

Get to Know STARS CLUB

NB Stars Club Newsletter Issue 1 November 2008



Join us! Thursday, December 4th, 6-7pm

Hear From Teachers, Club Coordinators & Ask Questions!

How do good schools get even better?

This is the question that drives the North Beverly School faculty in their work together as a Professional Learning Community (PLC). A PLC is a group of dedicated educators who have made a series of commitments to each other in an effort to improve student achievement. Such commitments include collaboration, reflection, developing a shared vision, complete focus on improving teaching and learning. This important work is facilitated by the school administrator and our consultant from Salem State College. The North Beverly faculty so appreciates the support from our parent and community volunteers...without you, this PLC would not be possible!

We began this year's work by identifying our learning goals for the year. These goals are drafted in the form of "essential questions":

1. How can we better communicate across grade levels and disciplines in order to provide all students with a comprehensive educational experience? What are the instructional gaps that must be addressed? How can we capitalize on the human and material resources right here at North Beverly?
2. How can we increase student engagement and attention to learning in order to maximize student achievement in every lesson?

Our work in Session #1 and throughout the year has and will continue to support these learning goals. As a faculty we have begun the process of clearly defining our K-5 learning goals in the area of reading. Our faculty has been collaborating as grade-level teams, cross-grade-level teams and with specialists, special educators and related service providers to develop a "K-5 Continuum of Essential Learnings in Reading". We have spent time looking collaboratively at samples of student work and how those work samples support our identified "Essential Learnings in Reading".

We used our time together as a PLC to closely examine student assessment data in the area of reading, identify students who are in need of additional support and/or individualized reading interventions, determine a schedule for monitoring student progress, collaborate with interdisciplinary colleagues to identify resources for interventions and to reframe our instructional reading groups in order to better meet the needs of every child.

The North Beverly faculty is fortunate to have the structure of a formalized PLC in which to engage in this important work. As we continue to improve our instruction in the classroom, we expect that student achievement will increase across all grade levels.

Fondly, Mrs. Flewelling

Saltonstall Sharing!

On Friday, Nov. 14, North Beverly parents Joanna Murphy Scott, Mary Morency, Debbie Ploszay and Carolyn Ingleson visited Saltonstall School in Salem to learn about their Fridays Clubs, which is very similar to our Stars Club. Saltonstall School has offered the program for more than ten years with great success, providing teachers – and students – the opportunity to expand their skills. Our group met the Saltonstall Parent Coordinators, who led a tour and answered questions about the Fridays Clubs in action. What we saw was inspiring! From poetry to taekwondo to drawing – these kids were engaged!

With each session Saltonstall offers a minimum of 30 Clubs for 350 students, which allows the classes to stay small and creates a wonderful leader-to-student ratio. Club leaders include parents, community members as well as teachers and students from Salem State College.

It was great to see the Saltonstall Clubs in action. Our visit was exciting and helped get our creative juices flowing to see what we can bring back to North Beverly.

As Saltonstall Parent Coordinators put it:
"Fridays Club makes our school even better!"

We were able to see first-hand the many clubs that are thriving at Saltonstall and can now bring those ideas to North Beverly. Some examples include:

★ Displaying Student Art – Artwork from Fridays Club is displayed at Salem City Hall for the entire community to enjoy. Already, Dr. Hayes and Mayor Scanlon embraced this idea and are on board with helping us highlight North Beverly Stars artwork at City Hall, the Memorial Building and the Beverly Public Library. We'll keep you posted.

★ Reaching out to Fifth Graders – Saltonstall offers a Fridays Club Academy that taps fifth-grade students to run a Fridays Club for their younger classmates (with a parent supervisor). This is a wonderful chance to nurture leadership, responsibility and organizational skills. We believe our fifth-graders would rise to the occasion, and we would like to offer a similar experience at North Beverly.

★ Teaming up Clubs – Clubs for younger students are combined with two activities. For example, Play Dough & Perler Beads or Clay modeling & Legos. This allows students to be exposed to two related activities, but enables them to use different skill sets during one club meeting. For the younger students, it's the best of both worlds.

Some of the other Clubs observed included: Cartooning, Legos, Sports Clubs, Taekwondo, Cheerleading, Destination Imagination, Play-Doh/Lincoln Logs/Moonsand, Art Drawing, Model Building, "Things that Float & Fly" Club, Poetry Club, Video Club, Italian "Soup" Club (combining art, music and Italian history).

What is STARS CLUB ?

Stars Clubs is a brand new enrichment program run by parents and community volunteers. This initiative has a double objective. It presents the students with new opportunities for learning a variety of topics in a non-traditional environment while offering our educators quality time to enhance their teaching. It is the first initiative of its kind implemented in the Beverly school system and, as the first session of Stars Club is coming to an end, we have a lot to be proud of.

More than 20 clubs have been offered in this first session, covering a wide range of interests. In K-2, kids with a passion for fitness and health choose between Yoga, Healthy Kids, and Healthy Cooking. The children learn to exercise and relax, discover good life-long habits, and create and sample some tasty treats. The arts and crafts buffs may express their creativity in the Knitting or the Arts & Crafts Clubs. Board Games and Lego are also very popular clubs, where logic, design, and strategy are put to the test. Reading and story telling is the focus of the Eric Carle Club. Finally, our young students have a chance to discover the world of nature through hands-on experiments in the Science Club.

In grades 3-5, kids interested in fitness and sports have chosen from Running and Healthy Snacks, Cardio kick-boxing, and even Golf. Kids intrigued by logic test their strategy skills in the Board Games, Everyday Math Games and the Jigsaw Puzzles Clubs. American Girl Doll Club explores history through the world of dolls. Fabulous Fairy Tales, Newspaper, and Pen Pals Around-the-World Clubs explore different ways of communication and creative expression through the written language. Fire & Injury Prevention Club aims at teaching the kids awareness of basic safety. A sense of community involvement is fostered on the Green Team where kids learn about recycling and preservation of our natural resources. Finally, the Mentor Club offers an opportunity to our fifth graders to hone their mentoring skills while providing babysitting for Star Club coordinators with little ones.

The impressive variety of clubs offered was made possible by the fantastic efforts and dedication of our volunteers. With little time to prepare and no previous role models, they embraced this program and jumped in with both feet. They used creativity, ingenuity and teamwork to educate and enrich our children. They not only helped launch the program but, without a chart to follow, they really defined it. We are all grateful for their hard work. We should be very proud of what we have accomplished so far, but the journey has just begun.

We value the feedback that the current leaders have given us, and we hope to find innovative solutions for some of the challenges we face. We are working closely with neighboring communities such as Danvers and Salem that have been running successful similar programs for years. In order to maintain and enhance the enriching experience for our children we need the help and involvement of the entire North Beverly community. This is an exciting chance for us to play an active role in our children's education.

Get Psyched for Session II of STARS:

With the start of Session II only 6 weeks away, we are working hard to make it as enriching and fun as possible! New community partnerships have begun to be formed and we are happy to announce the following groups and individuals will be involved:

- **Montserrat College of Art** - **Beverly Historical Society**
- **Mitchell School of Dance** - **Beverly Bootstraps**
- **Essex National Heritage** - **Essex County Greenbelt**
- **BHS Music Director Ray Novaack** - **BevCam**
- **BMS Band Director Adam Costa** - **Kiwanis**
- **Mayor William Scanlon** - **Rep. Mary Grant**
- **City Councillors Grimes, Flaherty, Cronin & Burke**

We are actively recruiting Coordinators and Assistants, either for the entire six-meeting Session or as a one-time "guest speaker" or extra pair of hands. Child care is available and we provide a Guide to Stars Club for Volunteers. Please see below for a list of Clubs that can use your leadership or help!

- **Government** - **Intro to Foreign Languages** - **Sports**
- **"New to Science Fair" Prep** - **K-2 Green Team**
- **Board Game Blast** - **Support the Troops** - **Professions**
- **Passport/Travel** - **Arts & Crafts** - **Jam Session**

Session II starts January 14th.

Clubs will be held Wednesday mornings, 8 - 9:30am on 1/14, 1/28, 2/11, 3/3, 3/18 and 4/1.

Questions? Contact Antonella Cucchetti
antonellac@comcast.net

Join us Thursday, December 4th at 7 pm in the Cafetorium

Kids aged 3 and up are invited to play in the gym or read in the library. Supervision will be provided.

_____ YES! I'll attend the STARS CLUB Informational Meeting!

Name: _____ Email address: _____

Please clip and return no later than Tuesday, December 2nd. Thank you!