

Hurlbutt Elementary School

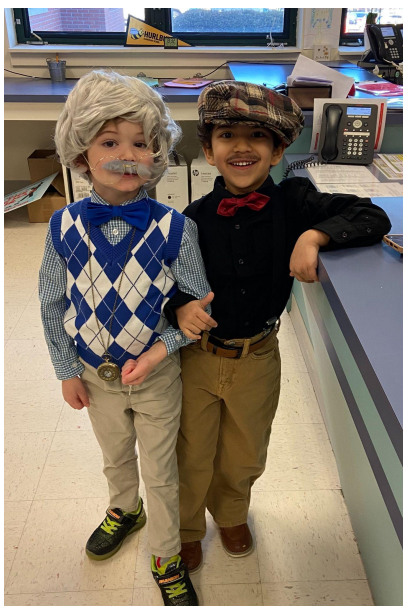
9 School Road
Weston, Connecticut 06883

February 2025

The Sound of Kindness

Our school community gathers once a month for our PBIS (Positive Behavioral and Support Interventions) celebration. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a research-based, multi-tiered framework designed to support students' behavior, academics, social-emotional development, and well-being. When implemented with fidelity, PBIS enhances social-emotional skills, promotes academic achievement, and fosters a positive school climate. At our assemblies we celebrate all of the ways we have lived the school motto, *Be Safe, Be Kind and Be Responsible*. To bring this motto to life for students we often talk about what it looks like and sounds like to live that motto throughout our school day. The focus on kindness and kind words was taught and supported through a read aloud, *The Little Book of Good Manners* by Zack Bush and Laurie Friedman with their buddy class. We also learned a song called, *The Sound of Kindness* by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater. Explicitly teaching and modeling what language and phrases students can use is a powerful way to support this initiative in our school. Our students and staff take great pride in creating and sustaining a positive school climate.

100 Days of School



We had so much fun celebrating 100 days of learning at Hurlbutt Elementary School. Throughout the year and across the grades, students explore and develop strong number sense through counting, place value and exploring the number 100 through engaging math activities that deepened students' understanding of counting, place value and patterns. Students practiced counting to 100 in various ways,



including by ones, fives, and tens, reinforcing their fluency and number sense. Through hands-on activities, students recognize how numbers build up to 100, strengthening their ability to decompose and group numbers strategically. This special day not only made learning math fun but also reinforced foundational counting skills essential for future mathematical success. This day was also a great opportunity to reflect on all of the academic and social-emotional learning for our students.

Math in Kindergarten

Our kindergarten math program Developing Roots by Mathodology is a developmentally appropriate way to teach math concepts. The activities and lessons foster foundational skills through hands-on exploration and meaningful engagement, allowing children to build number sense, spatial reasoning, and problem-solving skills in authentic ways. A key feature of our approach is Shelf Day, a dedicated time when students engage in structured yet playful activities designed to reinforce math concepts. During Shelf Day, children explore carefully curated materials and games that promote counting, sorting, patterning, measuring, and early operations—all through hands-on play and discovery. This approach aligns with research on early childhood learning, ensuring that math instruction is both rigorous and joyful, laying the groundwork for future success in mathematical thinking.



Music in our School

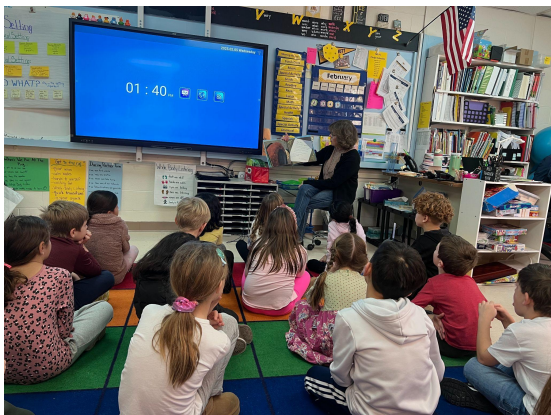
Our music classroom is an engaging and active place where students develop foundational skills and habits that prepare them for the opportunities they will find throughout their years in the Weston Schools. At Hurlbutt, we use the *Conversational Solfege* approach to music education, a research-based methodology that develops strong musical literacy through a sequence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing music. Rooted in the idea that music is learned best in the same way as language, students first experience rhythms and melodies through echoing, movement, and song before progressing to notation and composition. This interactive, engaging process builds a deep understanding of musical structure while fostering creativity and a love for music. By internalizing musical concepts in a natural, playful way, our students develop the skills to become independent musicians and lifelong music learners. Our first graders recently worked through identifying and writing the notes associated with the rhythms they have been learning. They also then had the opportunity to compose their own! It was amazing to see the students successfully applying these skills and creating their own music. Our budding composers and musicians amaze us with their enthusiasm and engagement in the arts.

World Read Aloud Day

Celebrated on February 5, World Read Aloud Day is a global initiative that brings together students and staff to share the joy of storytelling through the act of reading aloud. Hurlbutt students were delighted by special visits from staff across the district, who took the time to read in classrooms, creating an engaging and collaborative experience for all. Our students and staff enjoyed the “pop up libraries” that Mrs. Rodko



placed around our school. We loved seeing books throughout the building in unexpected places.



Computer Science, Dash Robots and an Amazing PTO

Students had the opportunity to transfer what they learned during lessons using Code.org to program our Dash robots using block coding to complete tasks. This required not only using their coding knowledge, but collaboration and perseverance! These lessons align with standards from CSTA (Computer Science Teachers Association). Many thanks to the PTO for not only purchasing our first set of Dash Robots several years ago, but also purchasing a new set this year, when the original robot batteries failed due to age. The PTO also funded the transformation of our prior Computer Lab into our MakerSpace with mobile tables that can be moved based on our activity.

