

# The SUNFLOWER

A Newsletter from Braeburn Elementary School



45 Braeburn Road, West Hartford CT 06107  
Phone: (860) 561-2200 Fax: (860) 521-8416

Jan. 12, 2017

Jeffrey F. Sousa  
Principal

## A Message from the Principal...

Happy 2017 to all of our Braeburn families!

During our winter recess Braeburn was much too quiet! It is so good to see and feel the energy return to our school as Braeburn is again bustling with our amazing students. I look forward to a great year in 2017 filled with many wonderful memories and everlasting educational experiences for all of our students.

Creativity has been called a key 21st century skill. That means it, along with skills like communication and critical thinking, will help students navigate the increasingly collaborative and information-rich world that awaits them once they leave school. The arts have been shown to boost students' academic performance, perseverance, self-confidence, and more. Here are strategies for supporting your child's creativity.

**Take stock of your toys.** Flashy electronic toys are fun, but they don't offer children opportunities for open-ended, imaginative play. Make sure to have basic art supplies: paper, crayons, glue, and clay at home, along with toys like building blocks, puzzles, or costumes for dress-up.

**Cut the screen time.** Set limits on TV and iPad time. Try designating a certain time during the week when your entire family will put down cell phones and work on a creative project.

**Embrace mistakes.** Children who are afraid of failure are less likely to think creatively. Teach your child that mistakes are opportunities for growth. Ask, "What could you do differently next time?" Be patient with your child—and model patience as he or she learns new skills or tries a new project.

**Encourage curiosity.** Don't squelch kids' natural curiosity by being frustrated when your child asks lots of questions. Embrace it! Ask, "What if" questions, and encourage your child to use his or her imagination.

**Offer constructive praise...** Too much praise can make a child "hooked" on success. Instead of offering general praise ("You're so smart!"), offer specific feedback that praises your child's effort or the process he or she used ("You found a great way to paint that scene," or "I can tell you've been practicing.") Offer non-verbal praise (a hug or a thumbs-up), or implicit encouragement by displaying your child's work on the refrigerator.

**...but step back sometimes.** If a child feels constantly watched, he or she may be less likely to try new ideas. Give your child space to play on his or her own. Wait until your child is finished drawing to ask what he or she has made.

**Look for community resources.** Check your local library, museum, or community center for art classes or workshops to try new creative skills. Keep an eye out for poster or story contests offered by community organizations, too. Or, try teaming up with a neighbor or friend to host an art playdate. Some projects can be time-consuming or expensive, but working together with other families can help ease the burden.

Additionally, here are some web resources:

Visit Crayola's **Creative Parenting Web page** for activities and tips to spark creativity at home. [bit.ly/creativeparenting](http://bit.ly/creativeparenting)

The **Tinkerlab** offers dozens of hands-on art, science, writing, and craft ideas for families to try. [tinkerlab.com/](http://tinkerlab.com/)

At **The Artful Parent** blog, explore interviews with children's art experts along with lists of the best supplies. [artfulparent.com/](http://artfulparent.com/)

Thank you for sharing your children with us and please remember Snuggle Up and Read will be held here at Braeburn today from 6:00-7:30pm. I hope to see you here!

Yours,

Jeffrey F. Sousa  
Principal

## CURRICULUM CORNER

Last week the Braeburn staff had a chance to evaluate and celebrate student writing. We read hundreds of student pieces at all grade levels. Upon examining the student work we noticed the following trends that I would like to share with you.

- Children are demonstrating strong leads in their writing.
- Stories are being told “bit by bit.”
- The stories have good beginnings and endings.
- Children are able to “write across the pages” - they are writing several lines per page and stories are several pages in length.
- Children are successfully writing about a small moment in time.
- Children are staying on topic.
- Children are able to sequence time and events in their writing.
- Children have a sense of story structure.
- Children are including feelings, emotions and humor in their writing.
- The stories are well organized.
- Children are displaying stamina - they are able to write for longer periods of time on a specific topic.
- Children are writing in complete sentences.
- Children are beginning to demonstrate elaboration and craft in their writing that they have noted in mentor texts.

We are so proud of our students and all of their hard work! The work that the children have begun in this unit applies to the writing that will continue throughout the year, regardless of the writing genre that is the focus of instruction. We will continue to work on the skills of elaboration, editing and revising, and writing fluently with our students as we move on to explore the writing of informational text and opinion writing throughout the rest of the year. We look forward to sharing that work with you during parent conferences in March!

***Ellen Cercone, Curriculum Specialist***

## BRAEBURN CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
Thurs, Jan 12	6:00-7:30 pm	Snuggle Up and Read Night
<b>Mon, Jan 16</b>		<b>Martin Luther King Day-No School</b>
Tues, Jan 17	7:45 am	Student Council Meeting, Library
Thurs, Jan 19	6:30-7:30 pm	PTB Meeting, Cafeteria
Fri, Jan 27		Fitness Friday
Wed, Feb 1		Family Night; Non-electronic Activities encouraged
Tues, Feb 7	7:45 am	Student Council Meeting, Library
Thurs, Feb 9	6:30-7:30 pm	PTB Meeting, Cafeteria
Tues, Feb 14		Valentine's Day
<b>Mon-Tues, Feb. 20-21</b>		<b>Winter Recess (includes Presidents' Day)</b>
Fri, Feb 24		Fitness Friday
Mon, Feb 27-Fri, Mar 3		Dr. Seuss Week



Next Edition of  
The Sunflower will  
be Date Reminder  
version:  
Thursday,  
January 26, 2017



### Monthly Lunch Menu

Please visit the WHPS  
website for our monthly  
lunch menu at:

<http://www.whps.org/page.cfm?p=2084>



## Girl Scout News

### Pajama Day Update:

I am so excited to let you all know that our Pajama Day fundraiser was a huge success and on behalf of Braeburn's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Brownie Troop I would like to thank everyone for participating! We raised \$365.00 and received 38 pairs of pajamas. The money was used to purchase additional pajamas for the Pajama Program Charity and our total donation was 76 pairs of pajamas. Even better news is that our local Carter's store matched our donation! So Braeburn has made a donation of 148 pairs of pajamas that will be given to families in need in our community! We would like to send out a special thank you to Principal Sousa for allowing us to hold a school wide pajama day and to all the staff and teachers who helped make this happen!



## The Library is hosting the third annual Snuggle Up and Read

**Who:** Braeburn Families K-5

**What:** Snuggle up with some good books, crafts and hot cocoa while browsing the library. You and your family can check out books too!!

**When:** January 12, 2017 6:00-7:30 pm

**Where:** Braeburn's Library Media Center

**Why:** This is a great way for families to celebrate "Family Night", read together, check out books as a family, create a puppet show together, make a craft and enjoy some hot cocoa... all as a family.

Wear your most comfortable pajamas and snuggle up and read!



**Special Notice to *5<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents* :  
Bristow Middle School  
Enrollment Process**

Bristow Middle School will be holding its enrollment for the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders in January. Bristow Middle School is a school of choice, drawing its diverse population from all neighborhoods in West Hartford. In the 2017-2018 school year, Bristow will enroll 420 students in grades 6 through 8.

All 5<sup>th</sup> graders who reside in West Hartford and are attending West Hartford Public Schools are automatically included in this process. Other 5<sup>th</sup> graders who reside in West Hartford and attend a private, parochial or inter district magnet school like The University of Hartford Magnet School are also eligible, although they need to apply to be included in the process and verify they reside in West Hartford with our Residency office.

Each 5<sup>th</sup> grader will receive a number randomly, which will establish the choice order. This number will be mailed home to parents on January 19, 2017. In order to help parents make an informed choice, two informational meetings will be held at Bristow Middle School on Monday, March 6, 2017 and Thursday, March 9, 2017 at 6:30 pm. Parents can choose to attend either of these meetings as they are both the same. Students are invited to attend these meetings with their parents.

**We recommend you attend one regardless of the number your child receives so you are prepared in case we get to your child's number.**

For information about Bristow and full details about how this enrollment process works, please visit the Bristow website at <http://bristow.whps.org/>. You can also call or email the principal, Steven Cook, at 860-231-2100/ or [Steven\\_Cook@whps.org](mailto:Steven_Cook@whps.org)



**Kindergarten  
2017-2018**

***Calling All Braeburn Children  
Eligible for  
Kindergarten in the Fall***

If you have a child who will be five years old on or before Jan 1, 2018, please call the school office at 860-561-2200 after the first of January so that we may add your child to our incoming Kindergarten list.

If you know of a friend or neighbor with an incoming Kindergarten student, please have them give us a call as well!

Thank you.

# Off To Kindergarten!



Please join us to learn more about Kindergarten in West Hartford, the Registration Process, and ways to help prepare your child.

Parents of the West Hartford Kindergarten Class of 2017-18

To register, please e-mail [rsvpgreatby8@gmail.com](mailto:rsvpgreatby8@gmail.com)

Childcare available by reservation on first-come, first-served basis.

Children residing in West Hartford who are 5 on or before January 1, 2018 are eligible for enrollment in WHPS kindergartens.

Monday  
January 30, 2017

(Snow Date:  
Monday, February 6)

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Town Hall  
50 South Main Street  
West Hartford, CT 06107





## West Hartford Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs

Apply now for the 2017-2018 Pre-Kindergarten programs located at Charter Oak International Academy, Florence E. Smith STEM School and Webster Hill School. Applications will be available in all West Hartford Elementary School Offices, at the West Hartford Town Hall in the Residency Office (Room 154) and the Human Services Office (Room 306), and online at [whps.org](http://whps.org) beginning January 12, 2017.

Applicants must be:

- A resident of West Hartford
- Age eligible:
  - Charter Oak International Academy will accept 60 Pre-K students born between 1/2/13 to 1/1/2015.
  - Smith and Webster Hill Schools will accept 16 Pre-K students each born between 1/2/13 and 1/1/14.

**Please plan on attending one of the following  
Open House Informational meetings:**

Charter Oak International Academy:	February 2nd 6:30 pm February 23rd 6:30 pm
Florence E. Smith STEM School:	February 9th 6:30 pm
Webster Hill School	February 1st 6:00 pm



For additional information, please call:  
Charter Oak International Academy (860) 233-8506  
Florence E. Smith STEM School (860) 236-3315  
Webster Hill School (860) 521-0320  
Irene Garneau, Dept. Supervisor for Early Childhood Education (860) 929-5552

**INSPIRATION MEETS  
IMAGINATION**

**PLAYHOUSE  
ON PARK** 

# Young Actor Training Program

## ACTING CLASSES FOR STUDENTS GRADES K-8

We offer exciting opportunities for students interested in furthering their theatrical talents and abilities. We welcome students of all levels of experience! Our acting classes strive to teach the basics of acting techniques in a comfortable, educational, professional and fun environment! Students are placed into classes based on their current grade level. We conclude each session by inviting friends and families to a final share day!

Class sizes are limited. Advanced registration required.

**Winter session begins as early as January 9th!  
Sign up today!**

Also Offering...

# Professional Theatre for Young Audiences

**THE CAT IN THE HAT: JUNE 3-11, 2017**

Get Your tickets now to see professional actors bring these energetic and exciting plays to life! We also offer in-school workshops!

### MONDAYS

4:30-5:30PM Grades: K & 1  
5:45-6:45PM Grades: 1 & 2

### TUESDAYS

5:30-7:00PM Grades: 5 - 8

### WEDNESDAYS

4:00-5:00PM Grades 3 & 4  
5:15-6:15PM Grades 4 & 5



To register for either program and for more details and tickets, please see our website [www.playhouseonpark.org](http://www.playhouseonpark.org) or call the box office at (860) 523-5900 x10.

244 Park Road, West Hartford, CT 06119 [www.playhouseonpark.org](http://www.playhouseonpark.org) (860) 523-5900, ext. 10

### **Public Act 16-189**

We believe that it is vital for all students in West Hartford Public Schools to be able to efficiently and effectively use digital tools that empower them in all phases of the learning process, including research, problem solving, content creation, communication, and collaboration. We also believe that we must be committed at all times to protecting students' privacy and providing them with a powerful and safe educational experience. To that end, the West Hartford Public Schools follow the legal requirements of Public Act 16-189 to promote the safety and security of all students and staff. In compliance with Connecticut State Law, we update online programs used within the district that house student data. The programs may be used district-wide, in a very small number of classrooms, or with individual students. The list will be updated each time the district enters into a new contract where student data is housed. For more information on the specifics of Public Act 16-189 and updates of vendor agreements, visit [www.whps.org/pa189](http://www.whps.org/pa189).