



Monthly Bulletin

May 2008

Dr. Patrick Michel
Superintendent of Schools

www.monticelloschools.net

A letter to parents from the Superintendent of Schools

It is May and spring is finally here in Sullivan County! At this point, we are deeply into our budget season and I personally wanted to update you on what will be in the proposed 2008-09 budget and how this budget will directly affect you and your children.

At the elementary level, we are continuing the development of our International Baccalaureate (IB) program. This year, Chase Elementary School will be applying for official IB recognition and next year, Duggan Elementary School will begin the formal application process. Cooke and Rutherford Elementary Schools are slated to follow in subsequent years. We have been working on improving our reading program and will continue to expand our accelerated and enriched academic programs. Our EXCEL Building Project has been submitted to the State and upon approval (expected shortly), we will begin fencing-in our elementary school playgrounds and installing an outdoor camera surveillance system at Chase.

At the middle school level, we will continue with our expansion of the accelerated and enriched programs. We will begin our first year of "looping," which means that the teachers your children have in 7th grade will be the same as in 8th grade. We anticipate an improvement in student performance as a result of this change in structure. We will also be offering a Modified Football Program for 8th graders that will allow our team to compete against others in Sullivan and Orange Counties. Each year after that, we will add another level of football to include Junior Varsity and ultimately, Varsity. With the continued success of the new Boys & Girls Club after-school program for our middle school students, I am pleased to report that enrollment has reached almost 100 members.

Monticello High School continues to go through its reorganization process with more diversification of our Academies. This year, the staff has worked to create an improved Junior Year Experience for our current sophomores. We will be expanding our Academy structure into the junior year which will allow students to pursue interest strands, such as dance or engineering. We have vastly increased our college level course offerings to enable students to have more choices and options. This will help parents save substantial amounts of money on college tuition, while students get the experience of taking upper level courses. Our YMCA program is growing and we anticipate more activities for our high school students, such as the recently implemented traveling basketball team.

We are working very hard to not only improve instruction and safety in our schools, but to be cost effective as well. Since my first year at Monticello, a comprehensive review of the budgets of each of our major departments has been conducted, with the most recent being our Food Service and Athletic programs. Our goal is to bring significant improvements to our Food Service program and to add a football program without any financial impact to taxpayers.

Please call me if you have any questions about the budget or any concerns about our schools. As usual, my door is always open.

The School Budget Vote will be held on Tuesday, May 20

All polling locations are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Special Budget Edition

A public budget hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 6, at 7 p.m. in the RJK Middle School cafeteria.

Monticello School District residents will go the polls on May 20 to vote on a proposed \$73,806,760 budget for the 2008-09 school year. The plan, which represents an increase of 5.72% over the current budget, is the lowest budget increase in 10 years. If the budget is not approved by voters, the Board of Education has the option to put the same budget up for another vote, put a revised budget up for vote or adopt the contingency budget. Because district officials and the Board of Education were very cautious with spending and created a budget below the contingency budget, the difference in the proposed tax levy increase between the proposed budget and the contingency budget is only about 1%.

Also on the ballot will be a proposition to purchase three replacement school buses at a cost of \$330,000, which is 65% reimbursable through State aid.

Residents will also vote to elect candidates for three seats on the Board of Education.

Absentee Ballot Information

Absentee ballots are available at the office of the District Clerk Mary Ryan Buchholz. For full details about the absentee ballot process, call her at 794-7700, ext. 70501.

Absentee ballots must be filed in the office of the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 20.

FYI: if a college student is a legal resident of the school district, is registered to vote, but is away at school, they are still eligible to vote via absentee ballot.

Voter Registration Information

District residents who wish to register to vote may do so, by appointment, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. daily, except weekends and holidays, at the office of the District Clerk, Mary Ryan Buchholz, Administration Building, 237 Forestburgh Road in Monticello. Registration must take place five (5) days preceding the Tuesday, May 20, budget vote and Board of Education election.

Voter Registration at District Schools

Residents can also register to vote with the main office secretary at each district school beginning May 5. Registration hours will be the same as the daily schedule of each school. *Please bring valid identification and current proof of residency with your present address listed.*

Voter Registration Day - Tuesday, May 13

A Voter Registration Day will be held on May 13. On that day, residents have the opportunity to register to vote, 4 - 8 p.m. at each of the district polling locations (*see location chart below*).

Voter Qualifications

In order to be legally qualified to vote in the annual school district budget vote and Board of Education election, a person must be:

- A citizen of the United States;
- Eighteen years of age or over;
- A resident of the Monticello School District for a period of at least 30 days immediately preceding the vote; and
- Registered to vote. (*The registration of voters is valid for a period of four years. If the resident has not voted within that period, they must re-register. All new residents must register to vote.*)

Residents of the district who are registered to vote in a general election are eligible to vote at school district meetings and elections without further special school district registration.

District Polling Locations

(If you have a question about where you should vote, please call the District Clerk at 794-7700, ext. 70501.)

Forestburgh (District #5) Forestburgh Town Hall

Thompson (Rock Hill area) (District #4) Rock Hill Fire Department

Mamakating (District #3) Chase School, Wurtsboro

Bethel (District #2) Duggan School, White Lake

Thompson (Remainder of district) (District #1) RJK Middle School

Polls are open on May 20, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

FYI: The date of the Monticello High School Academic Achievement Awards and National Honor Society Induction has been changed to **Thursday, May 22 at 7 p.m.** in the auditorium.