



Region 14 Schools

Inspiring Excellence

The Region 14 community is dedicated to ensuring an engaging and positive learning environment where every student becomes a respected contributing member of society who graduates prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Bethlehem Elementary School

The Student Council will be working with Officer George to facilitate the “See Something, Say Something” safety program. This is a district effort that strives to create a culture where students will be comfortable coming to a trusted adult to report any uncomfortable behavior in the building.

The BES program is geared towards 3 – 5th graders and empowers the older students in the building to work with the SRO as partners to keeping students safe in their school environment.

BES has also created its own 4th and 5th grade Student Advisory Committee (SAC) which mirrors the school’s Teacher’s Advisory Committee. They meet quarterly to discuss anything and everything about school safety and ways to improve climate and student engagement.

SAC meetings are held during lunch and discussions have included topics like maintenance of sport fields, fostering a positive climate through theme days, types of lunch choices, more time for recess and PE, safety monitors on the buses and the development of *The Bulldog Topics*, a promotional video created by and for students and parents.



Celebrating Officer George at BES

Since the start of the new school year in August, students and staff in all of our schools have been working to address the issue of School Climate. While it might look different in elementary school than it does for our middle and high school students, time spent striving to make every aspect of a student’s school experience a positive one is a universal goal here in Region 14 and time well spent.

The overall school climate encompasses areas that include safety, a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment and the ability to achieve and maintain respectful, trusting, and caring relationships for the entire school community.

A positive school climate is related to school success particularly in the areas of attendance, achievement, retention and graduation.

I wanted to take this time to share the various school climate initiatives currently going on at each of our four schools and commend the continued commitment of our students and staff for their efforts.

Dr. Anna

Woodbury Middle School

As a way to foster whole school community and inclusion, Woodbury Middle started the school year off piloting a new program called “WMS Family.” The 370 students make up 24 Family groups comprised of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders and one Family Faculty Advisor.

WMS Family is a systemic venue for information to be disseminated and discussed but it has provided much more than that. WMS Families meet at the start of each day for discussions on a variety of topics with their peers across grade levels. In addition to learning from their cross-grade peers, WMS Family provides students an opportunity to interact with staff members they might not otherwise be in contact with on a daily basis.

The WMS Family concept works to support a positive school climate and restorative practices. WMS Families work together to develop, promote, nurture, and maintain positive relationships with students.

The goal of the WMS Family is to culti-

vate a culture in which every individual feels he or she is a valued and respected member of the school community.

This group is especially helpful for incoming 6th graders as a way to ease their transition into middle school. At the same time, the WMS Family unit gives the opportunity for 7th and 8th grade students to hone their leadership skills and become positive role models in the school community.

Last month, a school wide assembly with a representative from the Anti-Defamation League focused on encouraging all students to become allies to their peers. Follow-up activities focused on a kindness theme have taken place in the classrooms, in co-curricular activities such as Wingman, in the student advisory groups, and WMS Family.

Many of the upcoming activities that have been developed by the WMS Wingman group will be implemented in WMS Family including a “Family Feud” competition between Families to promote comradery and fun.

Mitchell Elementary School

Mitchell is building off the success of their 5th grade Safety Patrol and Student Council groups to implement a new Safe School Climate Committee. Taking the cue from a professional learning event about student voice, Mitchell aims to increase the "volume" from just 5th graders who are on Student Council and Safety Patrol to include younger students on a new Safe School Climate Committee.

The program's goal is to create and foster stronger bonds across grade levels and com-

municate solutions for the school. A cohort of school counselors, teachers, Principal Roden, peers and students will meet bi-weekly to build their voices by bringing situations and settings into group discussions.

The Safe School Climate Committee's mission is clear: to utilize Mitchell's best resources — the students in grades 1-5 to create a stronger community within the building based on kindness, respect, proactive steps, and hard work together. The program is still in its planning stages and will be implemented in the fall of 2018.

"See Something, Say Something" was taken on by the Safety Patrol and Officer Marsh as part of DARE. Principal Roden and school

counselors are also involved. Safety Patrol has taken the lead in creating posters and educating the other students during lunch waves about working together as a Mitchell community to squash the negative behaviors, bring awareness to the positive, and to work together across grade levels to reinforce a sense of student leadership.



MES Safety Patrol lunch meeting with the Principal

Wingman in Region 14 Schools

Wingman is a youth leadership program designed for children of all abilities to feel accepted by recognizing their unique and individual strengths and boosting their self-confidence. The program teaches student leaders principles of inclusion and empathy to create an accepting school environment for all students. The program is sponsored by *Dylan's Wings of Change*, a foundation dedicated to the memory of Dylan Hockley who was killed in the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012.

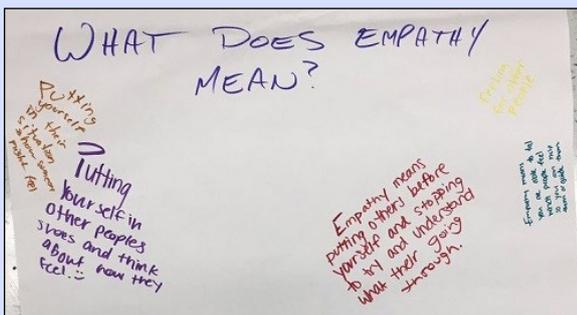
Woodbury Middle School

The year-long Wingman Program is wrapping up at WMS. The program kicked off in September with the training of 48 student leaders who were nominated by faculty members to lead the charge in countering the root causes of rejection, exclusion and isolation with increased empathy and compassion.

Wingman's 48 student leaders are advised by teachers Adam Brutting and Anthony Gonsalves who have a strong desire to further develop leadership and empathy skills in their students. The students received training at the start of the school year and have been meeting with their advisors to design school environment activities throughout the year.

Recently, WMS held an Anti Defamation League-sponsored assembly to teach empathetic behaviors and to improve student interactions around kindness. The Wingman student leaders have taken that theme and proposed activities with a goal to improve the school environment.

Activities include weekly announcements of national holidays to create opportunities to find similarities among members of the school community, painting the cafeteria windows with inspirational quotes and compliments, a Weekly Kindness Challenge and "Definition" Posters focused on helping students to become more aware of the meaning behind the words they say as well as the impact they have. A Kindness drawing/photo contest has also been implemented in WMS Family.



Sample Wingman Leadership Exercise

Nonnewaug High School

Nonnewaug High School will become the first high school in the country to implement the nationally renowned Wingman Program and its principles into the high school student population.

While Wingman has its roots at the elementary and middle school levels empowering students to take the lead in their school's climate, students at Nonnewaug began working behind the scenes to take the philosophy and principles of the program and make them relevant to the high school community. NHS will lead as the flagship high school for other high schools to follow in working towards maintaining positive school climates.

In February, students, counselors, and Principal Luby began Phase I of Wingman - a focus group to assess student thoughts on culture and climate and get a feel for the entire school community. Areas the Wingman Program will likely focus on include Emotional Wellness and Stress Management, Conflict Resolution and Community Building.

Phase II begins Wednesday with a school-wide assembly for current 9th- 11th grade students to introduce them to the concept and start recruiting student leaders. Ian Hockley, the founder of Wingman and *Dylan's Wings of Change* will be on hand to tell his story and answer any questions the students may have about getting involved.

All NHS students will have the opportunity to apply for the Wingman leadership positions on line following the launch assembly. Student leaders will be trained by expert educators with selected teachers and counselors acting as champions to guide and continue their development throughout the school year. The Wingman student leaders will play roles in guiding incoming freshmen during orientation and in freshman class advisories to welcome them to the school and to promote the Wingman program and its principles. They will be present at all events throughout the school year as champions of an inclusive school environment.