

# STONINGTON SCHOOL NEWS

MARCH 2010

Stonington Public Schools/860-572-0506

ISSUE 7

## ***CARING, COMMITMENT, AND COLLABORATION: A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY AT PMS***

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The sounds of the excitement that accompany new learning can be heard throughout PMS this year as teachers, students, and families have joined together to make more educational dreams come true. This year teachers have focused on heightening student engagement in learning and increasing each child's ownership of that learning. At the same time they have increased their own learning through working with consultants from SERC, a division of the State Department of Education. Results of their efforts provide an enviable road map toward excellence in public education.

The initiative with SERC, made available through Title 1 funds, has introduced our teachers to SRBI, (scientific researched-based instruction) and Step-by-Step, 2 programs that alter the way educators support individual students in their learning and inform teaching. In short, our teachers are now better equipped to use specific data to determine the support needed to ensure a child's success. Using a 3-tier model we work toward student independence, but use data and goal setting through the SAT (Student Assistance Team) to make decisions. Parents are important members of the teams.

The Step-by-Step model provides protocol for teachers to place and support students with disabilities according to their abilities. The shift toward focusing upon a child's abilities and working toward independence does away with the age old, prescriptive over-support of children with IEPs. The Step-by-Step approach offers exciting opportunities for all students.

Concurrent with workshops with SERC consultants, teachers continue to take advantage of the opportunity to attend other important professional workshops throughout the year. They continue to share new learning with colleagues in classes and team and monthly school-wide meetings. SERC consultants will work with all of the Stonington schools next year.

### ***Impact on Students***

The excitement of adult learning has rippled through PMS throughout the year. More students are beginning to graph assessment scores to track their learning. Many are taking advantage of the support of 2 new math support teachers who are also funded with federal monies. Several children are also taking advantage of tutoring opportunities in order to improve their skills. All students continue to participate in Flex Block, the time allotted to providing targeted instruction to bolster specific skills.

Conversations of students throughout the building are frequently around new, "fun" learning, whether it pertains to classes, new after school activities, or field trips. It is our hope that we offer enough exciting activities at PMS that each child find joy in coming to school. Recently, for example 5<sup>th</sup> graders visited the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford where they competed with others to see who could keep their motion-related designs flying longer, racing faster, or shooting straighter. They saw exhibits where they could feel sound and "hear" light and sat in flight chairs to explore outer space and make craters on the moon.

The Stonington Education Fund (SEF) Apple Grant program has frequently made possible new initiatives at PMS. This year, for example, Chris Clarke, technology technician, and Leah Pittle, grade 5 teacher, created *Maker's Faire*, an after school activity around electronics. Students meet in small groups to create objects, including a Nix clock, an LED scrolling sign, and a solar windmill. Expecting few students, Mrs. Pittle planned on an 8 week activity. She now has 24 students that are meeting in small groups over a 23-week period.

*Annie* is coming in April! Mr. Ferrall and Dr. Liguori are working with over 70 students to produce this musical in April. Excitement is running high as our directors continue to have practice sessions and call upon parents and teachers to help out with the many responsibilities that are part of a musical production.

This year PMS has joined forces with Unified Sports of the Special Olympics. Under the leadership of Mrs. Yutzy of our Physical Education staff, we will have a group of students prepare to represent PMS at the regional

track and field event in the spring. Accompanying them will be a group of partners who will be their buddies in practices and at the meet. The sponsor of this program is CAS, the CT Association of Schools.

Several of our students, under the guidance of Mrs. Cassidy and Mr. Flanagan are part of the Amistad Friendship Society, a diverse group of middle school students from 7 southeastern CT middle schools. Enjoying a busy year together, they have visited each other at events held at each middle school, served as ambassadors at PMS for a Capoeira (Brazilian Martial Arts/Dance performers presentation), and will sail aboard the Amistad (historical schooner) in the spring.

### *Celebration of Service Learning*

This year marks our 10<sup>th</sup> year of service learning at PMS. Led by Mrs. Ingham, we are using the theme of *Make a Wish-Pay it Forward!*, Our school wide focus is reach out and grant wishes to people and programs with whom he have worked over the years. Students, for example, have collected over 200 pairs of eyeglasses that Ms. Pacelle will bring to Africa. Additionally our students have helped a prospective Eagle Scout from SHS collect 1700 items to stock the Daily Living Closet at the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, provided new school shirts for all of the students at Chikumbuso, collected 600 cans of soup for the PNC, and raised \$1141 for a Red Cross Help Haiti Fund. In December students hosted a Holiday Tea and Tree Lighting for the Granato Senior Center. Over 90 seniors attended the tea luncheon and enjoyed PMS students' gifts, and an afternoon of caroling and treats. Over 65 volunteers made the celebration possible. In the spring we will host a dance marathon with the seniors.

The service learning engages everyone at PMS as we enjoy several challenges and projects throughout the year.

### *Pay It Forward*

I am proud of the forward movement of Pawcatuck Middle School to prepare each student for his/her future as a thinker and problem solver, hard worker, communicator and team player, and, hopefully, one who understands that even 1 person can make a difference.

### **Kindergarten Registration**

Stonington Public Schools Kindergarten Registration for the 2009/10 school year will be held in March at Deans Mill and West Vine Street Elementary Schools. The dates and times are:

- **Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

To be eligible for kindergarten, a child must be five years old on or before January 1, 2010. Parents are asked to register their child at their home district school, either West Vine Street School or Deans Mill School. At the time of registration, parents must provide a copy of the child's birth certificate (for age verification), a record of immunizations, and proof of residency.

Anyone with questions prior to registration may call:  
Deans Mill School at 535-2235 or West Vine Street School at 599-5832.



### **Teacher of the Year**







Teacher of the Year nomination forms are available on line at [www.stonington.org](http://www.stonington.org) and in the schools' principal's office. Any parent, citizen, student, employee may nominate a tenured teacher for Teacher of the Year. The deadline for nominations is Thursday, April 1, 2010.



# MARCH 2010

## SPS DISTRICT CALENDAR



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March is CMT &amp; CAPT testing month</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b> 6:00 SHS SEF mtg.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b> 6:15 WBSS PTO mtg.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PMS</b> <b>Dr. Suess Day</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b> 3:45 WVSS SBIT mtg.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b> <b>In like a</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5</b> 900-4:30 MMS Strategic Planning mtg. 5:00-7:00 DMS Skate Night @ Galaxy Roller Rink 7:00 SHS Spring Musical-Suessical</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6</b> 7:00 SHS Spring Musical-Suessical</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7</b> 2:00 SHS Spring Musical-Suessical</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8</b> 4:30 DMS SBIT mtg.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9</b> 5:30 MMS SBIT mtg. 7:00 MMS PTO mtg. 6:30-9:00 SHS Citizens Forum</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10</b> 6:00 SHS Spring Sports Team Night 7:00 PMS PTO mtg.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>11</b> 6:30-9:00 SHS Mr. SHS 7:00 Central Office BOE mtg.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>12</b> 6:30 DMS Math/Science night</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Spring Forward</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>15</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>16</b> 9:15 WVSS Spring Picture day 5:00 SHS SBIT mtg. 6:00 DMS Kindergarten Music Concert</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>17</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>18</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>19</b> 5:00 PMS Basket Bonanza 6:30-8:30 DMS Movie Night 7:00 SHS Brain Quest</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>20</b> 9:00-4:30 SHS Strategic Planning mtg.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>21</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>22</b> 6:30 WBSS Music Concert</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>23</b> WVSS &amp; DMS Kindergarten Registration 2:00-7:00 pm 6:30 PMS Family Dodge Ball</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>24</b> WVSS &amp; DMS Kindergarten Registration 10:00 am-2:00 pm 5:00 MMS Family Book Fair 6:00 WBSS SBIT mtg.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>25</b> 6:00 SHS Winter Sports Awards Night</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WVSS Book Fair</b> 3/25-3/31</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>26</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>27</b> 7:00-10:00 pm SHS Senior Class Benefit-Spring Fling Dance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>28</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>29</b> <b>SHS Student Leadership Week</b> 3/29-3/31</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>30</b> 7:00 SHS Choral Concert</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>31</b></p>			<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Out like a</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>