



# Monthly Bulletin

January 2009

**Dr. Patrick Michel**  
Superintendent of Schools

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

## From the desk of the Superintendent: Feeling the impact of the economic crisis

It is never easy telling the people you care about that things are going to get difficult and that they will not have the same level of service they had been provided in the past. Unfortunately, this has become the reality in which we now exist. In a recent newspaper editorial the headline read, "The Money Tree Is Bare" – there are no truer words to describe these desperate times.

Our school system, like all the other districts in New York, is facing unprecedented cuts in services due to the state's fiscal crisis. We have several options in dealing with this pending storm, each which requires community support and sacrifice. If we try to keep things exactly as they are, then we will be forced to raise taxes to whatever degree necessary to cover our expenses. We could cut services and programs and try not to raise taxes or do a combination of program cuts with a lower tax increase. There is another option we also need to consider – what if we looked at this very bad situation as an opportunity to change what we do and still try to deliver our services and be true to our core mission - preparing our children for the brutally competitive global marketplace and to be good citizens.

Raising taxes has been a tried and true New York State method of dealing with escalating costs. What is different this time is that the people in our state and our school district are at a breaking point. None of us would keep a car or major appliance if the repair became so complicated and costly that it outweighed the logic of buying a new one. Yet, we insist on keeping the same old tax system and now want to add caps, circuit breakers or even more taxes on top of the highest taxes in the country. These same principles apply to our government organizations, as well. At what point are we going to say we need to reform and modernize these systems?

It would be easy to compile a long list of what is wrong in our state, but we don't have the luxury of time. We must begin to address the issues at hand and bring them to a manageable level. During the past two years, the Monticello Central School District finally began receiving enough state funding to allow us to enhance our schools and programs and support the needs of all of our children without bankrupting taxpayers. This money allowed us to build the academic and social infrastructures we needed for student success. We created partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club, the YMCA, the Monticello Police Department, Monticello Community Cares Coalition and many other groups. We did this with the unwavering support of our community. Recent data shows significant progress in student attendance and success rates. Now, after all our hard work, we are faced with the possibility of once again being underfunded. This would hurt our progress immensely.

I know our community is focused on the future and the needs of our students. That is why we want to open our budgetary discussions to the public and ask for help in working out a viable plan that addresses the pending financial storm. Our schools serve our community - and we need our community to help us make the difficult choices that must be made. Let us look at this as an opportunity to affirm our core mission and make true systemic changes that will help us lower costs and allow us to continue to deliver excellent services to our children and their families. The process will not be easy and the choices will be extremely difficult.

Anyone who is interested in sharing their ideas, suggestions and expertise or who wants to be part of these community discussions is invited and encouraged to attend the public meetings and Firehouse Chats we have scheduled during the next few months. If you are unable to attend a meeting but would still like to share your ideas, please contact me at 794-7700, ext. 70910 or via e-mail at [pmichel@k12mcsd.net](mailto:pmichel@k12mcsd.net).



**FIREHOUSE CHAT SCHEDULE:** ● Rock Hill Firehouse Chat - Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m. ● Monticello Firehouse Chat - Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m. ● Chase Elementary School Library - Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m. ● White Lake Firehouse Chat - Tuesday, Mar. 24, 7 p.m. For updated information and additional meeting schedules, please visit the district web site at [www.monticelloschools.net](http://www.monticelloschools.net).

## QuickCLIPS

### BOX TOPS for Education

How to participate: cut "BOX TOP\$" symbol from Proctor Gamble Products and send them into school in a bag marked with the student's and teacher's name. Rutherford, Duggan and Chase Elementary Schools all participate in this program. If you don't have a child in any of those schools, but would still like to participate, please call the district office at 794-7700, ext. 70511. For more details regarding the Box Tops program, please visit [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com).

**March 2009 High School Varsity Baseball Academy with Coach Mike Marra** For more info or questions, visit [www.eteamz.com/MonticelloLLinc/files/FPBA2009.pdf](http://www.eteamz.com/MonticelloLLinc/files/FPBA2009.pdf) or e-mail [mmarra@k12mcsd.net](mailto:mmarra@k12mcsd.net).

## Quiet, PLEASE

### Thank you!

There are a variety of programs presented by the Monticello Music Department throughout the year. Both performers and listeners benefit from a quiet atmosphere during a concert or theatrical performance. Any conversation or movement can distract the performers and diminish the overall experience for all involved.

### Hints for being a respectful audience member:

- Refrain from talking.
- Refrain from unwrapping noisy candy wrappers during the performance.
- Turn off pagers, cell phones and watch alarms.
- Do not wave to your child during the performance.
- Do not take flash photography.
- Please don't walk down the center aisle to take videos.
- Applaud only at appropriate times.
- Do not leave the auditorium during the music.
- Do not leave as soon as your child's portion of the concert is over.
- Attend the performance expecting the best - you just might be surprised!

Any questions or comments should be directed to Monticello's Director of Music, Dr. Kevin Dirth, at 794-8840, ext. 10993.

## Important Dates

MONDAY, JANUARY 12 - FRIDAY, JANUARY 16:  
● NY State ELA Tests - Grades 3, 4 & 5

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15:  
● Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m.

MONDAY, JANUARY 19:  
● Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - NO SCHOOL

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20 - FRIDAY, JANUARY 23:  
● NY State ELA Tests - Grades 6, 7 & 8

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27 - FRIDAY, JANUARY 30:  
● Regents Exams

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30:  
● Conference Day - NO SCHOOL - ELEMENTARY ONLY

### PASSPORT EVENT at Chase Elementary School, Thursday, Jan. 15, 4-7 p.m.

Please bring an original birth certificate (*no copies*) a valid driver's license or other valid form of photo ID and two passport photos (*photos are available at the event for \$15*). Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by both parents/guardians.

To download a passport application in advance, visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) (*please DO NOT sign the application in advance*). For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 796-4535. Walk-ins welcome. Cash or checks accepted. This event is sponsored by the U.S. Post Office.

### Monticello Little League Registration

**Saturday, Jan. 10, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., RJK Middle School cafeteria**

Registration is open to all boys and girls, ages 5 to 18, who live in the Monticello School District (*except for the Town of Mamakating*). A copy of the child's birth certificate is required to register. For more information, call Olga at 583-5431 or Marta at 796-3628 or visit [www.monticellolittleleague.org](http://www.monticellolittleleague.org).

### NEW Superintendent Conference Day Schedule for 2009:

- Friday, Jan. 30 - Full-day Conference - NO SCHOOL - Elementary Schools ONLY
- Friday, Feb. 6 - Full-day Conference - NO SCHOOL - High School & Middle School ONLY
- Tuesday, Mar. 24 - Full-day Conference - NO SCHOOL
- Wednesday, May 13 - Half-day Conference - EARLY DISMISSAL

Please note, the half-day conference days scheduled for Wednesday, February 4 and Wednesday, March 25 that are listed in the district calendar as early dismissal days will be REGULAR SCHOOL DAYS.