

# News from Burr

## Principal's Newsletter

February 2014

Dear Burr Community,

Spring is just around the corner, and hopefully we have made it through most of the snow. It has been a busy time at Burr, and I wanted to take a moment to update you on a number of important things happening at our school.

During the past few months, we have continued our work with monthly school wide CARES assemblies. CARES is an acronym that stands for cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control, and it forms the framework for how we strive to treat each other at Burr. Each assembly is an opportunity for students to learn the meaning of that month's word, work collaboratively with their classmates on an activity to model that word in action, and celebrate the students and staff at Burr who have demonstrated CARES through their words and actions. One aspect that has made our assemblies especially exciting is that students have begun to facilitate them. For example, when we studied and discussed assertion (standing up for yourself) in January, second grade students (working collaboratively with their teachers) hosted the assembly for the rest of the school.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test begins for Burr's students on March 19th. Fifth grade students will be taking the test during the final two weeks in March and the first week in April. Additionally, fifth grade students will be taking the Connecticut Mastery Test Science assessment on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Fourth grade students will be taking the SBAC assessment during the weeks before and after April break, and the third grade will follow during the final week of April and the first week of May. The district will be conducting a series of informational workshops for parents in the upcoming weeks. Burr's parents (along with parents from Dwight and Mill Hill) are invited to attend a workshop at Dwight School on Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> between 9:30-10:30. You should have already received a letter from the district through Infinite Campus that explains some basic information about SBAC including the reminder that this year's assessment is a field test and specific reporting results for schools and parents will most likely be limited.





Fairfield's school district continues to focus on the importance of providing a safe environment for all students. You should have received a letter from the Superintendent that clarifies additional safety measures for all elementary schools in Fairfield. They include an *Oops* cart that will be in the front of the building for any items that students may have forgotten at home. Parents are asked to leave items on this cart, and secretaries will check the cart periodically throughout the day to make sure that items get to students. Other safety measures mentioned in the letter include welcome protocols at the office front desk and routines for before school music lessons. Please note that this letter is posted on the Infinite Campus portal, so when you log in you should be able to see it. Also, please be aware that parents are still welcome to visit Burr for any number of specific reasons including (but not limited to) mystery readers, birthday celebrations, volunteering in the library, and special class parties. All of the staff at Burr greatly appreciate your support and generosity and welcome your presence in the building.

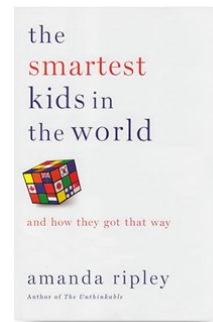
Finally, I wanted to make you aware of a Book Club opportunity that I am running in conjunction with the PTA. I invite all members of the Burr's parent community to read the book *The Smartest Kids in the World* by Amanda Ripley. At a May Principal's coffee, we will discuss some of the major ideas presented in the book as well as implications for our school. The book explores how students are educated in countries throughout the world. It does this by explaining the experiences of American exchange students who spend a year studying in Finland, South Korea, and Poland. Far from a dry textbook read, the book is provocative and thoughtful, and I think it will give all parents some insight into how we educate (and maybe should educate) our children. The link below is to the author's website and offers videos, related articles, and a description of the book. I would invite everyone to read the book and join the conversation. Books can be ordered through *Barnes and Noble* or *Amazon.com* More information to follow soon.

<http://www.amandaripley.com/books/the-smartest-kids-in-the-world>

Warmly,

*Jason Bluestein*

Jason Bluestein



Upcoming Important Dates:

March 26- Conference Date - Early Dismissal

April 2 - Conference Date - Early Dismissal

April 3—Conference Date- Early Dismissal (Evening Conferences)