

**ELLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DISTRICT INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT
NOVEMBER 2015**

1.0 Status of Initiatives

Sight Word Vocabulary Data

Dolch Word List	Trimester 1			
	Exceeds 26+	Meets 7-25	Approaching 3-6	Significantly Below 0-2
Kindergarten	12%	58%	24%	6%

Dolch Word List	Trimester 1			
	Exceeds 161-226	Meets 80-160	Approaching 65-79	Significantly Below < 64
Grade One	38%	34%	12%	16%

Dolch Word List	Trimester 1		
	Meets 214-226	Approaching 202-213	Significantly Below < 201
Grade Two	85%	5%	10%

Grade 6: Math Innovations Module 1

A Balancing Act – Focusing on Equality, Algebraic Expressions and Equations

Pre-Assessment Data	Post-Assessment Data	Overall Growth
Class Average = 30%	Class Average = 82%	+ 52%

Post-Assessment Data:

Level:	# of Students:	Percent:
Exceeds	27/219	12%
Meets	161/219	74%
Approaching	28/219	13%
Significantly Below	3/219	1%

November was a busy month for staff, students, and our families at Windermere School. We celebrated Veterans Day with over 25 veterans from the area visiting our classes. All of the veterans had relatives who attend (or attended) Windermere School. Each veteran guest was presented with an American flag, refreshments, and a musical tribute performed by our student musicians in a large assembly to begin the program. Afterward, the veterans were guided to classes where they spoke to students about their experiences and opportunities to serve our country.

Our physical education teachers focused their attention and classes on promoting wellness as they readied students for the State Physical Fitness Assessment. **Mrs. O'Brien** and **Mrs. St. John** encourage students to do their best with this annual test.

Our results are highlighted below:

Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment at Windermere - 11/11/2015

ASSESSMENT AREAS	Grade 4 Boys	Grade 4 Girls	Grade 6 Boys	Grade 6 Girls
Number of students tested on all 4 items	38	32	101	114
Number of students medically exempt	0	0	0	3
Number of students meeting the aerobic endurance standard (One-Mile Run/Walk or PACER)	30	26	83	98
Number of students meeting the flexibility standard (Back-Saver Sit-and-Reach Test)	32	30	82	103
Number of students meeting the upper body strength and endurance standard (90 Push-Up Test)	25	20	79	75
Number of students meeting the abdominal muscle strength and endurance standard (Curl-Up Test)	32	25	91	96
Number of students meeting the standards on all 4 test items	18	15	62	68

What a valuable learning day we had at Center School in November. For our fourth annual “Take a Veteran to School Day” program, we had the honor of welcoming sixteen veterans, mothers, fathers, uncles and grandparents of our students. They came to speak to our students in classrooms. Each in turn had an opportunity to share mementos from or photos of their experiences with our students. Students served as ambassadors for their visiting veterans in other classrooms. Their visit was culminated with delicious refreshments in the cafeteria at a reception provided by the PTO. We thank the following families and friends for participating in our program:

- Jonathan Allen**— Ellington resident
- Rick Centore**— great uncle to Camryn Fisher
- Joseph Ferolano**— grandfather of Lucia Ferolano
- Ryan Flori**— father of Brooklyn and Alexis Flori
- Joshua Garlock**— uncle to Nicole and Jacob Thomann
- Allison Gonzalez**— mother of Anna and Morning Hook
- Jerry Griswold**— grandfather of Joshua Pierson
- Joshua Hebert**— father of Hunter Hebert
- Alan Luoma**— grandfather of Luke Pereira
- Frank Mund**— grandfather to Charlotte and Sam Mund
- Donald Platt**— grandfather of Mackenna and Griffin Platt
- Donna Roberts**— grandmother of Genevieve Sticesen
- Will St. Clair**— uncle to Ryan Sagendorf
- John Szymanski**— father of Evan Szymanski

Ryan VanNorstrand— step-father of Bryanna Cromwell

John Wilkinson— grandfather of Alex Echard

Also visiting our school to speak with her students was **Mynot Moule**, grandfather of Ms. Katelyn Moule.

Angela Flori organized a reception of delicious homemade baked goods and refreshments to honor the veterans that spoke at Center School. We now have a fine tradition of bringing our veteran's stories to Center School and allowing our school community to show them how much they matter and offer our appreciation for their service. Thank you to our PTO for their support.

Thank you to **Tomi Raver** for helping coordinate the annual Thanksgiving Basket Drive in connection with **Cherie Murphy** and our PTO. Also, thank you to all the Center School families who donated toward the baskets and helped assemble and deliver them to Ellington Human Services office. The Reading for Fun Store has opened under the direction of **Lauren Kindall**. Students log and are awarded for their total minutes of at-home reading each month. **Kellie Scutt** organized school picture retakes. **Deb Ellis** organized the Box Tops Collection. **Ian Walsh** was the biggest contributor and won a gift certificate to Barnes & Noble for his efforts. **Angie Moser** organized a Lyman Orchard Pie Sale in time for the Thanksgiving holiday. Center School staff wore jeans as a fundraiser to support veterans upon return to their civilian lives. \$130.00 was collected and donated to the GIGo Fund.

Center School offers many thanks to **Kellie Buck** and the PTO for organizing The Bright Star Touring Theater to perform The Gift of the Magi & Other Heartwarming Tales. Two performers played all the roles to the delight of the students. In O'Henry's tale, The Gift of the Magi, our students learned about putting others first. From the Indian folktale, The Drum, our students learned about generosity and the power of giving. The rendition of Stone Soup stresses the value of sharing and helping others. This was the perfect complement to our character and literacy curriculum at a most wonderful time of the year.

Center School students met the goal of 10,000 Positive Behavior Choices. A Flashlight Read-a-Thon was held as a school-wide celebration in the darkened gymnasium. Students brought their favorite book and a flashlight to sit with their classmates and read for 20 minutes. The highlight of the experience was led by **Mr. Adams**. Students sang This Little Light of Mine while shining their flashlight beams on to the ceiling in unison.

The Windermere literacy team participated in a TC Teacher Led Study Group and shared concepts with classroom teachers and Literacy Teams K-4/5-8. This met with praise and success. The TC Learning Progressions from Teacher Led Study Group are being utilized in coaching/pushing into classrooms to model higher level thinking and written responses to literature.

Mrs. Bienkowski and **Mrs. Duff** facilitated two in-service programs on November 3 during our district's professional development day on finding resources to support small group reading in grades 3-6 and helping K-2 teachers align phonics skills with reading levels. Mrs. Bienkowski and Mrs. Duff modeled activities to reinforce phonics skills in small and whole group settings.

Ms. Palasek, our media specialist, has worked with all students in grades 1-6 in establishing Code.org accounts for the upcoming Hour of Code event. Students in grades 5-6 have been supporting the 1st and 2nd graders as they begin using their Code.org accounts. Ms. Palasek met with **Mrs. Dymkowski** to discuss capturing student work to upload to the digital portfolios. As part of our school improvement plans, Ms. Palasek has begun using the Nearpod Common Sense Media lessons with students in grades 3-6. These lessons focus on digital citizenship and are highly interactive.

Our school counselors, **Ms. Marshall** and **Ms. Toback-Reveley** have completed the annual ten-week conflict resolution lesson series in grade 5 classrooms concluding with a final assignment to complete with parents on the topic of cyberbullying and internet safety. They coordinated our Rachel's Challenge Assembly and student leadership training program while facilitating Friends of Rachel Club planning and committee meetings. A Herculean but vital task was organizing our school-wide food drive for Hockanum Valley Community Council. They also collaborated and met with Youth Services to brainstorm ways to include Windermere in the Decide to Be Kind town campaign and invited the Ellington Youth Services to lead a Friends of Rachel Club.

Mrs. Schumacher organized the Patriot's Pen essay contest which was open to 6th grade students. This year there were 9 students who participated in the contest. The 2015 – 2016 theme was "What Freedom Means to Me." The essays will be scored by members of the Ellington VFW. All students who participated will meet with a member of the VFW and receive a certificate of participation.

Over 880 student birthdays are celebrated during the course of the school year. Since we believe a child's birthday is very special, Windermere celebrates with the principal visiting the birthday boy/girl's classroom, giving him/her a birthday pencil and inviting the class to join in the Principal's Birthday Shake - a special (but very silly) dance. Already, this year, over 300 students have been "surprised" with a birthday shake!

At the November 3 professional development day, **Mrs. Bordieri** and second grade teachers, **Mrs. Warriner, Mrs. Varga, and Mrs. Garrow** presented the Second Step program to all of the Windermere teachers. The presentation included information about social emotional learning and the Second Step program itself. The second grade teachers discussed their experiences implementing the program since the beginning of the school year. Teachers were then given time to work with their grade level teams to plan for implementation of the program.

On November 19, **Mr. Welch, Mrs. Bordieri, Mrs. Warriner, Ms. Bostiga, and Mrs. Faraci** attended the Yoga & Mindfulness in the Classroom: Tools to Improve Self-Regulation Learning and Classroom Climate conference in Cromwell, CT. The conference provided an introduction to yoga and mindfulness along with simple ways to integrate them into the classroom. Participants were taught 67 simple yoga poses as well as mindfulness practices that are already being integrated into the attendees' classrooms.

Dr. LaPorte and Mrs. Haberern continue to meet on a regular with Tara Kelly and Colleen Palozej to stay informed about the ELL program. Ms. Kelly sets the agendas for these meetings and brings forward, questions, concerns and celebrations. There are two new students moving to

Windermere from South Korea in January. There are currently 47 students in Ellington receiving ELL services representing 17 languages.

The special services department staff presented on four different topics at the recent district wide professional development. **Dr. LaPorte** and **Mrs. Haberern** presented to the High School staff on the topic of providing accommodations to students with IEPs in the regular education classroom. **Tracy Smith**, presented to all staff who work with grade six and up on the new regulations and procedures regarding transition for students with special needs. **Sarah Anderson** and **Valerie Baigert** presented on Physical Management Training and **Sara Spak** did a presentation on Applied Behavior Analysis.

Dr. LaPorte planned the first parent conversation night which was offered to all Ellington parents. The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Group was invited to attend. The topic was on how parents can effectively partner with schools through the PPT process. The session was well attended and positive feedback was received.

Dr. LaPorte and **Mrs. Haberern** attended the district Dyslexia Committee meeting. **Deb Hillemeir**, Center School Reading Consultant, has taken the lead of this committee as part of her professional practice goal. The team reviewed the current process and forms and determined next steps which will include providing parents detailed information about Dyslexia.

The month of November started with a professional day that had all teachers at the middle school learning on a wide range of topics including student portfolios, student led conferences, nonfiction reading strategies, classroom questioning techniques, a range of instructional softwares, rubric and learning continuums development and finally, a wide range of curriculum work sessions. In language arts seventh grade students completed their initial small book club and then demonstrated their understanding through the creation of video blogs. In eighth grade, November kicked off the year's first book club which will eventually support a literary essay unit in the future.

In social studies, seventh grade students focused on the area of Mesopotamia, from ancient civilization to modern times. Students' research in the area of the unrest in Syria will lead to an interdisciplinary project in language arts, where students will begin using their research to develop a narrative writing piece in December. In science, seventh grade students worked on cell units, while eighth grade studied Newton's Law and demonstrated their understanding through blogs and video public service announcements.

During November, the middle school also hosted its annual Veterans Day ceremony. At this schoolwide student assembly attended by veterans and local community members, middle school students honored local veterans through emotional and patriotic speeches, poems, and music. New this year, honored guest and speaker was VFW member **Bruce Warkentin**.

In an effort to provide additional access to high school information the high school has expanded up-to-date information to parents/guardians on school activities by providing parents a link to our daily news broadcast at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ellingtonhs>. Additionally, Mr. Rinaldi

will be tweeting school activities and happenings on Twitter. Parents were informed in the high school newsletter that they can follow Mr. Rinaldi on Twitter @njrinaldi2230.

As part of EHS career and college exploration initiatives EHS school counselors will soon be meeting with juniors to discuss life after high school. Students are using Naviance and specific career websites to research career and post-secondary options. Sophomores are using Naviance to complete a career interest survey. The results of this survey provide students with a list of potential careers. Students are encouraged to do further research into specific careers, participate in the shadowing program, and attend career guest speaker presentations.

The high school administration held a second student round table meeting on November 16. The purpose of the student round table is to give a random selection of students an opportunity to sit down and engage in discourse with the administration. So far the student response has been overwhelmingly positive with many students surprised and excited to be having a conversation with the high school administration.

The high school is continuing its book study of Role Reversal by Mark Barnes. Many high school faculty members have been attending this book club examining achieving results in a student center classroom. The book focuses on creating an academic environment in which students thrive and develop a quest for knowledge as well as outlining an approach that leads to more student creativity and freedom.

The high school Student Spotlight Breakfast was held on November 18, highlighting first-quarter accomplishments and high honor roll status. For the first time in ten years there were more freshman on the high honor roll than any other class. Mr. Rinaldi congratulated those freshmen on this outstanding accomplishment. Principal Rinaldi also reports that for the first time in ten years there were fewer students on the academically ineligible list than ever before.

The annual Thanksgiving football game was held this year on Thanksgiving Eve at Coventry High School. The Ellington Knights were victorious. Several sports teams advanced in the state tournament and the volleyball team advanced to the state finals for the first time in over 30 years. They were awarded the CIAC Girls Volleyball Class M Runners Up championship award trophy.

2.0 Next Steps

Teachers at Center School are preparing for report cards and parent conferences for the first week of December. Holiday festivities are planned with our fourth grade chorus singing at the Winterfest on December 5, our Chorus Recital on the 21st and a whole-school Sing-a-Long on the 22nd.

The Crystal Lake School data team work is underway. Teacher teams have met to form their data team norms, establish areas of focus for the segment of instruction and some teams have already administered pre-assessments to inform their instruction. Teams are focusing on a variety of content for their data team work from phonemic awareness to informational writing to writing conventions.

The Crystal Lake School faculty is beginning a faculty book study on A Mindset For Learning: Teaching the Traits of Joyful, Independent Growth by Kristine Mraz and Christine Hertz. The December faculty meeting will be spent discussing the first portion of the text. Teacher **Colleen Bava** has created a faculty blog to assist in the ongoing dialogue about the book's concepts.

The K-4 Literacy Team will be meeting with kindergarten teachers on December 2 to discuss student progress and review the upcoming changes to intervention services. Our elementary ELA specialists intend to meet with 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade teachers to review updated reading assessment information. The 5-6 Literacy Team will attend SBAC conference on scoring to better understand how to assess student work. This will be shared at our monthly literacy team meeting.

Ms. Palasek continues to collaborate with classroom teachers to help our students learn to use their Google Accounts and other technology as needed. She intends on meeting with grade 4 teachers to plan research lessons to support social studies unit on regions. In her desire to bring our media center to current use, she will weed through older reading collections and order new books based on journal reviews, student recommendations and curriculum needs.

Teachers have recently plunged deep into our Second Step curriculum at Windermere School. Cognizant of more students entering the school system with diverse needs, special education mandates, and even behavioral concerns, we are hoping that the implementation of the Second Step program along with our current PBIS initiatives and most recent Mindfulness and Yoga strategies will tap into students' conscious, self-reflective abilities. The thrust of our December faculty meeting is on Mindfulness, Yoga, and Consciousness-Based Education. C.B.E. is a practical, proven approach to develop the creative intelligence and inner happiness of every student. "Mindfulness training helps to strengthen the parts of the brain that increase focus and attention and decrease the natural wandering that derails that focus. Mindfulness addresses a wide range of issues that are not addressed through pure academic learning. It prepares the mind to learn, and it addresses the social and emotional side of learning and of life. (*#EdJourney: A Roadmap to the Future of Education*, Grant Lichtman)

Instrumental lessons for both the Intermediate and Beginner Bands are in full swing. These lessons meet once a week for thirty minutes. They are also on a rotating schedule and instrumental students are required to attend one lesson every week with their instrument, lesson book, and band music. Our winter concerts are scheduled for December at Ellington High School and students are excited to perform.

Our second round of Windermere Town Meetings is slated for December 16, 2015. The focus will be on volunteerism and "doing the right thing." A representative from Ellington Youth Services will present at these meetings. These are important "gatherings" which invoke the involvement of students and staff to add to our PBIS system of holistic school improvement.

Students and staff will participate in the annual Seasonal Sharing Drive for the Ellington Outreach Department. Items collected will go to seniors in need throughout the Ellington

Community. Students in the intermediate grades will compete to see which class can donate the most items.

In December, the middle school will be hosting its first student led conferences during the early part of the month. Well over a year in planning, this change in conference format now includes students in the parent- teacher discussion. The new format relies heavily on students' new digital portfolios to help the students demonstrate their skills and knowledge, reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and establish goals for their second trimester.

In addition, in the month of December language arts teachers will once again work with Teachers College consultant Katy Wischow with particular focus on developing common language both within departments and cross content. In particular, a focus will be on developing schoolwide literacy rubrics and learning continuums. This area was identified as an area of need based on recent fall faculty learning walks. Finally, books for the winter middle school book club will be distributed using the text Teaching Students to Self Assess by Starr Sackstein. The focus of this book club will help teachers develop useful and practical strategies in the area of student self-reflection, supporting the student-led conference initiative.

Mrs. Smolnik has organized a holiday themed book fair at Barnes and Noble in Manchester, CT. The event will take place on Friday, December 11, 2015 for Ellington families and friends between 6pm and 8 pm. Participants can bring their book fair voucher or mention Ellington High School when they make a purchase that day with Barnes & Noble. Copies of the voucher will be posted on the Ellington High School Library website at <http://ellingtonschools.org/ehslibrary>. Supporters may also shop online at www.bn.com/bookfairs from Friday, December 11 through Wednesday, December 16.

Under the direction of Mr. Bill Prenetta, The Opening Knight Players will present a live version of the classic television cartoon A Charlie Brown Christmas on December 4, 2015 at 7:30 p.m., December 5, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 6, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for students and senior citizens.

3.0 Recognitions

Ashley Caputa, Deb Hillemeir, Cristine DiVenere, Katie D'Addona, Jenna Dhandapani, Maura Kleszczewski, Tomi Raver, Becky Wentworth, Valerie Baigert, Ronni Rucki, Abby Hoffman, Allison Morris and Trudie Luck Roberts met as a book club to discuss A Mindset for Learning: Teaching the Traits of Joyful, Independent Growth by Kristine Mraz and Christine Hertz. **Allison Morris, Cristine DiVenere, Sumitra Ratneshwar, Ashley Caputa and Abby Hoffman** hosted student interns from Ellington High School Early Childhood class. **Aimee Boehm, Kim Bocchino, Tonya Magnusen and Melissa LaMalva** participated in PMT Training with **Valerie Baigert** as facilitator.

Ines Knospe presented a German Club and **Pam Whiting** presented a Simple Machines Club and an Inventors Club as part of the After School Enrichment program. **Jenna Dhandapani** and **Mike Nash** presented Google Apps for Education to the Center School PTO at the November meeting. Parents were able to log in to their student's account to see their student's technology

experiences to date.

Congratulations to Center School student **Tim McMenamin** for winning first place in the fourth grade Fire Prevention Poster Contest. All Ellington fourth graders made a poster to reflect the theme, “Fire Prevention; Everyone, Everyday.” Center students worked under the guidance of **Steven Bernard**, learning how to present important information graphically using pictures and few words. Tim will be recognized for his creative efforts at the Selectman’s December meeting in the town hall.

Crystal Lake School is continuing its tradition of supporting the Crystal Lake Food Pantry at the Community United Methodist Church. There was a whole school assembly held to kick off the coin drive in November. Throughout the month students are collecting coins and working toward collection goals. Once each collection goal is achieved we celebrate with a Spirit Day. So far we have held two spirit days to celebrate coin collection milestone—Hat Day and CLS Colors Day. A check from the proceeds of the coin drive will be presented to the Food Pantry managers at the Annual Pancake Breakfast in December. Teachers **Colleen Bava**, **Erica Lombardi** and **Lisa LaForte** are organizing this year’s Coin Drive.

Crystal Lake School fourth graders are continuing with their tradition of community service with bi monthly trips to the Evergreen Nursing Home in Stafford. Students are matched with nursing home residents to do activities together during their visits. Teachers **Nancy Connelly** and **Christine Marshall** organize this ongoing community service project.

Twenty-three 3rd and 4th grade students participated in the November Nutmeg Lunch. The featured books were Arnie the Donut, Bowling Alley Bandit and Elvis and the Underdogs. In order to be eligible to attend, the students had to read one or both of the featured books and write a reflection on the book(s) prior to the lunch.

Several Crystal Lake School teachers presented workshops for their colleagues on the district’s November 3 Professional Learning Day. **Christine Marshall** and **Colleen Bava** presented on Academic Choice and Genius Hour. Christine and Colleen shared their experiences with implementing Genius Hour in their classrooms and how it connects to the Responsive Classroom core component of providing Academic Choice to students. **Erica Lombardi**, **Lisa LaForte** and **Colleen Bava** presented a session on Communicating with Parents in a Digital World, highlighting their experiences with blogging and the use of Twitter as a parent communication tool. Participants had an opportunity to investigate different platforms for creating a blog.

Crystal Lake School students were treated to a performance of A Charlie Brown Christmas on November 20 by Ellington High School’s Opening Knight Players.

Crystal Lake School honored Veterans Day by hosting Bring a Veteran to School Day on November 11. We were honored to have veterans **Dayton Stimson**, **Kenneth Shrophshire**, **John Carnemolla**, **Roger Moser**, **Tom Dzicek**, **John Takach** and **Jeff Morgan** visit our classrooms to answer students’ questions and share experiences.

The Intervention Department would like to thank the entire 5th and 6th grades for their continued collaboration and support. The staff has been instructional in the success of our SRBI meetings to set individual student goals and sharing data. Our media personnel would like to recognize **Ms. Horvath** and **Mrs. Bava** (Crystal Lake School) for the work they instituted with the book club for A Mindset for Learning. It was great to witness teachers, not only from across our district, but also other districts to discuss teaching this important and valuable work to students.

November's *Tireless Teacher Awards* were presented to **Ms. Hatt** and **Ms. Korona**. This award is given to a teacher who continually demonstrates tenacity and demonstrates leadership qualities by going beyond the parameters of contractual and building-level expectations. Although all of our Windermere teachers demonstrate such professional prowess, each month a specific teacher is honored with a special pin, certificate, and decorative symbol for the classroom. **Ms. Hatt** is recognized for her work with school administration and overall esprit. From the intermediate school, **Ms. Korona** was honored due to her intermediate focus on Teachers College initiatives in the classroom and meaningful connections she maintains with students and parents.

Our new *Amazing Aide Award*, recognizing a lunch aide who is connecting with students, supporting our PBIS program through incentives, and working her "magic" during lunch and recess with the students was presented in front of the students during one of our lunch waves. Congratulations to **Mrs. Rebecca Einsiedel** for the month of November.

In our ongoing efforts to recognize and thank staff members for their relentless and consistent assistance to students, staff, and parents at Windermere, a new award has been created: the *Prize Para Award*. Each month, Principal Welch recognizes a paraprofessional in the building with a certificate and lapel pin as a way to say "Thank you, for all you do!" Our recipient this past month was **Mrs. Diane Frederico** who assists with our intermediate students and is praised by multiple teachers for her exemplary work. Our aides, paraprofessionals, and tutors are vital to the success which epitomizes Windermere School!

November was the beginning of the fall after-school program "The Zone" at EMS. Choices during the session included cooking, photography, sewing and volleyball. Tutoring was also offered for students needing help in all core academics.

On November 5 and 6 **Beth Shaw**, School Counselor, attended a conference with the National Council for Behavioral Health to receive a Youth Mental Health First Aid USA Certification. The conference was a "first responder" type of presentation for rapid response and providing assistance to young people experiencing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and substance use disorders.

On November 6 **Joyce Agnew**, School Counselor, attended a conference for licensed mental health professionals titled Frontline Emergency Mental Health Services, provided by the Connecticut Counseling Association & CT Mental Health Counselors Association in collaboration with the American Red Cross. The training was especially relevant for Joyce because she serves on the EMS School Security and Safety Committee. She has also been assigned as the Mental Health Officer and alternate Safety Officer in case of an emergency at EMS. The training included mental health protocols to follow in the event of an emergency or

disaster; methods and characteristics of psychological first aid; the how-to's of assisting families in casualty and emergency events, as well as an overall review of what to expect during and after an emergency situation from a mental health point of view.

The EMS PTO Craft and Vendor Fair was held on Saturday, November 14. All 110 vendor booths sold out, and the fair was well attended. This year's craft fair earned over \$7,000. The middle school is extremely grateful to all of the parent and student volunteers that made this craft fair possible, and a special thank you to PTO President **Brenda Samson**.

The Eastern Region Music Festival held auditions in November, and twelve EMS students have been accepted into the festival ensembles for band, orchestra and chorus. Congratulations to **Aidan Caron, Ayushman Choudhary, Andrew Ferruolo, Miguel Gomba, Nathan Hale and Tarun Nori** for band/orchestra, and **Julianna Adams, Autumn Colburn, Kayla Flint, Rudraksh Nathan, Claire Palmer and Nicky Rachakonda** for chorus. These students will have the opportunity to perform at the ERMS Festival Concert in March.

Student Accomplishments

On November 11, the Ellington High School Student Council, under the direction of Mr. David Helmin, Advisor, organized a program in honoring and remembering our local veterans. The entire faculty, staff, and student body of Ellington High School observed Veterans Day with an assembly program in the gymnasium, "Honoring All Who Served." Numerous veterans who are members of the American Legion Hatheway– Miller Post Number 62, VFW Post 10689, and the American Legion Auxiliary were invited to the ceremony. **Tom Arbeiter**, Student Council President, was the Master of Ceremonies and **Tori Chandler** served as the Assembly Assistant Chairperson for the assembly. The Vocal Ensemble, conducted by **Mr. Richard Diamond**, sang the Star-Spangled Banner followed by an assembly address by Tom Arbeiter. New this year was a video presentation of "American Soldier" by Toby Keith that was broadcast over a large screens to the entire assembly. The video was linked to a student essay by Jess Roberts, Class of 2018 entitled, "86,400 seconds." There was also excellent coverage of this event in North Central News.

Special guests honoring our veterans included Mr. Maurice Blanchette, First Selectman, Town of Ellington; Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Daniel Keune, Chair, Ellington Board of Education; Mr. Christopher Davis, State Representative; Mr. Tim Larson, State Senator; and Mr. Ted Graziani, Department of Defense Appointment Connecticut Chair for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Three AP Environmental Science students (**Sneha Koripella, Max Weiner, and Emily Walker**) attended a Forestry Workshop on Saturday, October 31 at Session Woods Wildlife Management Area in Burlington, CT. They began their day with an indoor presentation on the sustainable use and management of Connecticut's forests for a variety of products, values, and benefits. This year's special topic for the Envirothon competition will focus on the environmental, economic, and social impacts of invasive species on forest ecosystems. The students also worked in the field with forestry professionals (Professionals ranging from people who work at CT DEEP, US Forestry Service, tree wardens, and service foresters) to learn how to identify and measure trees, and better understand the importance of our forest resources.

At EHS, enthusiastic book lovers met Thursday, November 12 in the library media center (LMC) during the three lunch blocks. The library hosts an advisory meeting each month to discuss great new titles and exciting authors. Students can offer input to Ms. Smolnik about which of these titles would be great to have in the LMC.

Congratulations to all 37 EHS students who represented Ellington High School in the Band and Chorus at the NCCC Music Festival, which was held at Stafford High School in November!

Congratulations to **Rachel Bingham, Nick Cantin, Elizabeth Gerlach, Adam Giard, William Grant, Jessica Jones, Dan Meaney, Grace Palmer, Tyler Rodrigues, Colby Villeneuve, and Emily Walder**, who auditioned for and have been invited to participate in the Connecticut Music Educators Association Eastern Region Festival in January!