



Monthly Bulletin

September 2009

Dr. Patrick Michel
Superintendent of Schools

www.monticelloschools.net

From the desk of the Superintendent: Welcome Back!

Welcome back to another great year in the Monticello Central School District. We have worked very hard over the summer to ensure that the programs we offer are providing our students with everything they need to be successful. Teachers, administrators and support staff have worked together to make our buildings clean, safe and stocked with supplies for the new school year. We are continuing to evaluate and adjust our curriculum so that it challenges the minds of our children and prepares them for competition in the global community. One of our main goals is to increase our graduation rate.

Our elementary school administrators and teachers continue their training and implementation of the International Baccalaureate program. It is with great pleasure that we announce the removal of the RJK Middle School from all the state lists for poor academic performance. We can now focus on improving our programs system-wide. Monticello High School is still in the process of restructuring and is making great progress. The College in the Classroom program had a very successful first year. We will be working closely with Syracuse University to further enhance this program and support students who want to take these challenging courses.

Unfortunately, on the economic front, there continues to be hardships and concerns for the future. Newspaper, radio and TV news coverage has been awash with reports of deepening budget deficits and the potential for serious cuts in government support. We continue to receive very unsettling news from New York State concerning the possibility of mid-year cuts in state aid. If this monetary shortfall occurs, it could force us to cut programming in our music, sports and extra curricular programs. Although we successfully beat back the State's attempt to make mid-year cuts during the last school year by intensely advocating with our state representatives, this year's deficit may make it virtually impossible for our representatives to save us this time.

Every year, we strive to manage our finances cautiously with the goal to have unexpended funds at the end of the budget cycle. This allows us to help lower property taxes. We have been very successful doing this over the past three years. We are proud to say that in many of our municipalities homeowners have seen a reduction in their tax bills in at least one of those three years. Since our administration began, tax increases in general have been the lowest in 20 years.

The Board of Education typically votes to give the unexpended funds back to the community to reduce the tax levy. Due to the pending mid-year cuts, this simple decision has now become more complex. The Board has decided to put part of the money towards lowering taxes and hold the other part in reserve to protect our student programs if the state follows through with its threat to reduce our aid.

We know times are tough and that every penny counts. We must look ahead and prepare for the worst case scenario - remembering that the preservation of these programs is essential for the success of our children. For the past three years, our tax rate has been lower than what we predicted in our budget documents - this year will be no exception. We believe this is the responsible, fiscally prudent approach to dealing with this situation and we are grateful for the continued support from our community.

If you need further clarification on this issue or have any other questions, please do not hesitate to call. I wish you all a great school year.

Enhancing the Supportive Learning Environment (SLE) in our schools

In June 2009, the district's SLE team completed a survey of parents, teachers and students to get input on what improvements to the school community could make it a better place for learning. Those results are posted on the district web site at www.monticelloschools.net. Next, the SLE team will be hosting a Community Forum to discuss the survey results and create a plan of action to implement change. All community members are invited and welcome to be a part of this event on Tuesday, Sept. 22, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

QuickCLIPS

Important Information about Health Screenings from the School Nurses

The New York State Education Department requires that parents provide a physical exam report for all new students and for the following grades: K, 2, 4, 7 and 10. Please submit physical exam reports to your child's health office by November 1, 2009. If a physical exam report has not been received by this date, your child will be scheduled for a school physical.

The New York State Education Department requests that parents also provide a dental certificate for students in those same grades (K, 2, 4, 7, and 10).

The New York State mandated health screenings are in the process of being completed in the Monticello School District. The date for student health screenings are indicated on the school calendar. Parents or guardians will be notified by mail if a student's screening results do not meet the New York State guidelines. Please make sure your current mailing address is on file at your child's school. Please contact your child's School Nurse if you have any questions.

Important health forms and information including Permission to Administer Medication, Self-Administration Medication Release Form and the Self-Directed Field Trip Release Form are now available on the district web site at www.monticelloschools.net.

Support sought for a worthy cause

Gift basket raffle tickets to benefit the American Cancer Society's Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk are available for \$1. The *Basket of Hope* includes a water bottle, travel mug, socks and a variety of gift certificates donated by area businesses. The raffle will be drawn on Friday, October 2. For more information, to buy a ticket or to make a donation, please call Kim Rock at the RJK Middle School at 796-3058, ext. 20966.

Important Dates

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16:

- Duggan Open House
- Chase PTO meeting, 7 p.m.
- KLR/Cooke PTA meeting, 7 p.m. at Cooke

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17:

- Board of Education meeting

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22:

- Cooke Picture Day

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23:

- Chase Open House, 7 p.m.
- KLR Open House, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24:

- RJK Open House, 6:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25:

- KLR Picture Day

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28:

- Yom Kippur - NO SCHOOL

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29:

- RJK Health Screenings

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30:

- RJK Health Screenings
- Cooke Open House, 6 p.m.

Boys & Girls Club Day for Kids, Saturday, 9/12, 11 a.m. at DeHoyos Park, Hay Street, Monticello

This free, fun-filled family event will include music, games, sports and food. For more info, call 794-8080, ext. 176.

FYI: Grades 3-8 Test Dates to be Released

The New York State Education Department has changed the testing dates for the 2009-2010 school year. Because of this, they are not listed in the district calendar.

Once the new dates are finalized for Monticello Schools, they will be printed in future publications and posted on the district web site at www.monticelloschools.net.

Music in Monticello does it again!

For the third consecutive year, Monticello Schools' music department has been recognized as being one of the top 100 Best Communities for Music Education in the country.

This honor will be acknowledged at the September 17 Board of Education meeting and will include musical performances by various student groups. All are welcome to attend. For more details, call 794-8840, ext. 10993.