



## Monthly Bulletin

February 2009

Dr. Patrick Michel  
Superintendent of Schools

[www.monticelloschools.net](http://www.monticelloschools.net)

### From the desk of the Superintendent: The World Changes

I want to begin my letter by thanking all those who have participated in our community forums to discuss our budget situation. I also want to thank those who have contacted me via e-mail and telephone. Your suggestions have been thought-provoking and have helped us consider all our options. I recently read Seth Godin's book, Tribes. In it, he speaks about the demise of the music industry and its inability to react to the changes brought about by the global economy and the internet. I am going to use some of his ideas to help us decide what we need to keep and what we need to change for us to continue to flourish. As we frame this very important discussion, consider the following quote.

"The first rule the music business failed to understand is that, at least at first, the new thing is rarely as good as the old thing was. If you need the alternative to be better than the status quo from the very start, you'll never begin. Soon enough, the new thing will be better than the old thing. But if you wait until then, it's going to be too late. Feel free to wax nostalgic about the old thing, but don't fool yourself into believing that it's going to be here forever. It won't."  
Seth Godin (p. 93)

The whole argument of his book has given me pause as it applies to us and the difficult choices ahead. During the past three years, we have made significant changes in how we do business. We have expanded our college offerings at the high school level - expanded our honors and enrichment programs - began participation in the International Baccalaureate and Project Lead the Way programs, and created a much more sophisticated support infrastructure for students who are struggling academically by creating faculty positions to support our teachers. We are earnestly in need of continuing all these programs because they educate our teachers how to prepare our students for the 21st century classroom and economy. To do this, we must employ different methods and different rules from those we have in the past. If we do not accept this, our children will encounter a lack of opportunity and be doomed to poverty.

I observed a class today and was fascinated by the level of resistance we got from students because they were asked to practice 21st century learning styles instead of using a 20th century approach. I saw the frustration in our teachers' faces as they tried to explain the concept to children who would much rather have the teachers do all the work. The students wanted to acquire knowledge through lecture and taking notes. At times, this can be an effective teaching method but it should not be the dominant approach to learning. To prepare students properly for the 21st century, they must be the facilitators of knowledge and learn to work in teams to create knowledge and to apply that knowledge to generate a product. The classrooms of today must teach children to learn differently from the way we did. Acquiring that skill as a teacher is more difficult than it is as a student. First, we must unlearn how we learned and then teach our children how to successfully learn within our new world so they are prepared for the expectations of the global economy.

I would argue that because of this situation we cannot afford to remove any of the new programs we have put in place. That includes the support network we have created for our teachers and their students. To do so, would undermine our future. The changes we are facing are truly reshaping our world. We can choose to be nimble and adapt to these changes or be left behind regretting what might have been.

As always, my door is open. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

*"When the world changes, the rules change. If you insist on playing today's games by yesterday's rules, you're stuck."*  
From the book Tribes by Seth Godin (p. 114)

**CABC MEMBERS WANTED:** Monticello Schools' Citizens' Advisory Budget Committee meetings will be held as follows:  
**Wednesdays, February 4 & 25 and March 11 & 25 at 7 p.m. in the RJK Middle School cafeteria**  
These meetings are a way for community members to be a part of the 2009-2010 budget formation process.  
**The full 2009-2010 Budget Calendar is available on the district homepage at [www.monticelloschools.net](http://www.monticelloschools.net).**

## QuickCLIPS

**RJK Middle School presents this year's Broadway: A Talent Show, Friday, Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m. in the Arnold Packer Hughs Auditorium Tickets available at the door. Doors open at 7 p.m. Snow date: Saturday, Feb. 28**

### Memorabilia sought for Monticello High School baseball history display

The Monticello High School Athletics Department is actively seeking donations of interesting, unusual and/or special items and artifacts to document and archive the rich history of baseball in Monticello Schools. Items such as publications, photographs, newspaper articles, scorebooks, pennants, buttons, etc., are being sought as part of the quest to preserve this historical legacy.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Coach Mike Marra at 845-794-8840 ext. 10515 or via e-mail at mmarra@k12mcsd.net.

Please keep this in mind the next time you clean out your attic, basement, garage or closets and remember, one person's junk can be an archivist's treasure!

## SKI & SNOWBOARD RACES

**The Sullivan County YMCA and Rock Hill Fire Department will host their 2nd Annual Fireman's Ski Race, Friday & Saturday, Feb. 27-28 at the Holiday Mountain Ski and Fun Park.**

The event will include a wine & cheese reception, torch parade, French Toast breakfast, awards dinner and fireworks display. Sponsorship opportunities are still available.

For more information, contact YMCA Program Director Ross Miceli at 794-7700, ext. 10975 or via e-mail at rpmiceli@yahoo.com.

## Important Dates

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5:

- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6:

- Conference Day - NO SCHOOL - MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL ONLY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11:

- Monticello Firehouse Chat, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12:

- Wurtsboro Firehouse Chat, 7 p.m. in the Chase Elementary School Library

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY, 16-18:

- Mid-Winter Recess/President's Day - NO SCHOOL

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19:

- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.

**Project Excel Preschool registration for September 2009 is currently being held at the St. John Street Education Center in Monticello. Child must be 4 years-old on or before Dec. 1, 2009. For more information, call 794-4020.**

### Student fundraiser needs your help

The Red Cross Club in the RJK Middle School and Monticello High School will be collecting monetary donations during the months of February and March. The money will go to support families of children with leukemia and lymphoma. Last year, students collected more than \$250 and are hoping to double that amount this year.

**EPIC Parent Center and Sylvan Learning present: At Home Strategies for School Success, Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6:30 p.m. in the RJK Middle School cafeteria.**

The object of this study skills presentation is to help develop homework strategies to create independent learners by using a few easy tips.

For more info, call EPIC at 796-3058, ext. 20216.