

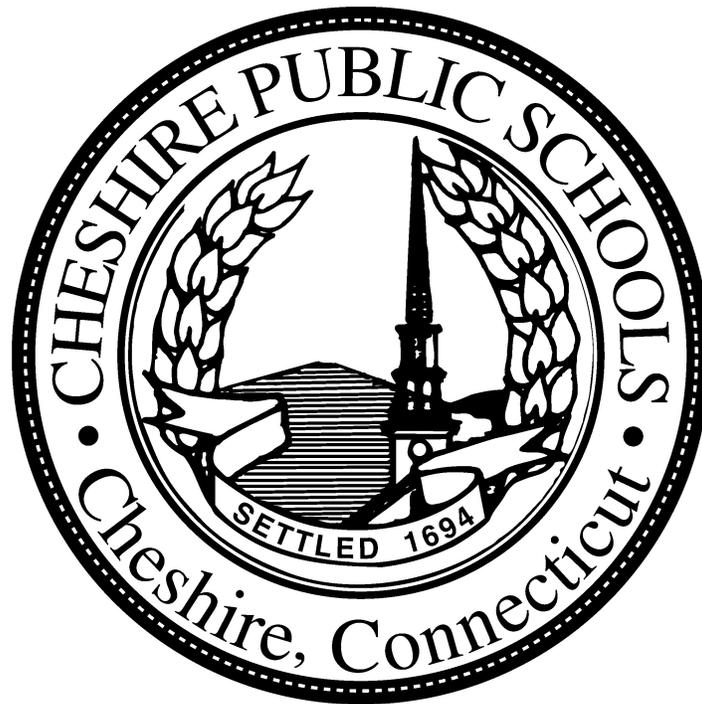
CHESHIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ANNUAL REPORT

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

2013/2014



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SCHOOLS

CHESHIRE HIGH SCHOOL

Jeffrey Solan, Principal
Maureen Reed, Assistant Principal
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Laurie Vicario, Assistant Principal

DODD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Michael Woods, Principal
Alberta Landino, Assistant Principal

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Ann Donnery, Principal – Darcey
Marlene Silano, Principal – Chapman
Russell Hinckley, Principal – Doolittle
Kelly Grillo, Assistant Principal – Doolittle
Beverly Scully, Principal – Highland
Erica Bordonaro, Assistant Principal – Highland
Mary Karas, Principal – Norton

DARCEY SCHOOL
Ann Donnery, Principal

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

The 2013-14 school year was one of growth and change for the students and faculty alike at Darcey School. The kindergarten teaching team embraced the Darcey Strategic Initiative of implementing the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in literacy through the Readers Workshop Model. This instructional initiative was successful due the collaborative efforts of the classroom teachers, IA's and LST's and reading coach. Ample professional development opportunities and monthly meetings fostered a greater understanding of the CCSS and a greater commitment to the initiative. The implementation of the Readers Workshop with a focus on independent reading with Just Right books was a major contributing factor for students to reach such proficiency and independence in their reading. The year end results of the early literacy screenings indicated that 80% of Darcey Kindergartners demonstrated goal (6) on Spring DRA. In addition to the strategies listed above, early identification of at risk students, ongoing and frequent data review with teachers, focused targeted instruction and modification of instructional strategies all contributed to student achievement.

The Early Intervention Strategic Initiative, which focused on building dynamic, collaborative, and responsive teams, resulted in stronger collaborative teams and built a shared understanding of best practice in early childhood education. Master teachers, in their end of the year reflection, indicated that weekly team meetings and monthly professional development opportunities with team members and instructional assistants were effective. These meetings were facilitated by master teachers to assist in disseminating information about classroom strategies for behaviors, child development and transdisciplinary approach. Additional information about substitute teachers and crisis situations were discussed. Master teachers gathered materials and supplied notes from meetings to support their mentoring. During EIC and IA meetings, the staff presented case studies to share strengths, strategies and observations to support classroom success. The master teachers will continue to support their IAs and teams by meeting at least four times next year. In addition, the team will explore the new Connecticut ELDS.

Implementation of the State Educators Evaluation and Development System was an area of focus (and angst) for the teaching staff at Darcey School. Initially there was much trepidation and many questions regarding procedure and expectations. Monthly staff meetings promoted greater understanding of the process and allowed faculty an opportunity to share and reflect. In general, most felt that it was a worthwhile process and that the process required teachers to review data more thoroughly and frequently and to self-reflect more deeply.

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2013/2014 HIGHLIGHTS OF DARCEY SCHOOL

- All kindergarten teachers incorporated Responsive Classroom strategies into their practice including morning meeting, creating rules and logical consequences with students and using effective teacher language. Strong evidence of practices was noted in classroom observations including increased student independence and engagement, problem solving and student questioning and discourse. Teachers presented a parent workshop on Responsive Classroom practices in the kindergarten classroom.
- Classrooms reflected more opportunities for individualized instruction and academic choice. The use of IA's for focused differentiated instruction resulted in less students in bands 1 and 2. Ongoing professional development provided by Pat Castle helped the teachers to identify focus objectives and for instructional assistants to focus on individual needs.
- Kindergarten Report Card was aligned to the CCSS in both math and literacy.
- Creation of a new School Leadership Committee, which included members from all areas of the school community: parents, classified staff and faculty. The committee tackled some difficult topics and was instrumental in guiding the strategic plan and forming Darcey's core beliefs towards the implementation of full day kindergarten. The input from the parent members was particularly helpful and offered a unique perspective to the group.
- The development of a security committee, which included parents and an officer from the Cheshire Police Department. The committee looked at all of Darcey's drills and evacuation procedures and made changes as recommended.
- The B-3 team provided the following in-service to the community: YMCA Preschool and Aftercare staff: "Positive Behavioral Support; Waterbury Area Parent Support Group: "Toilet Training; and, Darcey staff: "Reflective Supervision and Practice".
- Development of teacher leaders to share areas of expertise and facilitate professional learning communities.
- Darcey students participated in two community service activities: The Cheshire Food Drive and the Lights of Love campaign for the Ronald McDonald House.
- The PTA provided six curriculum enrichment events throughout the year including a children's author, a singer/storyteller, Mother Goose, a recycling program, an African drumming troupe and an old-time American musician.



CHAPMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Marlene Silano, Principal

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

This year Chapman experienced a change in leadership in addition to changes in teacher evaluation (SEED), assessments (SRI, Triumph, and SBAC), and a new writing curriculum in grade 1-5. The staff adapted to each of these changes and survey results revealed the majority of teachers feel morale is high at Chapman.

In addition to these changes Chapman made improvements to their SRBI process focusing on a more collaborative approach to decision making. This was a departure from previous practice and gave teachers more control over the SRBI process. The changes further enabled teachers to be more collaborative in planning Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction.

Lastly, parent communication was included as part of their evaluation process and resulted in increased teacher participation at PTSA meetings. One hundred percent of parents felt they had opportunities to get involved and serve as volunteers.

2013/2014 HIGHLIGHTS OF CHAPMAN SCHOOL

- The morale at Chapman School is positive.
- SRBI: selecting a focus objective, progress monitoring, data collection, are monitored and driven by teachers and SRBI case partners.
- Teachers worked with consultant Andy Dousis to observe, learn and practice Effective Classroom Strategies. Teachers volunteered to become more involved with Responsive Classroom by joining a PLC to help grow this philosophy at Chapman School.
- Teachers improved home school communication by presenting at PTSA meetings on topics such as “How to help your child with math homework” and “What parents can do to support their child’s reading.”
- Teachers implemented the new SRI assessment and learned how to use the data from this assessment to improve student performance (and write SLOs.)
- Teachers adapted to administering the Smarter Balance Assessment.
- Teachers implemented and adapted to the new writing curriculum.



DOOLITTLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Russell Hinckley, Principal
Kelly Grillo, Assistant Principal

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

A number of substantial changes took place at Doolittle School during the 13-14 school year including; state-wide changes to the teacher evaluation system, administration of the SBAC Field Test and continued work toward implementing common core state standards.

During the 2013-2014 school year Doolittle School completed three important strategic plan objectives: improving students' math fact fluency; implementing new writing curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards; and improving students' reading comprehension as measured by the new SRI reading assessment. In addition to the new SRI reading assessment, Doolittle also began administration of new Triumph Assessments for ELA and Math as well as the Field Test for The SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. Doolittle RAM, Nancy Veronneau, was key in supporting teachers in administering these new assessments and in helping teachers interpret the results.

Doolittle students were fortunate to participate in a wide array of engaging activities either facilitated by their outstanding teachers or by their extraordinary PTA. Students participated in a variety of events such as a Pizza and Ice Cream social nights, the Arithmetickles show, book fairs and Grade level events such as "Are You Smarter Than a First Grader", Ambassabears, Latin American Games, and Biography projects. Students were able to go on a number of field trips and participated in school activities such as field day, Nature's Classroom and Town Meetings. On June 23, 103 6th graders were promoted to Middle School.

2013/2014 HIGHLIGHTS OF DOOLITTLE SCHOOL

- Doolittle welcomed 4 new classroom teachers and a new Reading and Math Support Teacher.
 - Teachers were supported effectively by their mentors
 - Teachers successfully implemented Cheshire Public Schools' curriculum
 - Teachers had successful first years
 - Doolittle also welcomed a new Secretary and Principal!
 - Teachers implemented a new writing curriculum based on Common Core State Standards. Instruction represented a departure from previous instructional strategies

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- Implementation of new assessments to monitor students' progress and help plan instruction/interventions including: SBAC Field Test, Triumph ELA and Math, SRI reading assessment.
- There was an increase in the use of non-fiction text in reading instruction and non-fiction was encouraged for independent reading.
 - This switch is in-line with Common Core State Standards
 - Conversations and discussions were held about "Close Reading" strategies
- The Doolittle SRBI team implemented Google Forms to keep track of students' focus objectives and to make monitoring students' progress more efficient.
- Teachers focused on improving students' math fact fluency skills and improvement was evident in assessments given at the beginning and end of the school year.
- Teachers had additional Time after school for Collaboration. This time was used effectively to address SEED, SRBI and other curriculum needs.
- Implementation of the System for Educator Evaluation and Development.
 - Teachers set SLO Goals based on assessments and kept data
 - Teachers met with administrators for midyear and end of year reviews
 - Good discussions about teaching and learning were held
 - Many formal and informal observations of teaching were held
 - Staff set parent feedback goals on recess and bus behavior
- Andy Dousis conducted workshops with teachers to address students' behavior and implement Responsive Classroom strategies.
- The Doolittle PTA held many events and fundraisers. The PTA purchased Chromebooks for Doolittle.
- Students were involved in numerous activities, field trips, etc.
 - "Are You Smarter Than a First Grader", Ambassabears, Latin American Games, Biography projects, Field day, raising salmon, Science Quest, Trips to Sturbridge Village and the Capitol, and many others.
- Band, Strings and Chorus Concerts were all held in the Doolittle Gym
- Implementation of a Breakfast Program at Doolittle
- 504 meetings were held at the beginning of the year for all students with significant allergies with parents and teachers
- The Doolittle Safe School Climate Committee created a list of mean spirited behaviors.
 - To help identify bullying behavior and make proactive plans

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- Meetings were held with grade level teachers, students, administrators and Teacher Assistants (recess aides).
- Doolittle included 6 students through Open Choice.
- 99 Students attended Nature's Classroom in Ivoryton for an entire week.
- Students ran and led town meetings.



HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Beverly Scully, Principal
Erica Bordonaro, Assistant Principal

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

During the 2013-2014 school Highland's strategic initiative focused on teachers collaborating to learn and apply classroom instructional strategies and create classroom environments to raise achievement in reading, writing, math and the arts, and physical education. A common parent communication goal was also set as determined by the results of the safe school climate parent survey. To meet these goals, teachers utilized the district curriculum; mini-lessons; teacher/student conferences with effective feedback and goal setting; and the district curriculum resources.

Teachers worked together to analyze their class data and develop their SEED goals for the year. In November, they met to finalize student learning objectives, the parent feedback goals, and practice and performance goals on BloomBoard. By the end of the year, 98% of teachers met or exceeded their goals.

As Highland continued their RTI/SRBI initiative, teachers used data to monitor progress, develop focus objectives and intervention plans in reading, mathematics, and behavior.

Continuing focus on teaching and learning and collaboration and communication Highland continued Collaborative Learning Groups (professional learning communities). Their strategic initiative stated that teachers will participate in collaborative professional growth opportunities. Teachers analyzed their classroom data, and based on this information, chose collaborative learning topics that would help them make instructional decisions for their students. This year at Highland School, 100% of regular education teachers, special educators, and specialists participated in a collaborative learning group.

Highland continued efforts to implement Responsive Classroom techniques in every classroom. Teachers have consistently implemented the following responsive classroom practices: morning meeting, greeting students at the classroom door each morning, morning messages, the chime signal, effective feedback, and logical consequences. Andy Dousis, former RC consultant, spent four days coaching the staff in Responsive Classroom practices.

To extend a positive classroom and capitalize on diversity, Highland focused on developing opportunities for ethnic diversity for students and staff. Highland School

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sought to increase students' awareness of various cultures and traditions. To support this initiative, Highland worked in partnership with a sister school, Veterans Memorial Elementary School, located in Norwich, CT.

In conjunction with the PTO, Highland continued to develop community contributor projects using “Highland Helping Others” as the theme. These projects are all curricular related and help to connect the school with the greater community.

The after-school Highland School Drama Club successfully completed its sixth season with an exciting production of “Twinderella.” The show featured over 80 student performers in grades five and six, who sang, danced and acted. In addition to students on stage, several sixth graders worked as stage managers and assistant stage managers. The Highland Drum Team continued to perform at school events this year. It was comprised of fifth and sixth grade students who were recommended by their general music teacher.

Highland School continued a mentoring program with the support of Webster Bank and the Connecticut Mentoring Partnership.

Highland continued to implement a Literacy Volunteer Program; involving the support from both parents and the community. The program included one senior citizen from the Cheshire community and 9 parents of students from Highland School. The Literacy Volunteer Program provided additional reading practice for 24 students.

2013/2014 HIGHLIGHTS OF HIGHLAND SCHOOL

- Teaching and Learning focus, as follows: writing instruction; content vocabulary; SRBI; collaborative learning groups; and data analysis.
- Responsive Classroom: morning meetings, logical consequences, effective feedback, closing circle.
- Implementation of the Highland Safe School Climate Plan
- Student Council - In addition to participation on numerous community service projects, the student council developed bus safety rules and taught the Highland students those rules
- Participated in the CHS Cadet Program with three cadet teachers at Highland School.
- Student Community Meetings with Mrs. Scully, Ms. Bordonaro, and Mrs. Usher (school counselor)
- Town Meetings: Buddy classes (an upper grade class is paired with a primary grade class) joined together to run one town meeting.

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- Senior Center volunteers
- Numerous PTO Sponsored and Highland-Sponsored Events: Community Connections and PTO Sponsored Visiting Authors.
- Opportunities for Ethnic Diversity for Students and Staff



NORTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mary Karas, Principal

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

During the 2013-2014 school year, progress was made at Norton school on work to increase student achievement in reading, writing, and math, improving teacher implementation of interventions based upon analysis of student performance data, and in providing a safe, school environment through increased use of Responsive Class practices. This year, teachers focused on areas of student need through the development and monitoring of their SLOs based upon student data. Most teachers proved successful in increasing student growth on these measures as was indicated on end of year summaries.

Student progress was evident through analysis of student assessments, SRI results, reduction of the number of students requiring LST interventions, and progress reviews at grade level meetings. Through continued focus at grade level meetings, team afternoon meetings, and SRBI meetings, teachers were accountable for and required to provide evidence through data, to support their focused interventions. Data continued to be made visual through use of grade level charts noting student progress which were reviewed on an on going basis through the year. The Principal worked closely with the RAM and district reading specialist to provide teachers with needed professional development, release time to work collaboratively, or coaching to assist with effective instructional practices and interventions.

Progress in Responsive Classroom (RC) practice, which led to a more supportive school environment, was accomplished through work with Andy Dousis as well as additional teacher training sessions for RC. Teacher teams, specialists, and special education teachers all participated in professional development sessions with Andy which included observation of and reflection on teacher practice. This year, several teachers presented and modeled RC practices for staff and support staff. Teachers modeling expectations and intervening sooner to address behaviors as well as the implementation of other RC practices has had a positive effect on the student behaviors. During the 2013-2014 school year, there was a significant reduction in the number of student investigations completed at the office level.

Students were active members of the community through a more involved student council, community services projects in grade 6 and in Student Council, safety patrol responsibilities, school presentations, and the school play, "Honk, Jr.". The school year ended with an active Field Day supported by all staff and family volunteers. PTA contributed \$16,000 towards school wish list including increased technology

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through purchase of chrome books indicating continued community support and parent involvement for Norton.

2013/2014 HIGHLIGHTS OF NORTON SCHOOL

- Increased student achievement as demonstrated by the number of students demonstrating growth in reading as supported by SRI scores and math fluencies.
- Increased student achievement in areas of need as evidenced by teachers' SLO results.
- Successful work with the RAM and teachers to assess, plan, and implement effective instruction interventions and teaching strategies. Meetings and professional development sessions held to provide teachers with professional development in reading and math which led to successful interventions for students as evident in improved student achievement and reduction in number of students requiring intervention support.
- Work with teachers and support staff on Responsive Classroom practices and effective teaching strategies. This increased teacher implementation of RC practices and increased amount of positive teacher feedback regarding the impact of RC practices for students in classroom.
- Successful implementation of new writing curriculum.
- Work with the Safe School Climate Committee to review survey results and plan for next year based upon these results.
- Increased use of Norton School Twitter account to improve community communication. Parent feedback was positive.
- Sixth grade and Student Council involvement in community service projects.
- Veteran's Day breakfast and school program.
- Third year of Invention Convention at Norton School.



DODD MIDDLE SCHOOL
Michael Woods, Principal
Alberta Landino, Assistant Principal

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

The 2013-14 school year opened with several new initiatives. The State had approved the SEED evaluation system to replace the old Cheshire evaluation system. Teachers were oriented to the new system that included measurable learning goals and rated observations. In concert with this system was a new online system to manage all the new evaluations and observations. This system was not completed at roll out in the fall and features were introduced as they were developed.

The year faced new challenges. With a new evaluation system and the continued work of Common Core transition, many teachers felt the pressure to perform under all the new initiatives. In the end teachers serviced their students to the highest quality under the new initiatives and new administration.

2013/2014 HIGHLIGHTS OF DODD MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Dodd Implemented a 1:1 computing option for students and teachers to utilize devices to expand instructional strategies and higher order thinking skills.
- The Dodd Performance Standards were operationalized and assessed by all teachers through PowerSchool. Parents received a report that informed them of the level their child had attained in the five domains of the performance standards.
- Teachers worked hard to incorporate the Common Core State Standards into existing curricula and creating new curricula to align to the federal initiative.
- Core Academic Teams participated in several community services projects that ranged from food pantry donations, monetary donations to the united way, Toys for Tots, Humane Society, to creating care packages for troops overseas.
- The Dodd Kindness Counts Committee promoted kindness and kind acts throughout Dodd and the Cheshire Community. Greeting cards, quotes of the month, and student led meetings were the highlights of the committee as students and adults followed a well-designed Mission Statement.
- Dodd hosted speaker and law enforcement consultant, Leslie O'Neill, for an internet safety program for students and parents.
- The seventh grade Math-a-thon raised a remarkable amount of money this year for St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

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- Dodd Middle School went to the Invention Convention. Teams from around the state competed in an invention design forum that was sponsored by the Petit Family Foundation.
- The Visual and Performing Arts team performed flawless concerts with Band, Orchestra, and Choral performance that highlighted the learning of Dodd students. The Dodd Performance of Alice in Wonderland was a huge success.



CHESHIRE HIGH SCHOOL

Jeffrey Solan, Principal
Maureen Reed, Assistant Principal
Richard Sansoucy, Assistant Principal
Laurie Vicario, Assistant Principal

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Over the course of the 2013-14 school year, the Cheshire High School faculty was focused on the integration of the Common Core State Standards and the implementation of the new teacher evaluation system. Staff successfully embedded these new elements into their routine.

Cheshire High School was honored to have their Best Buddies Chapter identified as the Most Outstanding High School Chapter in North America. The addition of a new World Language Lab and updated Library highlighted important instructional and facility upgrades. Students enrolled in more challenging AP and ECE courses at a record rate and continued to find success with more than 90% of students earning a passing score of 3 or better on the AP exam.

2013/2014 HIGHLIGHTS OF CHESHIRE HIGH SCHOOL

- Cheshire High School was able to unveil an updated facility when school opened this past fall. The crown jewel of this update was a completely refurbished library. Ultimately, they were able to include a writing center in the library and house the technology specialist.
- Over the course of the year they dramatically changed the caliber of World Language instruction Cheshire High School was able to provide through the introduction of their first World Language Lab. The lab allows students and teachers to communicate in the target language using a multitude of instructional strategies designed to improve speaking and listening capacity.
- The school year began with a bang when the Cheshire High School Best Buddies chapter was named “Most Outstanding Best Buddies High School Chapter” in the nation! The year was marked with public and private celebrations of their accomplishment.
- Freshman Kick Off Program included three days of activities and speakers designed to make the transition to high school smooth.
- The first Special education college information night was a huge success.
- Cheshire High School collected 580 lbs of food for the Cheshire Food Drive

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- The Veterans Day football game where students from Amity and Cheshire honored veterans by wearing the name of their honoree on the back of their jersey. They also had a huge American flag on the field donated by McDermott Chevrolet.
- Veteran's Day luncheon where students invited Veterans and sat and interacted with them before special presentations.
- Girls' Volleyball received the SCC League Program of the Year for their 26-0 winning season and state championship.
- Received the most championships in the SCC League.
- Cheshire High School hosted exchange students from Germany for several weeks during the year.
- The Safe School Climate Committee sponsored a school wide leaf raking for the elderly in of Cheshire. Over 175 students volunteered a Saturday morning to support 36 local residents.
- Interdistrict Grant, "Careers in Sports Medicine and Nutrition".
- Seniors Aohan Dang and Nick Yu were selected as candidates for the United States Presidential Scholarship Program. This program recognizes some of our nation's most distinguished seniors. Scholars are chosen on the basis of their accomplishments in many areas: academic and artistic success, leadership, and involvement in school and the community. Students are selected for initial inclusion in the program by their exemplary performance on the SAT or ACT exams.
- Global Awareness Day had two groups joining the high school from neighboring towns. They arrived in time to enjoy the festivities in the Commons and then stayed to see a performance in the auditorium.
- B-1 Day took place on Tuesday March 25th – this is a half-day for students with teachers remaining for professional development. This is a day for the school community to come together to celebrate diversity and tolerance including a very moving panel presentation and entertaining video presentation. This year included booths and activities from various clubs around the school.
- Kudos to Cheshire High School teachers of the ECE UCONN program as it was mentioned in an article/interview with Kayla Hoynes, currently a sophomore at the university who was chosen to intern at Walt Disney for the spring semester.
- The spring play, Aida, took place on 3/27-3/29.

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- The following link will send you directly to the Program of Studies web page: <https://sites.google.com/a/cheshire.k12.ct.us/chs/school-counseling/program-of-studies> .
- Registration for students may be done online and took place the end of January.
- National Job Shadow Day was observed on Tuesday, February 4, 2014. Over 275 juniors and seniors signed up to shadow this year.
- Two classes participated in a Skype session with U.S. Senator, Chris Murphy. The Skype session took place directly from Washington D.C. and in the Library – students were able to ask the senator questions and listen to responses/dialogue.
- Two Blood Drives were held at Cheshire High School.
- Both the Junior and Senior proms were held – students enjoyed the events, no issues.
- 5/23 is also Bring a Veteran to Lunch Day – quite an impressive display of student patriotism and reverence towards all of those who have served our country.
- On Wednesday, 5/28 the Senior Experience Project students showcased their projects with presentations to a committee and visits from students.

