



Monthly Bulletin

December 2008

Dr. Patrick Michel
Superintendent of Schools

www.monticelloschools.net

From the desk of the Superintendent: Preserving our quality of education

We dodged a \$1.1 million bullet this week when the state didn't follow through with its proposed budget cuts. The mid-year adjustments to our state aid would have severely injured our schools and programs. We must, however, remain soberly realistic about the situation we are facing - huge cuts in our state aid are coming. When they do, just as every household in this country, we must go through a series of decisions regarding what to keep and what to sacrifice.

We watch as our town and county governments raise taxes in order to preserve what they feel are essential services for the people in our community. We, too, must go through the procedures of setting our priorities while still ensuring that our children get the best possible education our community can support. Traditionally, we started our budget process in late January or early February. This year, due to the severity of the crisis we are facing, I am recommending to the Board of Education that we begin our budget discussions now. That means your participation in the Firehouse Chats is more important than ever. We need your help as we formulate our plan of action.

Unfortunately, our Monticello Firehouse Chat was canceled due to a snow storm, but we will be rescheduling a date in the very near future. Due to treacherous weather conditions, our Forestburgh Chat has to be rescheduled, as well. Presently, we are working to finalize a date for our White Lake Chat. The Rock Hill Firehouse Chat is planned for Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. In Mamakating, we have arranged to meet at Chase Elementary School on Thursday, Feb. 12 at 7 p.m.

We will also be inviting volunteers to our Citizens' Advisory Budget Committee (CABC) meetings to once again participate in the budget formation process. More information about the CABC will be provided in the near future.

Needless to say, we will have to work together as a community to survive these tough times. There will be cuts - there is no way we can avoid them - but if we continue to work together, we will find a way to preserve the quality of our educational programs for our children.

Have a great holiday season.

Important notice about the Snow Closing Hotline

Beginning last year, the Monticello School District created its Emergency Closing Hotline - a recorded message that can be accessed by dialing 845-796-5006. How it works: when there is a closing or delay, a message is recorded with the date of the incident. The message is updated as necessary. If a person calls the Hotline and hears an old message, that means there is no updated information at that time and schools are running on their regular schedules. FYI: Emergency Closings and Delays are also posted on the district web site at www.monticelloschools.net, are announced by many of the local radio stations (*a complete listing of stations is on the district web site*) and are sent via the School News Notifier (SNN) e-mail alert system (*anyone can sign-up for this free service on the district web site*).

Firehouse Chats forum for important discussions

As part of the district's on-going effort to keep the lines of communication open with the community and to discuss important issues, the Chat series will be held for the 2008-09 school year with discussions about the NY State budget cuts, how they will affect the district and how we can work together through the tough economic times ahead. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings and share their ideas and suggestions.

- Rock Hill Firehouse Chat - Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
- Chase Elementary School Library - Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m. (*due to the lack of meeting space at the Wurtsboro Firehouse*)

QuickCLIPS

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

Monticello High School presents Anita Loos' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, Friday & Saturday, Dec. 12 & 13, 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium.

This hilarious drama features two pretty, bright, but unschooled flappers, Lorelei Lee (Daria Coney) and Dorothy Shaw (Liza MacEntee) who joyfully infiltrate the bastions of the ruling class. Their hunger to be fully accepted into this society is at odds with their recognition of its obvious moral hypocrisy. The cast is working hard to make this a memorable performance. In addition to the above, the 30 cast members include Erik Mayberg, Tanner and Tyler Wuerthner, Emma Cohen and Amy Conway. Teacher Jennifer Romano directs this year's production.

Tickets are \$5 for adults; \$3 for students; free for senior citizens and are available at the door. For more info, please call Dr. Kevin Dirth at 794-8840, ext. 10993.

New high school club focusing on Peace and Prosperity

The mission of the new Peace and Prosperity club is to discuss timely and engaging topics as a way to inspire members to think, think for themselves and think about others by committing to civic projects. Presently, the club is involved in a coat drive in conjunction with the DREAM Tank. Donations are being accepted at the Federation for the Homeless until December 20.

For more information or to join, contact Wes Bedgood, club president, at wesleyj4@hotmail.com or the club advisor Austin Singleton at asingleton@scbores.org.

Message from the school nurses about Health Screenings:

The New York State mandated health screenings are in the process of being completed. The dates for each school are indicated on the school calendar. Parents or guardians will be notified by mail if a student's screening results do not meet the NY State guidelines. Please make sure your current mailing address is on file at your child's school.

The NY State Education Department (NYSED) requires that parents provide a physical exam report for new students and for students in grades K, 2, 4, 7 and 10. If you haven't done so, please submit an exam report to the school nurse's office immediately. If a health report is not filed, your child will be scheduled for a school physical. NYSED also requests that parents provide a dental certificate for students in grades K, 2, 4, 7, and 10.

Important Dates

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4:

- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m. at RJK

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9:

- RJK Middle School Winter Concert, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10:

- Half-Day Conference - EARLY DISMISSAL
- Chase PTO meeting, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11:

- Chase Winter Concert, 10 a.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12:

- Duggan Winter Concert, 1:30 p.m.
- MHS Drama Performance, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13:

- MHS Drama Performance, 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15:

- MHS Winter Concert, 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16:

- Cooke Winter Celebration

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18:

- KLR Winter Concert, 9:30 a.m. at MHS
- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m. at RJK

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24 - FRIDAY, JANUARY 2:

- Winter Recess - NO SCHOOL

Monticello Little League Registration

Visit www.monticellolittleleague.org to register now for the 2009 season. *NOTE: an early registration discount of \$10 is available for those who register prior to December 13.*

Community resources that can help through tough times:

- United Way of Sullivan County, 38 Lakewood Ave., Monticello, 794-1771
- 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 Street, Monticello, 794-2604
- Community Action Commission to Help the Economy (CACHE) 63 South Main St., Liberty, 292-5821
- Food Pantry at the Community Church of Wurtsboro, 888-5626
- Catholic Charities (*by appointment only*) 794-6023

"Last Stop" Shopping Night, Friday, Dec. 19, 6-9 p.m. Chase Elementary School

Vendor spaces available for \$20. For more info, contact Colleen Karmolinski at 644-4157. *Sponsored by the Chase PTO.*