

SECTION V

A GLIMPSE OF OUR SCHOOLS



Central Tree Middle School
281 Main Street
Rutland, MA 01543
Principal: Nancy Fournier

Central Tree Middle School consists of approximately four hundred nine (409) students in grades six through eight, supported by thirty-three (33) teachers and additional support staff. The faculty at Central Tree Middle School remains committed to improving the quality of instruction, increasing parent involvement, and fostering a safe and orderly school environment.

The primary focus of our professional development program over the past year has been to integrate the various components of the WRSD Literacy Initiative into classroom instruction. Faculty members spent several days in subject-like groups deepening their understanding of the initiative. Several teachers signed up to be Lab Classroom Teachers and worked closely with members of the Teaching and Learning Alliance, Inc. These teachers continued to pilot instructional techniques gathered through the initiative and then agreed to share their experiences with other teachers. This year the teachers got to observe each other and then invited other middle school teachers in the District to observe them at Central Tree in a day long session.

Another focus of professional development was Numeracy wherein the whole school participated in workshops designed to expand upon stressing the importance of math in all curriculum areas. MCAS results were analyzed on a regular basis to identify relative strengths and areas in need of improvement so that we can improve student performance. All math teachers were able to attend training and we were thus able to form a partnership with Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in the use of their math program Assistments, which allows students to practice math in MCAS format questions using a computer and to get hints and immediate feedback as to their performance. This program is used widely in other school districts with very positive results.

In addition to our focus on academic improvement, we continue to address ways to improve our school climate and culture. Through the ongoing efforts of the Diversity and Tolerance Committee, we have worked together to identify and address ways in which we can improve the way students respond to a diverse population of peers. In April we read the book, *Tunes for Bears to Dance To*, by Robert Cormier. This book is a brief, compelling book that conveys the devastating effects of evil, whether its form is as huge and incomprehensible as the Holocaust, or as small and personal as another human being. Henry, a young teenager, is lucky to be employed. Since his brother's recent death, his father is paralyzed by depression; his mother works long hours to support the family. It's the early 1950s, and, with the return of the servicemen, housing and jobs are scarce. Unfortunately, Henry's boss is a bigoted, abusive individual whose hatred of others is so consuming that he intentionally sets out to corrupt the boy's goodness. He forces Henry to commit an ugly, violent act and betray a friendship with an elderly neighbor who has lost his home and family to the Nazis. As part of his rehabilitative therapy, Mr. Levine lovingly carves his vanished village and its population out of wood. The scenes in which he is "home" again demonstrate the Holocaust's horror in a deeply moving manner, and Cormier wrenchingly personalizes the man's grief.

The entire student body viewed a PowerPoint presentation about the Holocaust in preparation for their reading of the book. As a follow up, students met with a ninety-year-old Holocaust survivor who told his story of survival after being held prisoner in Terezin and later Auschwitz. On the following day, a school-wide project was completed with the outcome being a large mural to be added to the other two murals previously completed. This was the third year Central Tree has done such a project and the theme of accepting differences and having empathy for others is one that we continue to stress and foster within our school culture. In addition we explored the themes of aggressors, victims and bystanders and their roles in history and in relation to bullying. Afterschool activities were offered by the principal who worked with groups of students as they continued to explore this theme.

We continued to hold monthly Principal Coffee and Chats to provide parents and administration with the opportunity to share information and work together to improve the experiences for our children at Central Tree. A Student of the Month Program is also held on a monthly basis to acknowledge students in a variety of areas. We are using our school slogan, REACH (Responsibility, Excellence,

Achievement, Character and Honor) which represents the school's core values, to determine students of the month from each grade.

Over eighty Rutland senior citizens attended our annual Holiday Breakfast; we also continued to collect funds for local families around the holiday season and frequently make financial and food donations to the Rutland Food Pantry. We are proud to offer a variety of athletic opportunities including field hockey, track, basketball, cheerleading, baseball and softball. Central Tree is proud to offer students additional extracurricular opportunities including a Lego Robotics Club, the CTMS Student Council, Yearbook Club, Drama Club, Game Club, Mountain Bike Club, and Mathematics Club, National Junior Honor Society and German National Junior Honor Society.

This year Central Tree held its first staff/student basketball game where money was raised to support the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. This event was well attended and fun for all who participated.

Parent involvement is crucial to the success of Central Tree Middle School. Our PTO continues to grow in membership and in the number of sponsored events. The PTO provides our students with age-appropriate activities, such as after school movies, and with fundraising to support staff and school initiatives through their mini-grant program. A Spaghetti Supper was held in March that raised money to support our ever-growing music program. In May, a book fair was held, specifically promoting summer reading and high-quality reading materials to our students. This furthers our goal of promoting a love of reading and supporting the literacy initiative.



Chocksett Middle School
40 Boutelle Road
Sterling, MA 01564
Principal: Margaret N. Morgan

Chocksett Middle School consists of approximately four hundred twenty (420) students in grades five through eight, supported by twenty nine (29) teachers and additional support staff. Chocksett Middle School believes that all educational and school related decisions should be based upon the divergent needs and uniqueness of the early adoles-

cent. Through a climate of respect, we must provide our students with learning opportunities that meet each student's varied physical, social and intellectual needs and that maximize his or her potential. We believe that our curricula must go beyond the traditional academic offerings. Through sound educational practices and the utilization of emerging technologies, we can prepare our students for the challenges that will be theirs in the future.

Our work this year has focused on issues that can be categorized by the following; communication, school procedures/policies, student academic growth, student social emotional growth and facilities. Ongoing avenues for communication with parents, staff and students provide opportunities to build relationships and to gain insight to the strengths and weaknesses within our school. This year all Grade 8 students met with the Principal, via Principal lunches. Parents have participated in PTO, SIMCO, and at Principal's Coffee & Chats. A Principal's message is sent home with quarterly report cards and is posted on the school web-site.

In order to provide a clear understanding of Chocksett's policies and procedures, the school handbook has been reviewed and rewritten in coalition with SIMCO.

Student academic growth remains a constant focus of attention. The Chocksett staff has discussed the implications of our MCAS and Growth Model results for instructional changes/adjustments and implementation. All staff members have participated in professional development on strategies for answering Open Response questions. ISSPs have been developed for identified students in need. Work continues in regards to our "literacy program" and differentiated instruction and assessment.

We have included long term technology goals in our School Improvement Plan and are reviewing curriculum to ensure that our students receive the 21st century skills they need to compete in the global environment.

Since middle school students academic growth is closely related to their social-emotional well being, we continue to attend to this area in a variety of ways. Various anti-bullying educational measures have been implemented throughout the school year: Internet/Cyberspace safety programs, grade level instruction, staff training. Once again, transition programming for incoming Grade 5 students and parents took place at the end of this school year. We have been and will continue to be vigilant in providing both an emotionally and physically safe environment for our school community.

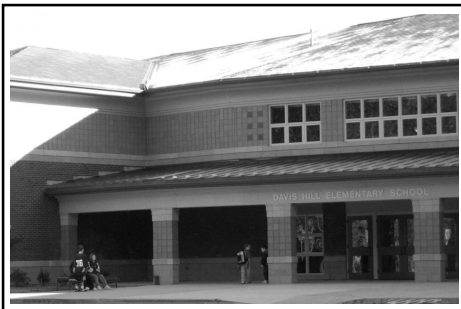
We continue to address ways to improve our school climate. We hold quarterly Principal Coffee and Chats to provide parents and administration with the opportunity to share information and work together to improve the experiences for our children at Chocksett. Our new Core Values of Respect and Responsibility have been embedded in school practices and classroom instruction. Over one hun-

dred Sterling senior citizens attended our annual Holiday Breakfast; we also continued to collect funds for local families around the holiday season and have made financial and food donations to the Sterling Food Pantry. We continue to offer a variety of athletic opportunities including field hockey, track, basketball, cheerleading, baseball, softball, and intramural volleyball. Chocksett is proud to offer students additional extracurricular opportunities including Student Council, Yearbook, Destination Imagination, Science Olympiad, Mathletes, Model UN, and the Central District Music Festival program. In addition to our sports teams, students competing in afterschool Academic Competitions are also recognized in an after school ceremony.

Parent involvement is crucial to the success of Chocksett Middle School. Our PTO continues to support various events and programs, such as the ASAP tutorial program, advisor stipends, financial assistance for field trips, and other academic enrichment endeavors.

In an effort to maintain a clean and safe facility, a custodian has been assigned to Chocksett during the school day. His continuous oversight of the facility has supported efforts to maintain our facility at an acceptable level of cleanliness and repair. The issue of "flooding" in the lobby following intense rainfall has been rectified.

We are continually grateful for the demonstrated commitment of our staff and parents to provide our students with a comprehensive educational experience within an emotionally and physically safe environment.



Davis Hill Elementary School
80 Jamieson Road
Holden, MA 01520
Principal: Mark A. Aucoin

What is Davis Hill? Is it a public school with students ranging from kindergarten to grade five? Sure, but more than that. Is it a building constructed in 2000 with great classrooms and work spaces for students, a wonderful and modern gym, library and cafeteria? Yes, but even more than that.

We are a living, breathing, exciting and dynamic school for

educators to work in, students to learn in, and for the parents and community to be involved with. We are defined by and held accountable to our commitment to our Massachusetts' State Frameworks, the Common Core of Learning, and our District's curriculum standards, and the philosophy of "Children First". But even with all that it, again, is only part of the picture.

We are a group of educators, teachers, specialists, and administrators totally dedicated and committed to bringing the highest level of education to our students. It is the Davis Hill communities' combined mission to enable our students to acquire knowledge, demonstrate tolerance, accept diversity, make personal decisions that reflect ethical behavior, understand their own and other's self worth and dignity, and be prepared to further pursue their life's goals.

The programs used at Davis Hill accommodate diverse learning styles and the differentiated needs of our students. The Davis Hill School community is committed to the core values of academic excellence, cooperative and respectful relationships, and life-long learning. The mission of Davis Hill School, therefore, is to improve the acquisition of knowledge, the appreciation and tolerance for differences and diversity, and the development of the skills for learning that will last a lifetime for children.

Our aim is to have students who leave Davis Hill at the end of fifth grade be able to read, write and compute to a high standard; to be able to make personal decisions which reflect ethical behavior and a clear understanding of their own and other's self worth and dignity; and will be prepared to further pursue their life's goals.

Teachers make every effort to meet the individual needs of all learners. The teachers monitor students' skills throughout the year. At-risk students may also have a Response to Intervention Plan that emphasizes the appropriate accommodations needed for children within the regular education program.

Other learning opportunities include a week long Adventure Camp for grade five, Destination Imagination (DI), Math Olympics, and LEGO Engineering. The past two years the fifth graders attended a weeklong ecology camp in Saco, Maine, dedicated to teaching skills involving multi-sensory learning, science of ecology and waterways, team building, adventure activity, and environmental protection issues. The program provides children with positive experiences of how they can make a difference in the social and environmental future of the world.

The school and our PTA support Destination Imagination (DI) teams for the International Problem Solving Tournament. This program uses the multiple intelligences of students to build skills, such as problem solving, teamwork and divergent thinking. Through the efforts of enthusiastic volunteers, students have been able to participate in a variety of after school LEGO Engineering programs from

kindergarten through grade five. Students are provided opportunities to design, plan, and cooperatively engage in engineering activities through teamwork.

Our students participate in community service projects, making monthly donations to the Wachusett Food Pantry. Students donated to the Telegram & Gazette Santa during the holidays. Teams of students purchased holiday gifts for needy families and seniors. In keeping with the tradition of Davis Hill being the biggest contributor to our local food pantry, we had a food and toy drive, organized and run by third grade students. It was a huge success.

Community connections are highly valued. The Holden Fire Department and Holden Police Department conduct programs for students at varied grade levels. Officer Sculthorpe, a Holden Police Officer, is assigned as school liaison to develop a positive relationship between school age children and the Department. We have strong connections to the history of Holden and our third graders make a day of touring the town. We welcome student teachers from local colleges to come to our school for observations and practicum experiences. The school also houses the Holden Recreational Department's Before School and After-School Child-Care Program.

There are many activities during the school year where children and parents become involved. Some of the events for this year have been our annual Fall Festival, Veteran's Day Recognition, Community Reading Day, the Holiday Fair, Geo-Bee, Destination Imagination, Family Arts Night, Family Picnic Day, and Kindergarten Orientation Day. Throughout the year parents can be seen on a daily basis providing important support by volunteering in classrooms and with special projects.

Davis Hill is truly enriched by this active and enthusiastic group of volunteers and caring and involved parents. Our PTA sponsors many family night programs, field trip transportation, and enrichment programs for our students. The administration and staff of Davis Hill are thankful for the many parents and seniors who come into Davis Hill on a daily basis to work with students and to assist teachers. This school has a wonderful sense of community that is felt the minute you enter the school.



Dawson Elementary School
155 Salisbury Street
Holden, MA 01520
Principal: Patricia A. Scales

Dawson Elementary School has continued its tradition of providing educational excellence while promoting strong social skills and positive values within our students. We continue to engage and challenge students in an environment that fosters the IALAC (I am Loving and Caring) spirit. Each month a different social skill is introduced and reinforced by the teachers and administration. Students are identified by their teachers as demonstrating the social skills that we, as a school, work on and receive an award at a monthly assembly. Staff members are recognized throughout the year for their hard work by the administration, by other team members, and even students. The Second-Step Social Skills program is being implemented in all grades to support the IALAC program. We have also incorporated anti-bullying activities in the school. Our activities are designed to be proactive to help students become aware of bullying and how to avoid and deal with situations they may encounter.

As part of the School Improvement Plan and the overall goals of the District, students are encouraged to participate in community service activities in and out of the school. Students have participated in activities such as letters to soldiers, senior center activities, American Cancer Society, Why Me, Tufts Floating Pediatric Hospital, as well as the local food pantry.

Enrichment programs are scheduled throughout the year. These programs support and enrich the curriculum. Programs are supported by the Dawson PTA. Teachers

