



# YOUR SCHOOLS

www.sweethomeschools.com

## Sweet Home Central School District

May 2010 Your Schools - The Newsletter for the Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District

# 2010-11 BUDGET ISSUE

### At A Glance...

#### District Vote May 18, 2010

#### What You'll be Voting on...

- \$65,452,876 District Budget
- **Proposition #1:** Authorize spending of \$442,000 for the purchase of four (4) passenger buses and one (1) minivan.
- Elect two (2) Board of Education members to a five (5) year term. Debbie Adams, Michael Morrow and Carol Nowak are seeking election. Meet the candidates on page 5 of this edition of *Your Schools*.

#### Annual District Vote

Tuesday, May 18, 2010  
12 noon - 9pm  
Sweet Home High School  
**Norman C. Vergils  
Community Center**

### Board of Education Adopts 2010-11 Budget...

At its April 13 voting meeting, the Sweet Home Board of Education voted to adopt the 2010-11 budget. The \$65,452,876 budget represents an increase of 2.52% 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 four (4) buses and one (1) minivan. The budget increase represents a tax levy increase of 9.9 percent over the current year. With a \$2.3 million reduction in State Aid, the Board of Education decided to appropriate over \$2 million in reserves to help reduce the overall tax levy.

Under this scenario, the average tax bill for an Amherst home assessed at \$100,000 with the STAR exemption would increase \$68 from the current year. The increase would translate to a total annual tax bill of approximately \$878. A similar home in the Town of Tonawanda with the new town Equalization Rate of 48.50 would see a tax bill increase of \$20. The increase would translate to a total annual tax bill of \$875.

Voters will also elect two (2) Board of Education members to a five (5) year term. The terms of Karen A. Barton and Carol A. Nowak expire June 30, 2010. Debbie Adams, Michael Morrow and Carol Nowak are the candidates seeking election to the Sweet Home Board of Education.

District residents will be able to vote on **Tuesday, May 18** from noon to 9:00pm in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center of Sweet Home High School, 1901 Sweet Home Road in Amherst.

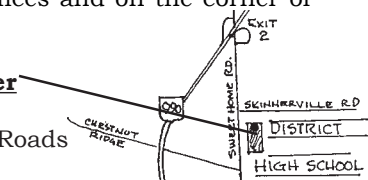
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### WHERE TO VOTE

Voting on the 2010-11 Budget will take place between the hours of 12 noon and 9pm on **Tuesday, May 18** 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*

### 2010-2011 Budget

The Board of Education adopted the 2010-2011 budget on April 13<sup>th</sup> 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 that requires the Board to continually revisit the mission of our school district: ensuring that all students meet or exceed academic standards and are adequately prepared for the next level.

The approved budget for the 2010-11 school year is \$65.9 million, an increase of \$1.6 million, or 2.5% over last year. The predominant expenditure increases are in the areas of salary and benefits. I believe the budget-to-budget increase is fiscally responsible and in tune with the financial crisis situation that currently exists in New York State and across the nation. The spending increase is the second lowest over the past 20 years, and it reflects a serious effort on the part of the Board of Education to reduce expenditures and seek efficiencies in all areas. The Board realized early in the budget process that holding down overall spending was absolutely necessary and that some targeted reductions must be made.

One of the major obstacles that had to be overcome in this year's budget process was the drastic reduction of state aid, which amounted to \$2.3 million. Our state is in an economic crisis and it is cutting back on school aid. Education spending amounts to 32% of the state budget, so it is unrealistic to believe that school aid would not be reduced in the current economic climate. Essentially, there are only two places where the school district can get revenue, the state or local property taxes. When one of those elements goes down, the other goes up. In order to mitigate the impact on taxes, the district engaged in a thoughtful and targeted process to reduce spending in areas that had the least impact on the educational program. In the final iteration of the budget, over \$2.8 million of spending reductions were made. Despite those reductions, we believe that the core academic and extracurricular programs that define our school district were preserved.

After making the spending reductions, the tax levy is proposed to increase by \$3.1 million, or 9.9%. While the percentage tax levy increase is higher than normal, the actual dollar impact on an average home in the district will range from \$60 - \$70. One reason the overall dollar impact is smaller than other school districts is the result of Sweet Home's tax rate, which is the lowest in Erie County, and will remain so.

There will be two other items decided by voters on Tuesday, May 18, 2010. The traditional proposition to purchase five buses is on the ballot as are two seats 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.

## 2010-11 BASIC BUDGET

**2010-2011 BUDGET INCREASE ..... 2.52%**

## CONCERT DATE CHANGE

Please be advised that the **Elementary Blue Band & Blue Orchestra Concert** originally scheduled for Tuesday, May 18 **will now take place on Monday, May 17 at 7pm in the High School Auditorium**. The **Glendale Chorus Concert** originally scheduled for Monday, May 17 **will now take place Tuesday, May 18 at 7pm in the High School Auditorium**. The concert was originally scheduled to take place at the Middle School.





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 2010-2011 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 beginning in January and ending in April. The School Board officially adopted the budget that is detailed in this newsletter on April 13, 2010.

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.

This has been an especially difficult year to construct a school budget. Our process always begins with examination of the Governor's proposed budget, which was presented in early January and contained news of an unprecedented reduction of \$2.3 million in state aid to Sweet Home, a 13.6% decrease. At that point the Board rolled up its sleeves and began the tough job of examining areas in the school budget that could be reduced. Three principles guided our work as we studied expenditure areas. First, we believe our charge is to protect the core academic and extracurricular programs, those elements that define our school district. We examined all areas with the idea of possibly reducing elements of a program, but taking care not to eliminate a whole program. Second, we believe as stewards of the public purse, we must be fiscally responsible and consider the impact of any tax increase on our community, especially in tough economic times. Finally, we strongly considered the judicious use of our reserve funds, money that we've placed into accounts to be utilized to offset critical financial situations.

The Board worked through three drafts of the budget, challenging the administration to reduce spending without significantly impacting programs. In the final draft, \$2.8 million of spending reductions were made. A total of 28 positions were cut from the budget, including 11 teachers, 12 teacher aides, 3 clerical, and 2 administrators. The elementary and middle school summer programs are eliminated in the budget and the district will only provide one late bus run at each of the schools.

The proposed budget will fully fund all core programs. Class sizes will remain at an average of 20 or less in the elementary schools. We appropriated over 2 million dollars of reserve funds in the 2010-11 budget which offsets the need for further cuts and reduced the overall tax levy.

We believe the adopted budget is a fiscally responsible one. The budget-to-budget increase is 2.5%, one of the lowest increases in over 20 years. The adopted budget will have a tax levy increase of 9.9%, which translates into approximately \$60-\$70 on an average home or approximately \$130 on an expensive home. The Board is confident that Sweet Home will maintain its status as the lowest full value tax rate for all Erie County homeowners.

The adopted budget includes a proposition to replace five 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 18, 2010 at the Normal Vergils Community Center, located at the north end of 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 2010-11 (2010-11 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*	\$13.97	\$100,000	\$978	(\$6)
2009-10*	\$11.57	\$100,000	\$810	(\$168)
2010-11*	\$12.54	\$100,000	\$878	\$68
			Ave. Yearly Decrease	(\$6)
			Amherst to Full Value in 2000-01	

\*STAR program is in effect  
\*Please note that the State has eliminated the \$250 STAR Rebate checks.

TOWN OF TONAWANDA				
AVERAGE HOME ASSESSED AT \$48,500				
	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	(\$26)
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*	\$25.02	\$51,500	\$902	\$21
2009-10*	\$23.72	\$51,500	\$855	(\$47)
2010-11*	\$25.78	\$48,500	\$875	\$20
			Ave. Yearly Decrease	(\$1)

\*STAR program is in effect  
\*Please note that the State has eliminated the \$250 STAR Rebate checks.

### Tax Bills with Equalization Rates... Assuming a \$100,000 Full Home with Basic STAR

<p>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. The impact on an average home is displayed to the right.</p>		<b>Amherst 2009-10</b>	<b>Amherst 2010-11</b>	<b>Tonawanda 2009-10</b>	<b>Tonawanda 2010-11</b>
	Taxable Home	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$51,500	\$48,500
	NYS Basic STAR	-30,000	-30,000	-15,450	-14,550
		\$70,000	\$70,000	\$36,050	\$33,950
	Tax Rate / Est. Rate	x\$11.57	x\$12.54	x\$23.72	x\$25.78
	<b>Actual / Est. Tax Bill</b>	<b>\$809.90</b>	<b>\$877.80</b>	<b>\$855.11</b>	<b>\$875.23</b>
	<b>Est. Change in Tax Bill</b>		<b>\$67.90</b>		<b>\$20.12</b>
	<b>Estimated % Change</b>		<b>8.38%</b>		<b>2.35%</b>

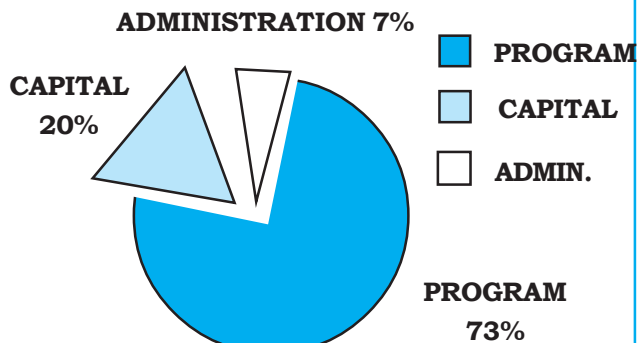
### Last Year's Budget Vote Results...

Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District **approved** the 2009-2010 district budget, Tuesday, May 19, 2009 by a vote of 410 "yes" to 133 "no". Of the 556 voters, 74% voted to pass the budget.

Voters also approved Proposition No. 1 to spend \$442,000 to purchase five (5) buses by a vote of 402 "yes" to 136 "no".

In the school board election, Dirk D. Rabenold won re-election receiving 458 votes. Mr. Rabenold ran unopposed. His term will expire June 30, 2014.

### 2010-11 Budget Categories...



## Sweet Home Board of Education Candidates...

District residents will elect two (2) members to the Board of Education on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 at the Annual Budget Vote. The terms of Karen A. Barton and Carol A. Nowak expire June 30, 2010. District residents can vote between the hours of 12 noon and 9pm on Tuesday, May 18 in the Norman C. Vergils Community Center of Sweet Home High School.

### DEBBIE ADAMS

I am Debbie Adams and I would like to serve as a member of the Sweet Home School board. My husband and I have lived in the Sweet Home district for over 18 years. We have 4 sons, 2 of which have graduated, and 2 which are attending the high school.



I feel that I have a great deal of knowledge regarding our district through the years of services as a volunteer. I have been involved in the schools and in our community at all levels of my children's education. My experience as an owner/operator of a retail business for over 30 years has taught me 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, maintaining inventory, account receivables and payables, all in a timely manner. I believe that 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.

To every decision which has to be made I will try to bring a sense of fairness and common sense. My goal is to do the best for the most. I believe that our district has an obligation to be as efficient as possible with limited education dollars, while making sure that our facilities are safe for our children. Every child should leave our schools and have the skills to succeed at the next level.

### MICHAEL F. MORROW

I was a member of the Sweet Home Board of Education from July 1997 to June 2007, and am seeking to become a member of the Board again.



As a resident of the school district for 37 years, I remain active with many school and community activities. I was honored with the Sweet Home PTA Council community service "Sid Oberacker Award", J.C. Penney Golden Service Award and the Erie County Association of School Board's "Laura Burns Advocacy for Children Award" for my involvement in school and community activities. I have also held various positions within the Parkview Community Club, Dexter Terrace PTA and High School PTSA. Presently, I serve as a committee member on the Sweet Home's Dollar for Scholars Chapter and the Amherst Youth Board for 6 years.

I am a 39-year employee of National Grid (formerly Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation), currently working as an Environmental Facilitator to manage all hazardous waste generated within Western New York. My wife, Karen, is employed by Avox Systems as a Quality Engineer. We have two children. My daughter, Rhoda, is an actuary for an insurance company in Albany and my son, Cory, is the band director at the Sweet Home High School. Both graduated from Sweet Home schools.

As a long-time resident, I believe my experience and continuous involvement with local youth groups, community and school activities have been an asset to learning and understanding the values of the community. The Sweet Home School District is facing enormously difficult challenges in this time of economic uncertainty. If elected, I will use my 10 years' experience as a Sweet Home School Board member to preserve our core educational programs within the current economic restraints. I am again asking for your support to represent you on the Sweet Home Board of Education.

### CAROL A. NOWAK

I am privileged and proud to have served this past decade on the Sweet Home Central Board of Education.



During that time, I've worked hard with my colleagues to ever-improve the excellence of our children's education; increase district-wide accountability for our students' achievement; meet costly and ever-increasing unfunded government mandates; develop and maintain a culture of trust and open, honest communication among all of the District's stakeholders; and meet the challenges of a changing Administration, changing community and tough economic times while taking most seriously the responsibility to efficiently manage our District's resources that are paid for with taxpayers' dollars. I am proud to have been part of the team that recruited our outstanding and now outgoing educational leader and look forward to providing continuity as we meet the critical and exciting challenge of selecting his successor. I am proud to be part of a Board that not only values but models the importance of education and welcomed the challenge to earn a Master of Boardmanship for exceeding 200 hours of training in the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective in that role. As a college professor, I bring to the table the perspective of higher education; as the president of an organizational consultant practice, I bring management skills; and as a fellow taxpayer, I bring trust in what is always a difficult and sometimes gut-wrenching budgeting process but the belief that there can be no better investment than in the lives of our children.

On a more personal note, I have lived in this District for nearly thirty years, am married to Bob Kaczorowski, and have two beautiful and amazing children - Abbey and John - both of whom are teachers and products of a Sweet Home education. I would greatly appreciate your support in the upcoming election.

# 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 2009-10</u>	<u>PROPOSED 2010-11</u>
\$4,467,424	\$4,604,270

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 2009-10</u>	<u>PROPOSED 2010-11</u>
\$46,444,555	\$47,958,146

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 2009-10</u>	<u>PROPOSED 2010-11</u>
\$12,930,078	\$12,890,460

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 2009-10</u>	<u>PROPOSED 2010-11</u>
\$63,842,057	\$65,452,876

### PURCHASE OF BUSES (PROPOSITION #1)

<u>BUDGETED 2009-10</u>	<u>PROPOSED 2010-11</u>
\$442,000	\$442,000

### GRAND TOTAL BUDGET

<u>BUDGETED 2009-10</u>	<u>PROPOSED 2010-11</u>
\$64,284,057	\$65,894,876

## 2010-11 VOTING PROPOSITIONS

### Proposition #1

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

The purpose of purchasing four (4) passenger busses and one (1) minivan for a total of \$442,000. The tax rates for the purchase of these vehicles are in line with the 2009-2010 bus purchase tax vote.

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

	<u>Actual</u> <u>2009-10</u>	<u>Projected</u> <u>2010-11</u>
Amherst	.18	.17
Tonawanda	.37	.33



## SUMMARY OF REVENUES

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2009-10</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2010-11</b>
Real Property Tax Levy	\$30,796,934	\$33,864,013
State Aid	16,980,000	14,893,740
State Bldg. Aid-Prior Reconstruction Projects	1,287,304	1,287,304
State Bldg. Aid-BOCES-Dexter Project	461,959	461,959
State Bldg. Aid-New Construction Project	2,089,571	2,089,571
State Building Aid-New Reconstruction Project	1,700,000	1,782,871
Sales Tax	3,050,000	3,000,000
State Aid-BOCES	1,102,871	1,020,000
BOCES Aid Construction Project	58,418	58,418
BOCES-Rental Dexter	545,000	520,000
Interest	200,000	200,000
In-Lieu of Taxes	1,700,000	1,600,000
Tuition-Foster & Other Districts	125,000	125,000
Tuition-Chapter 721 IRA Reimbursement	160,000	160,000
Other Receipts	375,000	375,000
Reserve for Tax Reduction	300,000	0
Retirement Contribution Reserve (ERS)	0	325,000
Reserve for Employee Benefits Liability	100,000	100,000
Reserve for Workers Compensation	500,000	750,000
Reserve for Debt-New Reconstruction Projects	250,000	250,000
Community Education Tuition & Fees	140,000	170,000
Fund Balance	<u>1,920,000</u>	<u>2,420,000</u>
<b>TOTAL BASIC BUDGET</b>	<b>\$63,842,057</b>	<b>\$65,452,876</b>
<b>Proposition-Bus Replacement-Six (6) buses</b>	<b><u>\$442,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$442,000</u></b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$64,284,057</b>	<b>\$65,894,876</b>

## SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES

### ADMINISTRATION

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2009-10</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2010-11</b>
Board of Education	\$23,650	\$23,650
District Clerk	19,050	19,050
District Meeting	1,150	1,150
Audit, Treas., Tax Collection & Legal	83,800	83,800
Central Administration/Finance/Human Resources		
Pupil Personnel/Public Information	1,090,800	1,071,800
Central Services-Printing & Publishing	244,000	209,000
Other Special Items	528,000	543,000
Curriculum, Supervision, Research & Planning	1,754,185	1,828,160
Employee Benefits-Administration	<u>722,789</u>	<u>824,660</u>
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>\$4,467,424</b>	<b>\$4,604,270</b>

### PROGRAM

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2009-10</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2010-11</b>
Instructional-Day School	\$26,968,922	\$27,313,718
Special Education	6,061,783	5,911,453
Summer School	113,890	67,320
Transportation	3,315,730	3,246,250
Community Service	140,000	135,800
Interfund Transfers/Special Aid Fund,		
Special Education Summer School	42,000	42,000
Employee Benefits-Program	<u>9,802,231</u>	<u>11,241,540</u>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$46,444,555</b>	<b>\$47,958,146</b>

### CAPITAL

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2009-10</b>	<b>BUDGETED 2010-11</b>
Operation & Maintenance of Plant	\$5,025,515	\$4,865,515
Debt Service: Principal	4,287,701	4,518,000
Interest	2,736,713	2,477,337
Employee Benefits-Capital	<u>880,148</u>	<u>1,029,608</u>
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL</b>	<b>\$12,930,078</b>	<b>\$12,890,460</b>
<b>BASIC BUDGET</b>	<b>\$63,842,057</b>	<b>\$65,452,876</b>
<b>Proposition-Bus Replacement</b>		
<b>Six (6) Buses</b>	<b><u>\$442,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$442,000</u></b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$64,284,057</b>	<b>\$65,894,876</b>



# DISTRICT BUDGET VOTE • TUESDAY, MAY 18

## 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 18, 2010. 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 11 if it is to be mailed; on or before May 18 if it is to be picked up.
- 2) Return your application to the district office by Tuesday, May 18, 2010 if the ballot is to be picked up by the voter.
- 3) Complete your ballot and return it by 4:00pm on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 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.

### A Closer Look at a Contingency 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.

**OVERVIEW**- A contingency budget could be put in place if the Board adopted budget were defeated in the voting referendum on May 18, 2010. 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 expected budget cap of 0%, 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.

The 2010-11 budget to budget spending increase is 2.52%, which is more than the CPI for 2009 of -.4%. If the Board adopted budget were to fail on Tuesday, May 18 the Board of Education would have to create a contingency budget and eliminate over \$1.6 million dollars from the proposed budget. This would severely impact the educational program at Sweet Home and would lead to major reductions districtwide such as the elimination of modified sports, field trips, summer school and Community Education.

### CONTINGENT BUDGET POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS

If the 2010-11 Budget were defeated in the voting referendum on Tuesday, May 18 and the Board of Education elected to adopt a contingent budget, the following items are potential reductions:

- Increased class size in all buildings
- Elimination of a Middle School team
- Elimination of Elementary enrichment program
- Elimination of Modified Sports program
- Reduction of elementary counselors
- Elimination of elementary math teacher aides
- Reduction of elective and advanced courses at High School
- Elimination of elementary music program





# YOUR SCHOOLS

www.sweethomeschools.com

Sweet Home Central School District

May 2010 Your Schools - The Newsletter for the Residents of the Sweet Home Central School District

## High School Takes Top Honor at Kenan Center Show

The Kenan Center in Lockport held its 25<sup>th</sup> Storrs All High Photo Show featuring the work of area high school students and Sweet Home High School won the prestigious **Best School Award**. Mrs. Kristen Piurek, art teacher, enters the school in the competition every year. More than 25 high schools throughout Western New York have work in the exhibit, which continues through May 9<sup>th</sup>. The awards were presented to the students on Sunday, April 11 at the Kenan Center.

In total, Sweet Home had 11 students exhibiting their work in the show. They included: **Tom Schaefer, Aleah Fierle, Matt Feifel, Kristen McCuen, Emily Decker, Gabe Rodregiez, Lauren Vinton, Bret Kriess, Taylor Kosha, Pam Koons and Amanda Maltbie.**

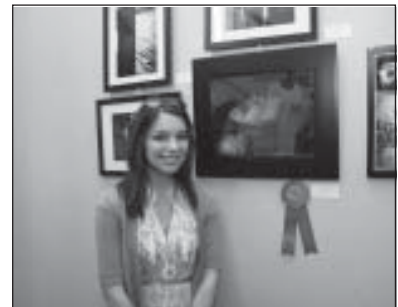
In addition to the Best School Award, four Sweet Home High students took home individual honors.

**Aleah Fierle** won Best Portrait Award for "Ophelia Wakens". Senior **Amanda Maltbie** won Best Architecture Award for "Lafayette Winter". Senior **Thomas Schaefer** won the Buffalo News NeXt Vision Award for Excellence for "Midnight Trip". Senior **Brett Kreiss** won a Merit Award for "A Day at the Dog Park".

The winning photographs of Aleah Fierle and Thomas Schaefer have been selected to be in the Albright Knox Art Gallery.

Congratulations to Mrs. Piurek and her students for being recognized at the Kenan Center Art Show!

Pictured are from top to bottom: Aleah Fierle, Amanda Maltbie and Thomas Schaefer.



## Dollars for Scholars Chicken BBQ Tuesday, May 18



Sweet Home Dollars for Scholars will hold a BW's Barbeque Chicken Dinner on **Tuesday, May 18 from 4-7pm** at Sweet Home High School. Tickets are \$8 for a chicken dinner including two salads and a roll with butter. The dinner is take-out only and walk-ups are welcome. Pre-sale dinner tickets are available by calling 250-1267. All proceeds will be used for scholarships for our graduating seniors. Please be sure to buy your tickets in support of Dollars for Scholars.

## Central Registration Information...

Sweet Home School District has a centralized registration department for all new students. We are located at 1901 Sweet Home Rd and the number is 250-1600. Our registration packet can be accessed via the web at [www.sweethomeschools.com/registration](http://www.sweethomeschools.com/registration).

### **Have you registered your child for Kindergarten?**

If you have a child that will turn 5 by December 1, 2010 and have not yet contacted the school district about registration, please do so as soon as possible.

### **Universal Pre-K Registration & Screening May 17, 19, 21 & 24, 2010**

If you have a child who will turn 4 by December 1, 2010 and have not yet received information about registering your child for the UPK program, please contact district office at 250-1414 to request a packet and schedule an appointment.

### **Moving?**

If you plan to move at the end of the school year, please make sure you contact Central Registration so that we can update our records and you will receive placement letters and/or schedules for the 2010-2011 school year. Please remember that if you move outside of the school district, your child must attend a school in the district you will be residing in. You should contact your child's school to transfer records.

## Family Support Center News...

### **Do you have a loved one struggling with addiction?**

There is a free and anonymous support group at BryLin Hospitals Outpatient office at 5225 Sheridan Dr, on Wednesdays from 5-6pm. This group is available for anyone ages 18 and up. No registration necessary.

### **Alateen and Alanon Meetings in Amherst/Tonawanda Area**

#### ***Alateen and Alanon \*\*Held at the same time***

- Wednesdays, 7:30pm, First United Methodist Church, N. Tonawanda, 65 Main St (at Tremont)
- Thursdays 7:30pm, Blessed Sacrament Church 263 Claremont Ave.

#### ***Alateen Only***

- Mondays, 7:30pm, Unitarian Church Williamsville, 6320 Main St (near Youngs)

#### ***Alanon Only***

- Mondays, 7:30pm, Kenmore Alliance Church, 175 Bonnett
- Tuesdays, 7:30pm, Tonawanda City Hall, 200 Niagara St.
- Wednesdays, 7:00pm, Trinity Lutheran Church, east Amherst, 8760 Transit Rd
- Fridays, 8pm, Brighton Community Church, 1225 Brighton Rd
- Fridays, 10am, Randall Baptist Church, Main St. and Youngs Rd, Williamsville
- Saturdays, 10am, Crossroads Lutheran Church, 4640 Main St. Amherst
- Saturdays, 10am, Tonawanda Church of Christ, Summit St. and Delaware, City of Tonawanda

### **Stress Reduction and Management Club for Town of Amherst Youth, grades 9-12**

Do you know a teen that could use a mid-week fun evening away from the rigors of homework? Are the pressures of school, family, friends wearing on your teen? Do you know a young person that has withdrawn due to life's pressures or who is struggling with managing stress?

### **Catholic Charities of Amherst is offering an exciting new youth program "The Oasis"**

It is part club, part support group, part Leadership development.

Beginning April 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm-8:30pm at 3392 Main Street. Call 839-4066 to register or for more information. The program is free and runs the first three Wednesdays of each month.





*Asst. Superintendent for  
Instruction  
Anthony J. Day*

## An Update from The Office of Instruction...

Last month, each district's NYS school report card was released for 2008-09. With its release comes a wealth of data related to student performance on a large number of tests developed by the State. During the past decade, the public has become highly attuned to these measures, as they become the basis of comparison and the accepted mechanisms by which we judge the worth of our schools. I would argue that there are other more important pieces of data that tell the story of our work. Almost daily, I have an opportunity to witness learning in action in classrooms around the district. Four vignettes from actual classrooms around the district highlight for me the data that best exemplifies what makes Sweet Home a special place for kids.

I visited a "writer's celebration" in a grade one classroom just before the April break. These children had each produced a number of pieces of original writing-poems, essays, research reports or narratives. Each boy or girl had a chance to read one piece of their work to all the adults gathered in the room. They then proudly showed their mom, dad, or grandparents their entire folder of work. The smiles on their faces demonstrated their sense of accomplishment and it was apparent in

their work how much each one had grown as writers.

Just around the hallway, I talked with a group of fourth graders who had recently participated in a live "chat" with a space scientist and a space architect from NASA. The kids had written questions in advance and, with other children from around the country, had listened to the scientists describe their work. They connected these ideas with those from stories they had read about pioneering women and prepared to write about them on their on-line "journal." Many of the kids were excited and eager to share their experiences with me.

Earlier in the week, I spent a few minutes examining some writing submitted by three middle school students. These were position essays written after reading multiple stories and articles about sports and competition. The students had to take and support a personal position about the role of sports in our society and how they influence people. Using their own ideas and citing evidence from the stories and articles, the kids worked hard to convince the reader that their position was justified. This was a great task for any seventh or eighth grade student- a challenging yet important form of writing. What made the work even more satisfying to me was the fact the authors were kids that normally struggle with literacy and were trying to close gaps in their skills. While others may never have felt them capable of such work, their teacher challenged and supported her students to persevere in creating their texts. While the final work was not perfect, the kids could take pride in completing a task that almost all their peers would find difficult and challenging.

I drove out one Sunday in April to the Kenan Center in Lockport. An exhibit featuring the talents of photographic artists from high schools all over Western New York was on display and a large crowd gathered to view their work. I was impressed and proud of the work submitted by the Sweet Home photographers. The photos manipulated light and shadow to tell small yet powerful stories. One of our photo artists smiled as she told me how much fun it had been to create the shots while her beaming parents and relatives listened nearby. The next day, I learned that the Sweet Home exhibit had taken "best in show" and reflected upon how much the kids' had to have learned to achieve such an honor.

Each day, students develop new knowledge and skill in ways that capture their imagination. They produce work that helps them develop their growing understanding. To each child, all the work is award winning if it they feel the sense of accomplishment associated with growth and improvement. Each achieved insights or personal gains of which they could be proud. The love of learning evident in each story isn't revealed by the NYS report card yet this is what our schools are really all about. We remain proud of our students' achievement and the data on the previous pages and continue our quest to improve these results. However, these results are often the least important to the people that matter most- our students. What matters most to them is what they learn and produce each day in their classrooms.

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

The New York State School Report Cards for the 2008-09 school year have recently been released and all six Sweet Home schools continue to meet rigorous performance targets and have earned the status of "schools in good standing" for the 2009-10 school year. An examination of our achievement data continues to provide strong evidence that the Sweet Home educational program is strong and helps our students achieve to high levels.



The achievement data presented in this issue focus upon English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies 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" on Regents examinations throughout four years as well as graduation rates. Please refer to the graphs below as you read the following synopsis of student achievement at Sweet Home.

Sweet Home Elementary students continued to achieve at high levels on their grade level English Language Arts assessments in 2009. Over 85% of all grade three to five students achieved proficiency on their English Language Arts assessment. In elementary mathematics, Sweet Home's students continued to perform at high levels as comprehensive student performance on the grade 3-5 assessments approached 95% proficiency.

Sweet Home Middle School continued to improve the achievement results of its students. English Language Arts results improved in each grade last year with all grades topping 80% proficient for the first time. Indeed, seventh grade students outperformed their counterparts from the year prior by 11% and eighth grade students by 16%. Equally important is the performance of our smaller "subgroups" of students including those with special needs. More special needs students demonstrated proficiency on the 2009 assessment and, overall, less than 1% of all students performed at the lowest levels. This performance again resulted in the Middle School earning a status of "school in good standing." In Mathematics, 92% of all Sweet Home Middle School students achieved proficiency- a gain of 7% from 2008. Eighth grade student performance soared with a gain of 20%.

Science and Social Studies performance remain strong at both the elementary and middle levels. 93% of elementary students passed the NYS Science and Social Studies assessments and over 50% achieved mastery. 86% of last year's eighth graders passed the state Science 8 assessment and 87% passed the NYS Social Studies examination. In both exams, mastery rates approached or passed 40%.

High School Graduation Rates for the 2004 and 2005 Cohort are included in the district achievement report. The Sweet Home Central School District graduation rate remained very strong with rates of near or above 90%. Of all Sweet Home students entering grade nine in 2004, 93% graduated with a Regents diploma and 50% were successful in earning a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. Of the students entering high school in September 2005, 89% earned a Regents diploma and 55% earned the advanced designation certificate. This rate- a significant indicator of the ability to complete a post-secondary program- remains 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 91% of the students in the 2005 cohort were successful on the Comprehensive English Examination after four years of instruction. Also impressive is the continued increasing performance of students at the mastery level on this assessment- remaining over 40%. After four years of instruction in mathematics at the high school level, successful completion of a Regents examination in mathematics remained strong improving to 94% with performance at the mastery level reaching 50%. In both examinations, Sweet Home performance continues to exceed that of similar schools.

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that school districts notify parents about the qualifications of the teachers employed by the district. At the present time, teachers meeting the No Child Left Behind criteria as "highly qualified" instruct 99% of our classes. If you have any questions regarding this please contact Mr. Michael Baumann at 250-1417 or email him at [mbaumann@shs.k12.ny.us](mailto:mbaumann@shs.k12.ny.us).

The District CDEP team has and will continue to examine this data, in addition to other relevant data, to determine achievement gaps in the district. The District team as well as each building team will examine the root causes of any gaps, determine leverage points for improvement and develop plans to address those areas. Should you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Mr. Anthony Day at 250-1419 or email him at [aday@shs.k12.ny.us](mailto:aday@shs.k12.ny.us).

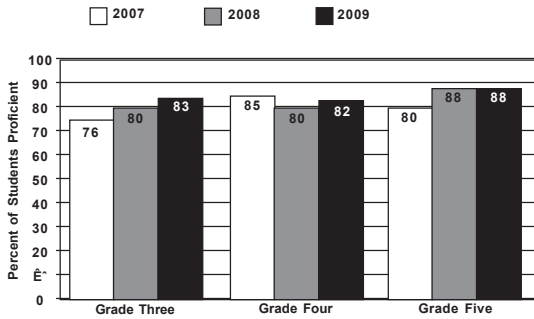


# SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

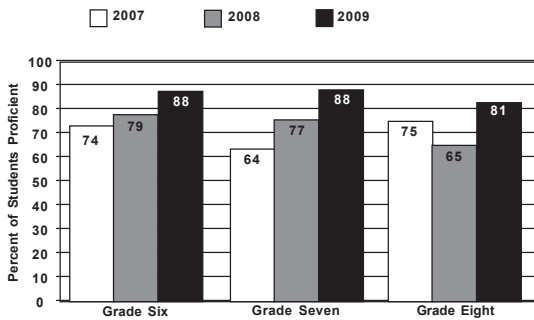


## 2008-09 SCHOOL REPORT CARD INFORMATION

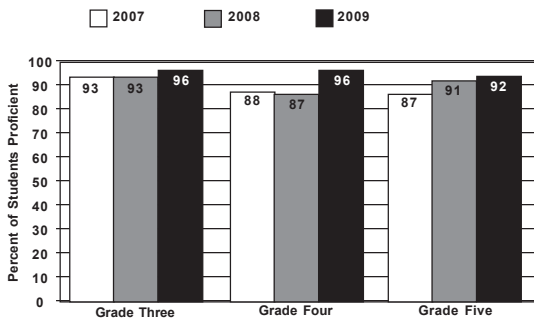
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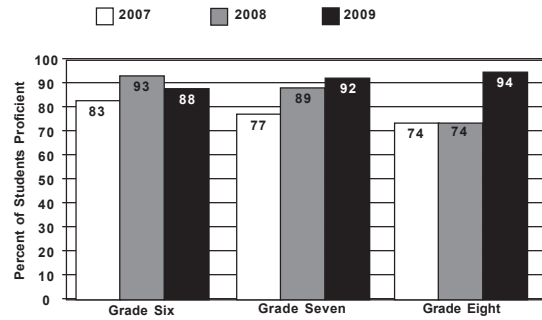
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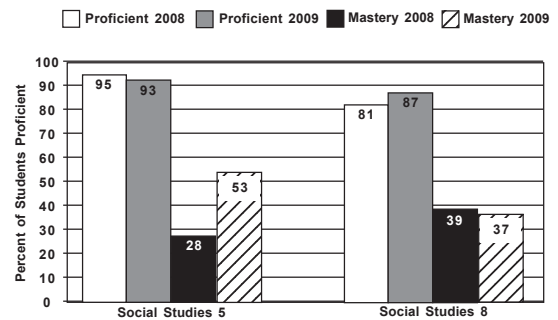
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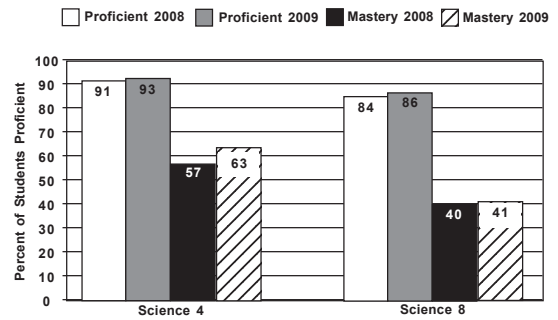
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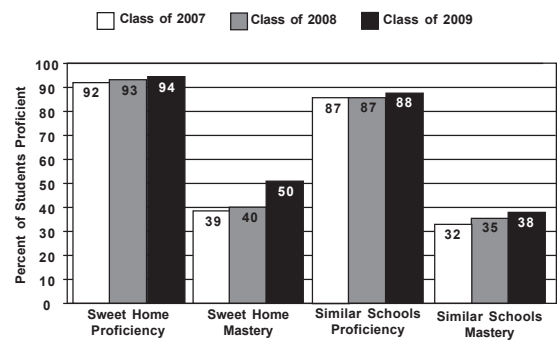
2007-2009 New York State Elementary / Intermediate Social Studies

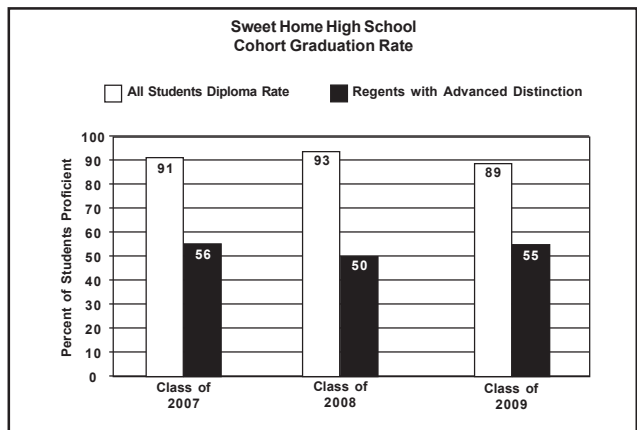
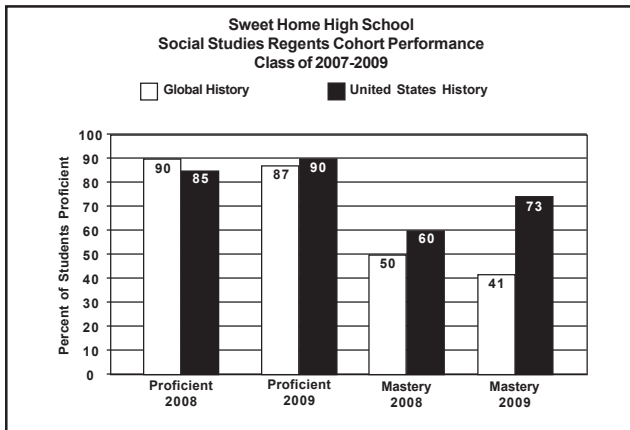
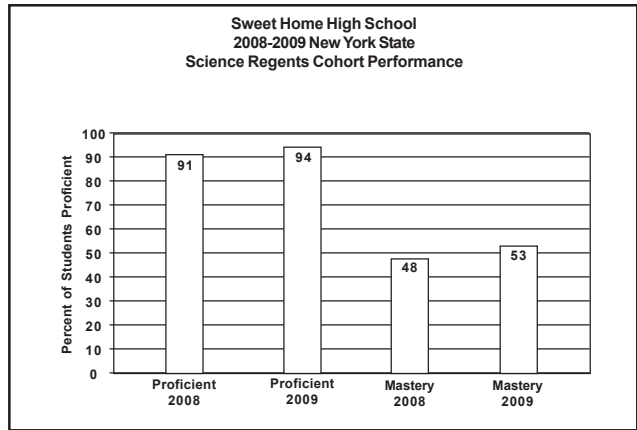
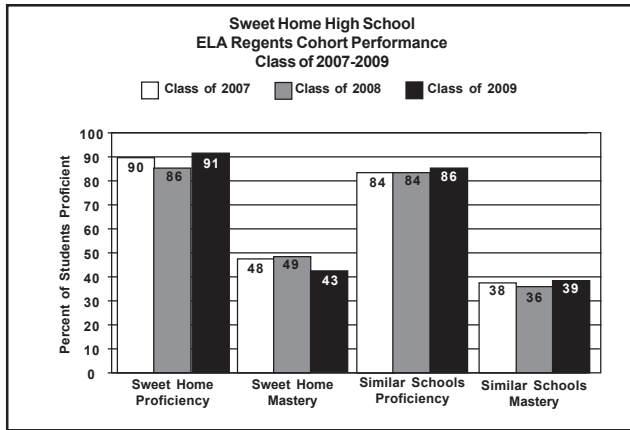


2007-2009 New York State Elementary / Intermediate Science



Sweet Home High School Regents Math Cohort Performance Class of 2007-2009





## 19 Set to Retire from Sweet Home...

With the end of the school year in June, Sweet Home will say goodbye to 19 employees who are retiring. Of the 19, five are teachers and fourteen support staff. To honor these men and women, the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Sweet Home Retirement/Recognition Reception will be held Wednesday, May 19 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:

**Dawn M. Bezak**

*Bus Driver*

**Diane L. Busdiecker**

*Bus Aide*

**Lester C. Busdiecker**

*Bus Aide*

**Maria V. Emmi**

*Middle School Music Teacher*

**Cynthia M. Golden**

*Glendale Reading Teacher*

**Bonita J. Goupil**

*Bus Driver*

**Norman L. Goupil**

*Bus Driver*

**Linda A. Gross**

*Bus Driver*

**David N. Harrison**

*High School English Teacher*

**Daniel R. Jauch**

*District Computer Technician*

**Lynn R. LeFauve**

*High School Art Teacher*

**Joy E. Lembke**

*Middle School Cleaner*

**Sharon P. Malone**

*Middle School Clerk Typist*

**Nancy W. Mendola**

*Glendale Librarian*

**Patricia A. Pepe**

*High School Clerk Typist*

**April D. Powell**

*Dexter Terrace Cleaner*

**Frederick J. Rudy**

*High School Cleaner*

**Maria B. Smith**

*High School Clerk Typist*

**Judith Toelsin**

*Maplemere Cafeteria Monitor*



## Glendale Wins National Grant...

Thanks to a grant from the Kids in Need Foundation Teacher Grant, Glendale Elementary brought music from Africa for the entire student body to enjoy.

In January 2009 Glendale music teacher Mrs. Barbara White found that the school had been awarded a grant of \$500 and the work began. Librarian Mrs. Mendola began working with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, researching African art and symbols. Mrs. White began working on African drumming and art teacher Mrs. Banks picked up the ball leading the students into building the instruments. In all, the students made over two dozen African instruments.

The display can be seen outside of the Music Room. The students are very proud of their work and Mrs. White says that the school will continue to use the instruments for years to come.



## AMHERST DUSK TO DAWN RELAY CHALLENGE MAY 21 & 22

The Amherst Dusk to Dawn Relay Challenge is an exciting youth development and community activity that takes place each May. Teams of 8-10 individuals come together for the challenge of a lifetime! Each participant runs or walks a mile and then passes the baton to another teammate - the process repeats itself for twelve hours throughout the night until everyone has successfully completed the challenge. As part of the event, continuous entertainment, music and plenty of other fun activities take place.

The event is part of a national program which has been extremely successful in promoting positive healthy communities, wellness and youth development.

Sponsors, teams and volunteers are needed for this event! For further information, team registration materials or questions, please contact Roseanne McCarthy at the Amherst Youth Board, 631.7215 or [RMcCarthy2@amherst.ny.us](mailto:RMcCarthy2@amherst.ny.us).

### **Download an application at:**

<http://www.amherst.ny.us/govt/youth/>

## Maplemere Battle of the Books Winners...



Congratulations to the winners of the Maplemere Elementary Battle of the Books competition held on Tuesday, March 30. Pictured along with principal Ann Laudisio are the winning team from Mrs. Herbold's 4th grade class : (l to r) **Elijah Robinson, Clare O'Brocta and Alyssa Sukmanowski.**

## Middle School Helps Niagara SPCA...

The middle school social studies classes of Mr. Chad Reimer and Mr. Jeff Miller collected old blankets, toys and towels for the Niagara SPCA during the months of March and April. For their efforts the students were recognized on the SPCA's website at [www.niagaraspca.org](http://www.niagaraspca.org) and a thank you note was sent to the students by the SPCA's executive director. Pictured in the photograph are **Kristine Hafner** (left) and **Alexandra Kendig** (right).



### **Volunteers Needed**

Contact organizer Antonella Covelli, Director of Volunteers at [acovelli@amherst.ny.us](mailto:acovelli@amherst.ny.us)

<http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/64-621181218114>

## Football Field Recognized as Field of Excellence...

Sweet Home High School is pleased to announce that its football field was recognized by Pioneer Athletics as a winner of the **2009 Field of Excellence Award**. As a winner, Sweet Home will receive a certificate of recognition and a Field of Excellence banner.

Pioneer Athletics services over 22,000 high schools, universities and professional athletic organizations throughout North America. Only 58 of these received the Field of Excellence Award and it is the first time since 2007 that a field in New York State has been recognized by Pioneer.

Congratulations to **Head Groundskeeper Dale Peterman** and his staff of **Kevin Belling, Roger Belling, Mauro Belluz, Dave Kler** and **Mark Yerke** on this outstanding award.



*Sweet Home's Award Winning Football Field. This picture was taken the day prior to the Homecoming football game in October.*

## Talkin' Proud at Willow Ridge..



Students in Mrs. Olmstead's fourth grade class at Willow Ridge utilized some good old fashioned conversation – albeit of the online variety – to complete a class project. The students conducted online chats with a space scientist and space architect to determine how the sun and its impact on earth are considered when constructing a spacecraft for space travel. Not only did the chat broaden the students' concept of space careers, it also helped them

with their listening skills, note taking ability, writing descriptive paragraphs and thoughtful questions on the class project topic.

## PARP at Heritage Heights...

March was PARP (Parents as Reading Partners) Month at Heritage Heights. Parents were encouraged to read at least 5 minutes with their child each night to help them surpass their goal of 153,000 reading minutes in the month. The students easily surpassed their goal by reading over 210,000 minutes! To help them in their efforts a number of special readers visited the school during the month including **Superintendent of Schools Geoffrey Hicks**, pictured here.



## 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](http://www.sweethomeschools.com) to view each and direct any suggestions to Michael J. Baumann, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Planning at 250-1417 or via email at [mbaumann@shs.k12.ny.us](mailto:mbaumann@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, 25 and sophomores will register on Wednesday, May 26. **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, June 30 to Friday, August 13, 2010. 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.



## Middle School Student Council Supports Stone's Buddies...

On Thursday, March 18 the student councils at Sweet Home Middle School donated a check of nearly \$950 to Stone's Buddies of Children's Hospital in support of pediatric brain cancer research. The students made and sold hearts during lunches and coordinated a number of bake sales throughout the school year as part of the Stone's Buddies project. The check was a culmination of a lot of hard work and afterschool time put in by all the Middle School student councils.

Thank you to all of the student councils at the Middle School for their work in support of this worthwhile cause.



## Sweet Home Students Rise Above

**Rise Above** tobacco prevention incentive research study is now in its second month at Sweet Home High School. This program, sponsored by Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Yale University, rewards students for making the positive choice to be tobacco free. Every week, eight students who have voluntarily registered for the program are randomly chosen; if students test negative for tobacco use, they win a \$25-50 gift card to the Boulevard Mall. Nearly 48% of the student body has enrolled in the program so far. See [www.sweethomeschools.com/healthnews/RiseAbove](http://www.sweethomeschools.com/healthnews/RiseAbove).

Special monthly contests are additionally offered. In March's 'Sweet Choice' Contest, students submitted a statement on why they choose to be tobacco free. The top three entries were selected to receive \$100, \$75, and \$50. April and May Contest winners will receive similar prizes.

April's current 'Tricks Of The Trade' Contest asks students to find an example of tobacco marketing in the community, or take an online quiz on tobacco marketing for a chance to be randomly drawn for a prize.

And in May's 'Tell It Like It Is' Contest, students will tell the truth about tobacco by composing a poem, skit, song, monologue, or artwork for their entry. Students who want to create a professional-grade video may work with a Roswell director after school.

### **Rise Above weekly \$50 winners:**

Aaron Anaya, Brad Truong, Waheeb Rizek, Jonathan Cielinski, Alex Castellano, Faryal Sahhibzada, Breanna Adderly, and Tim Oakes.

### **Rise Above weekly \$25 winners:**

Katie Betz, Connor Miller, Taylor Powell, Brian Herring, Shawn Guzdek, Jessica Serio, Toni Wright, Gabe Rodriguez, Taylor Bonati, TaSharra Coston, Abileen Ward, James Abbarno, Kelsey Hinterberger, Courtney Stoudemire, Stephen Maxwell, Shayla Walker, Elizabeth Utkin, Ashley Bernier, Kaitlyn Kler, Jasmin Foye, Lauren Finnerty, Steve Spencer, Daniel Peden, Kevin Spadiner, John Romans, Christina Heim, Lakeria Harris, Kahlil Humphrey, Bree Boyette, Joanna Ward, Erika Frase, Kari Moley, Michael White, Anthony Paterno, Katie Olczak, Alexa Hutchinson, CJ Schummer, Chris Murray, Victoria Hughes, and Nick Cuomo.

### **'Sweet Choice' Special March Contest Winners: 'Why I Choose To Be Tobacco Free...'**

- **1st Place, Dean May (\$100 gift card):** I believe it is important to not smoke because it is so unhealthy and life threatening. Many people cut their life short by smoking. To me, being here for my family in the future is more important than smoking tar wrapped up in a piece of paper. Wouldn't you agree?
- **2nd Place, Vo-ece Haygood (\$75 gift card):** I've seen so many people ruin their lives by smoking. It has killed much of my family and this is a main reason that I don't smoke. There is so much to lose and nothing to gain. Smoking would obviously hurt my singing voice which would change my mood tremendously. It would also hinder my ability to play sports. This is why I don't smoke.
- **3rd Place, Deyanna Rivers (\$50 gift card):** I choose to be tobacco free because I want to live to see my kids



*"Rise Above" Street Team members*

## Health & Wellness Corner...



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

### **Kids Escaping Drugs: Face 2 Face Program Partnership**

Recently, a small group of our Middle School students attended a *Kids Escaping Drugs* Summit to receive leadership skill training, which was followed by a Face 2 Face Program assembly program at Middle School.

Kids Escaping Drugs Shared Info Our children are facing challenges that we never could have imagined when we were their age. In recent studies teens report over and over again that prescription pills are easier to obtain than alcohol or marijuana. They see these drugs as less addictive and less dangerous than street drugs like cocaine or heroin. In fact, many of the drugs they are taking are opiate based pain killers like OxyContin, Loritabs and OxyCodone. These are powerful narcotic pain killers that can be habit forming. In many cases these pills are crushed then snorted or swallowed making the effects immediate. Other drugs being abused at alarming numbers are sedatives, including Valium, Xanax, and Ativan and even drugs to treat ADD/ADHD such as Adderall and Ritalin.

These drugs are all prescribed for legitimate reasons and serve to control the severe pain, anxiety or depression of the patient. In the wrong hands however, they can lead to addiction and can serve as gateway drugs to more serious and deadly drugs such as heroin. **All medications including ANY that you have to purchase at a pharmacy counter (ie: Sudafed, Robitussin-D, Coricidin-D) should be kept under lock and key.**

Talk with your Kids Face 2 Face Think about what you did as an adolescent that your parents had no knowledge. Now imagine you had unlimited access to a vehicle and to today's technology- cell phones, social networking sites and computers. Adolescents literally have the world at their fingertips.

It is a parent's responsibility to monitor this activity and talk to their children about expectations. The earlier you start the conversations and the more often you have them, the more open your communication will be. Simply telling our children not to drink or use drugs is unrealistic today. Every child will face the choice to use or not at some point during their pre-teen or teen years. How they respond to the situation will largely depend on how you've prepared them.

- Ask open ended questions starting with "What do you think about..." or "Who do you know that..." Avoid questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no".
- Don't be shocked or judgmental about what they share. As part of the Kids Escaping Drugs Face 2 Face Program students are asked if they know someone who drinks alcohol or smokes marijuana. Even in grades 6 and 7 almost every single hand is raised without hesitation.
- Ask what drugs they hear about kids using at school. Use their answer as an opportunity to talk about real life consequences of drug abuse.
- Use recent news events as a springboard for starting a conversation. Have them read articles detailing consequences of behaviors involving drugs or alcohol use. Ask them to share their feelings about what they have read and you share yours.
- Role-play situations. "You're at a party and someone offers you a beer, what would you do?" Discuss ways to remove themselves from potentially dangerous situations.

**For more information on adolescent drug trends, signs & symptoms or to talk with a counselor:  
WWW.KED.ORG**

### **National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NAIMS) Information Clearing House**

More than 60 booklets, on topics including acne, alopecia, atopic dermatitis, arthritis, back pain, bone health, keloids, knee problems, lupus, Lyme disease, Marfan syndrome, scoliosis, sports injuries, sprains and many more. You may order up to 25 copies of 10 titles free. [www.niams.nih.gov](http://www.niams.nih.gov)

### **May is Children's' Behavioral/Mental Health Month**

'According to the Report of the Surgeon General, more than 14 million children and adolescents in the United States, or 1 in 5, have a mental health disorder.' See site below for 'information to assist health care clinicians, families, and communities in promoting mental health and addressing children's behavioral and mental health issues.' <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/behavior.cfm>

*Continued on Page 19*

## Health & Wellness Corner Continued...*Continued from Page 18*

### **What is Snus?**

SNUS (pronounced snoos, like loose) is a moist powder “smokeless” and “spit less” tobacco product that is packaged in a dry, teabag-like pouch and placed between the lower lip and gums for an instant nicotine fix. It is a form of snuff that is consumed much like smokeless tobacco, but is unique in that it typically doesn’t require the user to spit. Snus was largely manufactured in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, but is now being heavily marketed in the United States and several other countries. Snus pouches are easily concealable creating the potential for children and teenagers to experiment with and/or use the product without parent / teacher knowledge at home or in school.

### Health Effects of Snus Use

Snus contains more nicotine than cigarettes and thus has the potential to lead to nicotine addiction and dependence. Because it is a product that is placed in the mouth, the adverse health effects of snus use can be similar to smokeless tobacco use: increased risk of developing lesions in the mouth, gum recession, and cancer of the mouth or tongue. Also, a study published in the medical journal *The Lancet* in 2007 found that using snus doubled the risk of developing pancreatic cancer among its users.

Snus manufactured in the U.S. is believed to be even more harmful than the snus manufactured in Sweden and other European countries. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snus>

### **Stop Medicine Abuse**

The Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) announced last week support of “Home to Homeroom,” an educational program that teams parents with the medical expert in their teen’s school – the school nurse – to help prevent and address teen medicine abuse. Parents play a pivotal role in keeping kids drug-free. Research shows that kids who learn a lot from their parents about the risks of drug abuse are up to half as likely to use. ‘

### Troubling Teen Statistics Underscore Need for Education

Recent studies among middle and high school aged kids across the country show a disturbing form of substance abuse among teens: the intentional abuse of otherwise beneficial medications, both prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC), to get high.

According to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, one in five teens reports having abused a prescription drug to get high. Where OTC medicines are concerned, data from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America indicate that one in 10 teens reports having abused OTC cough medicines to get high, and 28 percent know someone who has tried it.

The ingredient the teens are abusing in OTC cough medicines is dextromethorphan, or DXM. When used according to label directions, DXM is a safe and effective ingredient approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and is found in well over 100 brand name and store-brand over-the-counter cough medicines. When abused in extreme amounts, DXM can be dangerous.

StopMedicineAbuse.org was developed by the leading makers of OTC cough medicines to build awareness about this type of substance abuse behavior, provide tips to prevent it from happening, and encourage parents to safeguard their medicine cabinets. Substance abuse can touch any family: The key to keeping teens drug-free is education and talking about the dangers of abuse.’ <http://www.stopmedicineabuse.org/learn>

### **Fun and Educational Websites for Kids**

#### **The Space Station**

Watch the pieces come together as they are sent up from Earth. This is the International Space Station (ISS) Assembly diagram, piece by piece. [http://i.usatoday.net/tech/graphics/iss\\_timeline/flash.htm](http://i.usatoday.net/tech/graphics/iss_timeline/flash.htm)

#### **Reading Rockets**

Reading Rockets is a national multimedia project offering information and resources on how young kids learn to read, why so many struggle, and how caring adults can help. A website that offers a wealth of activities for students and families. <http://www.readingrockets.org/families>

#### **Rags to Riches History Game**

<http://www.quia.com/rr/440241.html>

# SWEET HOME CENTRAL SCHOOLS OF AMHERST & TONAWANDA

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## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Geoffrey M. Hicks

## Your District



*The senior boys bowling team finished their season in 4th place in Class A. Damian Annas set a school record 757 set this year, Chris Louis was named MVP and Jason Heubert became only the second boy ever to roll a 300 while bowling for Sweet Home.*



*Above: Middle school student Matthew Mogensen reads to a first grade class at Maplemere. Matthew is a part of the middle school book club Books, Bagels and Breakfast. Left: Willow Ridge first grader Tyler Maloney compares and contrast dinosaurs in Mrs. Newman's Writing Celebration on April 16.*



*Above: The Middle School Grade 7 math team that took 1st place public schools division at St. Joe's on April 13. Below: High School students in food science class visit D'Youville College Food Service on a recent field trip.*



*Rebecca Jasen delivers a "Bad Case of Stripes" during the middle school 8th grade Declamation Contest on Friday, April 16.*

