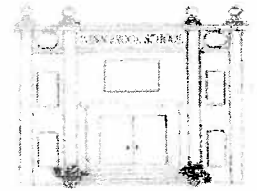


# Words from Winn Brook



January 10, 2011

[www.belmont.k12.ma.us](http://www.belmont.k12.ma.us)

## Principal's Newsletter

Janet Carey, Principal

### Watershed Stewards



The Winn Brook School was recently awarded a major grant from the Foundation for Belmont Education. We are very excited and appreciative that, thanks to the Foundation, we have the opportunity to help preserve a species of turtle that is threatened in Massachusetts. Dr. Bryan Windmiller, a local scientist, has been working with the Mass. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife as well as Mass. Audubon Society in order to protect the Blandings Turtle, which is currently listed as Threatened or Endangered in all of its natural habitats except those in New Hampshire.

Second and third graders will have the primary responsibility for the turtles' care since they are learning about their community, animal adaptation and habitats. Classrooms at other grade levels will also have opportunities to observe the turtles and follow the hatchlings' progress. Second and third graders will provide the school community with periodic updates and growth data will be recorded on a bulletin board outside of the office for all to see.

Blandings Turtles are threatened for a number of reasons. In addition to habitat destruction, the eggs are often destroyed by birds, cats, and other animals, including the fisher cats that have moved into this area. Older turtles are most commonly killed by traffic since they frequently travel to new wetland sights or cross roads in search of nesting grounds. The female Blandings are not able to reproduce until the age of 14-20 years; therefore, many never survive long enough to produce offspring.

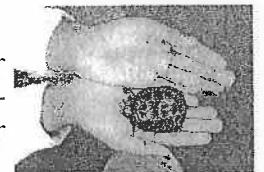
Dr. Windmiller protects the turtle nests with wire cages until the hatchlings emerge. He then delivers them to several institutions throughout the Boston area to be nurtured throughout the winter months. In late spring, when they are large enough to survive in the wild, the turtles are tagged and returned to their natural habitat. Surprisingly, Dr. Windmiller has documented increased survival rates with school-raised turtles which fare better than those raised in large aquariums. He attributes this to the frequency with which students observe the

turtles. Frequent monitoring allows health problems to be detected early and addressed.

The children will soon be voting on gender-neutral names for Turtle 108 and 124. The sex of the turtles was dependent on the temperature of their nests. We cannot identify their sex until they are transported to the Franklin Park Zoo in February. During that visit, they will undergo a laparoscopic procedure which will allow scientists to determine their gender. This high-tech look inside the turtles will be recorded and shared with us as a U-Tube video.

For several years, we have promoted our core values (respect, community and high expectations) by focusing attention on environmental issues, particularly the need to demonstrate respect for our resources by reusing and recycling them. The Turtle Project will also promote respect and help students understand the importance of preserving not only material resources, but threatened wildlife as well. Additionally, it will allow students to make a significant and authentic contribution to their community.

We thank Ximena Soto Landry for helping to bring this project to fruition through her hard work on our grant application.



Above, Ms. Griot-Cross (project chair) recently taught students to use calipers in order to measure the turtles' shells.

### Welcoming a New Custodian

We congratulate our former Head Custodian, Mr. Tim Daye, who was recently promoted to a district-wide carpentry position. He did a terrific job at the Winn Brook, and will certainly be missed. Mr. John Katin has been hired to take over as our Head Custodian. Mr. Katin comes well prepared having had considerable construction and custodial experience. We are pleased to welcome him to Winn Brook!



Mr. John Katin



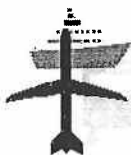
*Respect*

*Community*

*High Expectations*



# Vacation Planning



Please plan your vacations so that they **do not conflict with school**. It is very disruptive to learning and to the flow of classroom momentum when vacations are extended or when a vacation is taken while school is in session. Current teaching techniques are often multi-sensory and cooperative learning strategies are used which involve children working in small group settings. It is virtually impossible for a teacher to reconstruct the learning experiences that were missed due to a vacation. Not only is your child put at a disadvantage if he/she misses school, but time and attention is taken away from the class as a whole when a child is unprepared to progress with a sequence of activities due to a vacation absence. Please consider whether or not you want to convey a message to your child that leads him/her to believe that skipping school is acceptable.

## A Note from our Nurse

All families with students in grades 1,4,7, and 10 will receive a report of their child's Body Mass Index or BMI. This state mandate, conducted by the School Nurse, is part of a state-wide effort to promote better health for all. Measuring heights and weights has been part of the health screening conducted in schools for decades; however, this is the first year that reports will be sent home.

Heights and weights will continue to be screened in a confidential manner and reports will be sent home via U.S. mail—also confidentially. Please call Ms. Shaughnessy if you have any questions or concerns.

*Youth Spelling Bee 2011*

*The Foundation for Belmont Education will hold its annual Youth Spelling Bee at Belmont High School on January 29 2011, beginning at the new earlier time of 3 pm. The Bee is open to all students in grades K-6, with spellers participating in 3-4 person teams. On-line registration is now open at [www.fbe-belmont.org/bee](http://www.fbe-belmont.org/bee) and will close on January 20. Each child's team should agree on a team name before parents log on to register.*

# Upcoming Events

- 1/11 School Committee meeting, 7:30 pm at CMS
- 1/17 NO SCHOOL— Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/18 PTA program, grade 2, Kenya
- 1/18 School Advisory Council meeting, 3:15 in the conference room
- 1/20 Bingo Night for grade 4, 6:30—8pm
- 1/25 PTA meeting 7:00 pm in the cafeteria
- 1/29 FBE Spelling Bee, BHS Auditorium
- 2/11 PTA program on weather for grade 1
- 2/21 -25 NO SCHOOL, Vacation Week

## MCAS Dates 2011

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Gr. 3 Lang. Arts       | March 22 - April 4 |
| Gr. 4 Long Composition | March 22           |
| Gr. 4 Lang. Arts       | March 23-April 4   |
| Gr. 3 & 4 Math         | May 10-24          |

**It is imperative that all 3rd and 4th graders are in attendance during the testing period unless they have medically documented absences.**

# Budget Presentation

Dr Entwistle, Superintendent of Schools, will be presenting the proposed 2011-2012 budget to the School Committee on **Tuesday, Jan 11th**. The meeting will start at 7:30 at the Cheney Middle School. This is an important meeting and parents are encouraged to attend in order to understand the impact that this budget will have on our community.

The School Committee has set up the following schedule of budget presentations:

- ♦ January 11, Tuesday, 7:30 @ CMS, initial presentation
- ♦ Jan 18, Tues, 7:30 pm @ CMS, budget update to School Committee
- ♦ (Tentative) Feb 8, Tues, 7:30 pm, budget Q&A discussion with public
- ♦ (Tentative) Feb 10, Thur, 9:00 am, budget Q&A discussion with public
- ♦ Feb 15, Tues, 7:30 pm, @ CMS, budget update to School Committee
- ♦ (Tentative) Mar 5, Sat - all day budget workshop
- ♦ Mar 15, Tues, 7:30 pm - budget public hearing

# Physical Education Class Visits

Parents are invited to observe their children's physical education classes. Learn about the goals and instructional strategies used in our wonderful PE program.

K-Hannon	Tuesday 2/8 at 9:00 – 9:30	3-McCorkle	Thursday 2/10 at 11:40 – 12:10
K-Lapon	Wednesday 2/9 at 9:05 – 9:35	3-Pomponio	Thursday 2/10 at 9:00 – 9:30
K-Winn	Tuesday 2/8 at 9:30 – 10:00	3-Calhoun	Thursday 2/10 at 9:30 – 10:00
K-Doyle	Tuesday 2/8 at 10:00– 10:30	3-Pandolfo	Thursday 2/10 at 10:00 – 10:30
1-LaRoche	Friday 2/4 at 1:10– 1:40	4-Knutson	Tuesday 2/1 at 10:50 – 11:20
1-McNiff	Wednesday 2/2 at 1:40 – 2:10	4-Ross	Monday 1/31 at 9:30 – 10:00
1-Gillies	Friday 2/4 at 11:35 – 12:05	4-Crough	Monday 1/31 at 9:00 – 9:30
1-Alexik	Wednesday 2/2 at 2:10 – 2:40	4-Graber	Monday 1/31 at 10:00 – 10:30
2-Griot Cross	Wednesday 1/26 at 11:05 – 11:35		
2-Gainer	Wednesday 1/26 at 9:40 – 10:10		
2-Torniero	Wednesday 1/26 12:20 – 12:50		
2-Morrison	Wednesday 1/26 at 11:35 – 12:05		

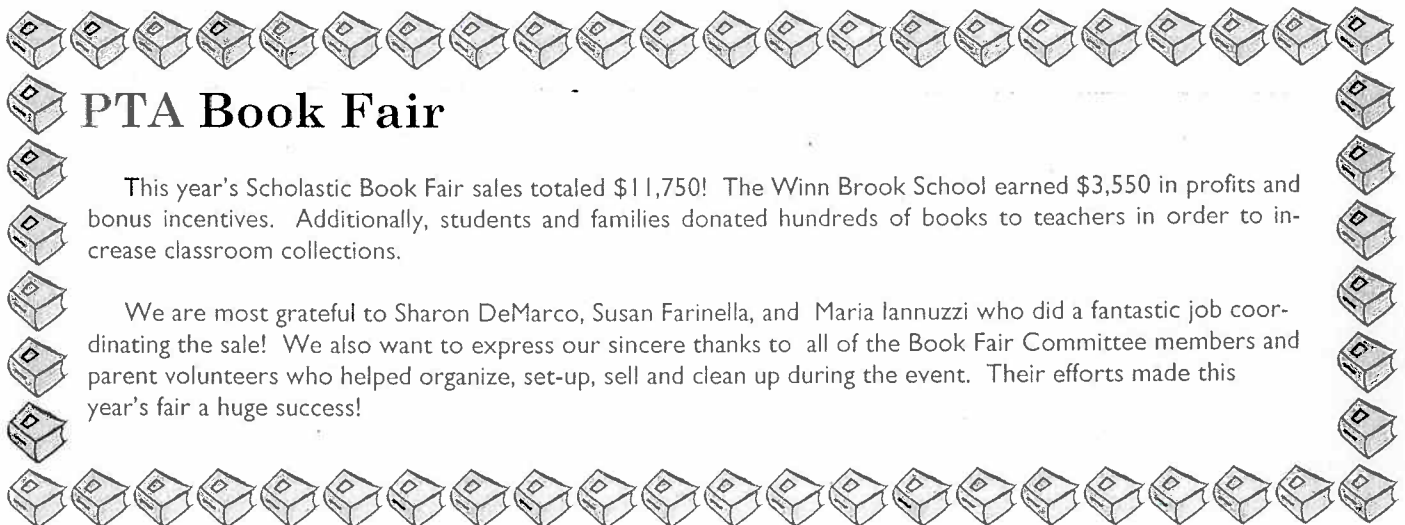


## Winter Weather Reminders

Given our recent weather, it is a good time to review our winter recess procedures and recommendation for dress. Since the children benefit from fresh air and active play, we send them outside for recess unless the weather is particularly wet or drastically cold. As you are probably aware, a layered approach is generally the best way to cope with winter conditions. The layers help conserve body heat while children are outside and enable students to adjust to interior temperatures that may vary as they travel to the gym, lunch, and specialists' classrooms.

Students will only be allowed to play in the snow if they are wearing the appropriate gear (snow pants, boots, hats and mittens/gloves.)

*Delayed school openings, as well as school closings, are announced on WBZ radio and TV (channel 4), WHDH TV (channel 7), and WCVB TV (channel 5). WRKO radio and the BPS website ([www.belmont.k12.ma.us](http://www.belmont.k12.ma.us)) will also carry this information.*



## PTA Book Fair

This year's Scholastic Book Fair sales totaled \$11,750! The Winn Brook School earned \$3,550 in profits and bonus incentives. Additionally, students and families donated hundreds of books to teachers in order to increase classroom collections.

We are most grateful to Sharon DeMarco, Susan Farinella, and Maria Iannuzzi who did a fantastic job coordinating the sale! We also want to express our sincere thanks to all of the Book Fair Committee members and parent volunteers who helped organize, set-up, sell and clean up during the event. Their efforts made this year's fair a huge success!

# PTA Page

## Upcoming PTA Events

**PTA meeting: Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 7:00pm– 8:30 pm @ Winn Brook Cafeteria**

**Winn Brook Skating Night: Friday, March 4, 2011, 7pm- 9pm @ "Skip" Vigliolo Skating Rink**  
Free admission and hot cocoa. Bring your family and your skates! All children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Math Night: Thursday, April 7, 2011, 6pm-8pm @ Winn Brook gymnasium**  
An interactive, fun, family event filled with games and activities. Recommended for 2nd - 4th graders. Questions?  
Contact Lyn Bodmer ([ricknlynb@yahoo.com](mailto:ricknlynb@yahoo.com)).

Want to commemorate your child's birthday or give a class gift? Check out the **Gift Book Wish List** for your child's class at <https://sites.google.com/site/wbptagiftbook/>. Directions also available at our donation box in the school lobby. Need more info? Contact Georgia Looney ([phillipsge@yahoo.com](mailto:phillipsge@yahoo.com))

Please bring us your "**Box Tops for Education**" (<http://www.boxtops4education.com>). Each box top we redeem earns us additional funds to pay for the programs, events, and supplies that enrich our children's school experience! Leave box tops in the marked bin in the lobby and we'll do the rest!

The Winter Session for the **Extracurricular Classes** runs January 24 - March 25th. Volunteers will be needed to monitor the classes. Please consider helping out.

If you have agreed to be a **Library Volunteer**, please check your calendars to see if you are scheduled for any dates in January or February. Your support is vital to keep the library running smoothly.

Winn Brook volunteers have barcoded over 7000 books as part of the effort to automate the library collection. The School Committee meeting on Jan 18, 2011 (7:30pm at Chenery Middle School) will include a presentation about the **library bar-coding effort** and a discussion about **future library function and funding**. Please come to learn more. Contact Jenny Angel ([jangel@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:jangel@stanfordalumni.org)).

The **Holiday Gift Drive** collected 409 gifts! These went to Massachusetts children and families in need. In 2011, look for the Belmont Food Pantry drive & landscaping projects.

Thanks for your support and assistance in making the recent **Book Fair** a success! We earned valuable funds for the programs and events that enrich our children's experiences at Winn Brook.

At a recent PTA meeting, we asked you to **share your opinion about the role of the PTA**, the programs we sponsor, and how we spend our funds. Here are some of your great ideas:

- ◆ Have more community building activities like picnics, community service events, organized Kindergarten play dates, and other activities that help families make connections at Winn Brook.
- ◆ Increase PTA's PR effort so that more families understand what the PTA does; it's not just ice cream socials and movie nights, but also paying for school programs and tools that teachers use in the classroom.
- ◆ Have the PTA sponsor parental education initiatives like Winn Brook orientation packets and programs for parents regarding bullying and sensitivity training.