

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School

APRIL 2009

PRINCIPALLY SPEAKING

Welcome to Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. We hope that our newsletter will serve as a window into our great school. There are wonderful things happening every day and we want you to be aware of them. Please enjoy the newsletter and look forward to us restructuring our website to share even more information.

Bienvenidos a la escuela intermedia Bennie Dover Jackson. Esperamos que nuestro boletín le provea la información que usted necesita. Queremos mantenerle informado de todas las maravillosas actividades que acontecen todos los días en nuestra escuela. Disfrute este boletín informativo y esperamos pronto tener nuestro website listo para ofrecerles aún mas información.



Tracy J. Barber, Principal

Physical Education Department Recognized

The BDJMS Physical Education department was recognized in a recent edition of “Strategies-A Journal for Physical Education and Sports Educators”. Through the efforts of the Physical Education Department they received a grant for heart rate monitors and fitness-based technology as part of the EnergyNow! Program. Students and PE teachers can get immediate feedback about student performance and activity levels.

The technology provides each student the ability to customize workouts and activities based on heart rate data. Students are expected to maintain a target zone (TZ) of 155 – 185 beats/minute. This method is far better than stopping and checking pulse rates during exercise. The heart rate data is then downloaded via an inferred scanning tool to a computer program called TriFIT. In the program the data can be analyzed to see the level of involvement of students over a period of time.

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SCHOOL WIDE STUDENTS OF THE MONTH
2008-2009

Grade 8
 Linette Almonte
 Tathiana Jean Baptiste
 Natassia Carter
 Kervince Duperval
 Michael Gilliard
 Thaidisbeth Lopez
 Hailey Lugo
 Tanessa McQuillan
 Jordan Rodriguez

Grade 7
 Kyla Chadwick
 Elissa Lantigua
 Evelyn Lobo
 Karla Moran
 Orrin Parke
 Nico Ramos
 Derrian Williams

Grade 6
 Julio Alvarez
 Samantha Brown
 DeAndre Bruton
 Jacob Epps
 Jennifer Joseph
 Misael Lopez
 Ermioni Mema



Care Packages

During the month of February, BDJMS care packages were sent to nine soldiers serving overseas. All recipients are family or friends of our staff and students here at BDJMS and students assisted in coordinating the packing of the boxes during Saturday Kid Zone. Donations have been greatly appreciated and we hope to send another shipment in May!



Adolescent Sleep (youngsters between the ages of 11-22)

Our students are changing rapidly during adolescence. Their bodies need more sleep. Experts say they need 9 hours and 15 minutes of sleep. Also, students' body hormones change so they are more awake in the evening and then are harder to wake in the morning.

Lack of sleep causes memory problems and decreases creativity so it is hard for students to learn. They are struggling with learning to handle stress and controlling emotions and being tired makes this worse. Tired youngsters have more problems with the usual mood swings, irritability and lack of self confidence that is normal during adolescence. Other concerns are depression and weakening the bodies' ability to fight off illness. Lack of sleep can cause problems with making good choices.



School Social Worker

Help! Recruiting School Uniforms!!!

Please consider donating "gently" used school uniforms your child has outgrown to our school. If you belong to a church or organization, perhaps they could contribute money, donate new uniforms or "gently" used shirts, khaki's, crew neck sweatshirts or sweaters in our school colors: shirts, sweatshirts and sweaters (green, yellow or white) and khaki slacks. If you have a donation to drop off, please bring it to the Guidance Office.



Science Fair Participants/Winners

On Wednesday, March 10th four BDJMS students participated in the Connecticut State Science Fair. These students have been working on their projects since October and deserve recognition for their efforts. They competed against hundreds of other middle school students in the state.

The following students earned third honors:

Grade 8

Yanashley Bures and **Anyssa Dhaouadi**: “How Do Different Exercises Effect Heart Rate?”

Hailey Lugo: “How Does the Surface of an Object Effect How a Dolphin Uses Echolocation?”

Grade 7

Nicholas Muscarella: “How Do Differing Acidic Solutions Effect PH and the Digestion of Swallowed Chewing Gum?”



Update Emergency Contact Information

If home phone numbers, emergency contact names or emergency contact phone numbers have changed, please contact the main office at 437-6480. It is imperative that these your child's emergency information is kept up to date.

Red Team

The red team science classes recently finished building bridges for the Science and Technology in Society Unit. Students had to choose from a variety of materials including toothpicks, popsicle sticks, and straws as well as glue,



tape and wire to construct a bridge of their own design in teams. The bridges were then tested on strength and durability (pictures of the bridges can be seen in the Red Team hallway). Our next unit will focus on weather and climate. We will finish the year by studying astronomy and the Earth-Moon system.

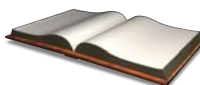
Mrs. Rodgers' 8th grade language arts class has been reading “Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl” as well as excerpts from Left to Tell-a survivor's account of the Rwandan genocide. The students have been studying WWII and the holocaust in their social studies class, so reading Anne Frank in language arts has proved to be a successful connection.

Looking at the more modern genocides through the book Left to Tell has also connected students to current events such as what is happening in Darfur and their responses have been quite insightful.

As a project the students have constructed posters to answer the big question, “how will learning about their lives influence the way you live yours?”

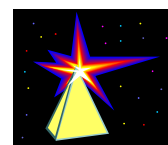
Students have also written and illustrated pieces of poetry as if they were speaking to Anne Frank, telling her how the world has changed and how it has stayed the same.

Students in Mrs. Williams's language arts classes recently completed *The Pact*, a story told affectingly about three young men who beat odds many of us find difficult to imagine. Their experiences chronicled lessons to help young people become educated and avoid the traps of poverty, drugs and crime. *The Pact* is a lesson in the power of peers. Due to the



contemporary nature of the novel, students found it intriguing. Some students spoke of forming their own pact in helping themselves achieve personal goals. Let's hope this insightful text garners life-lessons that aren't easily obliterated!

Mrs. McLellan's math classes have been working on geometry. In February students created a Geometric Valentine Poem. The poems related the student's feelings and geometry terms. Their creations were beautiful; if you would like to read some, come up to room 416 and have a good read and for some a good cry. Included in our geometry unit we have made colorful cubes relating surface area and nets; we've created tessellations using our handmade stencils; and we've had fun with logic problems. We have made faces, edges, and vertices come to life by creating the only five regular polyhedra known to man out of straws and ribbon. Geometry is so much FUN!!!



Parents: We are collecting Box Tops for Education which you find on cereal boxes, snack bars, etc. Please clip the labels and have your child return them to their homeroom teacher. The school receives money for each label redeemed.



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Dream Team

During CMTs, our students had the opportunity to learn about the Chinese culture throughout the disciplines. In math, they created pictures using tangrams. During language arts, they wrote poems based on folk legends, and were able to express themselves through calligraphy. They learned how to use chopsticks, about the customs of Chinese New Year and about the Chinese zodiac during social studies and science. The students really enjoyed these activities.



The Dream Team teachers are extremely proud of our students' effort during the CMTs. We held a raffle for those students that came in on time every day and that used the test taking strategies that they have been taught this year.

Boys' Basketball Team Finishes 13-0

The boy's basketball team finished its second undefeated season in a row this year at 13 – 0. The team's captain and leading scorer was eighth grader Izzy Davila. Keith Porter and DeAnte Bruton also contributed significantly for the Tigers. Coaches Cravinho and Wheeler were very happy with the season and are looking forward to next season. The team and coaches would like to thank all of the parents, students, and friends that attended the games and supported the Tigers. We hope you enjoyed watching us play. See you next year!



Connecticut College Tutors

Sixty-two students who participated in the first Community Partnership initiative visited the Connecticut College campus on March 27th. The tutoring program enlisted the support of Connecticut College tutors and matched them with BDJMS students recommended by their teachers.



After three weeks of intervention, the students acquired additional strategies in mathematics in order to confidently tackle the mathematics portion of the Connecticut Mastery Test. To reward their efforts, the BDJMS students will partake of the all-you-can-eat buffet at the Connecticut College cafeteria.

Band

The bands 6,7,8 are planning a concert on May 28th at 6 PM. Students will stay after school that day, rehearse, eat, relax and then perform promptly at 6. This concert is focused on patriotic pieces and how marches played a role throughout history. We hope to include our 5th grade students as well from all NL elementary schools.



Also, we are looking forward to planning another field trip in June with the band. However, each student must participate in fundraising. We are working on ideas for a destination as well as what to sell in order to make our financial goals...the students have been helping in all of the planning and we will give you an update in the next newsletter.

Student Services

Youth Advisory Council

The New London Community and Campus Coalition, in collaboration with Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, is in the process of forming a Youth Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will consist of students who possess leadership capabilities and who are willing to give a voice in decisions the Coalition is making to prevent underage drinking and substance abuse. Students' voices would ensure that New London youth would be heard. This group of 4-8 students will meet 2-3 times a year.

The mission of the New London Community and Campus Coalition is to engage all constituencies in the New London community to combat underage drinking and substance abuse and promote positive behaviors with New London youth.

Peer Mediation at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School



Hats off to our peer mediators who are doing a phenomenal job conducting peer mediation sessions!!! Peer mediation is a service offered at Bennie Dover that allows students to resolve conflicts in a non-threatening, peer-led environment. One positive indicator that students are benefitting from this service is the limited number of students requesting additional peer mediation sessions. The peer mediators will celebrate their hard work with an end of year social. Coast Guard cadets will be invited to hold a mini workshop on leadership for our students in May.

Grade Six Classroom Presentations

The grade six school counselor is visiting students during their study hall period to share concepts with students that are **academic, career, and personal/social developing**. The **academic** lessons will include strategies that will achieve success in the classroom. The **career** instruction is to help students see a relationship between academics and the world of work. The **personal/social** developmental goal is to provide a foundation for personal and social growth by helping students understand and respect themselves and others, acquire interpersonal skills, and understand safety and survival competence.

The comprehensive school counseling program is directed to all students. September's presentation allowed the counselor to introduce her role and explain her relationship to students. She also shared a list of ways and reasons why students should seek assistance from school counselors. "How to Succeed in Middle School," was a fitting topic during the month of October.

Give Respect, Get Respect offered a myriad of lessons for students to learn. Students (1) recognized the importance of showing respect for others' ideas, feelings, dreams, and personal boundaries, (2) distinguished between respectful and disrespectful behaviors, (3) saw the value in respecting other people's differences, and many other subtle lessons.

The video, *Developing A Positive Attitude Towards Homework*, is an excellent tool for helping middle school students see the value in homework. The lesson was quite compelling that study skills learned now are yours for life.

Transition to Middle School

Guidance is currently planning visits for grade 5 students to the middle school as part of our transition program. Students from each elementary school will visit Bennie Dover Jackson. They will listen to a presentation from counselors and students that describes our program and the middle school experience. The presentation is followed by a tour of the building and students are encouraged to ask questions while having a snack before returning to school.

Transition to High School

In late January, all counselors from New London High School came to Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School to provide an overview of the high school program. Counselors met with students in classrooms and discussed the ninth grade core classes, graduation requirements, and elective class selections. They also discussed community service requirements and NLHS activities and after school programs.





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ENRICH

The ENRICH Program is in the middle of their annual spring building projects. If you stop by our classroom it looks like a combination of the desert of Giza and a new housing development. 6th and 8th graders are building pyramids out of sugar cubes and 7th graders are designing and constructing houses using plans they have drawn. Students are enjoying the hands on building opportu-



nity while at the same time being challenged by construction problems. ENRICH students have also registered on the Renzulli Learning System and have created their own learning profiles that they will be using to explore web sites that are geared towards their interest areas. Several field trips are in the works. We will be visiting the Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe houses in April and some ENRICH students will be

participating in the CAMPY workshops at the Coast Guard Academy in May and seven ENRICH students will be attending the Urban Showcase the first of June. On Feb. 27th we had 17 students take the test to see if they will qualify for the Johns Hopkins Talent Search Summer Programs. It's been a busy spring but a lot has been accomplished by ENRICH students.

Pasta with Parents and Basket Bonanza

With over eighty items donated to our event, the Pasta with Parents and Basket Bonanza 2009 was a HUGE success! A big THANK YOU to the teachers, students, parents, and community members who came out and made donations of items to raise money or their time! This event is a PTO fundraiser for student activities. Now preparations can begin for Pasta with Parents and Basket Bonanza 2010!!!! WAHOO!



Volunteers

There are currently over 70 volunteers within the building working as mentors and tutors!!! This year we have been strengthening our relationship with the USCGA, UCONN at Avery Point, Connecticut College, L&M, and the Kiwanis Club. On March 19th we had the honor of Susan Weinberg a.k.a Dr. Mentor visiting NLPS for an informal luncheon for community members. She also visited Dr. Clouet's TV talk show to promote mentoring in New London! On April 1st, Ms. Sebastianelli will be visiting the Kiwanis Club to share information on the volunteer programs at BDJMS.

Voyager Book Club

Tuesday afternoons in the month of March, April and May are the meeting times for the Voyager Book Club. The club is sponsored by the Connecticut Council for the Humanities. The students meet from 2:30 to 3:30 to discuss the Percy Jackson book series written by Rick Riordan. The Humanities Council has purchased the books and the students get to keep the books after the club has concluded. What a great way to improve reading skills and get to keep four books. For more information contact Mrs. Eileen Schindler, Literacy Coach, at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School.

Nova Team

NOVA team students are

Sailing through spring, shrugging off the snow and the weight of CONNECTICUT MASTERY Testing! If you ask your child what the last sentence's literary device was, they'll instantly respond "alliteration!" This, and fraction division and simple machines, propaganda and western expansion, stories of Vietnamese villagers, make up a day at BDJ—all you have to do is ask...

This quarter the Nova Team took a little break from the CMTs, CFAs, and DIPs to eat a little P-I-E in honor of Pi Day! We spent the week of March 9 learning new vocabulary associated with the concept of pi, measuring circles and making calculations. We read Sir Cumference and the Dragon of Pi and the students made necklaces representing the first 100 digits of pi, with each color standing for a different number. We ended the week by eating pie on Friday, March 13, even though it wasn't truly Pi Day until that Saturday 3/14. We continued talking about pi the following week as the students wrote a persuasive essay trying to convince the entire school to celebrate with us next year.



Over the past few months, students have been hard at work in social studies!

- Propaganda flyers were designed to convince colonists to settle in one of the three major regions of America in the early 1700s
- Posters were created to display the 7 Principles of the Constitution (to teach others-what they are, what they mean, and what they look like) as established in the late 1700s
- Persuasive letters were written in a unit titled "Writing for Your Rights!" where students wrote letters to President Obama, Chief Justice Roberts of the US Supreme Court, The New London Board of Education, BDJMS Principal Mr. Barber, *The Day* paper, and others to express their positions on the specific aspects of the Bill of Rights and their rights.
- Currently, students are working on a word classification system.
- As we continue in our journey through American History, we will be heading west!!! It is the year 1789 and the United States is growing, I am excited to share the journey to the Pacific Ocean with my students over the next few weeks!

Each month, the NOVA Team recognizes students who have shown effort, achievement, good citizenship, and a desire to learn. Students are recognized in two categories- Super NOVA of the Month (one per month) and NOVA Rising Stars (multiple students chosen per month).

SUPER NOVAS

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| September | Nathaniel Rios |
| October | Keith Verdini |
| November | Jake Sherman Watson |
| December | Alyssa Gregory |
| January | Alicia Martin |
| February | Briana McQuay |
| March | Ryan Burdick |

NOVA Rising Stars

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| September | Gretchen Greene | December | Ryan Burdick |
| September | Alicia Martin | December | Corey Capers |
| September | Arieanna Ramos | December | Gerald King |
| September | Adbel Rodriguez | January | Jailene Clinton-Ortiz |
| October | Heaven Bodden | January | Raul Maldonado |
| October | Kylah Chadwick | January | Francisco Santos |
| October | Emily Corbeil | January | Adrian Silva |
| October | Lexus Harris | February | Cheryl Chapados |
| October | Nick Muscarella | February | Khadija Dubose |
| October, November | Joanna Perez | February | Jessie Laflamme |
| November | Nashalis Ayala | February | Amarilys Martinez |
| November | Emily Gonzalez | February | Janeska Vargas |
| November | Asia Jefferson | March | Edwin Colon |
| November | Austyn Robledo Ramsay | March | Gretchen Greene |
| November, January | Deisha Quinones | March | Darnell Robinson |
| | | March | Arman Thompson |



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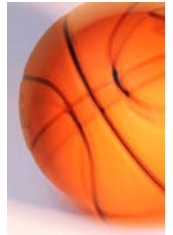


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Girls' Basketball Team

Congratulations to the girls' basketball team for a successful season. Coach Stefanski would like to recognize the efforts of: Ray Ray Brown, Mackenzie Viveiros, Brianna Pugh, Lexus Harris, Bryanna Parkes, Tamia DeBarros-Cannon, Alyssa Gregory, Gretchen Greene, Shariena Hill, Rayven Smith, Deanna McCarvell, Alicia Varley and Shakysa Padilla.



SPIRIT TEAM

Geometry and measurement are all the buzz as students delve deeper into the construction and measurement of geometric shapes as they explore both Customary and Metric measures. Studies will culminate with our annual industrial design project where students will get a glimpse into the real world challenges of industrial shoe design and once again possibly get to do a remote video conference with a  real world shoe designer. This integrated math project will enlist the expertise

and support of Ms. Morris, our art teacher, as students compete for first or second place and honorable mention.

The SPIRIT team science students celebrated National Poetry Month by writing Limericks about earthquakes and Haikus about producers, consumers and decomposers. Currently, we are working on a unit on Ecosystems which will take a close look at Long Island Sound. Next we are headed to the science lab to dissect squid and then we're off to Project Oceanology for a hands-on look at estuaries

onboard the ship, Enviro-Lab, at the end of April. Furthermore, we will be hosting the Dennison Pequotsepos Nature Center in May to do an Enviro-scape Lab to go along with our study of soil and erosion. And finally, we have to mention those fantastic Interactive Science Notebooks the students have been working on all year! They really are outstanding representations of all that we have learned in sixth grade. Science is where it's at!

