

The Hurlbutt Scoop

Hurlbutt Elementary School PTO Newsletter
Thursday, November 15, 2012

SCHOOL CLOSINGS & SCHEDULED DELAYS

(Click here for 2012-13 District Calendar)

November 21st-23rd – NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Recess)

UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

November 19th – School Photo Re-take Day

November 28th – HES PTO Philanthropy Meeting

December 3rd – 7th – HES Book Fair

SCHOOL & PTO NEWS

A MESSAGE FROM SARA SPAUDLING & TAMMY ROBERTS, HURLBUTT PTO CO-PRESIDENTS

Hi everyone,

Busy first full week back! We have some info to share from the BOE open forum and the General PTO meeting this week. There will be a BOE meeting on Monday evening where the North House space issue will be discussed. At the meeting, Dr. Palmer and Gayle Weinstein answered questions about the proposed shift of space shared with the town from the South House to the North House. We will provide a link to a full description of the proposal. Dr. Palmer will be hosting a coffee this Saturday for any parents who were unable to come to the PTO meeting.

We have been told that the district will re-schedule conferences on December 12th and 13th. Dr. Palmer also let us know that the plan is to let snow days run in June rather than cut into breaks this year. The last storm (which I hope will be the last storm) was a delayed opening because Gayle and Dr. Palmer worked to have the crews out plowing over night (at extra cost, but the circumstance seemed extraordinary) rather than waiting until the morning to plow: they will consider doing so again this year to keep any additional snow days to a minimum (for which I am a grateful!).

We have our first Family Fun Night TONIGHT! Kristin could really use some volunteers, so please let her know if you are available. Thank you Kristin for organizing such a cool event! The Book Fair had to be rescheduled to the week of December 3rd - please consider volunteering if you have time (please see Christina, Pam and Elana's section below). We also have the

evergreen basket fundraiser coming up; this event provides food for families in need and is really a great service (please see Darcy's section below and consider helping out - she bravely volunteered to run the event with out a co-chair this year!).

We hope everyone has a joyful and safe holiday! Sara & Tammy

Sara Spaulding & Tammy Roberts
Hurlbutt PTO Co-Presidents

BOE UPDATE

Board of Education Meeting Monday November 19th @ 7:30 PM Weston Library Meeting Room

Coffee and chat... with the Superintendent – November 17 at 9:00 a.m. in the WIS Cafetorium

BOARD OF EDUCATION UPDATE

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION held a special meeting on Tuesday in the WIS Cafetorium for a question-and-answer session with the Board and the district administration. A video link will be available in the next few days on the district website. The district will be assembling a Q/A and fact page for families in response to questions asked - a link will be published in the next Scoop. A follow up session took place Wednesday morning during the General PTO meeting. Dr. Palmer, Gayle Weinstein and members of the BOE were on hand to answer the many questions and concerns of HES parents. Dr. Palmer will also be hosting a coffee on Saturday at 9:00 in the WIS Cafetorium for all those who have not had a chance to voice your concerns and participate in the informative meetings held this week.

The comprehensive work presented by Dr. Donald Kennedy of the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) suggests that Weston will see a declining enrollment, mostly attributed to smaller cohorts entering kindergarten. As the BOE prepares to develop a budget for 2013-2014, this work will guide the district in its planning, specifically regarding the use of space. It is unlikely the district would be able to close a school building, therefore it is looking at changes that are logical for both the school system and the town of Weston. HES was designed specifically for the youngest learners currently housed in that building, e.g. classrooms have bathrooms attached to the room as well as sinks within the room for hand washing. Therefore, moving these students to another building would not be advisable. Dr. Palmer discussed the following ideas regarding facility usage for 2013-2014 school year:

- Allocate available space not needed for educational programs for use by the Town (Parks and Rec, WOW are possibilities)

- Relocate the Senior Center from South House to the 1st floor of North House and revert current Senior Center space to classroom/educational space - the square footage is the same - but the move will give seniors a separate parking area and HES will regain the classrooms with bathrooms in a closer proximity to the central areas of the school building.
- Study the enrollment projections and capacity at WIS to decide if it would be appropriate to move grade 2 over to WIS (not a possibility until 2015-16). If the enrollment stabilizes, there will not be a move.
- The town is currently undertaking a traffic study to make the newly proposed Senior Center space more accessible to the seniors but separated from the children.

Dr. Palmer reiterated that the proposed changes would not compromise class size. The BOE guidelines for class size are > 18-20 K; 24 1st and 2nd. The school can function without the 1st floor of HES even if the current student body grows. Special secure doors would be installed and the school and senior center would maintain separate entrances. The gymnasium would remain and we would be gaining back the multi purpose room. The science lab and other classes housed in North House would be moved and rebuilt in the South House wing. The use of the building would be negotiated yearly and the school can reclaim the space at any time.

Here are a few of the questions and concerns voiced by parents and the answers given by Dr. Palmer, Gayle Weinstein, or the BOE:

- Why are we giving away space when most of our 2nd grade classes are at size guidelines of 24 children- why not make more classes smaller in size since we have the room? *Grade 2 had many late start students, causing class sizes to grow larger than anticipated. The school will add support where needed to help teachers cope with large class sizes. Adding sections at this time would not help the students.*
- Why not find a stand alone building for the senior center? *There is no building available and HES has space that is available. New construction would impact the town tax levies and the Board of Finance has said "no new construction".*
- Did you consider moving the school administrative offices into HES instead of having a senior center? *This has been discussed, but the administration would need more space than is available at this time.*

The BOE will be voting on the proposed changes at the November 19th meeting to meet scheduling deadlines. All changes need to be budgeted in December, before the budget proposals for the 2013-14 school year are voted on in January. Both Dr. Palmer and the members of the BOE encourage you to contact them with any question and concerns you have regarding the school system.

Other issues discussed at Tuesday's meeting:

- Can Wednesday before Thanksgiving be added into the calendar as a school day in light of all the missed days? *Given the proximity of the storm, many teachers and children have already set travel plans. The prospect of a low teacher child ratio makes adding this day unfeasible.*
- Snow days: The calendar was recently adjusted to make Monday June 17th the last day of school. This new schedule allows for an additional 4 snow days while still achieving the 180 days of school required by the state.
- Conferences have been rescheduled for Dec 12th during teacher planning times - no school will be missed. Teachers will review progress reports with parents at this time. As always, contact your child's teacher if you have concerns and set up a meeting.
- Why was Weston closed for so many days? If families did not have power and the schools did, why not let the children go to school in a warm, lit environment? *Extensive road blockages (220 roads were blocked in Weston) and instances of people trapped in their homes made it unsafe for both children and buses to try to navigate to school. CT school buses are not allowed to set up storm routes and buses cannot run until the majority of students could get to their bus stops safely. Residual hazards still blocked 1 out of 8 roads as of Monday. Additionally, many families without power/heat left town altogether. Schools would not have been well attended if in session on Monday.*
- In the event of a snow storm, Dr. Palmer and the DPW have discussed pre-treating roads before the storm and plowing through out the night to facilitate a delayed opening rather than a canceled day of school. This adds to the town budget but would be quite beneficial for the schools.
- Dr. Palmer apologized for the 5:00 AM phone call regarding the delayed opening. The technology department will be sending out guidelines to help you set your own choice of options on how to be informed (text, email, phone call).
- Do our children have enough free time with the new schedule? *In the prior contract teaching time was 1375 minutes per week - the lowest in the area. In the current contract our teachers have more teaching time which aligns us with other similar school districts. This was not a cut of the specials but rather an additional 30 minutes of teaching per day. This leads to a more balanced and educationally sound school day - this was not done to save money.*
- Looking at projections and current class size - if a grade level has all classes already at 24 - will another section be proposed for the upcoming year? *The district will need to look at the split to make a decision on how to go forward making sure classes are not close to capacity but are not too small as well.*

Sandy Hart, sandy@sundial.com
BOE Representative

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR PHILANTHROPY HAPPENINGS!

Our next Philanthropy meeting will have two very important projects to discuss:

- 1.) Maintenance and Phase II of our fabulous Outdoor Learning Garden
- 2.) Brainstorming philanthropy projects that parents can suggest to staff!

This meeting cannot be missed. Please join us on Wednesday, November 28th, 9:30 a.m., 15 Birch Hill Road. RSVP or just come! All are welcome. These are open meetings. Questions? Call or email.

Britta Lerner, HES PTO Philanthropy Chair
203-341-9245
bherlitz@optonline.net

HURLBUTT ANNUAL BOOK FAIR

Book Fair 2012 – Date Change!

Postponed because of Hurricane Sandy, the annual Hurlbutt Elementary School Book Fair will now be Mon-Fri, December 3-7. Our theme this year is ALL-STAR BOOK FAIR: EVERY READER IS A STAR! We are still looking for volunteers to help out with setup, decorating, selling, and more. **Please click here** to volunteer to help at the Book Fair.

EVERGREEN HOLIDAY GIFT BASKETS – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

It's that time of year when we start our largest Community Services event of the School year, the Evergreen Holiday Gift Basket collection. **We need 2 volunteers from each class to organize and coordinate this project, and we hope that you will consider offering your help.**

It is a fun, easy, and very rewarding community service project. We collect gifts, food, and donations through our classrooms in order to provide a holiday for a family in need of assistance, as well as food to last through the holiday break. This is done in liason with the Evergreen Network in Bridgeport. It is a great opportunity for our children to learn about giving to those less fortunate and they have great fun preparing the bins being sent to the families!

There is little time commitment for volunteers, and it is very rewarding. The classroom volunteers communicate with parents about what donations are needed, send reminders about donations, and attend a brief volunteer meeting on the morning of November 28th (Only one person from each class needs to attend).

Volunteers can also help load the truck with the baskets we have collected at the end of the project, if they want to.

This is the school's largest community service project of the year and we can really use your help! Last year between HES and WIS we supplied 54 families with a holiday meal, gifts and food staples for the children to have during the week school is closed (as they rely on their school meals regularly).

Please let your room parents know if you can help or email me at D.Barrera@outlook.com.

Darcy Barrera-Hawes, Community Services

INNISBROOK GIFT WRAP HAS ARRIVED!

The gift wrap is in and arranged alphabetically on the stage in the South House Cafeteria.

IF you have any questions please contact Eliza Tabacchi at elizatabacchi@yahoo.com.

PHOTO RETAKE DAY – NOVEMBER 19TH

The photos are here!! Portraits taken during Photo Day will be delivered in your child's backpack the week of 11/12. If you have any questions regarding your package or the portraits, please contact Coffee Pond Photography at 800-632-2323 ext. 0.

If your child was absent during Photo Day, and/or you wish to retake your child's photo, HES's PHOTO RETAKE DAY will be on Monday, November 19, 2012! Mark your calendars!

NUTRITION NEWS

[Click here](#) for the November 2012 edition of the Nutrition News.

Jill Patterson RD, Resident Dietitian
Chartwells School Dining Services

INNISBROOK GIFT-WRAP FUNDRAISER

Many thanks to all the families that participated in our annual fall fundraiser! Once again, it was a great success and we were able to raise quite bit of money for our school. Orders will be ready for pick during the first or second week of November. We will notify you!

Eliza Tabacchi, elizatabacchi@yahoo.com

HURLBUTT 2012-13 YEARBOOK

Believe it or not, we have already starting preparing for the 2012-2103 yearbook. Of course, we need your help. We are looking for photos from last year's Mother's Day concert, Field Day and Flag Day concerts. We will also be asking for pictures from the first day of school, field trips, class parties, family fun night, recess and any other specials that take place.

Please make sure that these are high resolution photos. You have two options for sending your pictures. You can send them directly to samhleuzzi@gmail.com or you can upload directly to the Hurlbutt 2012-2013 Shutterfly share site. Please email samhleuzzi@gmail.com to be added to the share site.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact either Sam Leuzzi at samhleuzzi@gmail.com or Melissa Chesman at mhchesman@gmail.com

NEW PTO WEBSITE

The Weston PTO's have joined together and launched a single District PTO website, www.westonpspto.org. The home page of this new website contains information relevant to all four PTO and each PTO has its own tab with information relevant to that PTO. It's important to remember that any online sign-up and RSVP forms for Hurlbutt will be listed under the HES PTO tab. If you have any comments or feedback relating to the new site please email westonpspto@gmail.com.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Preparations for the kindergarten class of 2013-2014 are already underway – a sure sign that the year is flying by. Children who will turn five years of age on or before January 1, 2014 are eligible to begin kindergarten next fall. This year, we will be holding parent informational meetings for all eligible kindergarteners. These will take place in Hurlbutt Elementary School's South House Cafeteria on Monday, December 10, 2012 at 7:00PM, and Tuesday, December 11, 2012 at 9:00AM. Dr. Michael Cicchetti, Hurlbutt Elementary School Interim Principal, and Meg Sullivan, School Counselor, will be facilitating both programs.

The program will be covering commonly asked questions such as:

- Is my child ready for kindergarten?
- What is the typical kindergarten day like?
- New situations – bus, longer day, cafeteria
- How do I help my child transition to kindergarten?
- How do I handle separation anxiety?
- What to expect the first few days of kindergarten
-and any other questions, concerns

Registration packets can be obtained in any of the following ways:

- Your child's current preschool
- On the district website, www.westonps.org
- Hurlbutt Elementary School main office
- Kindergarten informational meetings

Please bring the completed registration packet, along with proof of residency (telephone, gas or electric bill), and a copy of your child's birth certificate to the parent meeting. Without all of these documents, your child cannot be registered.

A presentation by our kindergarten teacher Team Leaders and our Curriculum Instructional Leaders will be held on Monday, April 29, 2013 from 9:30AM-10:30AM in the Hurlbutt South House Cafeteria. This will give you an opportunity to learn more about our kindergarten program.

Although it seems early for kindergarten registration, the information we collect will help us to plan accordingly for the next school year.

Should you have questions, or need registration materials, please call the Hurlbutt main office at, (203) 291-1446.

SOCIAL MEDIA – FACEBOOK & TWITTER

[Click here](#) to find us on Facebook. Like our page and get updated information in your Facebook newsfeed.

[Click here](#) to follow us on Twitter.

AROUND TOWN

WESTON PARKS & RECREATION – WINTER 2012 PROGRAMS

[Click here](#) for information on the Winter 2012 programs being offered; Sports & Fitness, Dancercise, Peanut Basketball and American Red Cross Swim Classes.

WESTON YOUTH SERVICES

WOW! Programs

Weston Youth Services is pleased to announce its lineup of our Winter 2013 WOW! After-School Programs for students in Grades K-2! From our very popular magic and clay classes to model and building and karate, there's sure to be something for everyone!

Please visit our website at www.westonyouthservices.org to check out our winter catalogue for a description of classes, dates, and registration procedure.

Online registration for all programs begins on Tuesday, December 4th. If your child was waitlisted for any of our fall programs, you will have the opportunity to register them from November 28th through November 29th. A link will be emailed to you.

Classes are scheduled to begin the week of January 14th and run from 3:15-4:15 p.m., unless otherwise stated.

WESTON SENIOR CENTER ANNUAL RE-GIFT SALE

Monday November 26th-Thursdays November 29th, 10:00-2:00pm. Please gather up any new or un-used items from your home. to donate to our sale. We are currently accepting donations! Please tell your friends to donate items too. Come shop at our sale, beginning November 26th at 10am. 100% of proceeds go to the Weston Senior Center.

WESTON BOY SCOUT TROOP 788 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Pre-Order your holiday evergreens. Buying your Holiday Season evergreens from Troop 788 is Convenient & Easy! Order and pay online: www.westontroop788.org. We have Trees & Wreaths for sale. Pick up is the first two weekends in December, Dec. 1, 2 & 8, 9, anytime between 10 - 3 pm. Any questions, please contact Tammy Roberts, troberts@emailcorner.net.

Time to Purchase Your Luminary Kits to benefit the Center for Hope!

The Center for Hope and Den for Grieving Kids, an organization which provides support to those in our community who are affected by critical illness, the loss of a loved one or other life altering circumstances, has kicked off its annual luminary campaign. Hope Lights Lives is a holiday

tradition where neighbors create a "community of light" by purchasing luminaries and lining their front yards with them one evening in December to show support for friends and neighbors who are facing difficult times in their lives. This year's luminary lighting will be held on December 16th at 5 p.m. Please consider purchasing a kit for \$25 which makes 12 luminaries. Please contact Tammy Roberts troberts@emailcorner.net to find out the name of your block captain or to sign up to become a captain for your own block OR Anne [Troxe ll troxellanne@optonline.net](mailto:Troxell_troxellanne@optonline.net) to purchase a luminary kit directly.

FREE SWAP & SHOP EXCHANGE PAGE

For Sale, For Free and Wanted Items for Sale. Have something to sell or giveaway but can't deal with Craigs List or Ebay? [Click here](#) to view, [click here](#) to advertise for free.

Submissions should be relevant to Hurlbutt and the Town of Weston (i.e., town sports programs, Town of Weston sponsored community events or after-school sports programs for students taking place in the Town of Weston). If there is any question regarding the relevance of a submission, final approval will be determined by The Hurlbutt Scoop editor and/or the Hurlbutt PTO President. Submission deadline is Tuesday – The Hurlbutt Scoop is emailed to all registered PTO Members on Thursday! All write-ups should be in WORD format and the content should be print-ready,

- If you have a flyer, please submit a brief write-up and we will attach the flyer to the newsletter,*
- If you want to re-run something from the previous week, let us know; review the write-up - does it need updating, i.e., change the wording from "coming home this week" to "you should have received last week"? If so, revise and resubmit,*
- The email address for the Scoop is hesptoscoop@gmail.com*

Thank you for your support and cooperation.