



PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

North Branford High School

Early Winter, 2010

Dear North Branford High Parents,

On behalf of the NBHS staff, we wish Mrs. Saulis well in her future endeavors and thank her for her efforts during the past four school years leading up to the New England of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Evaluation Visitation this past November.

The NEASC Evaluation Visitation took place from November 14th through November 17th and involved our entire staff, the student body and a number of community leaders, and the parents of the North Branford community. The high school completed a four year self study that was then presented to the NEASC Visitation Committee prior to their visit. During their 4 day visit, the NEASC Committee's task was to find evidence our own findings as outlined within the self study. The NEASC visit and self study focuses upon seven specific areas: 1) Mission and Expectations for Student Learning 2) Curriculum 3) Instruction 4) Assessment of Learning 5) Leadership and Organization 6) School Resources and 7) Community Resources for Learning. Following their visit, the NEASC Committee Chair will draft and submit a detailed report to the NEASC office and then a final report to NBHS during the spring semester. NEASC final reports include commendations, ratings on each of the seven aforementioned areas, and recommendations. We thank all members of the North Branford Community for their support during the NEASC visit and evaluation.

On behalf of Mr. Welch and Mrs. Wootton, we would like to extend our thanks to Superintendent Schoonmaker and the North Branford Board of Education for this opportunity in leading the high school during this time of transition. We look forward to the challenge and have taken initial steps in the following areas in moving the school forward academically and otherwise. Specifically –

- We have begun utilizing PBIS, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports – a nationally known researched based program developed by George Sugai of UCONN. This is a framework that focuses upon positive school climate. The objective is to develop and deepen connections between staff and students leading to a more positive climate and improved academic achievement.
- Under the guidance of our Superintendent and Director of Curriculum and Instruction, we have made plans for introducing Project Lead the Way (PLTW)- a technology curriculum focusing upon engineering and design, reintroducing an Automotive class at NBHS, and offering Plant Science in conjunction with our new NBHS Greenhouse.
- We are also exploring opportunities for our students in the following courses: Latin and Future Problem Solvers (FPS). Gifted and Talented students may have the opportunity to select FPS as an elective in the future at NBHS.

Todd Stoeffler, Interim Principal

Format of the Principal's Newsletter

Each issue of the Principal's newsletter will include an opening writing, a section compiled Mrs. Detour and The Guidance Department, a section titled "Happenings at NBHS", and a final segment titled "Parents and Teens".

The opening writing will include relevant and timely information connected to the entire school, the Guidance Department section will outline pertinent information related to their areas of expertise, 'Happenings at NBHS' will mirror the Board of Education Brief that outlines significant events at NBHS, and the 'Parent and Teens' segment will include timely information useful for parents and their teens that could be significant on a local, state, and/or national level.



Happenings at NBHS

- *Long time Coach Babby Nuhn was honored on December 7th as the Class S Field Hockey Coach of the Year. Four members of the field hockey team were name All-State by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference.*
- *Mr. Tzetzso and Mr. Carnaroli lead the Band and Chorus during our Annual Winter Concert on December 8th, and they performed at Evergreen Woods, the N.B. Senior Center & TVES.*
- *The Geremia Family selected the NBHS Wellness Center for their \$10,000 winning in a contest sponsored by Proctor and Gamble and the NFL – Thanks Mr. Geremia!*
- *The NBHS Courtyard, under the direction of Mr. DeNunzio and Mr. Choti, continues to take shape with planking being installed as weather permits.*
- *NBHS continues to unfold the framework for PBIS – Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports – a framework that supports positive student behaviors and improves school climate and student achievement. Through our Advisory Program that meets 1- 2x per month during homeroom time, students have been introduced to PBIS.*
- *WVIT Channel 30 completed two stories- one on the NBHS Coffee Coop, a new initiative started by Mrs. Pendziwater who heads up the Transition Program, another story covered the new NBHS Greenhouse that will be involving the Interact Club, The Life Skills Program, and Plant Science, a new science elective.*
- *Art work completed by North Branford Students, K -12, is currently on display in the Board of Education Room, Town Hall, and the two public libraries in town. Student work will be rotated throughout the year as new work is completed in classes.*



Two reminders:

The Connecticut State Department of Education has outlined information regarding health insurance for families who presently do not have health insurance for their children. Parents are encouraged to access www.huskyhealth.com for information regarding the HUSKY Health Insurance Plan and to then forward completed forms to HUSKY Program, P.O. Box 280747 East Hartford, CT 06128. The Husky HOTLINE – 1-877-284-8759.

Please review the enclosed insert from our North Branford Public Schools Food Service Department. We hope all high school students are responsible with their lunch tickets and will understand the outlined procedures (in accordance with USDA guidelines) regarding lost lunch tickets.

Parents and Teens



Technology and Cell Phones

As with all high schools across the United States, North Branford High School continues to attempt to meet all of the needs of our students in all areas including the area of technology. While technology continues to make advances in many areas usually making our lives more efficient, we look to you, the parent community to help us in a particular area regarding technology – the cell phone.

This generation of teens, as we know born between 1992 and 1996, has not known a world without the Internet and without cell phones. While the cell phone has made communications dynamic, instant, and global, at times, the cell phone has become a difficult piece of technology to monitor. As you know, the cell phone policy for students at North Branford High School is to have cell phones out of sight and in the ‘off position’. At the teacher’s discretion, a cell phone may be confiscated if the phone is out and in sight and/or being used. I have found that most teachers will provide a student a warning to put the phone away prior to attempting to collect the phone. Upon being collected, the phone is then stored in a safe in the main office until a parent picks up the device following the school day.

It is our hope that you discuss this topic with your son/daughter. As you can imagine, having a cell phone being used in a classroom is disruptive and deters from the learning process. This impacts not only the user of the device but also the other students in the class room. Most often, it is another student who may be contacting/texting their friend on the cell phone, at times, we have found that parents have contacted their child via cell phone during class and/or during school hours. As you can imagine, this is problematic because a student then faces a choice of following a parent’s wish to answer/respond or to follow a school rule. It is inevitable that that the student cannot win, either answer the parent and break a school rule or don’t answer the parent and follow a school rule. We hope that all parents consider this prior to using a cell phone during school hours to contact their child. As a parent myself, I can appreciate the need to speak with your son/daughter, we would hope you would use the main office number to reach your child. There is also a phone, free of charge, in the main office for student use. Students may use this phone prior to school, during X-Block, during lunch time, or after school. In the case of an emergency, students may use the phone as needed.

Beyond the school day and the rules of the school, we also have a desire to prepare your child for the world beyond high school. Many businesses and offices are now posting signs outlining the expectations of the employees and customers regarding cell phone use. We would hope that our students also realize that communicating via cell phone is a part of lives today yet it cannot be the only means of communication.

One aspect of school in addition to student academic achievement is the process of socialization – a process of students learning how to develop emotionally and socially. The socialization process is an important aspect of the students’ experience in school so that they can live and work with others for their entire lives. We have yet to see the long term impacts of electronic communications – while efficient and required at times throughout our lives, the impact on youngsters, even high school age students and how this means of communication affects their ability to develop face to face communication skills, conflict resolution skills, possess the skills to demonstrate the ability to be empathetic, caring, and insightful. One of our goals is to prepare students with the skills to navigate the world in a successful way – within families, at the work place, and throughout the community. Our hope is to have students, with the support of their families, to use technology in a productive fashion and to communicate effectively – both in content and in following the expectations of the environments in which they exist.



NBHS Guidance Department News and Noteworthy Information

- All Sophomores and Juniors received their PSAT score reports back during the week of Dec. 13th. Students were given their score reports and then shown how to access the CollegeBoard's *My College Quick Start* (www.collegeboard.com/quickstart) program online, using their personal access codes. If parents have questions about understanding their child's PSAT scores, they are encouraged to contact the NBHS Guidance Department. Copies of student score reports and their access codes are on file.
- Seniors are in the process of submitting their applications to post-secondary institutions where they are interested in attending next year. Please make sure that you are aware of your deadlines and get all of the required material to the Guidance Office well before the final deadline. If you have January 1st deadlines, this means that you should be submitting transcript request forms no later than Dec. 21th to ensure that your supporting material will arrive on time.
- On January 5th, students from last year's graduating class have been invited to join us for our annual Alumni Breakfast program, beginning at 9:00AM in the cafeteria. Students enjoy a nice breakfast with former classmates, staff and administration from NBHS while sharing some of their post-high school experiences.
- The Junior Seminar will be held in the NBHS Auditorium on February 2nd from 9:00-10:30AM. This is considered the "kickoff" program for Juniors as they begin the post-high school planning process. Students will receive copies of their transcripts to-date as well as information regarding the college search process. Parents are encouraged to attend this program. Parents will be receiving invitations in mid-January for individual conferences with their child's school counselor.
- The scheduling process for all students will begin in February. Students will receive their course registration materials and will get teacher recommendations before registering for their classes online. More information about deadlines will be provided to students when we begin the scheduling process.
- The Eighth Grade Parent Orientation program is scheduled for February 9th at 7:00PM in the NB Auditorium. Parents of incoming students are invited to come hear an informative presentation about life at NBHS, credit and course graduation requirements and all academic and elective programs offered.

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
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