

Letters to the Editor

Letters from readers are welcome. They should be limited to about 300 words and Voices reserves the right to edit. Letters must include name, address of writer and a phone number. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Food Drive Thanks

To the Editor:

Brownie Troop 4171 wanted to thank members of the community for their overwhelming generosity and support for our food drive.

The food drive took place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, November 11, at Dinova's Four Corner store. The girls collected more than 270 non-perishable food items and a \$50 cash donation in only two hours.

All proceeds were donated to the Middlebury Food Bank to help local families in need.

Thanks again to all who donated and to the girls and parent volunteers who participated in making our first ever food drive a success.

Rebecca Cavallaro
Karla Delnegro,
Troop Leaders
Middlebury

Comments on Reconfiguration

To the Editor:

Please consider a few of the lesser known facts of the Region 14 reconfiguration:

1.) Post reconfiguration, Woodbury and Bethlehem will be the first and only towns in the state of Connecticut that do not maintain their lower grade schools within their respective towns. Currently 100 percent of towns in the state of Connecticut from Sherman to Voluntown maintain neighborhood schools for the lower grades.

2.) The proposed K-2, 3-5 grade span configuration is one of the least practiced both in the state of Connecticut and the United States as a whole. There has been some confusion regarding this issue amongst MES and BES parents; Naugatuck, Superintendent, Dr. Robert Cronin's former post, has six K-4 configurations (the configuration currently at Mitchell) at the ele-

mentary level.

3.) Although this is an unprecedented decision for our schools and our towns, the Board of Education formally considered the reconfiguration proposal for 12 days prior to adoption. There is no R14 reconfiguration study on record.

4.) The renovations at Mitchell are still on the table. In a November 15 article of the Voices, Superintendent Robert Cronin referenced a future referendum with costs estimated at roughly \$30 million: "The renovation project is to accommodate the intermediate school needs," Dr. Cronin said. Woodbury and Bethlehem taxpayers are still being asked to fund renovations, only now we are being asked to do so at the expense of our neighborhood K-5 schools.

Please help us save our neighborhood schools and keep our kids at home. Attend the next board meeting Tuesday, December 5, at 7:30 p.m. at Nonnewaug and check out our website at www.saveregion14elementary.com.

William Barber
Families for Region 14
Elementary
Woodbury

Attendance at Meeting Urged

To the Editor:

The degree to which our Woodbury-Bethlehem school system is in trouble and unable to live up to standards afforded children in other area townships has not been made clear to our citizens.

Neighborhood elementary and middle schools are crowded, unable to offer the comprehensive, building-block educational experience standard for America's children.

Music, art and phys ed. are cut for lack of funding, as are teacher aides. More students per class becomes a solution as opposed to the bad idea it actually is. Splitting grades between schools makes it difficult for teachers of the same curriculum to confer.

Worst of all, the smallest students are seen as convenient pawns for solving space problem. Let's just put them on buses (no

Deadlines

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seatbelts) and bus them 45 minutes along roads that are dicey at best in sudden winter storms, to a school where we can stuff them in and, voila, problem solved.

This is the current "reconfiguration" plan construed by the Board of Education as "the best solution" to overcrowding.

The focus of modern public education includes keeping the lowest grades closest to home: i.e. the neighborhood elementary school concept. Yet the above reconfiguration plan was the only plan our board could arrive at to solve the problems generated by the failure to get a more adequate school budget passed. Impacted citizens, including parents, were not consulted.

Citizens concerned about our children (and our community as a good place where others might want to buy a home) are urged to come to the next board meeting on December 5, at 7:30 p.m. at Nonnewaug High School.

Public awareness and informed response solves problems, making for the best communities. Healthy, secure, bright children are surely our community's life source, the very reason for creating the solid hometown community that Woodbury-Bethlehem has, in the past, always been.

Connie Conway
Woodbury

Petition Out of Line

To the Editor:

The petition for a vote to acquire \$3.5 million was totally out of line. The people of Oxford voted to have our high school built for \$43.9 million and expected our elected officials to make this happen. They appear to be pretty much on target.

Any monetary shortfalls will be addressed when all bids are in