



Monthly Bulletin

March 2008

Dr. Patrick Michel
Superintendent of Schools

www.monticelloschools.net

From the desk of the Superintendent: fighting for our fair share

Last year, our school district received a 19% increase in State education aid because the Governor redesigned the aid formula to better support districts like ours. We were promised another significant increase this year, but due to the economic downturn, this did not happen. As expected, this year the Governor's proposed budget will give us substantially less aid than last year. We are thankful that our decrease was not greater and that we did not lose our aid completely like some of our neighboring school districts.

The old State aid formula was notorious for allocating more money to wealthier districts in Westchester, Long Island and New York City. Last year when the formula was changed, districts such as Monticello that have a very high poverty rate, were given increased monies. Under the Governor's proposed budget, we are seeing a trend that once again shifts the formula back to the old way of doing business. It is worthy to note that despite the low aid numbers, we have seen significant improvement in our achievement scores and student performance over the past few years.

Through the guise of High Tax Aid, the Governor proposes that districts like Monticello receive no aid in this category while much wealthier districts receive substantial increases. Through this process, districts in Orange County who have many more resources than we do, will receive up to three times the State aid increase than we will receive.

Upon learning this information, we decided to fight. Two weeks ago, Monticello Board of Education members and the Superintendent of Schools went to Albany to meet with State representatives. Thanks to Aileen Gunther, we were also able to meet representatives from the Assembly Education Committee and the Superintendent was interviewed for an Albany-based news program. Three weeks ago, two of our school board members, Richard Feller and Liza Glick, went to Washington DC to lobby for an increase in support. We are pushing very hard to get our fair share.

We will keep you informed about our progress and we are hopeful that through our efforts we will bring more money to our district to help further lower the property tax burden.

Please call me at 794-7700, ext. 70910 if you have any questions or want to help advocate for our fair share.

Monticello Schools Citizens' Advisory Budget Committee is off to a good start! Voice your opinions and concerns at the next CABC meetings scheduled for March 4, 12 and 18, 7 p.m. in the RJK Middle School cafeteria. Topics of discussion will include: Pupil Personnel Services, undistributed funds, curriculum development, technology, music and athletic budgets, BOCES services, new programs, staffing and benefits.

REMINDER: March 3-7: New York State Math Testing for Grades 3, 4 & 5 and March 6-12: New York State Math Testing for Grades 6, 7 & 8.

QuickCLIPS

FYI: The Sullivan County School Boards Association (SCSBA) is offering a free workshop for prospective board of education members, Wednesday, April 9, 7-9 p.m. at the Sullivan County BOCES Board Room, 6 Wierk Avenue, Liberty. This class is for any community member who is interested in serving on a school board. The workshop will explain the responsibilities, time commitments and qualifications necessary.

On the May 20 ballot, two Monticello Board of Education seats will be up for election. To register for the workshop or for more information, call Monticello District Clerk Mary Ryan Buchholz at 794-7700, ext. 70501.

The next **Alive at 25** course will be held on **April 19, 9 a.m.** at the Kauneonga Lake Bethel Senior Center. The cost is \$20 for Monticello High School students. For questions or more information, call high school assistant principal Mark Sutherland at 794-8840, ext. 10928.

Help needed: Recently, the Ronald McDonald Family Room (RMFR) in the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital was severely damaged when a pipe burst. Chase Elementary School is holding a fundraiser to help pay for the damages, so the room can be reopened.

The RMFR is a place where a family can stay when their child is in the hospital. This allows them to remain close to their loved one during the illness. For more information, please visit www.ronaldmcdonaldfamilyroom.com. To give a donation, please call Alma Buckley at 888-2471.

Important Dates

MONDAY, MARCH 3:

- Monticello School Community Advocates meeting, 7:30 p.m., RJK Middle School cafeteria

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5:

- Chase Kindergarten Registration
- Chase PTO meeting, 7 p.m.
- KLR/Cooke PTA meeting, 7 p.m. at KLR

THURSDAY, MARCH 6:

- Chase Kindergarten Registration
- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 7 & 8:

- RJK Middle School Talent Show, 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11:

- Duggan Kindergarten Registration
- RJK PTA meeting, 7 p.m., cafeteria

THURSDAY, MARCH 13:

- Duggan Kindergarten Registration

FRIDAY, MARCH 14:

- RJK Dance, Grade 6, 7-8:30 p.m.
- EPIC Parent Get-together, 7 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 17:

- Monticello Schools' Parent Advisory Group meeting, 7 p.m., RJK Middle School cafeteria

THURSDAY, MARCH 20:

- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 21 - FRIDAY, MARCH 28:

- Spring Recess - NO SCHOOL

Community resources that can help through hard times

With the cost of food and energy escalating, more and more families are finding it harder to make ends meet. If you or someone you know is in need of help, Sullivan County has resources available.

Some places that may be able to help are as follows:

- The **Regional United Way**, dial 211 from a cell phone or land line (school phones or others with internet-based phone systems may not work),
- The **Shepard's Pantry** (food pantry for Bethel residents) 583-4679,
- The **Sullivan County Federation for the Homeless and Tom's Soup Kitchen**, 9 Monticello St., Monticello, 794-2604,
- **United Way of Sullivan County**, 38 Lakewood Ave., Monticello, 794-1771,
- **Community Action Commission to Help the Economy (CACHE)**, 63 South Main St., Liberty 292-5821,
- **Food Pantry at Community Church of Wurtsboro**, 888-5626, and
- **Catholic Charities** (by appointment only), 794-6023.