

# REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 13

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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*The mission of Regional School District 13, a community that celebrates learning, honors tradition and embraces change, is to ensure that all students will be engaged and ethical lifelong learners and citizens who will thrive, excel, and contribute in an ever-changing, interdependent world by providing challenging, diverse, and nurturing experiences that empower each student to succeed through meaningful partnership with family and community.*

October 14, 2014

Dear Parents,

A few weeks ago I attended my first ever Durham Fair. Even though I grew up in CT, I never attended and now I know what people rave about. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and was proud to attend with my fellow administrators as a part of this amazing community. Our students, whether performing or volunteering are an important part of this event and I have heard many compliments since that time about their unique contributions. This is a message that I am becoming accustomed to hearing: our students represent our school and community well.

### **Communication:**

As we move into the school year, we are once again a part of the vibrant and engaging dynamic of teaching and learning. This happens in classrooms, on playgrounds, on the court, the field, the stage and wherever we talk and work together. As a school district, we want to be sure we are effectively communicating at the classroom, school and district level with you about what is happening. This year we will put a more deliberate effort into communicating with you about learning, safety and available resources. In the next month you will have an opportunity to take an on-line survey to give us feedback in these and other areas. This survey is similar to the one you took last year with additional and more specific questions in the areas noted previously. Your feedback is important to us and I want to encourage you to contact your child's teacher, administrator or me if there are questions that need to be addressed directly.

### **Updates:**

I have included below some information on the SBAC testing that was completed last Spring and that students in grades 3-11 will participate in this Spring. Additionally I have included information on the performance on the CMT and CAPT Science tests for students in grades 5, 8, and 10 which we received last month. Finally, I have attached a letter that reviews the district's attendance policy. Daily, on-time, full-day attendance to school is of great importance in maintaining the continuity of learning.

### **SBAC:**

The SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) testing will continue this year and will be administered to all students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 during the months of April and May. Our district along with other school districts around the state administered these tests for the first time last Spring. We are awaiting results of the test which was a pilot test that was a "test of the test," a means for determining how effectively the newly created and administered test is measuring what it is intended to and rendering data that will be accurate and helpful to school districts. This means that if your child took the SBAC test last Spring you will not receive information specific to your child's individual performance. The SBAC test is aligned with the Common Core State Standards, thus the test should be an indication of exposure to and skills in the particular area tested. You can access more comprehensive information on the SBAC test by visiting the CT State Department of Education's website: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2748&Q=334488>.

**CMT/CAPT Science:**

In addition to the SBAC pilot test that our students in grades 5, 8 and 10 took last year, they also took the CMT (5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades) and CAPT (10<sup>th</sup> grade) Science test. The results on these tests indicate that relative to comparative school districts in our DRG (Demographic Reference Group) our students scored as follows:

- Grade 5: a ranking of 14<sup>th</sup> out of 29 schools, with 75.6% of our students scoring at or above the state goal, in comparison to the state average of 59.6%.
- Grade 8: a ranking of 10<sup>th</sup> out of 20 schools with 82.0% of our students scoring at or above the state goal, in comparison to the state average of 62.5%.
- Grade 10: a ranking of 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 16 schools, with 72.1% of our students scoring at or above the state goal, in comparison to the state average of 46.8%.

A power point presentation that was created by Dr. Berry and presented by me to the Board of Education last week can be accessed by going to the assessment link on the curriculum tab of the district homepage. These results indicate that relative to our DRG, schools/districts that are comparable in the areas of socioeconomic status, need and enrollment, we continue to move closer to the top of our group as our students progress through the grades. I am continually reminded by parents of our graduates that our Science department provides students with rigorous, high quality instruction; the foundation of which begins in elementary and middle school. These tests measure students' cumulative skill and knowledge on the science skills and concepts included in the Science Curriculum Framework. You can access more comprehensive information about these tests by visiting the CT State Department of Education website at;

[http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/csde/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/handbooks/Science\\_CMT\\_handbook-posted.pdf](http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/csde/cedar/assessment/cmt/resources/handbooks/Science_CMT_handbook-posted.pdf).

**Senior Citizen Event:**

This month we will once again host an event that welcomes senior citizens from Durham and Middlefield. We have invited our senior neighbors to attend a school visit at Brewster School on October 21<sup>st</sup> which will highlight the integration of technology amongst our youngest learners. A soup and salad lunch will also be provided. If you know a senior citizen who you think would enjoy this visit, please reach out to them and have them contact Joan Lombardo (Middlefield) at 860-349-7121 or Lainy Melvin (Durham) at 860-788-3337.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn Y. Veronesi, Ed.D.*

Superintendent of Schools