It’s been a bit of a roller coaster for Webutuck students since winter break ended, with school in session, then closed due to COVID then open, then closed for snow. Students and teachers were back in the buildings the week of Jan. 25th, and even a casual observer would have been able to tell people it was a welcome change.

In Mrs. Wagner’s kindergarten classroom, students practiced throwing pieces of foam pool floats under the guidance of physical education teacher Alan Benson. When they were called up to the throwing line, they had a choice of which of two hoop targets to throw through. When they made the throw, they would get to pick an exercise from a virtual wheel Benson had spun on the SmartBoard. Choices ranged from a Flash Run to a Hulk Jump to Superman flying.

Stephanie Langdon’s second grade class was playing Feeling Football as part of its Second Step lesson about feelings. Students tossed a ball of string around to music and when it stopped, whoever was left holding the ball, had

**District resumes hybrid instruction model**

**EBIS Way seeks to motivate students**

Sensing that many of his students were having a tough time as the COVID-19 pandemic stretched on and school transitioned from fully remote to hybrid instruction, Eugene Brooks Intermediate School Principal Matt Pascale sought a way to help build morale and motivation.

“I could sense more and more students in EBIS were struggling. I could feel the apathy, the indifference about where we were at and school work wasn’t a priority for more kids than we’d like to see,” Pascale said.

“I’ve always believed that words are powerful and words put into action can achieve results,” he said. So, he came up with The EBIS Way - a motto and pledge he gave to each student and asked them to sign.

**See HYBRID Pg. 2**
to recite the list of feelings already named and add their own.

One young lady was so excited she jumped to catch the ball and gave the feeling, “angry,” but she was anything but angry. She might have been one of the previous feelings she identified, “Excited” or “Happy.”

At one point, the music stopped as the ball was thrown to Langdon. “Oh, you want me to share? OK, nervous,” she said, and then repeated the previous feelings.

Student Liam Diaz was glad to be back in school. "We get to see friends and have recess and we get to use sheets of paper," he said.

Jamie Quaranto’s fourth grade class was working on factors of 48 in class and at home and reviewing the difference between prime and composite numbers.

At the high school, Jay Bradley’s music class was working on Paul Desmond’s classic jazz piece, “Take Five.”

Drummer Duncan Lazrus, 10th grade, laid down the drums to keep everyone in line, while Christian Shook, also 10th, and Grainne Williams, 9th, added flute lines and Bradley played piano.

Lazrus said he found it difficult switching back and forth between remote and in-person learning.

“It’s easier to understand the work you’re doing (in school). I’d rather been in school five days a week,” he said.

Bradley darted back and forth between each of the three students in his live class - providing individual guidance, the iPad where his remote students were tuning in and his keyboard where he could play parts of the song. He was glad to be back.

“This is where we’ve worked together for so many years of these students’ musical lives. It’s good to hear them play again!”

The students learning at home have the same music and are asked to play those parts over the computer, Bradley said, adding that he supplements the music with rhythm and scale exercises students can work on while they are waiting to play for him.

Meanwhile, In Darren Butland’s career exploration class, students received a quick rundown of some of the latest news and then learned about various elements of a career in journalism from our own public information officer Irwin Goldberg.

Facilities gets new team member

**Editor’s note:** This is part of a series on WCSD’s new hires for the 2020-21 school year.

**James Schmidheini**

*Custodial worker*

James Schmidheini traded in driving a truck for a job closer to home, joining the facilities team Oct. 26, 2020.

Schmidheini grew up in Amenia, attending Webutuck schools until his family moved to Dover after fourth grade.

“It’s a nice quiet town and community and everybody here is friendly,” he said, “It’s a good place to work.”

Facilities Director Walt Kilmer said Schmidheini has a great work ethic.

“He is always willing to learn more than is required to do his job,” Kilmer said.

When Schmidheini isn’t working at Webutuck High School he is likely hunting, fishing, camping or off-roading. Asked about his dream job, Schmidheini said it would be a game warden.

Musically, Schmidheini enjoys classic country music.

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**Calendar**

- **Feb. 22**, Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.
- **March 1**, Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.
- **March 15**, Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.
- **March 29-April 2**, Spring Recess
- **April 5**, Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.
- **April 19-23, 26**, NYS ELA exams (state has requested a waiver)
In short, The EBIS Way, asks students to commit to being prepared, present, positive and proactive about their education. It works in conjunction with the school’s PBIS program, but offers its own rewards - in addition to students’ being better prepared to learn.

Fifth grader Jose Rosales was one of the first students to turn in a pledge. “I like being able to make up work that is missing and doing my work,” Rosales said. “I understand the pledge and all the things I need to obey and the rules I need to agree with.”

Each day, teachers and staff address students and reinforce the pledge by thanking students for being prepared or noting that they don’t seem to be prepared.

“Students are going to be recognized and rewarded for meeting the expectations,” Pascale said.

Beginning in the third quarter, Students of the Week will be recognized and have their names placed on the TV scroll at the front of the school. At the end of the quarter, teachers will put the names of students who “do their very best to meet the EBIS Way” into a drawing for a $25 gift card. Those who do it for a year will have a chance at a $50 gift card. One student will be selected at each grade level.

Nearly half the student population has turned in a pledge and Pascale has already noticed some results from implementing the program. “The number of positive behavior certificates have increased and there have been several names recommended for the drawing,” he said.

Clark Farr-Killmer, also a fifth grader, admitted that before signing the pledge he was struggling with being ready to learn.

“I love sleeping in,” he said with a smile. “It’s good to have this around so you know how to be prepared for school right away - You can just look at it and see what you need to know.”

EBIS from Pg. 1

Student sundaes assignment is worth the wait

In December’s newsletter we shared that WES second graders were set to craft their own ice cream sundae recipe as part of a writing assignment and then create their own dessert in class.

After a break provided by surging COVID-19 rates and snow, the students finally had a chance to indulge their creativity and sweet teeth.

At right is one example of a sundae created by Taylor Ahearn.

Thank you, teachers, for always finding creative ways to engage our students. And, thank you Lindsey Odell for sharing these photos.

Above, two early signers of The EBIS Way pledge, Clark Farr-Killmer, left, and Jose Rosales, hold their pledge forms outside the EBIS office. Both said signing the pledge helped them.

At left, a copy of The EBIS Way pledge form.
Midterm project turns students into teachers

Webutuck High School's DCC English 101 class learned firsthand about some of the challenges their teachers face in this new world of education as part of their midterm recently.

The 14 students were separated into six groups, each responsible for teaching a different chapter in the textbook to the other groups. Groups had the freedom to choose how they'd present the information to the class, but had to create both a student version and a teacher version (with answers), teacher Jenna Garofalo said.

Students were given an outline of what was needed for the lesson and were graded on the presentation itself and how closely it adhered to the provided outline, Garofalo said.

"I wanted to do something I had done previously, but I didn't know if it would work in a virtual environment. They always rose to the occasion and were successful," she said.

Tayler Wolfe was part of the group that taught "Cause and Effect."

"I've never taught before and I was learning myself," she said, explaining one of the challenges she overcame in doing the assignment which showed how to trace reasons and results.

Classmate Tayler Whitehead had a different challenge.

"It was most challenging to be on Zoom and not actually talking to people and I had some difficulty organizing the work."

Xin Wong's group taught the chapter on "Division and Classification."

"If we see anything, we ask if there’s anything they need to talk about and then we talk," she said.

Fourth grader Ryan Morrisey is one student who definitely got the lesson, though he said he didn't know the word, 'perseverance,' before learning about the trait but he understood the meaning.

WES lives January trait

Between COVID-19, snow and life, Webutuck's youngest students and the staff at Webutuck Elementary School have had to adapt, change and carry on.

It's fitting, perhaps, that January's character trait was perseverance.

"We're here and then we're not and then it snows and we're waiting for vaccines," Principal Jennifer Hengen said, smiling behind her mask. "We have to laugh at ourselves and each other and support one another," she said.

In teaching the character trait during the all-school assemblies, Hengen began to feel that her school exemplified the trait.

Teacher Renee Palmer chose the books, videos and items presented during the assemblies.

"Some days I have to keep reminding myself to keep going, be positive for myself, the children, my family. We can do this! We can beat this!"

Each week she creates a slide that highlights the trait with a definition and a visual example, a video and two books that illustrate the trait.

"Our children are quite remarkable, I haven’t seen any breakdown," Palmer said, adding that she and other staff members always keep an eye and ear out for any signs of difficulty.

WHS Senior Xin Wong talks about his English 101 midterm for teacher Jenna Garofalo's class. Garofalo shows part of his lesson plan

Teacher Renee Palmer shows the slide she created to illustrate January's character trait, perseverance.

See MIDTERM Pg. 5
Virtual assembly energizes classes

While field trips during the pandemic aren't possible, there are still ways to break out of the routine, it just takes a little bit of creativity, said Monica Baker whose class is fully remote. 

So, when she learned of a free Central Hudson Gas & Electric event, Baker seized the opportunity and made arrangements for the school to participate in the virtual assembly.

The 35 minute livestream took place Jan. 29 and was offered in two sessions: one for grades K-2 and another for grades 3-6. Central Hudson again partnered with the National Theater for Children to educate students and their families about energy efficiency, Joe Jenkins, associate director of media relations for Central Hudson said. The program is part of the utility's outreach and education program. NTC actors will visit 55 elementary schools and 18 middle schools this year as part of the program, Jenkins said. During the first year of the program, 2019-20, it was only offered to elementary schools in Central Hudson's service area.

Filled with different skits, quizzes and lesson reviews from the host, “Energy Endgame” taught students what energy is, how it is measured, how it is wasted, how to save energy and about renewable resources.

“I wanted to do something a little different. We can't do field trips this year, so with this we were able to watch it live and make it like a movie theater,” Baker said.

Central Hudson customized the event, welcoming Webutuck students and allowing Baker to post live questions from the students into a chat which the host then answered.

Baker’s students watched via Zoom while in WES classrooms, teachers and students watched on the SmartBoards.

“The kids loved it,” Baker said.

As a follow-up assignment, Baker asked her students to draw what they learned from the presentation.

“This is just one example of what teachers at Webutuck are doing to think outside of the box this school year to bring special opportunities to students during this difficult time,” said Baker, who is also the Webutuck Teacher’s Association executive vice president.

Shortened boys, girls basketball season ends on Friday

A shortened basketball season opened Feb. 12 and comes to a close with the final games Feb. 25 and 26.

“The teams are taking great strides and getting better each time they go out there to play and that’s what we are looking for," Athletic Director Joseph Lasaponara said.

"Everyone is using the time to get back into shape and have fun and I am very proud of all those who came out for basketball,” he said.

The girls are 0-4 and the boys 0-5 heading into this week.

No spectators are allowed, but games are being streamed live at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0EzDTrGxjwpqO0xuilKtm6w.

Registration for boys and girls soccer and volleyball is open. The season begins March 1.

MIDTERM from Pg. 4
Wong had done presentations before. His challenge was, “finding the definitions and getting the general gist and then finding a way to teach it in your own words.”

The group's teacher copy showed that “division is a process analysis and classification is moving from specifics to a group with common traits.”

Wong pointed out that it is a skill used to help make decisions.

Erika Voigt had never taught a class before, but she enjoyed the midterm. “It was much cooler and it gave us a chance to talk to each other.”