a typical Connecticut private university, tuition is \$2,200 for a 3-credit course (excluding texts). So our taxpaying-parents accrued a real-dollar savings of about \$831,600 in tuition after paying costs of enrollment at BHS on the basis of private school enrollment. The Class of 2011 also completed almost 12,000 hours in community service.



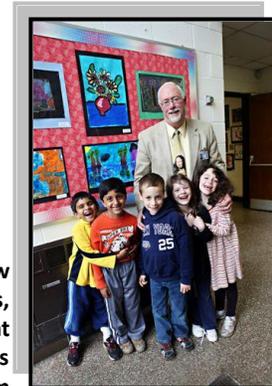
The Board of Education Institutes Full-Day Kindergarten

A recent research study confirmed the wisdom of the Board's decision to institute a full-day kindergarten program. The university findings indicate that a comprehensive and well-developed kindergarten experience has a long-term and positive impact on children throughout their school experience.



Bethel students (grades 3-8) are some of the highest achieving in the State on the Connecticut Mastery Test. However; we must better equip the younger generation academically if we are to retain our predominant position in the world. We want to ensure that Bethel children can compete anywhere and anytime. Here's what taxpayers should know: **1)** Federal and state governments adopted new academic standards in grades K-12. These standards raise the bar in reading, writing, math, and science. In simple terms, our students must know more at earlier ages. Entering kindergarteners must know letters (upper and lower case), numbers to 20, and phonemic sounds on day one of kindergarten. Teachers know that 2 hours and 40 minutes is not sufficient to teach foundational skills. They need 6 hours and 30 minutes to make every child ready to learn. **2)** Too many Bethel children start behind the curve. We must make up lost ground. **3)** A full-day kindergarten, implemented using the strategies proven successful by our school administration, holds down the cost of special education in future years. Early learning gaps are not closed by waiting. We know for certain we

must intervene fast and effectively. **4)** The Bethel Board of Education did not break new ground by implementing a full-day kindergarten. Already 111 Connecticut districts, magnets, and charter schools have a full-day. **5)** A full-day kindergarten program represents a significant cost savings to many tax-paying parents, who pay up to \$2,500 for day care when their child is not in the current half-day program. **6)** Realtors advise that a full-day kindergarten program increases home values. **7)** The Bethel Board of Education voted unanimously (Republicans, Democrats, Independents) for this program understanding that it is budget neutral. Teachers were transferred from other grades to implement this program.



Bethel CMT Results Continue To Excel

Our 2011 testing results continue an excellent overall trend. Our children remain extremely competitive among comparable districts throughout Connecticut and in the region. Bethel teachers and principals examine these results as one tool in shaping our curriculum and instructional decisions. At the same time, we caution that any conclusions drawn from standardized testing should be limited. As you know, there is so much more to schooling than can be measured by a single paper and pencil test



administered over a few days in March.

“Proficient, at goal, and advanced” are part of Connecticut’s testing jargon. In general terms, this is what they mean:

When you see the term **“proficient”** it indicates that these students

displayed **adequate** knowledge of **most** and **extensive** knowledge of **some** of the assessed content areas. For example, in math, these students may demonstrate limited knowledge of estimating solutions to problems, measurement, ratio, proportion and percent, but tested well overall. In the area of reading, students who perform at this level are likely to demonstrate an **adequate** ability to read and respond to informational and literary texts with some assistance. Students at this level use **some**



strategies effectively before, during, and after reading to understand, interpret and evaluate text.

The term **“at goal”** indicates that students demonstrated, on this one test, **extensive** knowledge of **most** of

the assessed content areas. For example in mathematics, these students may demonstrate adequate knowledge of the assessed content areas including measurement, ratio, proportion and percent. In reading and writing, students who perform at this level are likely to demonstrate a **consistent** ability to read and respond to informational and literary texts with minimal assistance. Students at this level, use strategies effectively before, during, and after reading to understand, interpret, and evaluate text.

The term **“advanced”** indicates that students demonstrate on this one test, an **exceptional** ability to read and respond to informational and literary texts without assistance. Students at this level effectively use sophisticated strategies before, during and after reading to understand, interpret and evaluate text. Students who perform at this level

demonstrate **extensive** knowledge of **all** assessed content areas.

3rd grade CMT

Math	97% proficient	87% goal	49% advanced
Reading	90% proficient	80% goal	27% advanced
Writing	93% proficient	83% goal	31% advanced

4th grade CMT

Math	94% proficient	84% goal	44% advanced
Reading	87% proficient	75% goal	27% advanced
Writing	96% proficient	79% goal	36% advanced

5th grade CMT

Math	97% proficient	87% goal	51% advanced
Reading	89% proficient	77% goal	27% advanced
Writing	98% proficient	89% goal	57% advanced
Science	97% proficient	83% goal	50% advanced

6th grade CMT

Math	97% proficient	92% goal	59% advanced
Reading	96% proficient	93% goal	44% advanced
Writing	96% proficient	87% goal	58% advanced

7th grade CMT

Math	99% proficient	86% goal	50% advanced
Reading	95% proficient	90% goal	46% advanced
Writing	91% proficient	73% goal	32% advanced

8th grade CMT

Math	96% proficient	81% goal	41% advanced
Reading	91% proficient	87% goal	51% advanced
Writing	91% proficient	80% goal	37% advanced
Science	89% proficient	77% goal	17% advanced

Capstone Projects Spark Interest

In grades 5, 8, and 12 students are called upon to complete “capstone projects.” This is an initiative where Bethel is again leading the state in preparing our students for higher levels of schooling.

In grade 5, students did in-depth research into the causes and societal impacts of hunger in 10 different nations around the world. They worked with teachers in large groups and presented their findings in a variety of formats.

In grade 8, students investigated topics like gun laws and crime rates; America’s success in reducing deaths in third world countries; the nature of homelessness; marijuana legalization; the impact of TV on small children; reducing teen pregnancy rates; the morality robot soldiers; and the real worth of professional athletes.

At BHS, the Internship Program, Career to Work, Cadet Teaching, and EMT training, as well as a myriad of college course opportunities prepare our students. We find that our business partners greatly appreciate the skills, work ethic, and enthusiasm of BHS students and often create employment opportunities for them. Also, one of the graduation requires at Bethel High is that a student must complete and document 60 hours of community service.

Middle School Students Rave About The WCSU Camp College

How do you make moon craters? Can nanotechnology be used to cure cancer? How do CSI investigators use DNA to solve crimes? These are just a few of the questions explored by more than 80 Bethel Middle School students at this summer's Camp College. Through Bethel's partnership with Western Connecticut State University in Project Bridge, middle school students once again had the opportunity to get an authentic taste of college life.



Underscoring the significance of this event, students were welcomed the first day by President Schmotter and Dean Zink. During the two days of Camp College, students participated in a series of workshops in the areas of mathematics, science, and writing. Middle schoolers examined the surface of the moon with NASA educator, Rick Varner, learned some techniques for science fiction writing with author, Dr. Oscar De Los Santos, and hunted bugs with Bethel's own Dr. Mitch Wagener. Students enjoyed lunch in the school's cafeterias and were given many insights into college life by WCSU students.

When asked to comment on Camp College one student exclaimed, "Awesome!" Another begged for it not to end. These students will participate in a follow up experience back at WCSU in the fall. The goal of Project Bridge is to entice young students into seeing themselves as future college students. One of the only programs of its kind in the nation, Bethel has partnered with WCSU in this unique venture since its inception.

Welcoming BHS Alumni Into The Faculty

We take great pride in knowing that Bethel High alums actively seek the opportunity to return to this community to serve in our school system. These individuals have a great affection for our school system and the community and they never miss an opportunity to pass along to current students the values they have learned here and the responsibilities of citizenship in Bethel. At Bethel High "Wildcat Hall" displays the photos of all of the alumni. We express our gratitude to the following alumni who serve us with distinction:

Dick Kolwicz -63, Doris Janofsky -69, Carolyn Marston-69, Patty Kunz -69, Lynn Fenn-71, Tabby Burghoff-71, John Wildman-75, Sharon Overthrow-76, Donna Cyr-78, Mark Dwinells-80, Linda Anderson-81, Bill Mills-81, Kari Leonard-83, Francis Boucher- 84, Deidre Hook-84, Denise Musser-84, Laila Rudinas-85, **Mark Ferrandino-86**, Gary Lawlor-86, Cynthia O'Connor-87, Joseph Shaboo-88, Trisha Dee-90, Michele Markus-90, Michelle Rutledge-90, Jen Torpey-91, Herbert Perlman-91, Jeffrey Moscowitz-92, Christopher Troetti-92, David Belcourt-93, Jason Gill-93, **Amy Mannion-93**, Danielle Bemonte-94, David Hunt-96, Greg Reid-94, Jonathan Pileggi-96, Laura DoBrindt-97, Heather Hufnagel-99, Kimberly Pollard-99, Casey Ragan-99, Keri Luchsinger-99, Jessica Loscalzo-00, Ryan DeRubertis-01, Jennifer Bruton-01, Greg Minor-01, Robyn Frazao-02, **Lauren Catalano-04**, Amanda Flachsbart-04, **Daniel Ford-04**,



Congratulations to Special Bethel High Students

Congratulations to Matt Barnes, Bethel High alumni and 2011 Big East Pitcher of the Year who signed a contract with the Boston Red Sox this summer. Matt was drafted #19 overall after a season at UCONN where he led the Huskies to the College World Series.



Congratulations also to Bethel High Senior Abdullah Hasanon who was appointed to the 2011-2012 State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE). The Council gives Connecticut students a voice in education planning and enables the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, State Department of Education personnel, the Governor, and state legislators to become familiar with high school students' perspectives on key issues.



Bethel Attracts Highly Qualified and Motivated Teachers



The Bethel Public Schools have become a professional destination of choice in Connecticut due to our high student achievement, excellent professional growth opportunities, and community support. Annually we receive hundreds of applications for many of our positions. We have a reputation for using a highly selective process to sort through our candidates. Also, in Bethel we have a philosophy that tenure must be earned and is not simply an indicator of time spent in the profession. The Bethel teacher evaluation system is becoming a model for the state in that teachers do report on the growth of their students. Our new teachers are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Monica Black | HS Business BA: Connecticut College, MBA: NYU, 6 th Year: Sacred Heart |
| Lizabeth Castellitto | MS Guidance Counselor BA: Ramapo College, MS: Fordham |
| Lauren Catalano | Berry Grade 1 Teacher BA + MS: University of Connecticut |
| Amanda Davis | Berry Grade 1 Teacher BA: Central Connecticut State University, MA: Sacred Heart |
| Jill DeRosa | Berry Grade 3 Teacher BA: Clemson |
| Mark Ferrandino | HS Special Education Teacher BS: University of Connecticut |
| Daniel Ford | HS Math Teacher BS: University of Connecticut, MA: Sacred Heart |
| Annette Gallaer | Berry Grade 3 Teacher BA: University of Delaware |
| Julia Gardella-Fortier | Berry COF Special Education Teacher BA: Simmons College, MS: Fordham |
| Hollis (Holly) Hefferan | Rockwell Grade 3 Teacher BA & MA: Sacred Heart |
| Amy Mannion | MS Guidance Counselor Mary Washington College, MS: Western Connecticut State |
| Lauren Merriam | HS Social Studies Teacher BA & MA: University of Connecticut |
| Mary K. Paccione | Rockwell Grade 1 Teacher BA: St. Mary's College, MA: Sacred Heart |
| Angelina Perez | MS Spanish Teacher BS: Western Connecticut State |
| Catherine Rovello | MS Special Education Teacher BA: Marist College, MA: Western Connecticut State |
| Natalie Smith | HS Physical Science Teacher BS & MA: University of Connecticut |
| Brian Stroh | Berry Kindergarten Teacher BS: University of Connecticut, MA: University of Bridgeport |
| Patrick Walsh | Rockwell Grade 3 Teacher BA: University of Connecticut, MS: University of Bridgeport |

A Quick Look At Bethel Home Sales in 2011

A recent report by ledger.com revealed that home sales in the region continue to reflect the negative economy right now. However, there is some good news in that, while the overall home sales in Bethel are down, the median sales price has increased a bit, in contrast to most other communities in the region.

Single Family Home Sales 1/1-6/30			Single Family Home Median Sale Price 1/1-6/30		
Town	2011-2010	% Change	Town	2011-2010 (in thousands)	% Change
Danbury	130-153	-15.0	Danbury	274.5-273.0	+0.5
Bethel	42-55	-23.6	Bethel	317.0-303.0	+4.6
Brookfield	52-70	-25.7	Brookfield	377.5-414.0	-8.8
New Fairfield	59-69	-14.5	New Fairfield	355.0-335.0	+6.0
Newtown	110-123	-10.6	Newtown	377.5-419.0	-9.9
New Milford	87-111	-21.6	New Milford	275.0-300.0	-8.3
Ridgefield	127-120	+5.8	Ridgefield	670.0-675.0	-0.7
Redding	39-42	-7.1	Redding	600.0-618.0	-2.9
Sherman	11-21	-47.6	Sherman	380.0-396.0	-4.0
Southbury	44-58	-24.1	Southbury	370.0-425.3	-13.0

Bethel's Curriculum Targeted for Continuous Improvements

Summer 2011 was particularly busy for curriculum writing at all levels of Bethel's school system. We are especially proud of the new mathematics curricula written for full day kindergarten through grade three this August. These curricula are completely aligned with Connecticut's new math standards which are the federal *Common Core State Standards*. The expectations for students at all four of these grade levels are very rigorous, and each lesson objective references our new math program entitled *Go Math!* In addition to math changes, the Supervisor of Language Arts, Mrs. Michelle Rutledge, and several kindergarten teachers have worked diligently to completely revise the language arts curriculum for kindergarten. With over three hours a day dedicated to kindergarten phonics, reading, writing, and oral language development, the new curriculum is comprehensive, creative, and engaging.



In addition to these improvements, the World Languages departments in the

middle school and high school have upgraded their curriculum outcomes, cultural units, and assessments for Spanish and French courses, including complete revision of Advanced Placement (AP) French. The new AP Music Theory course is ready for implementation at BHS, and so is the new AP Psychology course. Social Studies teachers polished up several of their core cores, and revised one of their new courses entitled *Facing History and Ourselves*. Exciting and important curriculum changes are now ready for implementation in the core BHS English courses with focus on implementing a wider variety of literary and informational readings as well as the *Common Core State Standards*. The mathematics departments at the middle school and high school completed major revisions to Algebra I, Algebra Ia, and Algebra II



based on significant changes to Connecticut's math standards.



A very exciting development for Bethel Middle School is the inclusion of *"Project Lead the Way,"* a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program for eighth grade students. The elementary art teachers are just completing a pacing chart to map out the changes to their program prompted by the new Fine Arts assessment standards. Even the library media specialist at BHS was busy polishing the *"Digital Citizenship"* curriculum to help adolescent researchers make the right decisions as they use electronic search tools. Social workers and school counselors, along with school psychologists, are planning for the implementation of a "social-emotional" curriculum for K-8 students that will complement the developmental guidance curriculum and other initiatives that address the social and emotional growth of young children.

Many new changes are ahead for our schools with the preparation now underway for completely new state assessments coming in 2014 for grades 3 through 11. At every level, we continue to upgrade, improve, and align to the *Common Core* the very best curriculum for every child. In the year ahead, we look to adopt a new mathematics program for grades 4 and 5, for example, to be sure that our children are thoroughly prepared for any new state assessment. We will also be finishing our revision of all science in kindergarten through grade eight.

Emergency Starting and Closing Times for Circle of Friends

SCHOOL	Early Dismissal Closing	2 Hour Delay Starting
High	12:15	9:35
Middle	12:56	10:15
Johnson	1:00	10:20
Berry/Rockwell	1:40	11:00
Circle of Friends AM (Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri.)	10:55	CANCELED
Circle of Friends PM (Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri.)	1:40*	12:45

Bethel High Naval Cadets Enjoy A Great Summer

The cadets of the Bethel High School Navy JROTC have had a very productive summer full of educational experiences both near and far. The American Legion of Bethel sponsored numerous students to attend Boys and Girls State, a week-long civics and leadership education program at Central Ct. State University. Cadet Abdullah Hasan broke out as a leader amongst the hundreds of other students there from around the state and was elected as State Senator and political party chairman. Cadet Elizabeth Symon served as registrar of voters, and Ariel Ligowski was town attorney and promoted to Chief Justice.

The American Legion also sponsored cadets attending the CT State Police Youth Week. Cadet Michael Kaluta and Stephen Hallock successfully completed the intense week of training similar to what our state troopers endure at the State Police Barracks in Meriden, CT.

The Navy paid all expenses to send two cadets from Bethel to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) academies. Matthew Correnty attended Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, FL for aviation training and won the model car race. Nick Damraksa attended STEM at the University of San Diego, where he won the robotics competition, the bridge building competition, and placed second in the water-walking competition.

Three cadets spent a week at sea on the U.S. Coast Guard tall ship the Barque Eagle. Cadets Madison Denny, Joseph Limbaugh and Zane Knapp climbed the rigging to set sail and



stood deck watches helping the Coast Guard Academy cadets sail from New York City to New London, CT.



Leadership Academy was held for two weeks at Naval Station Newport, RI. While there, the top 160 cadets from throughout the northeast region are pushed to their limits and learn to be leaders. The day starts at 0500 with 30 minutes of calisthenics followed by a 2-3 mile formation run. They take 22 academic classes and written tests on a wide range of subjects including communication skills, tact, how to plan and organize, sailing and seamanship, etiquette, etc. They also march miles each day, stand watch, compete in land navigation, uniform inspection and marching drill, and spend 2 hours each day learning to sail. Graduates get to wear the coveted silver aiguillette on their uniform. Bethel leaders included Elizabeth Symon,

Matthew Correnty who won the Physical Fitness competition and was selected as Honor Cadet, Brian Wille who placed first in sailing, Alex Nackid who placed first in Land Navigation, Brian Bergen, Richard Kim, Joseph Limbaugh and Benjamin Milositz who was selected as most improved. Joining them were two cadets who were among the best from last year, cadets Devon Smith served as a sailing aide, and Madison Denny served as a platoon aide. Both were instrumental in the overall success of Leadership Academy 2011. Congratulations to all.

An Overview of 2011-2012 Connecticut School Funding

Mrs. Teri Yonsky has been the Director of Fiscal Services for the Bethel Schools since 2006. She provides the following financial overview.

The last several years have been challenging financially for school systems.

A budget recap for Bethel Schools over the last four years is as follows:

2008-2009: 2.09% budget increase and 9 positions eliminated

2009-2010: No budget increase (0)% and 11 positions eliminated

2010-2011: 2.56% budget increase

2011-2012: 1.30% budget increase using one-time federal jobs funding





These budgets have been reflective of the economic environment and have had an impact on school operations and teaching and learning. Reductions included the elimination of our Gifted & Talented program, reduced classroom support due to fewer paraprofessionals and fewer class offerings and sections at the high school.

Bethel Public Schools builds its budget each year from the ground up: re-evaluating our operations and our staffing. We have been extremely judicious in managing our appropriated funds and in identifying the schools' greatest needs and targeting funding and staffing towards those needs. We have also re-assigned personnel in response to enrollment changes; again to best utilize our resources. We understand that tax dollars entrusted to us

need to be well spent.

The Bethel Education Foundation Is Vital To Our Schools

The Bethel Education Foundation was developed to provide supplemental funding to our teachers with great ideas. The Foundation has developed an application process that allows teachers to submit funding requests for equipment that expands their teaching repertoire or provides exciting opportunities for our students. One way for community members to fund the idea of a great teacher is donate to the BEF. Go to www.bethel.k12.ct.us. Scroll to "Community Links" and find "Bethel Education Foundation." If you scroll to the bottom of the BEF webpage and click on "Donate" you can use Pay Pal. You can also find the foundation at <http://betheledfoundation.org> or mail any donation to BEF, PO Box 92, Bethel, CT 06801. Our teachers are extremely grateful that a number of their project requests have been funded. A few of these funded requests include:

iPads for Technology Teachers K-5
Trout for Rockwell classrooms
A Sound System for BHS Choral Room
iPads at BMS
Digital Cameras for Johnson School
Document Cameras for Rockwell School



21 iPads for Digital English at BHS
Fine Motor Development Initiative at Rockwell
Intercom System for BMS Auditorium
iPod Touches for Berry School
Projector for Rockwell Cafetorium
Computers for Pro-Access (Teen Center)
Portrait Painting Guest Artist at BHS

Renovation Work Funded At Bethel High

A number of projects were tackled this spring and summer at Bethel High that were not completed within the time frame of the original renovation project. The Selectmen authorized Robert Germinaro, Supervisor of Facility Operations, to expend some of the funds remaining in the project account to bring to completion these projects. Included in the recently completed work were the following:



Interior Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (approximately 10 classrooms) \$31,600 total. This work is the interior (D-Wing, 1976) classrooms. Teachers reported that there was limited air flow in these interior rooms following the completion of renovation. Wings Consulting Company completed an air flow/balancing test which indicated that work was not completed in this portion of the facility. Their report indicated that duct work was not repaired and missing. They were contracted to re-balance the system and re-program the associated energy management system. (\$7,600) Emcor, the Board's HVAC service provider, examined the areas and produced a cost estimate to make the required ventilation/ductwork corrections. They confirmed Wings assessment that additional balancing of the system was required to complete the work. The cost for completion of this project was \$24,000. The system is now functioning according to specifications.



Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (weight, wrestling rooms) \$1,500. The complaint from the date of original occupancy was that there was no air flow in these highly used athletic rooms. Emcor, the Board's HVAC service provider, completed a mechanical examination of the barometric back-draft dampers for these rooms and an air flow/balancing test. The analysis confirmed that there was insufficient air flow. A technician was assigned to provide a technical analysis of the air handling unit. His visual

inspection indicated that the back draft assembly for this unit was installed incorrectly. This work has been completed. The system is now functioning according to specifications.

Completion of Restrooms 3rd floor (these were partially renovated but not operational) 2 bids \$40,875 total.



Otto Plumbing fully retro-fitted 2 restrooms, providing new fixtures and installing new plumbing to replace non-functioning existing lines. This work is complete and the restrooms are on-line. Actual invoice was less than cost estimate by \$3,150. Neves Plumbing provided retrofit 1 restroom, providing new fixtures and installing new plumbing to replace non-functioning existing lines. This work is complete and the restroom is on-line. Jobs were done simultaneously with no interruption to the school. Neves Plumbing also performed repairs on a women's faculty restroom that has been out of commission since 2008. This job was completed with the excess funds of \$3,150 from the above-noted Otto job. Sections of the old water piping had to be replaced as well as repair to the drainage lines.

Installation of a handicapped accessible door at the exterior Door (K-man) at

auditorium (\$4,625) During the renovation, the existing accessible equipment at the auditorium entrance was removed and not replaced. There was no handicapped accessible door to this public space. K-Man Glass provided the above noted estimate for an after-market Stanley Door opener. A lower level entry door stuck and was not operational from the time the renovation was completed. The moveable parts of the door never worked freely. Efforts to repair this unit from the punch-list were not successful. The door was removed and repaired with commercial grade hardware.



Exterior Doors (Dorma Doors) \$500

The Bethel High administration expressed concern that the exterior doors were not functional. The door return mechanism snapped with minimal use. There was no evidence on abuse of any kind. Dorma Doors examined all exterior doors and determined that they were not commercial grade. For a cost of \$500 we were able to change the "shock blocks" on the exterior doors so that the closing mechanisms now work properly.



Gymnasium Bleachers \$5,000 --- From the date of occupancy, the administration observed that the bleachers were scratching the floor and were racking (twisting with movement) in a way that broke the connecting bolts and made correct closure impossible. These bleacher units should have originally been installed with electric openers to ensure even opening and closing. Bleacher auto pullout units (cost \$5,000) are essential to extend the useful life of the bleachers and protect the floor.

There Is "Light At The End of The Tunne" I On The Bridge Projects

Good news! The Connecticut Department of Transportation just issued the contract for the long awaited replacement of the Walnut Hill bridge (near the intersection of Walnut Hill and Taylor Roads). Contractor bid invitations will be published this fall, and construction should begin as soon as the warm weather returns in 2012. This old bridge has been a problem for many years, forcing inconvenient detours for school buses and trucks.



Following that project will be the road realignment and bridge replacement of the Plumtrees/Whittlesey Road intersection. This project dates back to 1999-2000, but is finally in the last phase of surveys and designs. This work is tentatively set to begin in 2013. The project

will realign Whittlesey Road to meet Walnut Hill, creating a standard four-way intersection and wider bridge that will eliminate the "dog leg" turn into the school campus that causes morning traffic backups.





2011 Bethel Teachers of the Year

Representing **Frank A. Berry School** is Mrs. Kim Trombetto, who is both an outstanding teacher and great person. An expert on teaching young learners, Mrs. Trombetto gets commendable results from her students. She gets to know her students well and takes them where they need to go. She is kind, caring, and extremely professional. A leader in our kindergarten and in our school, Mrs. Trombetto is always looking for ways we can improve what we do to make things better for children. She truly makes Berry School a better place to work and to learn!

Representing **Anna H. Rockwell School** is Mrs. Donna Dolce. Mrs. Dolce is one of the special education staff members. She is extremely dedicated to her students and their families and has been a vital part of the Rockwell staff for five years. Mrs. Dolce is in charge of the Learning Center. She works with students with serious learning, behavioral and emotional challenges. She has very high expectations for her students and she is tenacious in providing them with the support that they need to become independent within the school and community settings. Mrs. Dolce strives to include her students in all aspects of our school. She is an extraordinary teacher with a calm, caring and sensitive nature. She has a gentle manner while consistently teaching her students to believe in themselves and become independent citizens. We are very proud of her accomplishments with her special friends and she is a wonderful reminder for us all to be kind and accept everyone in our daily interactions. Congratulations, Mrs. Dolce!



Mrs. Tamarah McCue is the 2011, **Johnson School** Teacher of the Year. She has been with the Bethel Public Schools for ten years as an Art Educator. Mrs. McCue cares deeply about the academic and social emotional achievement of all her students. She works with classroom teachers to incorporate cross curricular objectives into her art education classes. Mrs. McCue works to make Johnson a beautiful place, from her displays to constant offers to help in anyway she can. She routinely works with students who flourish in the art room and often need the extra attention and adult connection. She is highly dedicated, collaborates with colleagues and is truly an asset to the Johnson School community.

Bethel Middle School's teacher of the year is Clementine Hollopeter. She has been a math teacher at the middle school for the past thirteen years. Known by her colleagues and her students for her relentless determination and perseverance, Clem is a teacher who truly embraces the belief that every student can and will learn. To this end she works with students in class, during lunch, during extension, and after school, giving them confidence as well as mathematical skill. Outside of the classroom Clem serves as curriculum coordinator for the math department and works with teachers with the same energy and enthusiasm she shows her students. She is an inspiration to all of us.



Bethel High is represented by Marjorie Overmier who is not only an excellent and inspiring teacher; she is also a great role model for our students. Marj is hard working with high standards. She began her career at BHS as a student teacher. Marjorie created and teaches an Advanced Placement Art History course for BHS. She taught herself photography and completed workshops in Computer Applications and Photoshop. She practices ceramic and drawing techniques to enhance her expertise in these areas and took part in workshops at the Taft school for the advanced placement course and at museums and art schools. Marj also gives lectures on components of the course to the Advanced Placement European History students at Bethel and Danbury High Schools AP European History class. She has taken students for ten-day trips to Europe visiting art museums and historical sites. Marj is always a solid contributor to the Art Department and to the High School. When it comes to department goals and requirements, Marjorie doesn't wait to be asked to do a job. She jumps right in, offering significant and continual assistance.

Town of Bethel

Acct #111

The Bethel Public Schools

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“Our Primary Purpose Is To Improve Student Achievement.”

Our “Home Town Charity” Calls On All

Over the past 15 years, with the help of hundreds of volunteers, The SCOTTY Fund has provided over a half million dollars in financial and personal support to families of the children in our community who suffer from critical or life-threatening illnesses. Chances are you know one or more of these children; they are the children in our community, the children in our schools and neighborhoods, the children that need our support. Within the past year, The SCOTTY Fund has provided services to critically ill children in every Bethel Public School.



The SCOTTY Fund is launching a “Commitment to Community” initiative, asking community members to support The SCOTTY Fund with a financial donation of any amount that is within your capabilities. The need for financial support for families with ill children in our community has grown. Each year we help families where a parent must stop working to care for their ill child. In cases of a single parent, this is even more devastating. The SCOTTY Fund consistently eases their burden by paying mortgages, utility bills, and other household bills, as well as medical, prescription, travel, and other ancillary costs due to the illness. We also provide support of holiday meals and gifts for the ill children and their siblings, to ensure that these times remain special times in the child’s life. The main goal of the fund is to provide a little peace of mind to the family of an ill child, at a time when peace of mind is often hard to find.

The SCOTTY Fund began 15 years ago, in memory of my son, Scott Anderson, who lost his life to cancer at the age of three. I know, first-hand, the need for support during this difficult time in the child’s life. I also feel fortunate to be part of a community that is caring and ready to help those in need. If you are able to contribute toward our Commitment to Community, you may send a check, made out the THE SCOTTY Fund, to Linda Anderson at BHS or mail to The SCOTTY Fund PO Box 1080 Bethel, CT 06801. If you would like to make a meal for a family in town with an ill child, please email Linda Anderson at Anderson06801@yahoo.com.