



January 2010

# Quaboag Regional School District News Letter

*Decisions are made in the best interests of our students.*



The recent announcement from Governor Deval Patrick to reverse the 9c cuts to regional transportation reimbursement is certainly good news for the Quaboag Regional School District. This is a terrific way to begin the new calendar year! We owe a great deal of thanks to the legislators who signed a letter to Governor Patrick asking him not to cut regional transportation. More specifically, I would like to publically thank Senator Stephen Brewer and our State Representatives Anne Gobi and Todd Smola for actively supporting and creating a partnership with the Quaboag Regional School District.

I am happy to announce that Mary Dernalowicz has accepted the position of Interim Dean of Students at Quaboag Middle/ High School. Mrs. Dernalowicz has been teaching for 17 years, 15 at Quaboag. She graduated from Fitchburg State College in 1993 with a BS in Geophysical Sciences and she came to Quaboag in 1995. Since coming to Quaboag she has been involved in numerous committees, advised the Class of 2001, started up the Astronomy Club, advised the yearbook for the past 8 years, and also assumed the role science department chair in 2008. She travels to Mexico each February to work with paleontologists to recover dinosaur fossils and other geological work with the Commission of Paleontology of the Mexican state of Coahuila. In addition, she teaches college courses in the geophysical sciences at Mount Wachusett Community College.

The 2010 calendar year finds Quaboag looking to fill two very important administrative positions: Principal for Warren Community Elementary School and a permanent Assistant Principal for QRMHS. WBES Principal Colleen Mucha will soon be forming a search committee to select the next WCES Principal. Anyone who is interested in serving on the WCES search committee is asked to contact Principal Mucha at [cmucha@quaboag.org](mailto:cmucha@quaboag.org) or 508-867-4655. Likewise, Mr. Myers will soon be forming a search committee for the next QRMHS Assistant Principal. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Principal Myers at [gmyers@quaboag.org](mailto:gmyers@quaboag.org) or 413-436-5991.

While we are only about half way through the 2009-2010 school year, it is time to begin the budget process for the 2010-2011 school year. The administrative team is currently working on the fiscal year 2011 budget. As we have done in the past, we will hold several public budget meetings to solicit input and hear concerns from parents, students, and community members. A complete list of meeting times can be found on our website or by contacting the Superintendent's office.

In a cooperative effort with the Warren and West Brookfield Boards of Health, the QRMHS will host a second H1N1 flu vaccine clinic. This clinic is scheduled for Sunday, January 10 from 11:00AM- 2:00PM. The clinic will be open to all residents of Warren and West Brookfield.

Working together, I am confident that we can provide a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment for our students. As always, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions please contact me at [bkustigian@quaboag.org](mailto:bkustigian@quaboag.org) or 413-436-9256.

*Brett Kustigian, Superintendent of Schools*

*The mission of the Quaboag Regional School District is to form a partnership with parents and the community to prepare our diverse population of students to become lifelong learners in a nurturing, safe environment with high expectations so they will become responsible, productive citizens in an ever-changing global society. Most importantly, decisions are made in the best interests of our students.*

## Quaboag Regional Middle / High School News

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The faculty and administration of Quaboag Regional Middle High School welcome you back to school and hope that you had a happy and safe New Year!

As teachers and students, we have the unique opportunity to celebrate the New Year twice—first in September and then again in January. Every New Year brings new opportunities for personal and academic growth. Just as you do in September, encourage your son or daughter to use the January New Year as a fresh start, a chance to begin again. Refocus their attention on learning and personal improvement and help them approach challenges with fresh eyes. Review the goals they may have set for themselves in September (their New *School* Year's resolutions). How are they coming? Which have they achieved? Which need more attention? Have your son or daughter set productive New Year's resolutions, too. Reflecting on academic and personal goals in January offers us all an opportunity to improve!

CONGRATULATIONS to **Mrs. Dernalowicz**, who will be serving as our interim dean of students for the remainder of the school year. Mrs. Dernalowicz, a fifteen-year veteran of Quaboag Middle High School, is committed to working with you to maintain a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment for our students and building upon our positive start to the '09-'10 school year. Thank you also to all of the teachers, students, parents, and school committee members who volunteered to serve on the interim dean of students hiring committee.

We would like to offer our very special congratulations to **Brianna Fleming** (Class of 2010) for being chosen as this year's recipient of the Superintendent's Scholar Award. Brianna is a dedicated and conscientious student who is currently first in her class with a GPA of 4.7, a member of the National Honor Society, and a valuable member of her soccer and basketball teams. Brianna is an outstanding role model for her classmates, teammates, and the younger students who look up to her.

Quaboag's annual winter clothing drive (sponsored by **Heather Yelle**, Class of 2010) and the *Twelve Days of Giving* (a canned goods drive sponsored by **Olivia Jankins**, Class of 2010) were tremendous successes thanks to your support and generosity! Items donated to the clothing drive were given to the Worcester Area Community Action Council and all canned goods were donated to the food pantry in West Brookfield, *The Giving Cupboard*. **Thank you Olivia and Heather!**

**Stay involved!** We are currently looking for parent and community volunteers to serve on the QRMHS School Council, which meets monthly to discuss school improvement initiatives. In addition, we are committed to extending our library's hours of operation and are looking for after-school volunteers. If you are interested in either opportunity, please email Greg Myers, QRMHS Principal ([gmyers@quaboag.org](mailto:gmyers@quaboag.org)). The faculty, staff, and administration of Quaboag Regional Middle / High School remain steadfast in achieving our vision to create a school where all students may achieve at the highest levels. We are mission-driven, student-centered, and always seeking to improve. If you have any questions or concerns about your student's experience or if you have suggestions or ideas that might make our school better, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me anytime.

Sincerely,

Greg Myers, Principal

Mary Dernalowicz, Interim Dean of Students

## Warren Community Elementary School News

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We had two evenings of phenomenal holiday programs here at WCES. One evening we had students from Grades 2 and 3 performing, and after getting snowed out, we had another evening of Grades K and 1, along with the school band and orchestra, treating us to seasonal music. The staff joined on both evenings for some audience carol sing-alongs. Many thanks and a great deal of appreciation to music teacher Joanne Meegan and volunteer pianist Sara Blackwell for their work preparatory to the evening program. The gymnasium was packed, as was the parking lot and roadway, with many parents and grandparents enthusiastically smiling and celebrating the spirit of the season. Also in the spirit of the holidays, the Jingle Fund helped 75 families this year which equals 165 children. A big thank you goes out to the whole community for helping us in this endeavor.

After many frustrating delays we are about to place the newly acquired lap tops into the hands of children. The new lab will move from classroom to classroom, enabling the classroom teachers to bring significant learning opportunities to the students that they were not able to share before. These lap tops will be equipped with both a Lexia, and a Symphony Math software program. These programs are specifically designed to offer strategic math and reading interventions at the specific level of difficulty the student is experiencing. In the past we've had the Lexia program available for small groups of students but they would have to leave their classrooms with an adult to accompany them to the computer site. This will bring an additional opportunity for teachers and students to utilize these programs within the classrooms.

We have been fortunate to be able to hire some additional part-time staff to our building, and we are happy to welcome Mrs. Lisa Floury and Mrs. Stephanie Beauregard as Title I Math/ ELA tutors. Each will be working four hours per day, working with specific groups of students who have been identified in needs of assistance, within the classroom. One of these tutors will also run an after school homework assistance from 3-4 for identified students. Ms. Caitlyn LaRoche will be filling in for Mrs. Elaine Cygan's maternity leave from now until her return. Mrs. Cygan has been the Title I Reading teacher for the building, and this will be Caitlyn's first teaching position since graduating from Westfield State last Spring. Pumpernickel Puppets will be doing a 45 minute show at WCES on January 7 at 10:00 for the preschoolers and kindergartners. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Warren Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Sincerely,  
*Tedd Brown, Principal*

## West Brookfield Elementary School News

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**Dear families,**

**Happy New Year! It is our wish at West Brookfield Elementary School that the year 2010 finds our family and friends healthy and happy. We look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure that all of our students enjoy a successful year filled with wonder, curiosity, and delight in learning.**

**New Year, New Start at West Brookfield Elementary School!** Our crowded classes in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade will be getting a new start in January. We have hired Mrs. Terry Hall as a long-term part-time substitute teacher. Mrs. Hall will be responsible for teaching Math, English, Reading, and Writing to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade. With the addition of Mrs. Hall, we will be able to split our 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students into three groups instead of two for these subject areas. The numbers at this grade level are very large. The students will still remain with their current homeroom and they will attend specials, lunch, and recess all together. Mr. Hibbard and Mrs. Salem will still teach Science and Social Studies. However, at the end of the day the students will be broken into smaller groups where they can receive more direct instruction. The addition of the third teacher will better address our student needs. Welcome Mrs. Hall!

**Oh!! The weather can be frightful!** Students will be going outside for recess unless the weather is unsafe. Just a reminder to make sure that your child is prepared to go outside. Students need warm winter jackets as well as hats and gloves. Unfortunately, many students are coming to school without winter jackets and some are still wearing shorts. If a student has winter boots on they will be allowed to go in the snowy areas, however, if they are wearing their only pair of shoes for the day, they will not. If you are missing any sweatshirts or other pieces of your children's clothing, please stop by and check out our lost & found bin-it is overflowing! Remember to put your child's name on their clothing then if it is found it can be returned.

**Afterschool program-outstanding opportunity!** In November we sent out information about starting an afterschool program. The program would run from 3-5 pm Monday-Friday. The first hour would be academic based including homework, MCAS prep, and academic learning time. The following hour would be an enrichment piece. There would be opportunities for the students to partake in different activities like arts, drama, or athletic offerings. We have not had the interest necessary to get this program off and running, but we are not giving up. We are sending out another flyer looking for feedback and interest. We'd love to hear from families what it will take to help get this program up and running.

**Family Game Night:** On Friday January 22 from 6-7pm we will have Family Game Night in the West Brookfield Elementary School cafeteria. Family Game Night will be a time when families can come to the school and bring their favorite board, card, or dice games to share with others. The games will be set up on several tables and families can rotate and play different games with other families. Also, if you like you could bring a snack to share. Together we will have a free night of fun and learning. We hope to see you there!

Yours in learning,  
*Colleen Mucha, Principal*

## District Technology News

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Many thanks to Bob Sullivan who worked over the vacation to get the new computers up and running in the QRMHS library. This a big step forward and will give the high school another lab for research and general purpose projects. We continue to work on the website. We are looking at some new templates and software offerings which will keep us moving forward and continue to make the site more user friendly. If you have any questions or concerns about the new website, please contact me at [mmeehan@quaboag.org](mailto:mmeehan@quaboag.org).

*Michael Meehan, Technology Director*

## District Wellness News

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**Janice King, Quaboag Regional School Nutrition Director**, met in Boston with Project Bread and the Child Nutrition Outreach Program for MA Schools. She is leading an initiative at the state level to bring together effective collaboration between, local School Nutrition Programs, Project Bread, Child Nutrition Outreach Programs with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, all statewide pantries, and WIC agencies. The goal is to provide more directed local assistance and create effective outreach to feed children and families across our state. Her theme is "Feed me...I'm Hungry."

Our district benefits from this initiative as we move forward to dovetail all state agency programs to build connections and resources that we can use right here at the local level in our community. This work will also help support those in need in communities all across the state.

**Very Important:** If you have submitted an application for Free and Reduced price meals and were declined or were assigned the reduced price category, or if you are currently paying for meals and you are experiencing challenges with financial resources, please log onto this site and complete the SNAP calculator <http://www.gettingfoodstamps.org/Screen2/> which will let you know if you *may* qualify

**for food stamp benefits, then, you can continue through the prompts and complete the application online for SNAP.**

**The bottom line is, if you qualify for SNAP you will automatically qualify for FREE priced breakfast and lunch. Even though you might only qualify for \$10 per month in SNAP benefits, this qualifies your children for near \$800 in FREE Breakfast and Lunch at school to support their nutritional needs. Call Janice King if you need any assistance at 413-436-5991 x1922.**

**QRMHS:** Our School Nutrition program, Janice King, School Nutrition Director and Kim Harrington, Head Cook at QRMHS competed in the Worcester County School Nutrition Association Iron Chef competition which was held on December 2. We are happy to report that we won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the semi finals and we will compete in the Iron Chef finals in May 2010! Stay tuned for the results of our competition!

**District Wide Contest: Students and Parents:** I would like to invite all students in Quaboag Regional to enter this art contest for the next featured label on Heinz products. Click on this URL for additional information! (K – 12 students) <http://www.ketchupcreativity.com/>  
**Teachers:** Log on to this site as well for information and lesson plans on nutrition and health to enhance learning in the classroom. There is something for everyone!

Heinz is serving up a course that can increase your contribution to meeting the district's education goals, earn high marks for your school nutrition program and bring local and national recognition and rewards to your schools. What's more, it's easy and fun to participate in the Heinz Ketchup Creativity™ Contest. Schools in the U.S. are invited to submit K-1 through 12 students' designs for the chance of having their artwork printed on nearly 200 million Heinz® Ketchup packets (combined) distributed in foodservice venues nationwide and win prizes for themselves and their schools. The school name and city also appear on the limited edition packets!

KetchupCreativity.com is fully stocked with [contest entry materials](#), exciting lesson plans and interactive tools to inspire creativity in classrooms and lunchrooms! You'll also find resources to equip your team with useful information on Heinz products.

**WCES:** Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant program mid morning snack will start up on January 6, 2010. Please see the January menu on our website at [www.quaboag.org](http://www.quaboag.org) We know how much the children enjoy their nutritious snack at school and we are committed to providing a variety of delicious fruits or vegetables each day! Additional opportunities to eat these nutritious foods will help to create lifelong health!

**Food Assistance:** *The Sharing Cupboard in West Brookfield at the First Congregational Church on the Common is the location for our area's food pantry. Any resident in Warren, West Warren, and West Brookfield who is in need of food assistance can obtain food and non-food supplies one time per month.*

*Proof of residence and an ID for shopper and ID or documentation for all household members is all that is needed. Hours of operation for the Sharing Cupboard are Wed. 10 – 12 noon, and Thurs. from 7 – 8:30 pm. If you are in need of food, please consider going, it can make a big difference in your household.*

If you are a paid student, free, or reduced we offer an affordable nutritious breakfast or lunch with all the food groups; ensuring better nutrition. Our goal is to continue to grow district participation each year, not only to provide all children with the nutrition they need, in addition, we can position our program to potentially maintain our current prices for meals during the 2010-2011 school year! The bottom line is the more meals served the greater USDA funding will be !

**Free and Reduced School Meals:** We accept applications throughout the school year for students needing additional food support at school. Please request an application at school or you can download an application at [www.quaboag.org](http://www.quaboag.org) under the School Nutrition tab on the left of the screen. Return your application as soon as possible in order for your application to be reviewed. Thank you. If you have any questions, please call Janice King at 413-436-5991 x1922.

## Important District Dates & Reminders

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January 4	WCES	PTO Meeting 6:30 pm.
January 7	WCES QRMHS	Pumpnickel Puppets –Gr PK/K 10 AM Drug/Alcohol Awareness Assembly (all students) (presented by Emily Miller, District Attorney’s office)
January 8	WCES	Banking for Maine
January 10	QRMHS	Quaboag H1N1 Flu Clinic, 11:00-2:00
January 11	WBES/WCES District	2 <sup>nd</sup> Marking Period Grades Close Policy Sub-Committee Mtg. 7 pm (Superintendent’s office)
January 13	WBES	PTG Meeting 6:30 pm
January 14	QRMHS District	NHS Induction Ceremony 6:30 pm (auditorium) Warren Casino Task Force Mtg. (Town Hall)
January 15	WBES/WCES	Grades close
January 18	District	Martin Luther King Day – No School
January 19	District District District	Professional Development – Full Day (no school) Building Committee Mtg. – 6 pm. Superintendent’s office Budget Sub-Committee Mtg. – 6:30 pm
January 20:	WBES	Family Game Night 6-7pm
January 21	QRMHS	Scholarship Application Night, 6-7p (library)
January 22	WCES	Banking for Maine
January 25:	WBES	Report Cards School Committee Mtg. at 6:15pm at QRMHS Library
January 29	QRMHS	Second Term Grades Close
February 15—19		February Break