



# DANBURY DIGEST

## *District News & Highlights*

### **DSABC CELEBRATES NATIONAL MENTOR MONTH**

Danbury Schools and Business Collaborative (DSABC) is a non-profit organization with the mission to help Danbury Public School students achieve personal and academic success. DSABC works toward accomplishing this through school based mentoring and collaboration, which fosters cooperation among business, the community, the BOE, and Danbury Public Schools. Currently DSABC's primary program is the school based mentoring program, providing approximately 270 mentors to students in the Danbury Public Schools as well as Henry Abbott Regional Technical School. DSABC, governed by a volunteer Board, employs one full-time staff member, Agency Director Mary Arconti Gregory, and one part-time assistant, Ellen Meyst. Mentors for the program are recruited primarily through area corporations/businesses and the community at large.

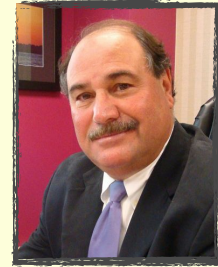
The DSABC School Based Mentor Program matches a supportive and caring adult who assists students to succeed in school by developing a one-on-one relationship. Mentors serve as a positive adult role model providing moral support and encouragement. The objective of the mentor program is to improve academic performance, attendance, behavior, attitude toward school, and most importantly, self-esteem and motivation. The long-term goal is dropout prevention.

January 26, 2012, is "**Thank Your Mentor Day**". DSABC would like to thank all of the mentors in the Danbury Public Schools for providing support and encouragement to a youth. We encourage all individuals to think of the mentors in your life, whether it was a team coach, a concerned neighbor, teacher, or another caring adult -- and take a few minutes to thank them. Then consider becoming a mentor yourself!

Independent research has shown that teachers reported the following improvements in children who were enrolled in School Based Mentoring Programs:

- 64% of students developed more positive attitudes toward school
- 58% achieved higher grades in social studies, languages, and math
- 60% improved their relationships with adults
- 56% improved their relationships with peers
- 64% developed high levels of self-confidence
- 62% were more likely to trust their teachers and students were less likely to repeat a grade

For more information on becoming a mentor, contact DSABC at [www.dsabcmentors.org](http://www.dsabcmentors.org), or [gregogom@danbury.k12.ct.us](mailto:gregogom@danbury.k12.ct.us) or 203-730-5017



### **Superintendents Message**

*We're approaching that time of the year when weather may be impacting our regular schedule. With the highly unusual start of the school year, we already used seven emergency days; however, through Board action and a calendar adjustment, we were able to make up four of these days, making the last day of school, at this time, June 19<sup>th</sup>.*

*As a reminder for weather related issues that may be impacting the school day, I encourage you to review our inclement weather procedures for delays, cancellations and early dismissals, and be sure your current contact information is accurate on our School Messenger Alert System.*

*Other activities that will be going on for the next two months will be the formation of the 2012-2013 budget and updates on the Mayor's 2020 Task Force dealing with increased student enrollment. Regarding the school budget, the City Charter requires that a budget be submitted to the City Council by February 15, 2012. The Board of Education and Administration have developed a budget timeline which includes opportunities for the public to participate in the process. We have scheduled a public forum to discuss the budget on Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. at Rogers Park Middle School, and a Superintendent's Roundtable on Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. at the Administrative Center, 63 Beaver Brook Road. Finally, the Mayor's 2020 Task Force is currently scheduled to meet in January with a possible recommendation going to the City Council by February.*



**DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT INTRODUCES  
TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER**

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) has been created to help our students and their parents, our educators, our educational partners and all community members to gain a deeper understanding of the instructional efforts that are underway in the Danbury Public Schools. The primary focus of TLC is on our curriculum, instructional and assessment initiatives as well as other initiatives designed to meet the affective needs of our students. TLC is a virtual location on our website.

The approach is a simple Q and A and the site will be updated at least once every two weeks. Therefore, the information will be very timely and relevant.

Steps to access and view the TLC site:

1. Go to the home page of the Danbury Public Schools: [www.danbury.k12.ct.us](http://www.danbury.k12.ct.us)
2. Click on "District"
3. Scroll down and click on "Deputy Superintendent"
4. When you are on my page, please scroll to the bottom. You will see the blue Teaching and Learning Center area.
5. The control buttons are at the bottom of the area. Click on the box that is to the right of the black box that indicates the slide numbers. This will maximize the area to make it easy to view. Use the right or left arrows to move through the slides.

Topics/Questions to be addressed should be sent to:

[glassw@danbury.k12.ct.us](mailto:glassw@danbury.k12.ct.us)

***Board of Education  
Meetings***

- January 11 and 25
- February 8 and 22
- March 14 and 28
- April 11 and 25
- May 9 and 23
- June 13 and 27

***Board of Education  
Members***

- Eileen W. Alberts
- Shirley Chilian
- Gladys Cooper
- Gary Falkenthal
- Annrose Fluskey-Lattin
- Richard Hawley
- Richard Jannelli
- Kathleen Molinaro
- Sandy Steichen
- Robert Taborsak
- Phyllis Tranzillo

**MAGNET SCHOOL AND STEM ACADEMY NEWS**

**Applications now being accepted:**

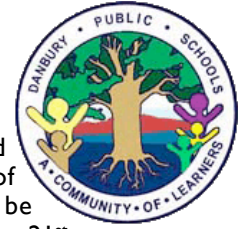
**Western Connecticut Academy of International Studies:**

Applications are being accepted until 4 pm January 23, 2012.  
Lottery will be held February 13th.

**STEM Exploration Academy:**

Applications are being accepted until 4 pm February 10, 2012. Lottery will be held February 17th.





**THE ROLE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM (IDT)**

The Instructional Development Team or IDT, as it is more commonly known, is comprised of those central office administrators who are directly responsible for instructional programming throughout our district. Consequently, the team includes Chris Pruss, Director of K-8 Reading, Language Arts and Title I, Kara Casimiro, Humanities Curriculum Administrator, Harry Rosvaly, STEM Curriculum Administrator, Augusto Gomes, ESL/Bilingual Education Curriculum Administrator, Ann Lindenmeyer, Administrator for Data Analysis and Special Projects, Meghan Martins, Associate Principal for Instruction, and Bill Glass, Deputy Superintendent, who leads the team. The administrators for educational technology, special education, elementary literacy and the Extended Learning Programs are adjuncts to the IDT who provide additional perspective and insight to the team.

Members of the team have been recognized for excellence by many professional organizations at both the state and national levels.

Within the past two years, the IDT has successfully led the creation of 50 new state-of-the-art curriculum documents. These documents have engaged the talents of scores of Danbury teachers. The work is also aligned to the new national Common Core State Standards. In doing this work, the IDT is

ensuring that our students are presented with the most important aspects of content and skills, which need to be mastered in order to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The IDT is also the research and development arm of the Board of Education. Therefore, the team is responsible for leading the development of all forms of student assessment and the monitoring of instructional strategies and educational pedagogy to ensure alignment with the most current educational research findings. The team also provides leadership to system-wide professional development initiatives.

The IDT members interface directly with representatives from the CT State Department of Education to ensure total alignment with all new statewide and national education initiatives and requirements.

The team also conducts School Reviews that provide a thorough auditing of the instructional program throughout a participating school with the intent of providing immediate feedback, which the teachers and principals can use to enhance the planning, delivery and assessment of instruction.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION RECOGNIZES MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Mr. Robbs attended the Board of Education Meeting on January 11, and was recognized for being honored by the CT Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission with its Humanitarian Award for his work with schoolchildren. The Broadview Middle School Principal was also featured in the January 5, 2012 edition of the Danbury News Times.

In the article, Principal Robbs credits his mother for encouraging him to work hard in schools and to help the less fortunate. "It's not about how much you have," Robbs was quoted as saying, shaking his head for emphasis, "it's about what you do with what you have."

Robbs, 68, has lived by those words his whole career, first as a science teacher in Los Angeles and later as a school administrator, including the last 13 years at Broadview. "This is what I do. I work with kids and I love my job," said Robbs, who lives in Danbury with his wife, Myrtle. "When I first came here in 1998, I said that I'd stay for five years. Well, here I am today. I'll stay as long as they want me and

as long as I feel I'm adding value to the school."

Robbs also serves on the board of trustees for The Hord Foundation, which has given out \$3.5 million in college scholarships to more than 2,500 African-American students from Greater Danbury over the years. He's even served as chairman of The Hord Foundation's scholarship program.



"It's about education. It's about making good choices in your life," Robbs said before visiting Shelter Rock Elementary School to tell his story to a class of fifth-grade boys.

"I started off like many kids in Danbury. We were very poor. Welfare poor," he said. "But that doesn't mean you can't make a difference in the world and make it a better place."



**COMMUNITY RESOURCE PROGRAMS**

**PARENTS SEE** - Parents Supporting Educational Excellence will begin Sat. Feb. 4 (8:30-2) followed by 12 Tuesday nights from 5:30-9:00 p.m. The training covers how the school district works, how policies are made, how to promote change, how to read your child's scores and how parents can be actively engaged with their child's school.

Parents also partake in a Board of Education meeting, host a Community Cafe and fill their toolboxes with skills to be effective. The training is free, dinner and child care is provided. For more information contact Anne Mead, Administrator for ECE/ELP at [203-830-6508](tel:203-830-6508). The Registration form is also available on the District webpage at [www.danbury.k12.ct.us](http://www.danbury.k12.ct.us).

**FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM CELEBRATES HOLIDAYS**

The faculty & students of Danbury Adult Education gathered for the first time to celebrate the holidays and give thanks for the wonderful things impacting their lives. Everyone was welcomed by Dr. Shuana Tucker, Director & Dr. William Glass, Deputy Superintendent. State of CT Liaison, Ms. Valerie Marino brought greetings. Three students shared with the audience the impact Adult Ed was having on them



personally and how they were achieving their educational goals. The students were: Clarence Bouie, Rachel Lalla & Valdeneia Pecor. One of them stated, "going to WERACE has change me in ways I thought going to school never could...I've met extraordinary people who taught me things that I truly believe I couldn't have learned anywhere else." Another student spoke of how the teachers see your potential and care about you as a person, no matter what challenges you've faced in your life." The mothers and children from our Family Literacy program also enjoyed our gathering. Ms. Agnes Wilson, Program Coordinator & members of the Fairfield County Chapter of Links, Inc. presented each child with winter hats and gloves, and each mother received a \$35 Target gift card. All enjoyed the afternoon of fun, food and fellowship. Special thanks to our event coordinators, Mrs. PJ Yochum & Ms. Shaneeka Walker for planning this event.

At another holiday gathering, the mothers of the Adult Ed Family Literacy Program hosted their holiday party. The program is comprised of 13 mothers and their children. The mothers prepared a pot luck feast and invited faculty and volunteers to join them and say "thank you" for all that you do to assist us and our children. Gifts were donated to the children by Ms. Nancy Stockman of Immaculate HS & Ms. Christine Reagan of St. Joseph's. Ms. Elizabeth Cotter, Family Literacy Director also thanked program partners Family Networks of Western CT, the Family Resource Center and the Young Lives Program of Jericho Partnership who volunteer their time and mentor the mothers & children in the program. A fun time was had by all.

The Spring brochure will be out in Feb. 2012. New courses and exciting tours are being offered, as well as discounts for district employees. Visit [www.danbury.k12.ct.us](http://www.danbury.k12.ct.us).

**Calendar**

**Monday January 16:**  
Martin Luther King Day  
Schools & Offices closed

**Tuesday January 17 and 31:**  
Early Dismissal all schools

**January 24-27:**  
High School Exams

**Wednesday February 8:**  
Early Dismissal DHS/ACE only

**Friday February 17:**  
Early Dismissal all schools

**Monday February 20:**  
Presidents Day  
Schools & Offices Closed

**Did you know ??**



60% of AP tests taken received a score of 3 or higher, which may qualify for credit at many Universities.



Economically disadvantaged student proficiency in Math at the elementary level has increased from 74% in 2006 to 84% in 2011.



Economically disadvantaged student proficiency in Math at the middle school level has increased from 61% in 2006 to 76% in 2011.