



YOUR SCHOOLS

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Sweet Home Central School District

May 2008 Your Schools - The Newsletter for the Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District

2008-2009 BUDGET ISSUE

At A Glance...

District Vote
May 20, 2008

What You'll be Voting on...

• \$62,599,511 District Budget

• **Proposition #1:** Authorize spending of \$442,000 for the purchase of six (6) passenger buses.

• Elect one (1) Board of Education member to a five (5) year term. Debbie Adams, Irene A. Bailey and Scott M. Johnson are seeking election. Meet the candidates on page 5 of this edition of *Your Schools*.

Annual District Vote

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

12 noon - 9pm

Sweet Home High School

Norman C. Vergils

Community Center

Board of Education Adopts 2008-09 Budget...

At its April 8 voting meeting, the Sweet Home Board of Education voted to adopt the 2008-09 budget. The \$62,599,511 budget represents an increase of 3.79% over the previous year. In addition to the budget vote, residents will be voting on one additional proposition. District residents will vote to authorize the spending of \$442,000 for six (6) buses. The budget increase represents a tax levy increase of 1.74 percent over the current year.



District officials expect the district to benefit from a projected 1 percent increase in property tax assessments and with the passage of the legislative budget on April 10, to receive an additional \$200,000 in BOCES aid that was not initially funded in the governor's proposal. Under this scenario, the average tax bill for an Amherst home assessed at \$100,000 with the STAR exemption would decrease \$8.40 from the current year. A similar home in the Town of Tonawanda under the same scenario would see a tax bill increase of \$12.20.

Voters will also elect one (1) Board of Education member to a five (5) year term. The term of Scott M. Johnson expires June 30, 2008. Candidates for the Board of Education include Debbie Adams, Irene A. Bailey and Scott M. Johnson.

District residents will be able to vote on **Tuesday, May 20** from noon to 9:00pm in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center of Sweet Home High School, 1901 Sweet Home Road in Amherst.

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WHERE TO VOTE

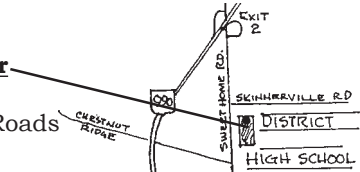
Voting on the 2008-09 Budget will take place between the hours of 12 noon and 9pm on **Tuesday, May 20** in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center of Sweet Home High School, 1901 Sweet Home Road in Amherst. The Vergils Center is on the north end of the building located adjacent to District Offices and on the corner of Sweet Home and Skinnersville Roads.

Norman C. Vergils Community Center

1901 Sweet Home Road

Corner of Sweet Home & Skinnersville Roads

Enter Door #6



A Message from the Superintendent of Schools...



Superintendent of Schools
Geoffrey M. Hicks

2008-09 Budget

The Board of Education adopted the 2008-2009 budget on April 8th after many hours of analysis, deliberation, and revision. A detailed explanation of the proposed budget appears in a special section of this newsletter.

School budget adoption is one of the most demanding jobs a board faces. The choices are difficult, and in the end it boils down to maintaining a balance between protecting the core programs of a school district and respecting the impact of local property tax increases on the community. The balance is a delicate one, which requires the Board to continually revisit the mission of our school district; ensuring that all students meet or exceed standards and are adequately prepared for the next level.

The approved budget for the 2008-2009 school year is \$62.6 million, an increase of \$2.3 million, or 3.79% over last year. The predominant expenditure increases are in the areas of utilities, fuel gas, and employee benefit costs, including salary, pension and health insurance. I believe the budget-to-budget increase is fiscally responsible. It represents a figure that is close to the cost of living contingency level, and is lower than most other increases over the past decade. More importantly, the increase will allow us to maintain the core academic and extracurricular programs in the district that our community has come to expect.

The good news on the revenue side of the budget is that state aid to Sweet Home has been increased for the 2008-2009 school year. Our local legislators, Senator Mary Lou Rath, Assemblyman Jim Hayes, and Assemblyman Robin Schimminger approved a state budget that allocates close to \$1 million of additional state aid dollars to Sweet Home. The increased state aid plus additional sales tax revenue will allow us to keep the tax levy increase at only 1.74%, the lowest level since the 2000-2001 budget year.

Based on information from the Town of Amherst Assessor, we anticipate that the assessed value of commercial property on the Amherst side of the district will rise between 1-2%. That translates to an overall **decrease** in the estimated tax rate for Amherst homeowners, dropping the rate slightly under 1% or approximately 11 cents per thousand. The average Amherst homeowner should see their taxes drop at least \$8.50 next year. Residents on the Town of Tonawanda side of the district will have a small increase in the tax rate of approximately 1.2% due to the state equalization formula. The budget will maintain Sweet Home's status as the lowest homeowner tax rate in Erie County.

One of the critical variables in the construction of next year's budget is the enrollment trend in our district. The declining pattern we have seen over the past five years at the elementary buildings is now showing at the middle school and high school as well. Enrollment has an effect on staffing, and there are two proposed reductions in teaching positions at the middle school next year in the areas of enrichment and special education. The proposed budget maintains staffing levels at the elementary schools and the high school.

There will be two other items decided by voters on Tuesday, May 20, 2008. The traditional proposition to purchase six buses is on the ballot as is one seat for the Board of Education. Please note that we have permanently moved the location of the vote to the Normal Vergils Community Center at Sweet Home High School, which should make parking and accessibility easier.

2008-09 BASIC BUDGET

2008-2009 BUDGET INCREASE..... 3.79%

DISTRICT BUDGET VOTE • TUESDAY, MAY 20 SWEET HOME HIGH SCHOOL • NOON - 9PM



Karen A. Barton



Douglas J. Galli



Marianne Jasen



Scott M. Johnson



Joe Miranda



Carol A. Nowak



Dirk D. Rabenold

A message from the Board of Education....

Building a school budget in a time of economic uncertainty is a complex task. Work on the 2008-2009 budget began last November with administrative and departmental meetings. The Board of Education tackled the first draft of the budget in early January and refined the document over the course of Saturday meetings during January and February. The School Board officially adopted the budget that is detailed in this newsletter on April 8, 2008.

There are many difficult choices in drafting a budget. In the end it boils down to maintaining a balance between protecting the core programs of the school district and respecting the impact of local property tax increases on you, the residents of the Sweet Home community.

The good news is that for the third year in a row, the New York State Legislature has approved a budget that allows Sweet Home to know the precise amount of state aid revenue prior to the time our budget is put up for vote. The Governor and the Legislature made education funding a priority in the state budget, and school districts across the state, including Sweet Home, saw critical increases in state aid.

As has been the case over the past seven years, significant challenges exist for the district with regard to expenditures. In that six-year span, the consumer price index has raised an average of 2.5% per year, health insurance premiums have increased an average of 12-15% per year, natural gas and fuel gas costs have increased over 25% annually and the school district's contribution to the New York State Retirement System has increased over 50% per year. While the past two years have seen significant increases in general purpose state aid, the previous five years had either minimal increases or in some cases decreases. Less state aid has traditionally meant budget cuts and a larger tax levy. Over the past two years the Board has approved applying a considerable portion of the state aid increase to reduce the overall tax levy. As a result, the tax levy increase will be at 1.74%, the lowest such increase in the past eight years.

The Board of Education focused on two guiding principles as it deliberated on the 2008-2009 budget. First and foremost was the charge of protecting the core academic and extracurricular programs of Sweet Home, the essential elements that define the district and make it one of the best in Western New York. The other guiding principal was upholding the school board's fiduciary responsibility of sustaining fiscal accountability by efficiently and effectively expending tax dollars. The Board engaged in serious conversations about tax increases, program reductions, school effectiveness, and improved efficiency. There was spirited debate about fiscal responsibility and academic achievement.

The proposed budget will fully fund all core programs. Class sizes will remain at an average of 20 or less in the elementary schools. The proposed budget eliminates two teaching positions at the middle school in the areas of special education and enrichment, and adds two teacher aide positions at the elementary buildings to be used for math intervention. The budget also adds an additional cleaner at the middle school due to the increased footprint as a result of the recent building project.

We believe the adopted budget is a fiscally responsible one. The budget-to-budget increase is 3.79%, close to the contingency level, which is set at 120% of the cost of living. The adopted budget should translate into a tax rate decrease for Amherst residents. Town of Tonawanda residents will see a slight increase in taxes of approximately \$12 on the average home due to the lowering of the equalization rate by the Office of Real Property. The Board is confident that Sweet Home will maintain its status as the lowest full value tax rate for all Erie County homeowners.

The Board of Education also understands the importance of maintaining the level of transportation service and safety expected by our community. The adopted budget includes a proposition to replace six buses that have accumulated high mileage after 12-13 years of use. We strongly support the proposition for the purchase of replacement buses.

Please review the details of the budget presented on the next couple of pages. There are charts and graphs that visually represent a summary of the major budget areas. The budget vote will be held on May 20, 2008 at the Normal Vergils Community Center at Sweet Home High School. Voting times are from noon to 9:00 PM.

Sweet Home Central Schools

Tax Bill on average home 1991-92 to 2008-09 (2008-09 estimated)

TOWN OF AMHERST				
AVERAGE HOME ASSESSED AT \$100,000				
	Tax Rate	Assessment	Tax Bill	Increase or Decrease
1991-92	\$13.91	\$72,000	\$1,002	
1992-93	\$14.58	\$72,000	\$1,050	\$48
1993-94	\$14.96	\$72,000	\$1,077	\$27
1994-95	\$14.98	\$72,000	\$1,079	\$1
1995-96	\$15.46	\$72,000	\$1,113	\$35
1996-97	\$16.12	\$72,000	\$1,161	\$48
1997-98	\$16.45	\$72,000	\$1,184	\$24
1998-99	\$16.69	\$72,000	\$1,202	\$17
1999-00*	\$16.75	\$72,000	\$1,085	(\$116)
2000-01*	\$12.11	\$100,000	\$969	(\$117)
2001-02*	\$12.38	\$100,000	\$867	(\$102)
2002-03*	\$12.70	\$100,000	\$889	\$22
2003-04*	\$13.13	\$100,000	\$919	\$30
2004-05*	\$13.82	\$100,000	\$967	\$48
2005-06*	\$14.01	\$100,000	\$977	\$9
2006-07*	\$13.74	\$100,000	\$958	(\$19)
2007-08*	\$14.11	\$100,000	\$984	\$26
2008-09*	\$14.00-\$14.17	\$100,000	\$979	(\$8)-\$4
			Ave. Yearly Decrease	(\$1)

*STAR program is in effect Amherst to Full Value in 2000-01

*This fall, the State estimates STAR rebate checks of \$249 per household with incomes of \$90,000 or less.

TOWN OF TONAWANDA				
AVERAGE HOME ASSESSED AT \$52,500				
	Tax Rate	Assessment	Tax Bill	Increase or Decrease
1991-92	\$16.20	\$55,000	\$891	
1992-93	\$15.32	\$55,000	\$843	(\$48)
1993-94	\$15.59	\$55,000	\$857	\$15
1994-95	\$16.19	\$55,000	\$890	\$33
1995-96	\$16.57	\$55,000	\$911	\$21
1996-97	\$17.28	\$55,000	\$950	\$39
1997-98	\$17.68	\$55,000	\$972	\$22
1998-99	\$18.16	\$55,000	\$999	\$26
1999-00*	\$18.07	\$55,000	\$973	(\$126)
2000-01*	\$17.68	\$55,000	\$723	(\$150)
2001-02*	\$17.49	\$55,000	\$592	(\$131)
2002-03*	\$19.76	\$55,000	\$708	\$116
2003-04*	\$20.47	\$55,000	\$734	\$26
2004-05*	\$22.54	\$55,000	\$827	\$94
2005-06*	\$23.94	\$55,000	\$879	\$51
2006-07*	\$24.91	\$52,500	\$872	(\$6)
2007-08*	\$24.57	\$52,500	\$881	\$9
2008-09*	\$24.91-\$25.23	\$52,500	\$893-\$905	\$12-\$24
			Ave. Yearly Decrease	(\$1)

*STAR program is in effect

*This fall, the State estimates STAR rebate checks of \$249 per household with incomes of \$90,000 or less.

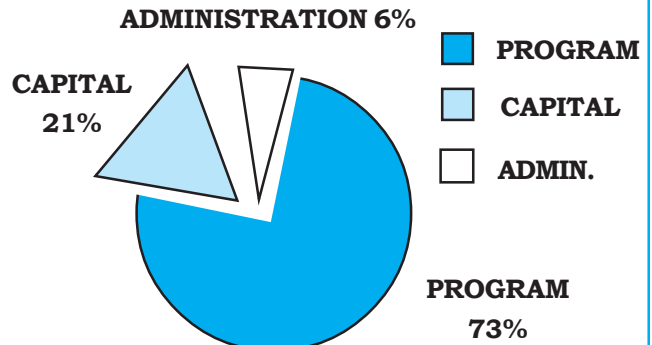
Last Year's Budget Vote Results...

Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District **approved** the 2007-2008 district budget, Tuesday, May 15, by a vote of 701 "yes" to 197 "no". Of the 898 voters, 78% voted to pass the budget.

Voters also approved Proposition No. 1 to spend \$428,100 to purchase six (6) buses by a vote of 653 "yes" to 224 "no" and Proposition #2 spending \$3.6M of New York State Excel Aid on tax neutral renovations and security improvements to five of the six district buildings by a vote of 666 "yes" to 209 "no".

In the school board election, Marianne Jasen, Douglas J. Galli and Scott M. Johnson won election receiving 592, 565 and 531 votes respectively. Jasen and Galli were elected to five (5) year terms which will expire on June 30, 2012. Johnson was elected to a one (1) year term expiring June 30, 2008.

2008-09 Budget Categories...



Tax Bills with Equalization Rates...

Assuming a \$100,000 Full Home with Basic STAR

The Sweet Home School District and its residents benefit from a strong commercial and residential tax base. In addition to a strong tax base, Sweet Home homeowners realize further tax reductions through a lower tax rate called a homestead tax rate. Sweet Home's application of this concept, known as homesteading serves as the model for successful tax differentiation programs across the State. These factors, combined with strong fiscal management by the Board of Education allow the District to provide a first rate education for the lowest cost in Western New York. With a change in the Equalization Rate in Town Tonawanda, it is expected to deliver a tax rate increase between 0% and 1%. The impact on an average home is displayed to the right.

	Amherst 2007-08	Amherst 2008-09	Tonawanda 2007-08	Tonawanda 2008-09
Taxable Home	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$52,500	\$52,500
NYS Basic STAR	-30,000	-30,000	-16,620	-16,620
Tax Rate / Est. Rate	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$35,880	\$35,880
	x\$14.11	x\$13.99	x\$24.57	x\$24.91
Actual / Est. Tax Bill	\$987.70	\$979.30	\$881.57	\$893.77
Est. Change in Tax Bill		-\$8.40		\$12.20
Estimated % Change		-0.85%		1.27%

The State Legislature and Governor are proposing rebate checks of \$249 added to STAR savings of over \$400.



Sweet Home Board of Education Candidates...

District residents will elect one (1) member to the Board of Education on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 at the Annual Budget Vote. The term of Scott M. Johnson expires June 30, 2008. District residents can vote between the hours of 12 noon and 9pm on Tuesday, May 20 in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center of Sweet Home High School.

DEBBIE ADAMS

As a long time resident of Sweet Home I would be proud to represent you as a Sweet Home School Board member. I believe in our administrators, our teachers, our students and our families. For the past 10 years I have been very active in our district as PTA president, room parent, committee member of PBIS and CDEP, just to name a few. In 2002 I was a recipient of the Donna Simon award. I was chairperson for the Middle School Theme Tray auction for several years, the Ice cream social following the variety shows, the Jazz Band dinners at the middle school, and the taste of Sweet Home. My goal was to create an atmosphere where families would feel welcome and more involved at school functions. I have also been asked to sit on several interviewing committees including those of middle school principals and our superintendent. Besides being involved on the school level I have volunteered in several community activities including our church, the Willow Ridge Civic Assoc., and scouting.



My husband Andrew and I have 4 boys, 3 of which are still attending the high school and middle school. I am self-employed, being the owner of Advanced Custom Embroidery for more than 10 years. My experience in retail business has taught me to be able to work well with people in regard to customer service, employees, and vendors. I am directly responsible for obtaining, designing, creating and producing customer orders, placing orders, maintaining inventory, and account receivables and payables, all in a timely manner. My experiences at school, in the community and in business have more than prepared me to work as a team player on our school board.

I believe that all children are entitled to a quality education and I would like to ensure that all of our children continue to receive that quality of education at Sweet Home. I know that I have the experience that will enable me to be a contributing member of the Sweet Home School Board.

IRENE A. BAILEY

I have been an active member of UAW Local 846 for the past 15 years. I hold the appointed position of Chairperson of both the Women's Committee and the Civil and Human Rights Committee. My duties in the UAW have afforded me the opportunity to attend several intensive, weeklong leadership conferences at the Walter and May Ruther Family and Education Facility in Black Lake, Michigan. I am an active member of the Working Families Party. I am also a member of the CLUW, and NAACP Buffalo Branch. In 1993 I received a BS in Finance from Canisius College. In 2005 I completed all requirements for the Advanced Certificate of Labor Studies from the Cornell ilr program. I serve as the President of the Buffalo Labor Studies Student Association for this program. I also sit on the Cornell's Labor Advisory Board. In 2006 I entered UB and began to study for a Master's Degree in Global Gender Studies. I have successfully completed four courses and am working on a fifth. Through all these learning experiences, I have learned people need a voice. I have had a desire to make a difference for the working people and now I feel a need to make a difference in the education of our young people. I would like to be a voice for you, our children, and our future.



SCOTT M. JOHNSON

I'm Scott M. Johnson, and I would like to continue to serve you on the Sweet Home Schools Board of Education. I and my wife, Bonnie Jan Johnson, are the proud parents of two children in the Sweet Home Schools, and have lived on Patricia Drive in Tonawanda for the past 20 years.

In my two years on the board, I have been very active and working hard to make myself a better board member. I have completed all eight of the NYS "School Board Institute" classes. I am a member of the audit committee and have completed all of the State mandated training for Fiscal Responsibility along with two other classes on school finances. In addition, I participated in the State Legislative Issues Conference where I visited our State elected officials, to make sure they know our needs, and that Sweet Home gets its' fair share of the budget pie. I have spent several days visiting our schools, and sitting in on classes to learn about the day to day activities.

I care deeply about the educational needs of our children. The past six years I have served on the district's CDEP Team, along with the Professional Learning Community Team at Glendale. In these roles, I have seen and helped our teachers and administrators make great strides in their efforts to make all students into Lifelong learners.

I think my job as the Information Technology Manager for NYSDOT, gives me a unique perspective to bring to board discussions. My leadership positions in several local organizations, like PTA, allow me to reach out to a diverse audience to gather information on educational issues. In closing, I think I have gained valuable insight and experience, which I would like to continue to put to good use representing you and our children.



Budget At A Glance...

The following budget information has been modified to comply with the Budget Reform Legislation of 1997. Under this legislation, the budget must be presented in three (3) parts:

Administration, Instructional Program, Capital

ADMINISTRATION

<u>BUDGETED 2007-08</u> \$4,257,525	<u>PROPOSED 2008-09</u> \$4,357,755
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Covers the Board of Education and Offices of Superintendent, Business & Finance, Personnel, Pupil Personnel, Public Information, Curriculum, Building Principals and Staff Development.

Major areas of expense included in this section of the budget are salaries for administrators, principals, board secretaries, treasurer, voting, contractual salaries and all related clerical/support staff. Includes all auditing services, tax collection fees, legal services, BOCES cooperative services, district computer services and staff development.

Includes printing and publishing, property and liability insurance, memberships, special assessments and BOCES administrative/building rental charges and administrative bank charges.

Includes all fringe benefits for above employees.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

<u>BUDGETED 2007-08</u> \$43,626,747	<u>PROPOSED 2008-09</u> \$45,592,276
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Includes salaries of teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, psychologists, social worker, coaches, therapists, teachers' aides, system engineer, computer technicians, census workers, chaperones and related clerical/support staff.

Includes teaching supplies, equipment repair contracts, contractual services, postage, textbooks, library books and materials, tuition paid to other districts, BOCES services (includes vocational and special education), district computer services, staff development, math/science and enrichment programs, community services and expenses for summer school programs.

Also includes transportation expenses including salaries, bus parts, gas, tires, insurance, utilities, supplies and tools, contractual expenses, equipment and contractual transportation.

Includes all fringe benefits for above employees.

CAPITAL

<u>BUDGETED 2007-08</u> \$12,427,435	<u>PROPOSED 2008-09</u> \$12,649,480
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Includes buildings and grounds salaries, equipment, vehicles, utilities, repairs, rentals, contracts and supplies for all the custodial, grounds, and maintenance of all district buildings.

Includes judgments and claims and refund of prior year property taxes due to reassessments and/or town clerical errors.

Includes debt service principal and interest and interfund transfers for existing capital projects.

Includes all fringe benefits for above employees.

TOTAL BASIC BUDGET

<u>BUDGETED 2007-08</u> \$60,311,707	<u>PROPOSED 2008-09</u> \$62,599,511
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PURCHASE OF BUSES (PROPOSITION #1)

<u>BUDGETED 2007-08</u> \$428,100	<u>PROPOSED 2008-09</u> \$442,000
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GRAND TOTAL BUDGET

<u>BUDGETED 2007-08</u> \$60,739,807	<u>PROPOSED 2008-09</u> \$63,041,511
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2008-09 VOTING PROPOSITIONS

Proposition #1

The Board is asking for a Yes/No vote on the following:

The purpose of purchasing six (6) buses for a total of \$442,000. The tax rates for the purchase of these vehicles represents a cost savings from the 2007-2008 bus purchase tax vote.

PROPOSITION RESIDENTIAL TAX RATES: (per \$1,000 assessed valuation)

	Actual <u>2007-08</u>	Projected <u>2008-09</u>
Amherst	.19	.16
Tonawanda	.34	.29



SUMMARY OF REVENUES

DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED	BUDGETED
	2007-08	2008-09
Real Property Tax Levy	\$30,099,791	\$30,622,388
State Aid	15,567,460	16,980,000
State Bldg. Aid-Prior Reconstruction Projects	1,326,752	1,287,304
State Bldg. Aid-BOCES-Dexter Project	461,959	461,959
State Bldg. Aid-New Construction Project	2,056,327	2,089,571
State Building Aid-New Reconstruction Project	1,450,000	1,450,000
Sales Tax	2,975,000	3,050,000
State Aid-BOCES	843,000	1,132,871
BOCES Aid Construction Project	58,418	58,418
BOCES-Rental Dexter	520,000	545,000
Interest	300,000	250,000
In-Lieu of Taxes	1,725,000	1,725,000
Tuition-Foster & Other Districts	125,000	125,000
Tuition-Chapter 721 IRA Reimbursement	205,000	160,000
Other Receipts	350,000	375,000
Reserve for Tax Reduction	25,000	50,000
Reserve for Employee Benefits Liability		100,000
Reserve for Workers Compensation	100,000	100,000
Reserve for Debt-Reconstruction Projects	350,000	250,000
Community Education Tuition & Fees	98,000	112,000
Fund Balance	1,675,000	1,675,000
TOTAL BASIC BUDGET	\$60,311,707	\$62,599,511
Proposition-Bus Replacement-Six (6) buses	\$428,100	\$442,000
TOTAL BUDGET	\$60,739,807	\$63,041,511

**SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES
ADMINISTRATION**

DESCRIPTION	BUDGETED	BUDGETED
	2007-08	2008-09
Board of Education	\$22,875	\$23,650
District Clerk	18,000	18,600
District Meeting	1,090	1,1150
Audit, Treas., Tax Collection & Legal	57,700	80,000
Central Administration/Finance/Human Resources		
Pupil Personnel/Public Information	1,050,450	1,060,800
Central Services-Printing & Publishing	250,000	244,000
Other Special Items	503,000	521,000
Curriculum, Supervision, Research & Planning	1,664,360	1,701,160
Employee Benefits-Administration	690,050	707,395
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	\$4,257,525	\$4,357,755

PROGRAM

	BUDGETED	BUDGETED
	2007-08	2008-09
Instructional-Day School	\$25,409,213	\$26,595,527
Special Education	5,437,715	5,786,585
Summer School	155,550	155,850
Transportation	3,075,025	3,231,250
Community Service	116,000	120,500
Interfund Transfers/Special Aid Fund,		
Special Education Summer School	39,000	42,000
Employee Benefits-Program	9,394,244	9,660,564
TOTAL PROGRAM	\$43,626,747	\$45,592,276

CAPITAL

	BUDGETED	BUDGETED
	2007-08	2008-09
Operation & Maintenance of Plant	\$4,764,450	\$4,965,400
Debt Service: Principal	3,928,000	4,081,000
Interest	2,933,851	2,751,942
Employee Benefits-Capital	801,134	851,138
TOTAL CAPITAL	\$12,427,435	\$12,649,480
BASIC BUDGET	\$60,311,707	\$62,599,511
Proposition-Bus Replacement		
Six (6) Buses	\$428,100	\$442,000
TOTAL BUDGET	\$60,739,807	\$63,041,511



DISTRICT BUDGET VOTE • TUESDAY, MAY 20

SWEET HOME HIGH SCHOOL • NOON - 9PM

TO VOTE YOU MUST:

- * Provide Proof of Residency
- * Be a resident of the district for at least 30 days
- * Be at least 18 years old
- * Be a U.S. citizen

YOU NEED NOT:

- * Be a registered voter
- * Be a homeowner

PROOF OF RESIDENCY REQUIRED TO VOTE:

All eligible voters will need to provide proof of residency in order to cast their ballots at the Budget Vote on Tuesday, May 20, 2008. According to Chapter 775 of the Laws of New York, voters must present one form of proof which testifies to their legal address.

- * Board of Elections Card
- * Post-Marked Mail
- * Driver's License
- * Rental/lease receipt
- * Non-Driver Identification Card
- * Utility Bill

ABSENTEE BALLOTS:

The Sweet Home Central School District allows for the use of Absentee Ballots at all district votes and elections.

- 1) Request an application by calling 250-1400 or writing the District Clerk's Office, 1901 Sweet Home Road by Tuesday, May 13 if it is to be mailed; on or before May 20 if it is to be picked up.
- 2) Return your application to the district office by Tuesday, May 20, 2008 if the ballot is to be picked up by the voter.
- 3) Complete your ballot and return it by 4:00pm on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 to the District Clerk's Office.

Any questions regarding voting policy should be directed to the District Clerk's Office at 250-1400 between 8:00am and 4:00pm.

New STAR Savings for Sweet Home Residents...

The proposed State Budget includes a new Middle Class STAR program that provides additional benefits to taxpayers on a sliding scale based on income. The benefit will be provided through a rebate check coming this fall and is in addition to the Basic STAR benefit which reduces the homeowner's property tax bill. If you remember a State rebate check was sent to your home last fall just before the November elections. The new program will be phased in over the next 3 years. Last year, the maximum Middle Class STAR rebate was for incomes at or below \$90,000 for Sweet Home property owners and residents. This year, the maximum rebate will be equal to 60% of the Basic STAR exemption or approximately \$249. A percentage benefit of the \$249 will be provided on a sliding scale for homeowners with incomes up to \$250,000. The Department of Taxation and Finance will administer the rebate program. **Basic STAR recipients will need to apply to the State Department of Taxation and Finance online or via mail in order to receive the rebate checks.** More information will be forth coming.

A Closer Look at a Contingency Budget...

OVERVIEW- A contingency budget could be put in place if the Board adopted budget were defeated in the voting referendum on May 20, 2008. If the budget were defeated, the Board of Education would have two options. They could adopt a contingent budget, which would fall under the State established budget cap of 3.36%, or the Board could present a revised budget to the voters a second time. If this second budget were to fail, the Board must adopt a contingent budget.

WHAT IS A CONTINGENT BUDGET? - A contingent budget is a spending plan that contains the necessary expenditures required to operate and maintain the school and its educational program. This budget must preserve the property of the district and assure the health and safety of all staff and students. Non-contingent items are eliminated from the school budget and only items necessary are to remain. These non-contingent expenses to be removed are the purchase of student supplies, the community use of building and grounds and certain equipment not necessary for the program or safety.

In projecting the 2008-09 contingency budget, reductions in staff in addition to removing non-contingent items would be necessary. An estimated total of \$446,000 would need to be taken from the spending plan in non-contingent items, as well as additional budget cuts in staffing plans to produce a budget that would fall under the state established contingent cap. The funding for field trips, modified sports, summer school and Community Education would be reduced if the budget were not to pass. These reductions would not have a significant impact on the tax rate as a decrease of less than 1 cent per thousand would be seen. Translated into tax dollars, a contingent budget would see a tax bill that is just pennies less than the adopted budget.

DISTRICT BUDGET VOTE • TUESDAY, MAY 20

SWEET HOME HIGH SCHOOL • NOON - 9PM





YOUR SCHOOLS

www.sweethomeschools.com

Sweet Home Central School District

May 2008 Your Schools - The Newsletter for the Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District

Baumann Named Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Planning

At its voting meeting on April 8, the Sweet Home Central School District Board of Education appointed Michael J. Baumann to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Planning effective July 1, 2008. Baumann will succeed Craig W. Allwes following his retirement June 30, 2008.

Baumann comes to Sweet Home from the Frontier Central School District, where he has been principal of Frontier High School since 2002. Prior to that, he was principal at Maryvale High School from 2000 to 2002. He was also an assistant principal at Sweet Home High School from 1998 to 2000. Mr. Baumann was a school counselor at West Seneca West Senior High School from 1989 to 1998.



Michael J. Baumann

Baumann holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Canisius College and earned two master's degrees from Canisius College: Master of Science in Education, Educational Administration and Supervision and Master of Science in Education, school counselor. Mr. Baumann completed his administration certification in 1996 at Canisius College.

Varsity Cheerleaders Win National Grand Championship

The Sweet Home Varsity Cheerleaders recently represented their school very well at the 2008 Athletic Championships April 5 and 6 in Chicago, Illinois. The team made up of two freshmen, seven sophomores, seven juniors and seven seniors won first place in the Large High School Varsity Division and National Grand Champions of the High School and Recreational Divisions, outscoring 12 teams from around the country. The team entered the final day of the competition with a slight lead and thanks to their strongest performance of the season went on to win the championship. The girls are coached by Laura Voigt and Kristen Bartkowski.



*The 2008 National Grand Champion
Sweet Home Varsity Cheerleaders*

Congratulations to Our Scholar Athletes

Four Sweet Home High School students were recognized as an All-Western New York Scholar Athlete. **Andrew Hopkins, Aaron Klein, Jill Nasisi** and **Brian Barnas** will be presented certificates of achievement prior to a future Board of Education meeting. In order to be selected to the Scholar Athlete team, student athletes must be a senior, have an overall grade point average of 90 or above for six semesters and be a starter or important reserve on their respective sports teams. Congratulations to Andrew, Aaron, Jill and Brian for their outstanding achievement.

Central Registration Information...

Kindergarten: If you have a child that will be 5 years old by December 1, 2008, you need to register them for Kindergarten. If you started the registration process and are missing some documents, please remember that your child is not registered until you have submitted all the documents needed. If you have not attended the Sweet Home Universal Pre-K program, your child will need to be screened. Summer screening is scheduled for August.

Transferring from another school district: A registration packet can be picked up at The Office of Central Registration, located within our Family Support Center at 1901 Sweet Home Road or we can mail it to you. You will need the following required documentation for registering a new student.

• **Two proofs of residency.** Education law states that a child must attend school at the district in which his/her custodial parent or court-appointed legal guardian resides. Your proof of residency includes: 1.) A copy of a current lease or proof of home ownership (mortgage statement, school/county/town tax bill, homeowners insurance). 2.) A utility, phone (landline only) or cable bill.**

- Photo ID of the parent/guardian registering the child. Please note that a driver's license is for identification only and not considered a proof of residency.
- Proof of Custody if the child is not residing with both biological parents.
- Child's original birth certificate
- Passport and current VISA if child is not a US citizen
- Updated immunization records
- Documentation of a physical within the past year
- For new High School students, if possible, the student's transcript from the school last attended.

****If you do not have a current lease but are on a month to month agreement with your landlord,** you must provide the following: 1.) A notarized letter from the landlord acknowledging you and your child(ren) are residing at that address, 2.) Proof of homeownership for the property from the landlord AND 3.) A utility bill in your name for that address.

****If you are living with someone who rents or owns a home in the district,** you must provide the following: 1.) A notarized letter from the landlord acknowledging you and your child(ren) are residing at that address, 2.) Proof of homeownership for the property from the landlord 3.) If a rental property, then the current lease of the renter AND 4.) A bank statement, paycheck, car insurance bill or social services statement with your name and that address on it.

Moving within the school district? You must formally change your address with the Central Registration Office. Parents cannot notify the student's building verbally or in writing about a change of address. Parents must come to our office to complete a change of address form and provide the two required proofs of residency. This form can be mailed or faxed but then you must have the form notarized and provide us with copies of your proofs of residency. This must be done as soon as your move takes effect to avoid interruption in mailing important documents or your child's schooling.

Remember to call 250-1600 with any questions or to set up an appointment.



UNIVERSAL PRE-K

Universal Pre-K (UPK) services are being made available once again this year to parents of eligible children in the Sweet Home Central School District. In order to be eligible, children must turn four years old no later than December 1, 2008. The UPK program can help ensure that each child will be successful in their later school experiences.

If your child is eligible to attend UPK in the fall, please call 250-1414 to request an application. UPK applications are also available on the district website at www.sweethomeschools.com.

You must make an appointment with Central Registration (250-1600) to register and have a completed application.

REUNION INFORMATION

Sweet Home High School, Class of 1978, is planning a 30th Reunion on Saturday, August 2, 2008, to be held at the Holiday Inn on Niagara Falls, Blvd., in Amherst.

The Reunion Committee is looking for all classmate contact information to send out details of the reunion weekend which includes a Friday Night Happy Hour and Family Picnic on Sunday.

If you are a alumni, or can help us, please e-mail:
SWEETHOME1978@aol.com.



HARKNESS STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to high school students **Dillon Multerer** and **Jeremy Miller** who were named Students of the Month at Harkness for the month of March. Dillon was described by his teacher as someone whose skills are an asset to the class. He is in the television and sound production program at Harkness. Jeremy's effort was described as tops. He is in the building trades program at Harkness. Congratulations Dillon and Jeremy!



Dillon Multerer



Jeremy Miller

ALUM GIVEN SUNY CHANCELLOR AWARD

Rob Maxwell (2004) was recently given a SUNY Chancellor Award. Rob is a starter on the SUNY Brockport baseball team. The Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence was created 11 years ago to recognize students who have best demonstrated, and been recognized for, the integration of academic excellence with accomplishments in the areas of leadership, athletics, community service, creative and performing arts or career achievement. The average Grade Point Average (GPA) for all recipients this year is 3.75.

99 Participate in All-County Music Festivals...

99 Sweet Home students recently participated in All-County music festivals. This is a tremendous honor and the district wishes to congratulate all on their accomplishments.

Elementary All-County: Courtney Dobson, Melanie Izard, Christian Peth, Owen Collins, Matthew Penberthy, Sierra Quagliano, Chelsea Hackett, Pedro Pereira, Samantha Monkelbaan, Eliza Lefebvre, Nevanna Harvey, Alexa Zak, Thomas Bartlett, Alyssa Strom, Stephen Gagnon, Joshua Conlan, Melissa Goodman, Charles Plummer, Devon Kroll, Omari Dickerson, Katie Hatzipetros, Taylor Falzone, Emily Heim, Aileen Doyle, Joseph Gerlach, Julia Stoll, Matthew Mogensen and Elizabeth Hudson

Junior High All-County: Sydney Bluman, Sarah Shallowhorn, Emily Hornung, Samantha Lorich, Alexxis Butera, Toni Wright, Amairanis Martinez, Lauren Rao, Brianna Burton, Kierra Donadelle, Rachel Polanski, Marie James, Christina Heim, Kailey McDonald, Cristina Lauria, Jennifer Panaro, Myriah Ruiz, Cory Shelton, Kyle Merrifield, Connor Miller, Stephanie Izard, Nicolas Sciandra, Alexander Paluch, Brian Rosiek, Alexandria Watts, Bridget Burch, Tiffany Kalisz, Sarah Fiordalsio, Chelsea-Sue Richner, Loretta Connelly, Yibbelle Caminero, Lindsey McGee, Evan Volden, Anthony Martin, John Romans, Kody Boos, Lakshay Gosain, Robert Giomundo, Justin Texido, Sherron Jones II, Timothy Lock, Gary Gellerson III, Chad Hirsch, Samuel Lunetta Jr., Justin Sullivan, Joseph Titenok, Elias Kotzambasis, Orvis Collins, Maxamillian Lewis, Dante English, Joshua DePoint, Jennifer Strom, Jaclyn Healy, Grace Pan, ElizabethAnne Jasen, Bethany Wolf, Sarah Lewandowski and Laura Ciminelli

Senior High All-County: Miho Connelly, Juliana Ruiz, Kelly Franclemont, Amanda Skinner, Andrea Gollhardt, Bethany Rarick, Ashley Gryta, Michelle Notaro, Amanda Trowbridge, Oleg Faynshteyn, Jeremy Oaks, Emily Weinheimer and Hayden Denesha

13 Set to Retire from Sweet Home...

With the end of the school year in June, Sweet Home will say goodbye to 13 employees who are retiring. Of the 13, two are teachers, two administrators, and nine support staff. To honor these men and women, the 42nd Annual Sweet Home Retirement/Recognition Reception will be held Wednesday, May 21 at Classics V Restaurant, 2425 Niagara Falls Boulevard, from 4-6pm. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at the main offices of all Sweet Home schools or by calling 250-1414. The reception will also be a time to recognize the Teri Gamin Heart Award winner. This year's retirees are:

Craig W. Allwes
Asst. Supt. for Human Resources & Planning
Irene Amico
Middle School Food Service

Dr. Nancy A. Biernat
Willow Ridge Enrichment Teacher
Richard M. Brewer
Middle School Reading Teacher
Helen C. Dubill
Sr. Clerk Typist District Offices
Donna M. Henning
Middle School Health Assistant
Kenneth J. Koch
Supervisor Buildings & Grounds
Teresa A. Johnson
Maplemere Nurse
Donna K. Lipp
Bus Driver
Jeanette R. Masso
Willow Ridge Aide
John S. Memminger
Bus Aide
Rose A. Rinallo
Bus Aide
Venera R. Sperduti
Bus Driver

Sweet Home Students Continue to Achieve in the Classroom...

The New York State School Report Cards for the 2006-07 school year have yet to be released to school districts as of this writing. Throughout the past school year, thanks to the work of our building principals, we have been able to track students' results and have asked our administrators and teachers to present and analyze this achievement data as well as their plans for improvement at Board of Education meetings.



Our results continue to demonstrate that Sweet Home students are achieving very well in relation to other students in New York State. The achievement data presented in this issue focuses on English Language Arts and Mathematics at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Elementary and middle school data highlight achievement on last year's New York State assessments. High school data focuses upon the achievement of student "cohorts" with best performance on assessments throughout four years as well as graduation rates. Please refer to the graphs on the next page as you read the following synopsis of student achievement at Sweet Home.

Our achievement data illustrates our students' continued success on state assessments; achievement surpassing that of students statewide. Sweet Home elementary school students continued to improve their achievement on the English Language Arts assessment. For the second consecutive year, more students achieved proficiency on the Grade Four assessment in 2007 than in any other prior year. In elementary mathematics, Sweet Home's students continued to perform at high levels and performance at every grade level demonstrated significant growth from the year prior.

Similarly, performance at the middle level demonstrates solid performance for our students. Sweet Home students continued to show strength with over 75% of all students demonstrating proficiency. Students in grade eight made gains over the prior year while sixth grade students outperformed their counterparts from the year prior by a whopping 11%. In the second year of assessment at all grade levels, Sweet Home Middle School students showed strong achievement gains compared to the 2006. Student proficiency rates for all students on the sixth and eighth grade assessments showed considerable progress increasing by 12% and 18% respectively. Moving forward, the performance of students with disabilities as well as all students in English Language Arts at the Middle School continues to be a focus for improvement.

High School Graduation Rates for the 2003 Cohort are again included in the district achievement report. This data represents the percentage of students that entered high school in September of 2003 that had earned a high school diploma by this past August. The Sweet Home Central School District graduation rate remained very strong with rates of 91%. Of the Sweet Home students entering grade nine in 2003, 56% were successful in earning a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation - indicative of success on eight NYS Regents examinations in addition to local course credit requirements. This rate - a significant indicator of the ability to complete a post-secondary program - is one of the highest in Western New York.

Sweet Home High School data portray strong student learning in specific subject areas as well. The district report card indicates that 90% of the students in the 2003 cohort were successful on the Comprehensive English Examination after four years of instruction. Also impressive is the continued high performance of students performing at the mastery level on this assessment - remaining at close to 50%. After four years of instruction in mathematics at the high school level, successful completion of a Regents examination in mathematics remained strong a rate of 92% with performance at the mastery level remaining above 40%.

Heritage Heights Teacher Recognized as Teacher of the Week...

Congratulations to Mrs. Susan Lubick on recently being named as NY Lottery Educator of the Week by WGRZ-TV Channel 2. Mrs. Lubick teaches third grade at Heritage Heights Elementary. She was nominated for the award and selected from a number of area educators.

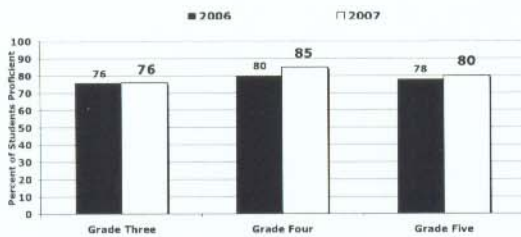


SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

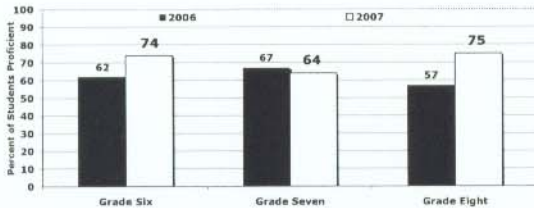


2006-07 SCHOOL REPORT CARD INFORMATION

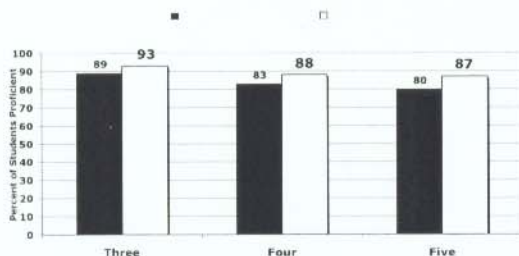
2006 New York State
English Language Arts Assessment:
Grades Three to Five



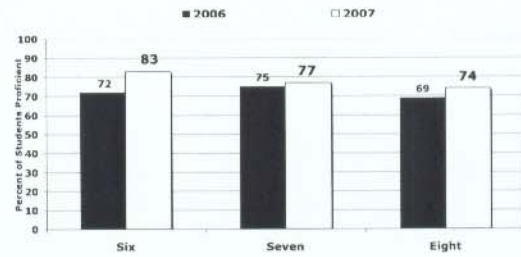
2006 New York State
English Language Arts Assessment:
Grades Six to Eight



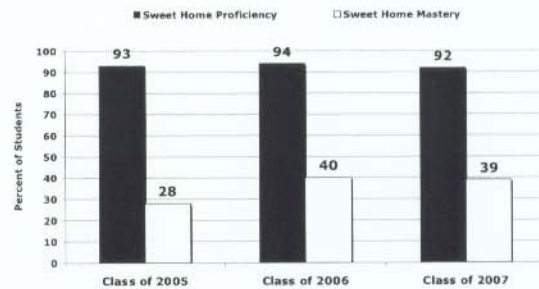
2006 New York State Mathematics Assessment:
Grades Three to Five



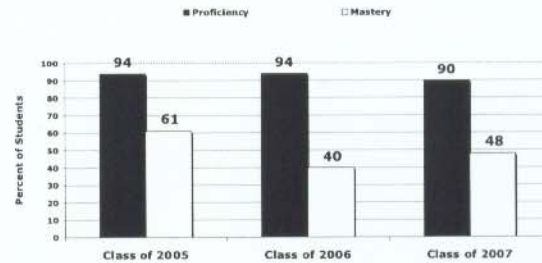
2006 New York State Mathematics Assessment:
Grades Six to Eight



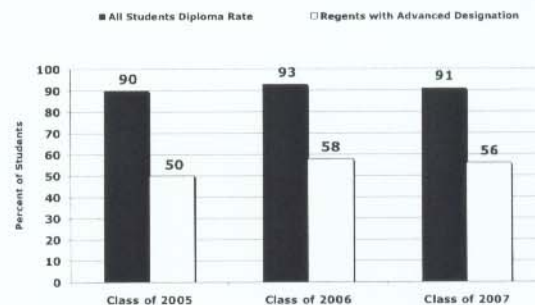
Sweet Home High School: Mathematics A Regents



Sweet Home High School:
ELA Regents Cohort Performance Class of 2005-2007



Sweet Home High School: Cohort Graduation Rate



An Update from The Office of Instruction...



*Asst. Superintendent for
Instruction
Anthony J. Day*

Everywhere we turn, we see and hear evidence of the power of technology to transform our society and our world. Over the past ten years, numerous innovations and the rise of the Internet have fundamentally altered the way individuals' work and communicate- not just in the United States but also all over the world. The forces of globalization are also changing the skill set our kids need to be successful as they take their place in the world. We should not assume that our children's future success is guaranteed when this changing global landscape has created enormous economic shifts and now allows hundreds of thousands of other children around the globe to enter the marketplace and compete for jobs that were perceived as "American."

These changes create a need for our school district to think more deeply about our real role and mission. Just a few years ago, our high school used to build goals around the number of students that graduated from high school. It seemed like a reasonable goal - one worthy of shooting for. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that simply graduating from high school will not nearly be enough to allow each student to take advantage of all of life's opportunities. The more meaningful accomplishment for today's high school graduates is to continue

and complete some form of formal schooling after high school. This is really the ticket to success for our children today.

This reality changes the way we look at our graduates and our mission. Receiving a high school diploma needs to mean more than passing high school courses and earning at least a 65 on five New York State Regents exams. Once the diploma is secured, those accomplishments will mean little in reality. More importantly, will our students know a body of knowledge well enough to transfer and use it in their lives after high school? Can they think - both critically and creatively? Can they analyze a situation or problem into its parts? Can they devise a new solution or idea that might better meet a need?

Perhaps more importantly, what mental habits will our graduates exhibit after they leave our schools? So much of school traditionally focuses around "knowing the answer." As the pace of global change continues to quicken creating new ideas and opportunities, a more important question might be "What do I do when I don't know?" Here is where we hope the kids' training in our K-12 setting would have helped build habits of mind such as persisting in the face of difficulty, posing questions and problems, thinking interdependently and flexibly, and creating and imagining.

We need to evolve our thinking about education and schools to stop thinking K-12 and instead consider our role as part of a K-16 organization. This spring, our high school staff has begun to discuss these issues and their implications for schooling. They have begun to consider that locally, we may need to consider what else we may want our kids to achieve before graduating - beyond expectations set by New York State. Tests will remain important parts of our program but instead of focusing on the minimum five needed to graduate, we should begin expecting our kids to pass the additional exams in Science, Math and Foreign Language that study after study indicate are highly correlated with completing post-secondary education.

We are also considering what actual work our students should create that would be demonstrate readiness as well. Increasingly, high school success will require completing complex tasks that require the construction of a product or performance will increasingly become important components of our program. These tasks would be tied to important "big ideas" of a discipline and require students to think critically and creatively as they consider new ways to apply their understanding. Such tasks may manifest themselves in a "senior exhibition" project that serves as a "capstone" of their high school career. A number of high schools around the country - including some in New York State - have initiated such a concept as a way of certifying that their kids are "ready" in a way that merely passing courses and exams cannot. At Sweet Home, current discussions around the future of our honors program include such a possibility - the same could be true for all our graduates as we continue our efforts.

Such thinking will require us to look beyond the high school to our entire organization. Do we ask kids to apply their knowledge to create rigorous products indicative of thought? Do we teach kids to think? What habits are we reinforcing? Consider how much the world has changed in just the last ten years? What will it look like in ten more? Then go to a second grade classroom and look around. These children will graduate in ten years. Will they be ready? This is the essential question for our schools and our community.

Heritage Heights Musical...



Heritage Heights' tribute to Margaret Read McDonald

Heritage Heights Elementary School recently paid tribute to author Margaret Read MacDonald in song by setting excerpts from ***Mabela the Clever*** and ***Tuck Me in Tales*** to music and song. The students performed the show three times on April 1 and 2 and sang in several different languages. The students will perform their musical rendition for MacDonald when she visits the school in May. Congratulations to Mrs. Imiolo-Schriver and her students for another job well done!

Maplemere Book Exchange...



Mrs. Scully's class works on the book exchange.

Development of good reading skills and habits is important for the success of any elementary school student. To that end, students in Mrs. Scully's fifth grade class at Maplemere started a book exchange to allow students to take books home with them and read! The students collected over 2,000 new and gently used books and on March 24-26 every student at Maplemere went home with three 'new' books. Thank you Mrs. Scully and students for your hard work on this project!

Middle School Declamation Contest...



Middle School Declamation Contests were held March 26-28.

One of the highlights of the Middle School calendar every year is the annual Declamation Contests where students are judged how well they speak and perform publicly in front of their peers. Congratulations to sixth graders **Joe Sigurdson**, **Becky Jasen** and **Deja Karlovick**; seventh graders **Kyle Merrifield**, **Jill Daddario** and **Orvis Collins**; and eighth graders **Leyla Mamedova**, **Sarah Fiordaliso** and **Laura Ciminelli** for placing in this year's competition.

High School Commended Students...



(L to R): Katie Niblock, Principal Joleen Reinholz, Lauren West and Ebaa Abdelfadeel

Several high school students were recognized by the Board of Education for their accomplishments at the Board's March 11 meeting. **Katie Niblock** and **Lindsay Bender** were recognized for representing the Town of Amherst at the 2008 Youth Leadership Forum. **Ryan Wolf**, **Lauren West** and **Ebaa Abdelfadeel** were recognized for being named a Commended StudentS in the 2008 National Merit Scholarship Program. Congratulations to all of the students honored.

High School Band Plays in Battle of Bands...

High school student **Josh Fritz** and his band "**Amberwood**" was selected as one of only six high school rock bands to perform Thursday, April 21 at the HSBC Arena in Buffalo. Scotty Bowman has a hockey tournament for High School all-stars, and, in conjunction, Robbie Takak of "The Goo Goo Dolls" sponsors a battle of the bands. The bands played sets between periods of the two games that were played that night. The winner of this "battle" will be invited to play as a featured band at the "Music is Art" festival later this summer. As of this printing it was not known how Josh and his band fared, but congratulations to them for being a part of the "Battle of the Bands".



Middle Schoolers Take Part in Math Competition...

Some of our Sweet Home Middle School 7th grade students participated in the St. Joe's Collegiate Institute Mathematics Competition on Tuesday, April 1, 2008. Schools from all over the Western New York area partake in the competition. Contestants demonstrate higher-level thinking and problem solving skills by taking a challenging written test. Our Sweet Home students fared extraordinarily well in the contest, winning numerous individual and team awards. Trophies were awarded to the individual students below with parenthesis stating their accomplishment.



One of the Middle School winners at the St. Joe's Collegiate Institute Math Competition on Tuesday, April 1, 2008.

Sweet Home Team Gold won 1st Prize in the Team competition, while Team Blue took home 2nd place honors. Students on the Gold Team were **Kyle Merrifield** (Overall Grand Prize), **Richard Miller** (1st Place), **Lisa Gagnon** (honorable mention), **Brendan Doyle**, **Te-yu (Tony) Chen**, and **Robert Puchalski**. Team Blue consisted of **Monica Thurston** (2nd Place), **Andrew Ciminelli** (3rd Place), **Anne Coughlin** (honorable mention), **Jacquelyn Stoebe** (honorable mention), **Megan Gugliuzza**, and **Carter Mann**. **Charlie Loweecey** (honorable mention), **Cian Harrigan**, **Richard Plesh** (honorable mention), and **Connor Miller** also participated as individuals in the contest for Sweet Home. All of these students should be commended for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to academic excellence.

Two of our seventh grade math teachers, Julie Ceccato and Katina Mescall, should be commended for their efforts. These teachers dedicated their time and energy, sufficiently preparing students for this worthwhile event and chaperoning their students to the competition

CODE OF CONDUCT & ATTENDANCE POLICY

In accordance with Project SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act), the districtwide Code of Conduct and Attendance Policy must be reviewed on an annual basis. We would appreciate your comments and suggestions into this process. Please visit the district website at www.sweethomeschools.com to view each and direct any suggestions to Craig Allwes, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Planning at 250-1417 or via email at callwes@shs.k12.ny.us. Copies of the Code of Conduct and Attendance Policy are also available in any of the district schools' main offices.

SUMMER DRIVER EDUCATION INFORMATION

Attention sophomores, juniors and seniors! Driver Education information can now be picked up through Community Education in the District Office. Students will need to pick up a parent permission slip and information sheet describing what they will need for registration. Juniors and seniors will register on Tuesday, May 27 and sophomores will register on Wednesday, May 28. **Both registrations will take place at 3:00pm in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center of Sweet Home High School.** Summer driver education will be from Wednesday, July 2 to Friday, August 15, 2008. The cost for Sweet Home resident students will be \$280. High school credit will not be applicable for this course. Please call Community Education for more information at 250-1423 or 250-1424.



McTeacher Night at McDonald's...



Maplemere faculty and staff took to the counter at the McDonald's restaurant on March 12 in support of ROMP (Rebuilding Our Maplemere Playground). They took orders, cooked, made French fries and even

cleaned up afterwards.

Not only did Maplemere set the record for a McTeacher Night at this location, it raised over \$700 for the hard work. Congratulations to Maplemere on a fun-filled evening.

Clowning Around at the Middle School...

Greg Smorol, Middle School Principal, was caught wearing a clown suit, the result of one of the promotional events at the Middle School Spring Bookfair, held April 9th and 10th at the Middle School Library. The event was called "Make the Principal Lose his Marbles" and with every purchase students moved closer to their goal. The students met their goal of purchasing books and as a result Mr. Smorol donned the clown suit on Friday, April 11.



Family Support Center News

BE PROACTIVE FOR A SAFE AND HAPPY SUMMER

Summer is almost here! For some parents of graduating seniors this means graduation parties and preparation for the departure of college-bound kids. For other parents, it is the start of a vacation filled with summer activities, camps, sports, trips or unstructured free time. Parents could use this opportunity as a teachable moment with their adolescents and young adults about the use of alcohol and other drugs.

Are you and your teen hosting a graduation or other summer party? The SAFEHOMES program provides some helpful hints to parents to make it a great and safe event for all your guests. The most important first step is to plan for everything:

- Decide on a guest list. Give your teen a maximum number to invite and set an age limit. Keep a copy of the guest list for your records.
- Set a party start and end time.
- Inform parents/guardians about the party and your expectations of guests- No alcohol or drugs!
- Have all teens dropped off and picked up by a responsible adult. If teens do drive, have them turn in keys to you to prevent leaving and returning to the party unnoticed and so you can monitor them when they leave.
- Stay at the party and supervise. Walk through the party frequently.
- Have all guests stay in the party location.
- Party should have ample lighting. Make it clear where the designated areas of the house are for party guests.
- Parents should provide supervision of all refreshments. Avoid punch or soft drinks in cups. Do not allow outside beverages.

It is illegal to purchase and/or serve alcoholic beverages to anyone under the age of 21. Remember that the homeowner or parent/guardian of the hosting teen may be held responsible if an underage party guests, as a result of alcohol use in their home:

- Gets into a fight and hurts someone or themselves
- Falls and hurts him/herself or someone else
- Sexually assaults someone
- Damages property
- Dies from drinking too much
- Injures someone or kills someone while driving after leaving the party

Though parents think that peer pressure is the #1 reason why kids drink or use drugs, 79% of teens say it is to get drunk or feel good, 67% say it is to forget problems, 47% say because there is nothing else to do. 66% say it is because others do it.

Health & Wellness Corner...



*Beverly Ann Shipe, SNT/P
District Nurse
Practitioner &
Health Teacher
250-1269*

Immunization Update: Tdap

For September 1, 2008 school entry: Students who are entering Grade 6 or Grade 7 or a comparable age level special education program on or after September 1, 2008 and who are 11 years of age or older must receive an immunization containing tetanus toxoids, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap).

If your child has received a Td, DT, or DTaP vaccination within the last two years, their Tdap vaccination should be deferred until a period of two years has elapsed. Ten-year-old students who are entering Grade 6 will not be required to receive a Tdap vaccine and will not be excluded from school, but must be immunized when they turn 11 years old.

Please contact your child's school nurse for further school entry info.

Save this Date! Fun! Fun! Fun! Friday-Saturday, May 23-24, 2008 Amherst Dusk to Dawn 12 Hour Relay Challenge

Teen participants and adult (>18 years of age) volunteers wanted! The Amherst Dusk to Dawn 12 Hour Relay Challenge is geared for ages 12 and up. Starting at 7 PM on Friday, May 23 until 7 AM on Saturday, May 24 at Sweet Home High School Outdoor Track. The event features continuous entertainment, food and fun, and health fair on Friday late afternoon. A "mini-Relay" is also offered from 7-10 PM for service clubs, groups and organizations. Get a team of 10-12 individuals together (cost is just \$30 per team member) or just come out and be part of the action! Contact Roseanne McCarthy at the Amherst Youth Board at 631-7215 for information. The Amherst Dusk to Dawn Relay Challenge is presented by the Amherst Youth Foundation in partnership with the Amherst Youth Board. [Photo gallery <http://www.amherst.ny.us/news/photogalleryout.asp?event=Amherst+All+Day+%2F+All+Night+Relay+Challenge&index=2>]

Free materials For Statewide Turnoff Week, April 21-27, 2008

Less Screen Time, More Physical Activity Will Lead to a Healthier Lifestyle. Free training and materials are available for the second annual statewide Turnoff Week in New York. Turnoff Week encourages New Yorkers to shut off television, DVDs, computers and video games and engage in physical activity instead.

Free "Power Down, Dream Big" organizer kits and posters are available, upon request and while supplies last. The kits are full of many examples of fun games and alternative activities, teacher and parent resources, and action steps people can take to coordinate events in their school, community, or home.' http://www.health.state.ny.us/press/releases/2008/2008-03-18_statewide_turnoff_week.htm

Children Fed Diet of Poor Nutrition on Saturday Morning Television

Nine out of ten food advertisements shown during Saturday morning children's television programming are for foods of poor nutritional quality, according to researchers at the Center for Science in the Public Interest and the University of Minnesota. During a sample of 27.5 hours of shows aimed at pre-school and elementary school-aged children, 91 percent of food ads were for foods or beverages high in fat, sodium or added sugars or were low in nutrients, according to the study. Forty-nine percent of the 4.08 hours of advertisements shown were for food (281 food ads out of 571 total). The sample, taken from a 2005 review by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, included major broadcast and cable networks that had Saturday morning programming.

The most commonly advertised food categories were ready-to-eat breakfast cereals and cereal bars (27 percent of all ads), restaurants (19 percent) and snack foods (18 percent). Of the 281 food ads, 59 percent were for products that exceeded criteria for added sugars, according to the study. About one in five foods advertised exceeded other guidelines, including total fat, saturated plus trans fat and sodium. The majority of advertised foods (84 percent) met the criteria for vitamins and minerals, often as a result of fortification. None of the 27 beverage ads met the study's nutrition standards.

The researchers conclude: "The findings indicate that the foods that food and nutrition professionals encourage children to eat more of, such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products and whole grains, are seldom encouraged in advertisements shown during children's Saturday morning television programming. Instead, most advertisements promote...foods high in

Health & Wellness Corner Continued...

fat, sugars or sodium, or low in nutrients.”

http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/media_16656_ENU_HTML.htm

Regular Walking May Cut Vascular Dementia Risk More Than 70%

A new study reported in the March 2008 Health & Nutrition Letter ‘has shown that regular, non-strenuous physical activity can substantially reduce the risk for vascular dementia, a slow progressive thief of memory and cognitive function similar to Alzheimer’s disease.’ Researchers found that easy-to-perform, moderate activities- such as walking, stair climbing and gardening- provided as much brain benefit as more rigorous, physically demanding activities.’

Activ8Kids! NYS School Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices Toolkit

The Activ8Kids! Program was launched in June 2005 to fight childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles among children. This program is a comprehensive approach to fighting the epidemic of childhood obesity that will serve as a model for the rest of the nation. The goal of Activ8Kids! is to instill in children before the age of eight a daily regimen that includes:

1. Consuming at least five (5) fruits and vegetables;
2. Engaging in at least one (1) hour of physical activity; and
3. Reducing screen time (TV and video games) to fewer than (2) two hours (5+1+2=8).

<http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/obesity/activ8kids/>

Health and Education Programs

Promoting academic achievement is one of the four fundamental outcomes of modern school health programs. Scientific reviews have documented that school health programs can have positive impacts on educational outcomes, as well as on health risk behaviors and health outcomes.

The *Healthy People 2010* objective calls upon the nation to increase high school completion rates to 90 percent because “dropping out of school is associated with delayed employment opportunities, poverty, and multiple social and health problems, including substance abuse, delinquency, intentional and unintentional injury, and unintended pregnancy.” Educational interventions, such as reduced class size, are associated with improved health outcomes, as well as improved educational outcomes.

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/default.htm>

Student Health and Academic Achievement

‘The academic success of America’s youth is strongly linked with their health. Health-related factors such as hunger, physical and emotional abuse, and chronic illness can lead to poor school performance. Health-risk behaviors such as substance use, violence, and physical inactivity are consistently linked to academic failure, and often affect students’ school attendance, grades, test scores, and ability to pay attention in class.

In turn, academic success is an excellent indicator for the overall well being of youth and a primary predictor and determinant of adult health outcomes. Leading national education organizations recognize the close relationship between health and education, as well as the need to embed health into the educational environment for all students.’

http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/index.htm

Fun and Educational Websites for Kids

PBS Kids

Site for children- games, music and coloring

Site for parents- Discover how TV, movies, ads and computers can shape your child’s development. Free preK-12 resources to support learning at home and at school.

<http://pbskids.org/>

Your District



High School administration met with graduating seniors as part of a Senior Forum on Tuesday, March 25 to discuss making the high school a better school for future students.



Above: Middle School teacher Deb Carlson talks with students about the school in Africa the Global Ambassadors adopted. Below: The Annual Jazz Festival was a huge success once again at the Middle School on March 27.



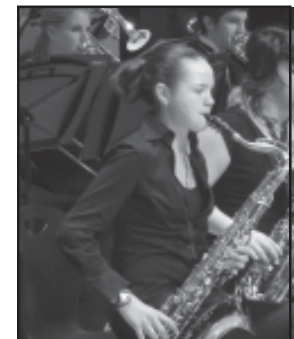
Parents and district administration man the registration table at Internet Safety Night on March 19 at the Middle School.



The Universal Pre-K classes at Willow Ridge Elementary proudly display their "Three Little Pigs" houses they created at the end of their reading unit in March.



Channel 4 meteorologist Mary Beth Wrobel visits Mrs. VanDeWater's second grade class at Maplemere to talk about the weather.



SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOLS OF AMHERST & TONAWANDA

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