



# Robert E. Fitch High School

101 Groton Long Point Rd.

Groton, CT 06340

## JANUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

Our mission at Robert E. Fitch High School is to educate our students to become outstanding citizens equipped with 21st century learning skills. The faculty and staff collaborate with home and community to promote academic excellence, personal wellness, and social awareness. We guide students into deeper cognitive awareness and increased levels of understanding, and we encourage our students to use their individual talents to their fullest potential. Our graduates are informed, responsible adults who respect diversity and value life-long learning.

### **PRINCIPAL'S CORNER**

The Winter Sports season has begun. Please come out and support our athletes. They will greatly appreciate it.

In November, FHS received its accreditation letter from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. FHS retained its accreditation; the report was extremely positive, indicating that FHS is doing what is necessary to raise student achievement.

11 juniors at FHS just received letters from the Commissioner of Education that they scored in the Advanced range (all 5's) in all sections of the CAPT test which they took last March, 2011. This is a tremendous accomplishment and we are all very proud of them. The students are: Tyler Ackley, Alyssa Denno, Kailyn Doiron, Clare Doyle, Alec Franklin, Peter Houser, Bryn Lalonde, Katherine Mason, Erika Mayer, Stacia Pombrio, and Christina Szczesny.

Midyear exams are right around the corner. Students, please begin to study each and every night for your midyears. This will prevent you from cramming the night before you have an exam. Parents, you can be a huge asset by asking your son/daughter if they have organized their work and are prepared for the exams.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone for all your support for the students and teachers at FHS. We all appreciate your efforts. Have a happy, healthy new year.

Sincerely yours,

*Joseph Arcarese*  
Principal

### **THE FHS WEB SITE**

Please visit the FHS web site for up-to-date information on what's happening at our school. The web site offers links that provide information about all that Fitch has to offer, including the PowerSchool parent portal and information on how to contact faculty and staff.

### **FHS Faculty Email**

In most cases use the teacher's first initial and last name followed by @groton.k12.ct.us

Example:

[ateacher@groton.k12.ct.us](mailto:ateacher@groton.k12.ct.us)

There are exceptions to this. If you have any questions on an email address, please call the school at 860-499-7200.

# MIDYEAR EXAM SCHEDULE

*(providing there are no snow days)*

**Friday, January 20—Last day of classes –1<sup>st</sup> semester**

**Monday, January 23—Periods 1A and 1B**

**Tuesday, January 24—Periods 2A and 2B**

**Wednesday, January 25—Periods 3A and 3B**

**Thursday, January 26—Periods 4A and 4B**

## THE FITCH PARENT COUNCIL

Please join us at a meeting!

•All meetings are held in the Fitch Library at 6:30•

**Thursday, January 26:** Preparing you for College admission process—Freshman through Senior years.

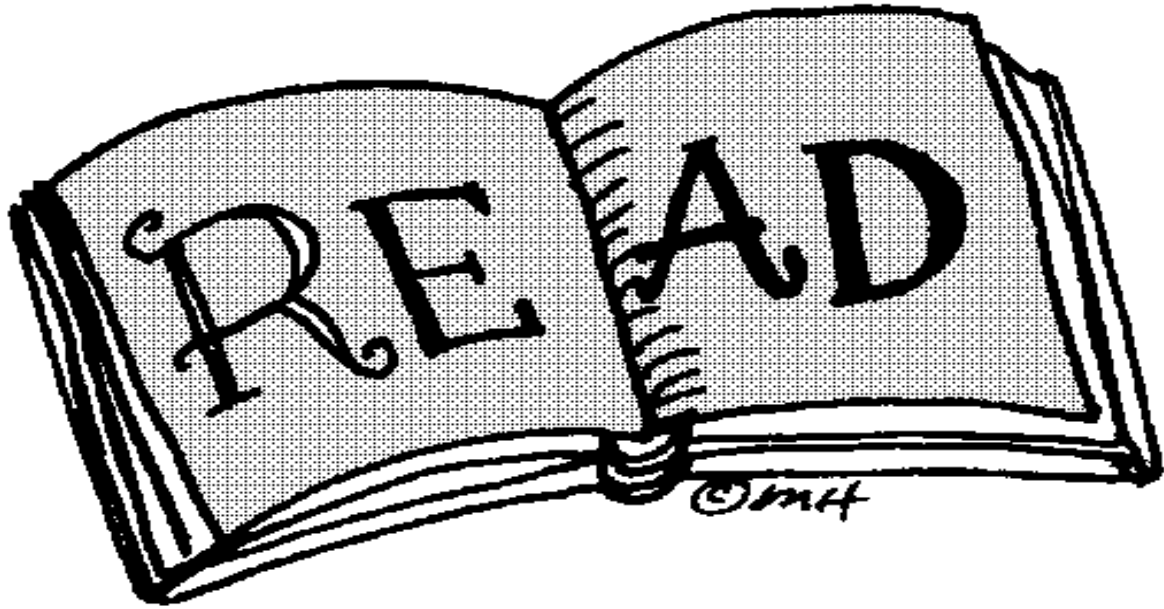
**Thursday, February 23:** TBA

**Thursday, March 22:** What is the CAPT test and why is it important? Look at district to federal result trends.

**Thursday, April 26:** Open; Coordinator nominations.

**Thursday, May 24:** End of year SRBI study; Coordinator election

Please email us at [fitchparentcouncil@hotmail.com](mailto:fitchparentcouncil@hotmail.com) with any questions or to suggest a topic for discussion.



## FITCH READS

For the 2011-2012 school year, we began a new program at FHS entitled “Fitch Reads” to promote the all too important skill of reading. In their advisories, students were challenged to create “Fitch Reads” posters; Ms. Johnson’s advisory won this competition and you will soon see their “Fitch Reads” poster throughout the school. Also in their advisories, students came up with suggestions to promote reading outside of the classroom; the faculty reviewed results during our November 8<sup>th</sup> Professional Development day. Two suggestions that came from the student body and faculty were to implement a Sustained Silent Reading program and to offer rewards to students who take this reading endeavor seriously.

After midyear exams, we will have SSR every Friday during the SRBI block. The expectation is quite simple: students are to select something to read. This can be reading for class, reading for pleasure, or reading on a Kindle, if possible. To prepare for this implementation, teachers have been collecting books, magazines, and other periodicals to create a small classroom library; our Video Production class has created a public service announcement; and students have been made aware of this expectation. Every two weeks, advisors will submit names of students who are taking SSR seriously and these names will be entered into a drawing for a prize. Parents and guardians, please join us to support our Fitch Reads effort by encouraging reading at home, by telling your students about this program, and by supporting your students to be active readers.

### THE FHS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM:

Please consider joining the FHS School Improvement Team or attending a meeting. To learn more, contact the chair, Alex Smith at [asmith@groton.k12.ct.us](mailto:asmith@groton.k12.ct.us)

NEXT SIT TEAM MEETING: 1/18/12 @ 2:30  
IN ROOM 3212

# SUPPORT THE FHS MUSIC DEPARTMENT



The FHS Music Department will give a concert on Thursday, January 19, 2012, at 7pm in the auditorium. Selections from the bands, choirs and orchestra will cover many styles and time periods. The concert will end with all ensembles joining forces to perform an arrangement of the Finale from Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The concert is free, so please join us.

## **QUICK REFERENCES FOR GBOE POLICIES**

If you would like to know more about the Groton Board of Education policies, you can visit the district web page and link to the policy sites. Fitch High School will keep the Board of Education's harassment and bullying policies posted to our web site all year long.

# NEWS FROM FHS'S COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER



**Juniors/Seniors  
Friday, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>**

## **Alumni Day**

Members from the  
Class of 2011 will speak about their college choice.  
9:45 a.m.

This event will be held in the band room.  
Pick up your pass in the Career Center or sign up on Naviance by January 5<sup>th</sup>.

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## **COLLEGE TRIPS**

**SECOND SEMESTER COLLEGE TRIPS WILL INCLUDE UCONN- AVERY POINT, EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY, NEW ENGLAND INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE. INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE COLLEGE & CAREER CENTER IN LATE JANUARY.**



## **FITCH ROBOTICS**

### **UPDATES**

On January 7, The Fitch Robotics Team will begin the new season of the *FIRST Robotics Competition*. The team will assemble at Dominion Millstone with other teams from Southeastern Connecticut to find out what this year's game will be. All teams across the world will be discovering the rules of the game at the same time, and then each team will have six weeks to design and build, from scratch, a 120-pound robot that will perform these as-yet-unknown tasks.

The Aluminum Falcons had great success this year raising funds for the *FIRST Robotics Competition*. The team has received significant grants and monetary sponsorship from local corporations (including SAIC, Applied Physical Sciences inc., Groton Utilities, Dominion, the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, and JCpenney) and has received fantastic machining and fabrication services from others (such as H.R. Hillery Co, and Race Rock Associates).

The team also had great success at its Pancake Breakfast/Silent Auction team fundraiser on December 3<sup>rd</sup> which exceeded their expected goal by more than \$1000 thanks to the efforts of all 28 student members of the team. Progress of the team through the upcoming "build-season" can be followed on the team's website: [www.team2168.com](http://www.team2168.com) . While at this site, please visit our "Sponsors" page to see a full list of the companies and organizations that have contributed money, products, services and/or time to the Fitch Robotics Team.



## NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS AT CHARTER OAK CREDIT UNION

### FHS Annual Holiday Coin Drive

The FHS Advisory program has partnered with the Charter Oak Credit Union for the past few years during the holiday season to conduct a coin drive; students are encouraged to donate their spare change to this effort. All proceeds go directly to the Groton Food Locker, which provides meals and services to those in need. This year FHS made a donation of \$281.78 to the Groton Food Locker.

### Instilling Financial Responsibility in Your Teen

According to recent surveys on youth and money, American parents miss the mark as financial educators for their kids, because they underestimate the role they can play in teaching their children about money management. Parents are a teenager's primary source of information when it comes to managing finances and from you, teens observe family values and attitudes about money. They also learn the importance of saving and to value what they have earned.

How can you start instilling financial responsibility in your teen? Well, research suggests that teens are more knowledgeable about the use of money when they are given a variety of experiences including the opportunity to both save and spend. They also benefit from watching their parents handle family income wisely. Encourage your teen to open a savings account and deposit  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what they receive from paychecks or special gifts. When you pay bills, balance your checkbook or go over your family budget, have them sit down with you to get involved and learn from the process. All of this helps your teen better understand money management techniques and the importance of making responsible financial decisions.

Get your teen Focused on Finances this New Year! Visit our website, [www.CharterOak.org](http://www.CharterOak.org) to download a brochure or to read more about the special products and services we can offer your teen! Designed to give them a jump start in personal finance, there's no better way to get the financial responsibility ball rolling!



## GUEST VISIT IN FRESHMAN SEMINAR CLASSES

Two of Fitch High School's Freshman Seminar classes had the honor of meeting with a Holocaust Survivor December 7, 2011. The survivor, Oleg Elperin, shared his story with the students in Mrs. Neidig's and Mr. Motzko's classes. Elperin survived the war by escaping his hometown of Minsk, Russia, with his mother and younger brother just days before the occupation by German soldiers. They lived for five years in Kazakhstan and then returned to Russia after the war. He later became a high school physics teacher and after retirement moved to Connecticut in 1991 to be closer to his children and grandchildren. Elperin answered student questions with honesty and sometimes even humor. He inspired all of them to appreciate their freedom and cherish the opportunities they have in this country. All of the students expressed sincere gratitude for having had the chance to meet someone like Oleg Elperin.



## DECEMBER BLOOD DRIVE AT FHS

**The Fitch students and staff donated a collective 39 pints at the Blood Drive on December 7th. That is 117 lives saved! Great job Fitch!**



## **FHS STUDENTS VISIT POMPEII EXHIBIT**

On Thursday December 8, 43 FHS Latin students joined their teacher Mr. Goodwin and 4 chaperones on a trip to the Boston Museum of Science. The Museum is hosting a traveling exhibition called “A Day in Pompeii,” which features over 200 items recovered from the ruins of that ancient Italian town. They all date from the time of its destruction in 79 AD and range in size from coins and jewelry to entire sections of walls featuring the beautiful artwork characteristic of these homes. Included were many examples of the haunting plaster casts that were made of the victims found in the volcanic debris.

While students spent time in other areas of the museum also, they devoted almost 2 hours to photographing, studying, and taking notes in the exhibit and many first-year students plan to make scrapbooks of their visits for term projects. Most Latin 2 students will re-create an artifact inspired by what they have seen.

Mr. Goodwin was pleased that the trip was approved by the school and central office because it’s unlikely that the students will ever again have the chance to see such a display of ancient Roman relics – at least on this side of the Atlantic. Mark Russell – Central Office manager of video production – was a surprise guest. He took hundreds of pictures and will put together a documentary of the trip. Watch for it soon on the Channel 19 program guide.

# UPDATES FROM THE FHS COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

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## A Parent Tutorial for Understanding 2011 PSAT/NMSQT® Results

### PSAT/NMSQT Score Report

Take a look at your student's PSAT/NMSQT® Score Report. Notice that each section of the test — critical reading, mathematics and writing skills — has its own column. Within each section is a great deal of information that provides a thorough review of performance.

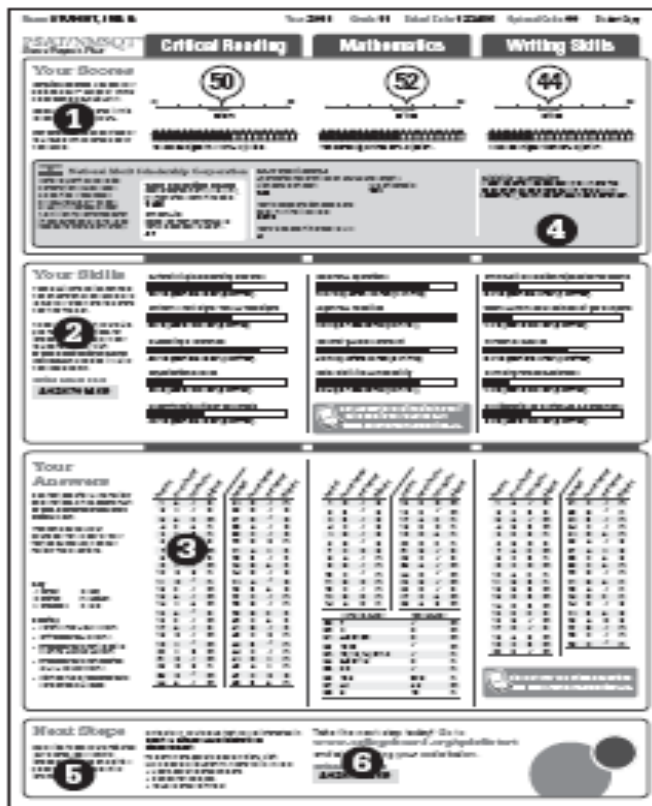
#### 1 Your Scores:

- Each PSAT/NMSQT score — critical reading, mathematics and writing skills — is based on a scale of 20 to 80.
- The score ranges show how much scores might vary if students were to take the PSAT/NMSQT repeatedly without learning additional skills. In other words, the scores within this range are considered "equal" statistically.
- Percentiles compare your student's performance with that of other students. Eleventh-graders are compared to all 11th-graders who took the test; 10th-graders and younger students are compared to all 10th-graders who took the test.

**2 Your Skills:** Students can see how they performed on each of the skills measured by the PSAT/NMSQT. After reviewing this section, students can then go online and log in to My College QuickStart™ to access suggestions for improving each of these skills and also sample questions to use for additional practice. Share this information with teachers, as these skills affect classroom performance and are important for success in college.

**3 Your Answers:** This section shows the correct answer, the student's response and the difficulty level of the question. Students should have received their test book along with their score report. Encourage your child to go over questions she or he got wrong. Did she or he really not know the answer? Make a careless error? Guess instead of leaving the question blank? My College QuickStart provides complete answer explanations to help students learn from their mistakes.

**4 National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) Programs:** NMSC cosponsors the PSAT/NMSQT, which stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. High school students enter NMSC programs, usually as 11th-graders, by taking the PSAT/NMSQT and meeting other published entry requirements. NMSC uses the Selection Index score — the sum of the critical reading, mathematics and writing skills scores — as an initial screen of students who enter its programs and to designate groups of students to be honored. If the Selection Index has an asterisk, refer to the NMSC section on the back of the score report. NMSC will notify principals of students whose Selection Index scores qualify them for recognition. For more information about NMSC scholarship programs, visit [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org).



**5 Next Steps:** Before the test, each student provided the college major she or he is considering pursuing. In My College QuickStart, the College Board provides important information about the indicated major, including recommended high school courses that will help prepare students for college-level work.

**6 Information About Your Student's My College QuickStart.** See the reverse side to learn about this free online resource.

## SAT TESTING INFORMATION

Test Dates	Test	U.S. Registration Deadlines	
		Regular	Late (a fee applies)
January 28, 2012	SAT & Subject Tests	December 30, 2011	January 13, 2012
March 10, 2012	SAT only	February 10, 2012	February 24, 2012
May 5, 2012	SAT & Subject Tests	April 6, 2012	April 20, 2012
June 2, 2012	SAT & Subject Tests	May 8, 2012	May 22, 2012

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

**College Applications.** The Guidance Department is urging parents to encourage their son or daughter to begin submitting college applications if they have not already done so. If your senior is still uncertain on where to apply or in what direction to head next year, please advise him or her to make an appointment with his/her counselor.

**First quarter grades.** The grades for seniors have automatically been sent by the Guidance Office to all colleges and universities to which they have applied.

**College Goal Sunday (Financial Aid Form Assistance)** On January 29, 2012, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at [The New London Science and Technology Magnet High School](#), 490 Jefferson Avenue, New London, CT 06320. Students and parents can talk to experts and get in-depth help filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition to receiving assistance in filling out the FAFSA, participants will receive general information regarding state and federal financial aid programs.

**Junior Parent College Planning Night:** The Guidance Department will be hosting a Junior Parent Night to kickoff the college planning that will need to be done over the Spring Semester. This will be held on Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup> in the Auditorium starting at 6:30. Snow date (Thursday January 12<sup>th</sup>) If is very important that all Junior Parents attend. The planning process will finish with the Junior Parent/Student Meeting listed below.

**The Junior Parent/Student Meeting.** Will be taking place early in the second semester. The individual conference will center on academic performance, course selection, and postsecondary planning. Parents are encouraged to accompany their son or daughter to this important meeting with their counselor. A letter was sent home explaining the meeting and asking for you to call for a for an appointment preference.

**Naviance.** All students have been given a username and password to use a computer Internet System called **Naviance**. This web site provides students access to college searches, learning style and personality type inventories as well as links to other web resources. If your student or you have forgotten their usernames and/or password, please have them contact a counselor or Mrs. Wisniewski in the Career Center.

**PSAT Scores** In mid-December an assembly was held to explain the score reports for all the students who took the test. It was offered to all our tenth graders and the cost was covered by the Board of Education. About 50% of our Eleventh Graders opted to take it as well. The scores are not mailed home so please ask your child to share the results and go over the score reports with you. You may also find more information about the test, including the 2011 PSAT/NMSQT Parent Perspective at [collegeboard.com/parents](http://collegeboard.com/parents).

The actual score reports were given to the student before leaving for the Holiday Break. Any student who took the PSAT in October will have **FREE** access to My College QuickStart™, a free online personalized college and career planning kit based on their test results.

Students are able to take the next steps towards college with these unique features:

- An online score report, including projected SAT score ranges, state percentiles, and the power to sort answer explanations by difficulty and by question type.
- A customized SAT study plan.
- College Matches - get a starter list of colleges based on the information you provided when you took the PSAT/NMSQT.
- Major and Career Matches - view a personalized list of suggested majors and careers.
- Access to My Road - a personality test to learn more about majors and careers that fit your strengths and interests.

**Students will have online access to My College QuickStart until they graduate from high school.**

Students register for My College QuickStart by visiting [www.collegeboard.com/quickstart](http://www.collegeboard.com/quickstart) and entering the access code printed on their official PSAT/NMSQT paper score report along with some identifying information. If you or your student needs assistance with registration, please contact our School Counseling Department.

## FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Please email submissions by 1/25/12  
to Sean McKenna, Assistant Principal,  
at: [smckenna@groton.k12.ct.us](mailto:smckenna@groton.k12.ct.us)

