



# Bound for Success

## Superintendent's Note:

### Budgeting Stresses and Successes



Regina Swierc, Superintendent

In the wake of a recession, public school districts find themselves just as challenged as the rest of society in terms of the need to be

accountable for spending and to ensure Tax-payers' money is being spent as efficiently and productively as possible. Warren County special Services School District is no exception. The Board of Education and administration of the district have recently made some of the toughest budgeting decisions in the history of the district. However, the product of this process reveals some positive messages for students, staff, and the district's constituent school districts. First and foremost, the governing body of the WCSSSD remains committed to its mission of "...promoting the highest level of positive growth and development through the expectation that all students will achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) at all grade levels. Through collaborative efforts of the district and community, the district strives to identify and address the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual

needs of students with disabilities through individualized educational programs and services in a safe, caring, and therapeutic environment within regionalized public school settings."

Second, the district has reduced its rates for tuition and services going into the 2009-2010 school year. The Board and administration recognize the need to make special education programs and services available that are affordable, contribute to some degree of fiscal relief for sending school districts, and continue to satisfy the need to remain competitive with other providers of special education programs and services. Please feel free to access information about the district's programs and services on the district web site at [www.wcsssd.org](http://www.wcsssd.org) or call the district's central office at (908) 223-7275. The grass is not always greener on the other side. Quality, public, affordable special education programs and services can be found right here in Warren County. We hope you will take the time to discover what Warren County Special Services School District has to offer!

~Regina Swierc

## Home of the Owls

### Spring Edition

School Year 2008-2009

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## Contracted and Related Services

Parent surveys have been sent home in order to assess the need for aftercare programs within the district for the 2009-2010 school year. We are asking that parents please make sure to complete the survey and to send it back by June 5<sup>th</sup> so that we can determine how much of a need exists in our district. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, we will be able to properly staff the program to meet the needs of the students.

Once again there will be a Spring Outdoor Education Program offered at Camp Warren. This program has been established in order to afford school districts the opportunity to expose their students to learning about topics outlined in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards outside of their daily learning environment. The camp offers an atmosphere conducive to

learning which captures the interest of the students and promotes their love of learning. Our instructors are composed of educators that have had experience in developing workshops for students of all ages and educational needs. The program will run a total of eight sessions beginning in April and ending in June. For more information concerning the outdoor education program you can contact Grace Acosta at [g.acosta@wcsssd.org](mailto:g.acosta@wcsssd.org)

I would like to take this opportunity to bid you all farewell. During the March 24<sup>th</sup> board of education meeting, the position of Supervisor of Contracted and Related Services was abolished effective June 30<sup>th</sup> and, as a result, I will no longer be part of the staff at the Warren County Special Services School District. I would like to express that the last four years have been a very rewarding experience in working with all our students, staff, and several individuals from various schools throughout the county. I will

take with me many fond memories and gratitude for the time I spent surrounded by such dedicated and committed professionals. I wish you all the best in the coming school year and applaud your efforts!



Grace Acosta

## WCSSSD Teacher of the Year!

### John W. Fish Jr., Music Teacher



"He is energetic and professional."  
Melinda Stano, Teacher WCTS

"He's very kind." Catie, Student

"Every year he bring us apple cider and Foschnachts." Franklin Township Staff

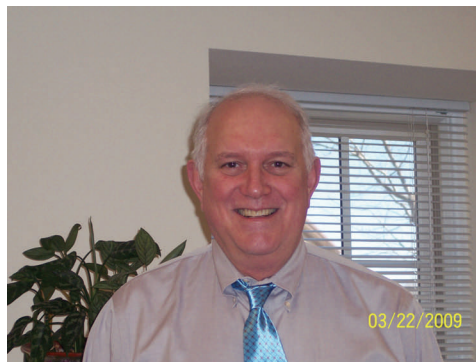
"I just like him!" Natasha, Student

"He makes music fun! He is consistent, positive, and kind with the children. In our "buddy" program he involves each and everyone." Great Meadows class

"He brings us goodies!" Emily, Student

"He always puts the students first and relates well to them." Karyn Smith, Teacher's Aide WCTS

"Mr. Fish is always a gentleman." Pamela Bianco, Art Teacher



"He's just cool." Thomas, Student

"He is always there with a helping hand." Rose, Personal Aide, Franklin Township School

"Mr. Fish always has a smile. It is refreshing!" Sharon Fretz, Counselor

"He goes above and beyond for the students." Carmello Chiara, Teacher's Aide WCTS

"He is very enthusiastic and enjoys broadening our students musical horizons." Megan Iandoli, Counselor

## Congratulations Mr. Fish!

# Inside the WCSSSD Classrooms:

## Kim Lutz's Classroom- Franklin Township Elementary



**Natasha was the top seller of the Joe Corbi's fundraiser! Thanks Natasha!!**

Mrs. Lutz's class started the new year studying about Martin Luther King and by celebrating "Chinese New Year", Monday, January 26, 2009 - The Year of the Ox. We feasted on wonton soup, roast pork fried rice, roast pork lo mein, Chinese tea and fortune cookies. The class used chop sticks and we learned to say "Happy New Year" (Gung Ho Fat Choy).

Three of our students performed in Franklin Township School's Winter Showcase at Warren Hills High School. They sang and danced to a

large audience. It was a huge success.

Our Valentine's Day party was festive - lots of goodies and cards.

Congratulations to Natasha for being the top seller of our fund raiser. Our class is working on Drug Posters hoping to place as one of the winners.

Mrs. Sully's grandson, Cameron James, entered the world on February 23. Mother Jessica and baby are doing fine.

We are looking forward to the spring so we can plant our flower seeds.

## Diane Kasharian's Classroom- Great Meadows Middle School

It is already March and we cannot wait for the Spring. The school year is flying by at GMMS. All the children are looking forward to going outside and observing the buds, flowers and listening to the birds. They are also looking forward to meeting their new friend, Johnny. We welcome him to our class and we know that he will enjoy all the activities that GMMS has to offer.

Brian, Anuraag, Matthew, Tira and Daniel received a special treat of chocolate milkshakes by Mrs. Pagliara and the student council. Thank you for this wonderful surprise. Mr. Beavers (the principal) and staff, the sixth, seventh and eighth grade students in Great Meadows continue to interact with our students on a daily basis. We are grateful to be in such a positive learning environment.

We were able to go bowling in the Fall and that was an exciting adventure for our students. It was a

friendly competition with many cheers and yelling from the fans. The children all scored in the high 70's and 80's with a little help from their friends. We cannot wait until our next trip.

We have our annual Spirit Month in March. Some of the activities include pajama day (the students favorite), hat day, crazy hair day and team day. The school is also presenting an assembly from a man who has been down to see the Titanic and he is going to be speaking to the entire school of his adventures and we are excited to hear of his journeys into the sea.

We are waiting word from Anuraag's personal aide on the birth of her baby boy. Fawn was due the beginning of March and we all wish her well. Trish (Matthew's personal aide) welcomed her granddaughter, Adia, in December, congratulations Trish.

We hope everyone enjoys the rest of the school year. Thank you to all the

parents for supporting our program as we continue to grow and learn each day.



**Daniel received a special treat of chocolate milkshakes by Mrs. Pagliara and the student council**

## Janice Fantuzzi's Classroom- Hackettstown Middle School

We are all continually working hard in the Hackettstown Middle School class. Robbie is doing well in all of his mainstream classes. We are so proud of him. He will be taking the ASK 7 test this month. Kenny has been going to 7<sup>th</sup> grade cycles classes. He just completed Art and will be going to computers next. He will also be taking the ASK 7 this month. Morgan has been enjoying the 6<sup>th</sup> grade cycles classes. He learned French, computers and Art. Now he will be going to Music and then Spanish. He is really looking forward to Music class since he loves instrumental music. He will be taking the ASK 6 this month, too. Jon just completed Spanish and had a fiesta to celebrate. He will be going to French and Music next. He has made

some friends in all of his mainstream classes. He will be taking the ASK 6 test.

We started reading Lord of the Flies as a class. The boys are looking forward to watching the movie when we are finished reading the book. They seem to enjoy the story and are all participating in the reading and discussion. We have been preparing for the ASK tests.

We have joined the Sussex Skyhawks Academic Program. I will be giving each student specific assignments to complete. When they are completed the student and family will receive free baseball



tickets to the Sussex Skyhawks baseball game.

We have been using a nickel board for positive choice making. Each student can earn nickels for doing good deeds. At the end of each day their money is calculated and put into a bank deposit book. We had an auction in January for the students to purchase items with their funds. We will be having another auction in the Spring.

Our Spring field trips will be either Pocono Snake and Animal Farm or Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm. We are looking forward to the nice weather coming so we can play outdoor sports.

We have fun while learning in our class!

## Darlene Grave's Classroom- Pohatcong Elementary School



Jaime enjoys working on the computer

Jaime is enjoying building things or searching for another adventure on computer games. When outside he is enjoying discovering how to use the Jungle Gym and finding pine cones to paint.

Jonathan is enjoying typing words he knows on his Alpha Smart and completing more difficult puzzles. He is enjoying learning to throw a basketball into a hoop, catch it and take turns playing.

**We are looking forward to Spring!**

## Donna Wolfgang's Classroom- Belvidere High School

Is it spring yet?

The students and staff of the WCSSSD class in Belvidere High School are itching to go outside again. We have kept busy in our classroom with a variety of activities including the Foss Science Measuring kit with Mr. AC's class and cooking up a storm in the Home Ec room, as well as all our regular daily doings, but long for the open sidewalk. Mr. AC's class has also joined us in some "gaming" sessions, which everyone enjoys.

We have also had the opportunity to assist the Agriculture class in planting

lilies in preparation for the upcoming Spring Flower Sale. Soon we will help plant all the annuals, both vegetables and flowers, for the big *End of the Year Sale*. It's fun to get to play in the "soil", as Mr. Leh says.

We enjoyed attending the Winter Concert assemblies and an Abe Lincoln assembly as well as the Winter Sport Pep Rally.

We have kept our display case in the high school current with whatever topic we happen to be discussing in the classroom. This half of the year has included the Declaration of Independence and

the Korean War.

It has been an enjoyable winter, but we are still looking forward to spring.



Mrs. Wolfgang's class participated in an Earth Day project.

## Melinda Stano's Classroom- Warren County Technical School

My, time flies when you're having fun. We try to smile each and every day. We are progressing quite nicely. We are learning new things and are enjoying getting to know each other. Many of our students have joined Tech's classes. Our students have accomplished a great deal.

We have implemented new classroom rules and a new behavior modification program. It seems to be working quite nicely. The students on platinum level have their choice from our new "Good Work" box in Mrs. Fretz's office. Chris and James have both been enjoying the iced tea while Jonathan was munching some potato chips. They have also enjoyed another pizza party, a Chinese takeout lunch and have gone bowling. Tom and James had some competition with Ms. Smith!! Two of our culinary students, Chris and Robert took a trip to New York Culinary Institute. Zeke has been mainstreamed to three classes since the beginning of the year! Way to go! Rich and

Jon are making a sign in Carpentry for a local state park. We are busy, busy.

Jon is our basketball star for the season! We are proud of all his points and team spirit. I have had the pleasure of watching the team and I was very impressed. Many of our students are taking advantage of Tech's activities. They are staying after for tutoring, watching ballgames and going to dances. It is nice to be included in the Tech family. We are anticipating taking the HSPA in March and the undergraduates will be participating in the S-test for the first time. Josh is also taking the ASE test for auto shop.

On a high note we have a student graduating this year. Jon will be greatly missed. He is looking into going to college to be a gym teacher. We wish him the best of luck in all he pursues.

I'd like to take this time to thank everyone for the warm welcome I received this year. It has been a challenging but greatly rewarding experience. A special

thanks goes out to Ms. Smith, Mr. Chiara and Mrs. Fretz for being there for my transition. I look forward to our team starting again next year with some old and new faces.



Ms. Stano's Carpentry shop students are building a dog house.

## Mary Hevener and Carolyn Schmid's Classrooms- The ARC

Hello from the ARC, the Junior/Senior classes have been busy working hard in the classroom and community. Together we took a Community Based Trip to the PNC bank in Washington, there we took a tour of the bank, met with the bank tellers and managers, walked inside the vault and learned how to balance a checking account. The trip was fun and we all learned so much. Thanks PNC Bank! Our future trips include a tour of the Tractor Supply store and Wal-Mart. We can't wait to learn more about working in these stores.

Together we organized a Valentine's Day Cookie Sale, with great success we baked the cookies, and hand wrapped

each cookie gram. Making the cookies was fun and the mistakes were delicious! With the money raised the classes plan to use that towards their reward program for future field trips. Thanks to all who supported our sale!



# Spotlight: ART with Pamela Bianco



Dumont Building Art Show

For the past three years WCSSSD has been honored to have Ms. Pamela Bianco as their art teacher. She is a New Jersey certified Elementary Education teacher as well as a New Jersey certified Art teacher. She is a dedicated employee who brings professionalism, integrity, and enthusiasm to our district.

This year, our students were thrilled to share their artwork with the public. Last month there was a display of WCSSSD student art at the Dumont Building, where a small display remains in the lobby. Most recently, Ms. Bianco's students' artwork was displayed at the Inde-

pendence Township Municipal Building in Great Meadows on March 27th. Almost every student in her art classes had a piece of work on display. Students, families, and staff were invited to enjoy refreshments as they perused the art show. It was an exciting night for everyone involved! A small selection of students' work will remain on display through April as part of a larger art show featuring work by students from various schools throughout Warren County.



Sample of student art on display

pendence Township Municipal Building in Great Meadows on March 27th. Almost every student in her art classes had a piece of work on display. Students, families, and staff were invited to enjoy refreshments as they perused the art show. It was an exciting night for everyone involved! A small selection of students' work will remain on display through April as part of a larger art show featuring work by students from various schools throughout Warren County.

With each art project, Ms. Bianco takes into consideration the Visual and Performing Arts New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, the age group, the disability, and the frustration level of our student population, "That said, of course I have to take into account the individuals in each class in order to make the project/experiences I offer as accessible and engaging as possible. In general, I try to have lots of tactile, multi-sensory components in the projects I choose for the autis-

and medically disabled classes and for the behavior classes I especially keep in mind the frustration quotient."



Independence Township Municipal Building

Ms. Bianco is currently working on a mural at the Hunterdon ARC and will be having an art show for them in May at the Lebanon Township Museum.

She is influenced by the landscape paintings of Jean-Francois Millet and is interested in painting the Warren County landscapes she drives through everyday.

Ms. Bianco is working with the WCSSSD Parent Staff Organization again this year to design our Field Day t-shirts! She works with each class to create, design, and make the t-shirts that they will proudly wear at our district-wide field day. The students enjoy using their creativity and the staff look forward to seeing what each class has designed.



Dumont Building Art Show

## Letter from the WCSSS Education Foundation:

The newly formed Education Foundation has recently completed its first mailed request for donations using a student letter that describes her experience at Warren County Special Services School District and a flyer that outlines the kind of programs we support. The goal of the Foundation is to raise money to increase and enrich opportunities for special students throughout Warren County who attend the WCSSSD.

We received a very generous start-up donation of \$2500 from PNC Bank, which allows us to offer two grants to creative teachers, have Foundation stationery and envelopes printed, pay for our bulk mailing, and still save some funds for additional beginning projects.

Sheridan Printers also assisted us by printing 350 flyers free of charge. Other donations have come from parents of WCSSSD students, a WCSSSD board member; Dom DeFranco, a retired WCSSSD teacher; two Foundation trustees;

and Shop Rite of Hunterdon County. We look forward to receiving additional support from other concerned community members.

We have an ongoing Teacher Tribute program that some parents have utilized to thank teachers and at the same time give back to the students and the district by supporting the Foundation. The contribution can be made in the name of a teacher or staff member to honor that person's efforts. The honoree receives a notice that the donation was made in his or her name and the money goes into a fund to be used toward new and creative programs and to provide educational equipment to enhance existing programs. Please consider this form of teacher gift at Christmas, the end of the school year, or any time thanks seem in order.

Most recently, the Foundation has distributed applications to teachers which they can complete individually or as a group to compete for two grants worth \$500 each

for the implementation of a creative teaching initiative or project that will promote student learning and student interest. We hope that teachers will enjoy sharing some of their best ideas and we will make every effort to support as many as we can. The application due date is May 15 and the grants will be awarded in June to be used in the 2009/2010 school year.

Other programs we hope to support as funds become available include an After School Care Program to provide care and activities for students who need extended care and a Scholarship Program for students eligible for college or trade school.

~Jane Keehn,

President of the WCSS Education Foundation

The Education Foundation is non-profit organization, making any donation tax deductible. Contributions can be made payable to WCSS Education Foundation, 682 Oxford Road, Oxford, NJ 07863.

## Parent Staff Organization

Our Joe Corbi's Fundraiser was a success! Thank you to Mrs. Fantuzzi for organizing, coordinating, and delivering our Joe Corbi's goodies. The top seller for this year was Natasha in Kim Lutz's class. She sold over \$500 worth of merchandise and earned a \$50 gift certificate for her hard work. Thanks to everyone who participated. The fundraiser will help pay for our June Field Day.

We are looking forward to our 2nd

PSO Parent's Night Out on March 28th. Parent's Night Out rewards our hard working parents with a night of free babysitting. All students and students' siblings are welcome to participate! We will play games, relax, make crafts and bake.

Field Day is scheduled for June 5, 2009 at Meadow Breeze Park in Washington, NJ. The PSO is working very hard to organize the events, games, and crafts for the big day. We will be having a PSO

meeting March 31st at 3:00pm at the ARC building to discuss and plan the big event. We encourage all parents and staff to attend.

We would like to thank several community businesses for their donations and support toward our district-wide Field Day: Quick Check, Manhattan Bagel, Unity Bank, the New Jersey State Police, In Flight Balloon Adventures, and Meadow Breeze Park.

~ Sharon Fretz, PSO Liason

## Home of the Owls

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Applications for the following levels are available on our website [www.wcsssd.org](http://www.wcsssd.org)

Elementary Level: Autism Spectrum  
Behavior Disabilities  
Cognitive Severe

Intermediate Level: Autism Spectrum  
Behavior Disabilities  
Cognitive Severe  
Multiple Disabilities

Secondary Level: Behavior Disabilities  
Cognitive Severe  
Multiple Disabilities

