



Monthly Bulletin

April 2009

Dr. Patrick Michel
Superintendent of Schools

www.monticelloschools.net

From the desk of the Superintendent: Stimulus Money will Help

I am pleased to inform you that our budget picture looks brighter. Although we are still expecting updated information from the state, our preliminary numbers look good. We would not be in our present position if so many people were not doing such a great job advocating for our schools. I would like to recognize and thank Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther and Senator John Bonacic for fighting very hard to keep our schools funded. Our Board of Education members also dedicated much of their personal time to advocate for us in Albany as well as Washington D.C. Thanks to Robert Stewart, Richard Feller and Alyce Van Etten, Monticello was represented at both the state and federal lobbying days.

Part of their participation at the federal level was to ensure that the Federal Stimulus Package would include a focus on education. As a result, monies were specifically allocated to each state to help restore the state aid cuts that were looming. These monies have helped us create a much brighter budget picture than we could have anticipated during these very tough economic times. I would also like to recognize the efforts of Senator Chuck Schumer and Congressman Maurice Hinchey for their help in securing this money for New York State.

Another result of our strong advocacy has produced a change in the Governor's plan to transfer the costs of preschool special education from the county level to our school district. This proposal would have added a \$150,000 increase to the school budget.

At this point in time, it appears that the proposed \$1.9 million cut in state aid we were expecting has been restored by the Governor. We will have to study what conditions must be met to get that aid, but we are confident that the money should help us keep staff reductions and our proposed property tax levy increase to a minimum. It is essential to note that this restoration of aid simply brings our numbers back up to this year's allocation - it does not add any additional funding. Our initial information indicated that the Governor and Legislature have agreed to freeze our aid for the next two years at the present level. Since our expenses are escalating, this will still pose us with some real challenges in our next budget cycle.

We must continue to be vigilant and make sure that our legislators understand the connection between suitable levels of federal and state aid and our ability to produce a quality education for our children. We also need to recognize that the Federal Stimulus money will only be available to us for the next two years and that there are still many uncertainties that exist. We must look to the future and be proactive in our planning to ensure that we address some structural budgetary issues this year that will impact our budgeting for next year.

At this point, let us celebrate the positive news and hope for the economic recovery of our nation. As always, my door is open. Please stop by anytime.

Absentee Ballot Applications Available for May 19 School Budget Vote

Applications for absentee ballots may be applied for at the office of the District Clerk. Completed applications must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter. Anyone can pick-up multiple absentee ballot applications from the district, although only the voter can personally pick-up an absentee ballot. If the ballot is to be mailed, it must be mailed to the voter. For voters who are residents of the district but will not be able to physically vote in their designated polling place (e.g. college students, work-related travel, vacationers, disabled) absentee ballots are available.

Absentee ballots must be filed in the office of the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on May 19.

For more information, call District Clerk Mary Ryan Buchholz at 794-7700, ext. 70501.

FYI: Town of Mamakating Parks & Recreation is offering instructional youth and adult volleyball leagues at the Chase Elementary School in Wurtsboro. Volunteers are needed to coach, referee or instruct. For more information, call 888-3049.

QuickCLiPS

Monticello School District residents will go the polls on May 19 to vote on a proposed school budget for the 2009-10 school year. Details of the budget will be available in early April and will be posted on the district web site at www.monticelloschools.net.

In addition to the proposed budget, district residents will go to the polls on Tuesday, May 19 to elect three (3) Board of Education members for the seats of incumbents Robert Stewart, Jacob Billig, and Eugene Nesin.

Petitions nominating candidates for the office of member of the Board of Education are available in the office of the District Clerk, located in the Central Administration Building, 237 Forestburgh Road, Monticello. The petitions must be returned and filed with the clerk no later than 5 p.m., Monday, April 20, 2009.

All candidates must file a petition and meet the following criteria:

1. Must be able to read and write
2. Must be a qualified voter of the district, that is, he/she must be a citizen of the United States
3. At least 18 years or older
4. Not be a convicted felon or have been adjudged incompetent
5. Must be and has been a resident of the district for at least one year prior to the election but need not be a taxpayer
6. May be the only member of his/her family on the school board (defined as those within the same household)
7. May not simultaneously hold another incompatible public office
8. Must not have been removed from a school district office within one year of the election
9. May not be a current employee of the district

For more information, call 794-7700, ext. 70501.

Important Dates

THURSDAY, APRIL 2:

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

MONDAY-MONDAY, APRIL 6-13:

- Spring Recess - NO SCHOOL

THURSDAY, APRIL 16:

- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21-22:

- NY State Science Performance Test - Grade 8

TUESDAY-THURSDAY, APRIL 28-30:

- NY State Science Testing - Grade 4

Voter Registration Information

District residents who wish to register may do so, by appointment, between 9 a.m.-noon. and 1 p.m.-4 p.m. daily, except weekends and holidays, at the office of the District Clerk, Mary Ryan Buchholz. 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. **Registration must take place five (5) days preceding the Tuesday, May 19, 2009 budget vote and Board of Education election.**

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 within the Monticello School District for a period of at least 30 days immediately preceding the voting
- 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.