



Monthly Bulletin

November 2008

Dr. Patrick Michel
Superintendent of Schools

www.monticelloschools.net

From the desk of the Superintendent: Getting through the tough times together

In one way or another, we are all experiencing the effects of the downturn in our economy and are aware of the potentially devastating personal challenges many of us may be facing in the near future. Regardless of the present situation, our children still need to be educated and prepared for the Global Economy – perhaps now more than ever. In my last message, I talked about the pending NY State budget cuts and how they could impact us in a negative way financially. During my own career, I have faced two economic downturns, and they were rough, but if we pull together as a community, I assure you we can work through this situation.

In order to position ourselves to be prepared for cuts in our State aid, we have already taken several steps. The most prominent change was consolidating our bus runs and reestablishing bus stops. During good economic times, we moved away from the old fashioned bus stop – that had to change. We do not have the luxury of continuing to provide door-to-door bus service for our students; it would be fiscally irresponsible and a waste of taxpayer money.

Since implementing the changes in our transportation program, we have had numerous complaints and concerns, all of which we have addressed. Where the concerns were justified, we made adjustments - we did not, and will not, go back to door-to-door service unless it is the only way to address a safety issue. I want to thank the vast majority of our parents who understand and support our decision to cut excess spending in this area. By doing so, we will now be better prepared for the difficult budget choices the future will hold.

As part of the next step of precautions, I have directed the business department to freeze our budget. That means we will only purchase what we absolutely need, and I will personally decide on any request to spend money. I am working closely with our principals, directors and teacher leaders to figure out other ways to save money, as well. One area we are exploring, in partnership with Sullivan County government, is an energy consortium as a way to lower our electric bills.

We will be working with our other vendors and members of the community to further put us in a stronger position to weather the financial impact of what is heading our way. Rest assured, though times may get tough we will get through this if we work together.

Please be sure to contact me if you have any questions, concerns, ideas or suggestions. As always, my door is open.

Winter Coat Drive at Rutherford Elementary School - Donations Needed

Coat donations for children and adults are being accepted at KLR. Volunteers will sell the coats for \$1 each from 5:30 to 8 p.m. (during parent/teacher conferences) on Wednesday, Nov. 19 and Friday, Nov. 21 in the school cafeteria. All proceeds will go to the Federation for the Homeless. Call Maureen O'Meara at 794-4240, ext. 30218.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Sullivan County "Celebrity" Dinner Friday, November 7, 6 p.m. at Mr. Willy's Restaurant in Monticello

This event will feature a family-style dinner served by Sullivan County "celebrities" such as local radio personalities, politicians, law enforcement and school district personnel (including Monticello Schools Superintendent Dr. Patrick Michel) and a comedy performance by Ava Levy. \$40 per person. RSVP to Elizabeth Rowley at 361-2222 or erowley@bgcorange.org. All proceeds will go to the Boys & Girls Clubs' Sullivan County youth programs.

School Closings & Delays

What you need to know

As winter swiftly approaches, so does the possible need for snow days, delays and early dismissals. The following is the updated information you will need to stay informed. This information is also available on the district web site at www.monticelloschools.net/Emergencyclosings.htm.

All school closings and delays will be posted at the top of the district homepage.

Members of the School News Notifier (SNN) service will receive the information directly via e-mail (*anyone can sign-up for this free service on the district homepage – it takes less than 5 minutes*).

Closing and delay information can also be accessed by calling the Monticello Schools Closing Hotline at 845-796-5006 for a current recorded message.

The following radio stations are notified with a closing/delay message: WALL, WVOS, WJFF, WSUL, WELV, WDNH, WGYN, WPDH, WHUD and Thunder 102. WRRN-TV and Fox 5 television stations are also notified.

Early dismissals and the cancellation of after-school activities due to inclement weather will be posted at the top of the district homepage and will be sent via SNN.

Inclement weather and dangerous roads can affect the school day - the decision to delay the opening of school, dismiss early or close school for the day due to weather conditions is never an easy one. **Our priority is always the safety of the children.**

Any decision to delay opening, dismiss early or close must begin early. Our transportation supervisors arrive at the bus garage by 3:30 a.m. After consulting weather reports and checking road conditions, the transportation director consults with the highway departments for additional road information. The superintendent is consulted and any decision to delay or close must be made no later than 5:45 a.m. If there is a delayed opening but weather conditions continue to be a problem, the district must determine whether to close by 7:45 a.m. Decisions to delay opening by one or two hours, dismiss early or close are not taken lightly. We want the children of the district to have uninterrupted and continuous instruction.

information continued in box to the right...

Important Dates

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4:

- County-wide Conference Day - NO SCHOOL
- Election Day

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5:

- Duggan Elementary School Health Screenings

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6:

- Duggan Elementary School Health Screenings
- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m., Cooke

FRIDAY - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7-8:

- RJK Middle School Musical, 7:30 p.m., auditorium

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11:

- Veterans Day - NO SCHOOL

WEDNESDAY - THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12-13:

- NY State Social Studies Tests - Grade 5

FRIDAY - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14-15:

- Area All-State Music Festival

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20:

- Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m., Duggan

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21:

- Superintendent's Conference Day - NO SCHOOL
- Interact Tricky Tray, 6:30 p.m., MHS gym

THURSDAY - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27-28:

- Thanksgiving Day Holiday - NO SCHOOL

...Closing & Delay information continued

We are sensitive to the inconvenience to parents who must make arrangements for their children if school is delayed, dismissed early or closed, but safety must take precedence over all other considerations.

Delayed openings mean all schedules will be delayed by either one or two hours. Therefore, bus pickups will be approximately one or two hours later than the scheduled time. If parents are concerned with the conditions of the roads in their neighborhood, they are advised to use their own judgment in making the decision about sending their children to school on that day.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the school closing procedures, please call Superintendent of Schools Dr. Patrick Michel at 794-7700, ext. 70910.

Please know that we sincerely appreciate your cooperation and support in our efforts to guard the safety of all our students.