



# THE COMET'S TALE

## **Sandy Creek Central School**

### **Board of Education:**

President: Greg Ivison  
Vice President: Brian MacVean  
Jean Bonhotal  
John Clark  
Michael Hovey  
Lynn Miller  
Deanna Soule

### **District Office:**

Superintendent:  
Mr. Stewart R. Amell

### **Business Office:**

Business Administrator/  
District Clerk:  
Shelley H. Fitzpatrick  
Assistant: Vicky Stoker  
Treasurer: Mike Cambareri  
Sr. Account Clerk: Lori Krebs  
Sr. Account Clerk: Holly Kelly

### **Principals:**

Elementary: Sue Ann Archibee  
Middle School:  
Joanne Shelmidine  
High School: Maureen Shiel

### **Dean of Students:**

Michael Stevens

### **Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds:**

Chris Ouderkirk

### **Cafeteria:**

Cook Manager: Debbie Archibee

### **Transportation:**

Supervisor: Deb Stevens

### **Technology:**

Coordinator: Paul Goulet

### **Athletics:**

Coordinator: Mike Stevens

### **Testing:**

Coordinator: Amy McCormack

### **Special Education:**

Coordinator: Janice Burns



Stewart R. Amell  
Superintendent of

## **I Look Forward To Another Successful School Year**

We're off and running and I look forward to another successful school year. I keep telling my fellow Superintendents that I am the luckiest Superintendent in New York State. I have a wonderful and dedicated staff, Board of Education members that are focused on providing the best education possible for our children, supportive parents and a community that understands the importance of a good education.

But most of all, I have an exceptional group of youngsters that motivate me to be the best Superintendent I can be. Sandy Creek is a special place and I am honored to have the opportunity to serve this community and its young people.

Over the summer months, the campus was active with student programs. Many students were getting extra help in reading and math. Students from all over the district participated in the summer recreation program. The Food Service Department sponsored a Summer Feeding Program for children 18 and under. The program was very successful. High School students were preparing for the August Regents Exams hoping to pass them for the first time and we had several students taking exams a second time just to earn a better grade. I surely do not want to forget the professional development programs for staff. Many of our teachers and support staff members participated in training to improve their knowledge base and teaching skills. Our building and grounds staff worked around all these folks and did an amazing job. I commend them for their hard work and willingness to go above and beyond.

Our Board of Education members were also busy. They participated in an on-line staff development program focusing on financial oversight, fiscal accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities. They also took time this summer to set their annual goals for the school year. They continue to concentrate their efforts on improving student performance on the state assessments. The Board of Education is also studying options to control the costs of health insurance and facility energy usage. They also want to improve how they function as a board assuring they make the best possible decisions that meet the needs of the school district.

As you can see, the school district spends many hours during the summer break preparing for the new school year along with trying to improve our skills as professional educators.

As I said earlier, I am the luckiest Superintendent in the State of New York. As a school community, we all work together for a better future for our children.

## IVISON'S INSIGHTS



Creg Ivison, President,  
Board of Education

~~ WELCOME BACK ~~

*Boy it's hard to believe summer is coming to a close, so soon. I suspect it's been a very long summer for those whose wells have gone dry due to the lack of rain. However be careful what you ask for as the clouds might open up and not stop!*

To steal a little from Jeff Foxworthy, you know summer is ending when -

- \*The NYS Fair has begun
- \*Field Corn is being chopped
- \*You are debating to move the dock or take the boat out of the water, due the dropping levels
- \*And the Kids are getting on your nerves
- \*Just think - snow is just around the corner!!

As Stu has said, the Board of Education and the Administration have been busy this summer. We have reviewed our goals from this past year and are tweaking them for this year. We officially approved our 07/08 goals and they are as follows:

1. Implement a paperless Board of Education agenda process
2. Research and implement more energy efficient strategies
3. Study the student grading process for grades 9-12
4. Study the Honors Programs
5. Continue the implementation of the Excel Project
6. Study the District Food Service Program
7. Continue to Improve Board Committees
8. Develop a plan of action for sustaining the Reading First Program after 08-09
9. Continue the District Health Insurance Study
10. Continue the implementation of the District CDEP Plan

I am also pleased to indicate to the District that the State Auditor has left the building! While the Board or Administration has not received any official reports (the official and public response may be a year or more in the making!), the auditor did indicate, during one of my recent errands to the district office, that she found no fraud or abuse of District resources (no surprise). As with any audit their job is to uncover problems, identify risks, and make recommendations. For those that are not aware the state audit was the third auditor to review SCCS's financial records this year. We now have two regular auditors that work closely with the District. I would like commend the District office staff for their quick responses to implement changes and/or recommendations made by either auditor.

In ending I'd like to wish all of our students and staff a happy, safe, and successful school year.

**Middle School Musings —Joanne Shelmidine, Middle School Principal*****Tips for the new year!***

If I had to name the one issue that can quickly get in the way of a child's success in school I would say it was homework. Most parent conferences center around how to help a child get organized and caught up on homework. Homework issues can also dominate life at home in the evening, with many parents and students frustrated about getting assignments done in a timely fashion.

Homework is generally assigned to allow students time to review and practice the skills learned in class. It also may be assigned to allow students the chance to explore topics more fully or to apply skills learned to new situations. Homework also allows students the opportunity to learn to work independently.

One of the simplest ways to help your child with homework is to show that you think it is important. Some of the ways to show that you care about the work that they do is to set a regular time to do homework. Some children work well right after school, some need a break and work best after dinner. Each situation is different, and is dependent on all the other responsibilities that your child faces.

Along with setting a time for homework, another aspect is setting a place to do the homework. Much of the success behind homework is in the organization and routine that it allows. If there is a set time and place for homework, materials won't be lost and distractions will be minimal.

Middle school students are going through many changes. One of the ways to assist them in school is by helping to ensure that they are getting enough sleep. Between sports, increased responsibilities in school, and their friends, many students end up over extended and over tired. This has an immediate effect on their performance at school. By helping students plan their time, and get enough sleep, they are able to be more successful in all their endeavors.

The use of the student planners provides a clear communication between home and school. Feel free to ask your child for his/her planner. Assignments that are not done will be circled, with teachers' initials or a stamp when the assignments are complete. Both short term and long term assignments should be in there. If there is ever a question about what your child is working on, feel free to call and talk to your child's teachers. We all want your child to be successful and by working together, we can help your child meet the goals that have been set.

**REMINDER****SCCS BOOSTER CLUB MEETINGS****4TH MONDAY OF EACH MONTH****6:30 P.M. IN THE BOARD ROOM**

## ELEMENTARY NEWS By Sue Ann Archibee

### Pre K 2007-2008



We would like to extend a hearty “Welcome” to our new Pre-K staff and students! Joining us as teacher this year is Julie DeLosh. Miss DeLosh has been a reading teacher in our district prior to this appointment and is thrilled to be leading our youngest learners now. On her team is Mrs. Lori Cean, as Teacher Aide. Mrs. Cean has been with us at SCCS as a special education aide and is equally excited to work with our “first year” students. A second Teacher Aide will join us soon, so stay tuned for more information.

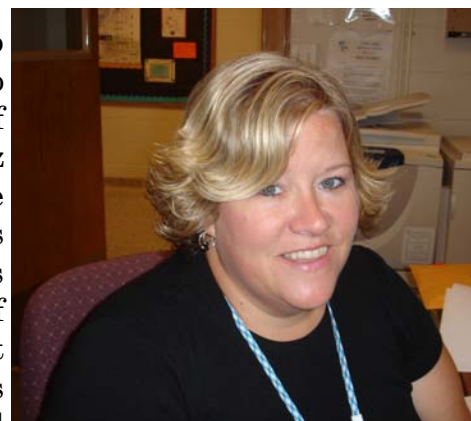
We have been fortunate in this grant funding, as it has allowed us to increase our numbers to 40 students this year. That has translated into some adjustments for us, including more furniture and a bigger bus for transporting, but we have made the changes and are looking forward to a great year. Best wishes to staff and students!



### New Elementary Office Staff



Please take a moment to introduce yourself and say hello to our new elementary office staff on your next visit. Mrs. Liz McKenzie and Mrs. Bonnie Bryden now head the operations in the Elementary office as building secretaries. As many of you know, Mrs. Linda Crast retired in April after 40 years with the District, but had trained



Mrs. Liz McKenzie well! Mrs. McKenzie hit the ground running in May, and Mrs. Bryden joined the office in July. With them you will find a friendly face, warm greeting and wealth of knowledge regarding our building and community. Welcome Liz and Bonnie!



## Buffy Peterson- Our New Elementary Social Worker

Joining us from Jefferson County is Buffy Peterson, our new elementary social worker. She is taking over the role vacated with Justine Hammond's retirement. Mrs. Peterson has previously worked for Cornell Cooperative Extension in Jefferson County as an adolescent program director, and is excited to be working with our younger population. She will be running many of the programs Mrs. Hammond headed, and will be adding some of her own ideas as well. She can be reached through the elementary office. We welcome Mrs. Peterson to our community.



## New Teachers at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grades



Our fourth and fifth grade teams are welcoming new staff members as well. At fourth grade, Mrs. Teira Norton has moved from 4/5 grade Teaching Assistant to teacher in 4D. This will be a bit confusing as we already have a Mrs. Norton (Mrs. Brandie Norton) at fourth grade, but adding either the homeroom letter or the



teacher's first name initial will help clarify who you are looking for. At grade five, Mrs. Shelly Hathway joins us from APW. Both teachers are SCCS graduates, and we are fortunate to have such talent joining our ranks!



Our new Reading Specialist for grades four and five is Mrs. Nichole Maitland, who formerly was one of our Reading Coaches. Returning from a maternity leave is Mrs. Christie White, who moved from fourth to fifth grade this year. Best wishes to everyone!



## *Fall Reminders from the Elementary*

Please remember these points to help make this a smooth year:

- Clearly label your child's belongings with his/her name (first name and last name initial is fine)
- Remember that starting time is 8:30 am and dismissal has moved to 3:00 pm. Your child will be counted as tardy if he/she arrives after 8:30 am.
- Bus changes need to be to the elementary office before 10:00 am to give us time to route the information to your child, his/her teacher, the bus garage and the driver. We can not honor late requests and still maintain the safety and security of your child. Contact the elementary office any time you have a question or concern. We are happy to hear from you and wish to keep the lines of communication open!

## *News from the High School*

### *Welcome back to all of our High School students!*



We are looking forward to another successful year for all students. I would like to introduce two new staff members that students will be seeing in the halls this year. First is

Mr. Shute who is replacing Mr. Clark and will be teaching Science 7 and Physics. Also joining us is Mr. Burris who will be teaching High School and Middle School Art along with some time in Elementary Art. Mrs. Abbott will be teaching all day in the Elementary this year.



We are also offering a new college Biology course this year. So for all of those Science majors, this is a chance to get some extra college credit before actually attending college. Mrs. Heck will be teaching this course.

We will also be changing our bell schedule by five minutes this year. Students will start homeroom/1<sup>st</sup> period at 8:15 am and the school day will end at 3:05. Making this adjustment will help coordinate the bell schedules between the elementary school and the MS/HS.

Maureen Shiel  
High School Principal

## Animals on School Property

Over the past several months, the Board of Education has discussed the issue of allowing animals on school property. The District presently does not have a policy either way. The District has received complaints from residents and visitors requesting that animals not be allowed on school property unless for educational purposes or handicap situations. Many feel that this is a major liability for the District and that it compromises the health and safety of our children and residents. Some people are afraid of dogs and some are allergic to animals. Unsupervised animals pose a great risk. The Health Department recommendation is not to allow animals on school property except under special circumstances and only for special educational purposes.

What are your thoughts? The Board of Education would like to hear your opinion on the subject.

Please write or e-mail: Stewart R. Amell, Superintendent of Schools, Sandy Creek Central School District, P.O. Box 248, Sandy Creek, NY 13145, samell@sccs.cnyric.org.

### Sandy Creek Central School Visitor Code of Conduct

All visitors on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. In addition, all visitors on school property or attending a school function are expected to be properly attired for the purpose they are on school property.

No visitor, either alone or with others, shall:

- ◆ Physically restrain or detain any other person, nor remove such person from any place where he/she is authorized to remain, except that students may be restrained as permitted by Commissioner's Regulations;
- ◆ Obstruct the free movement of persons and vehicles in any place in which these rules apply
- ◆ Gamble on school property or at school functions;
- ◆ Loiter on or about school property;
- ◆ Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

# NOTES FROM THE SCHOOL NURSES

## *“Put Your Best Foot Forward!”*

I remember well my father encouraging me the evening before school started each year: “Put your best foot forward, and you’ll do fine!” He wanted me to know that if I worked hard, and did my best, I would not only enjoy school, but would learn a lot along the way.

The coming school year promises to be a great opportunity for your child to put his “best foot forward!” Students can start the school year off right by practicing some important Healthy Habits. Here are just a few habits that we recommend for you to share with your child:

**Exercise your mind-** Read! Read! Read! Limit TV, computer and video game time. Challenge yourself with puzzles and other thinking games. Be adventurous and learn about new things. Ask questions during interesting conversations.

**Eat a Balanced Diet-** Eat slowly so that your body has time to feel full. Eat a variety of colorful foods. Eat three meals a day with healthy snacks between meals. Have sweet treats for special occasions.

**Take care of your feelings-** Share how you feel with a friend or adult. Value yourself and others. Ask for help if you feel stressed. Express yourself creatively.

**Get plenty of sleep-** Go to bed on time. Relax by doing a quiet activity before bedtime. Rest or take a nap when your body is tired. Get the required number of hours of sleep each day (for children it’s 8 hours).

**Exercise Daily-** Warm up your muscles by moving your body. Stretch your muscles. Try a variety of activities. Set aside time for physical activity every day. Play and have fun!

If your child will remember these healthy tips, she will be starting the school year off with her “*best foot forward!*”



### *Ketch up* with the Kitchen

September brings new changes in the cafeteria. Elementary students, grades 3-5 can now get a chicken Caesar salad as an alternate meal as well as a chef salad.

We have developed a new salad for High School. Our wonderful middle school principal named it for us. We are going to call it the Harvest Salad. It will be made with 3 kinds of lettuce, mandarin oranges, almond slices, dried cranberries, tomatoes, shredded mozzarella, croutons, and chicken. Try one and give us some feedback. In our juice machine, we now have 3 flavors of vitamin water. Check out our web page for the latest menu and alternatives at [www.sccs.cnyric.org](http://www.sccs.cnyric.org).



## 2007 MIDDLE CLASS STAR PROPERTY TAX REBATE

Sandy Creek Central School District homeowners are eligible this year for property tax relief through the new middle class STAR Property Tax Rebate. This rebate is available to qualifying property owners who file an application with the NYS Tax Department by November 30, 2007.

The amount of this year's rebate is calculated on a formula that considers an individual's income and local tax burden. Property owners who earn less income will see a larger rebate check. To receive a rebate, property owners must first receive either the basic or enhanced (senior citizens aged 65 or older) STAR exemption on their school tax bills.

The State Tax Department has mailed out over 2.7 million applications to property owners across New York who receive the basic STAR exemption on their school tax bill. The application is necessary in order for the Department to be able to link real property information from local assessment rolls to income information to determine the appropriate amount of tax relief.

For administrative purposes, each notice contains a special STAR code unique to the individual property. You will need this code to successfully apply for the rebate. You cannot file for your rebate without this code.

According to the Department of Taxation and Finance, Sandy Creek School District residents should have received their applications for the BASIC STAR rebate by September 15, 2007. This mailing schedule was devised to allow people ample time to fill out the application prior to the November 30, 2007 deadline. Once the applications are received, homeowners are encouraged to apply on-line to receive their rebate checks as quickly as possible.

NOTE: Seniors 65-years or older who receive the ENHANCED STAR exemption do not have to apply. These homeowners should have received their STAR rebate check automatically during the month of September.

We hope this information is helpful. Please if you are eligible for a STAR Rebate Check, remember to apply before November 30, 2007. Don't miss out on this much deserved tax relief. For more information, the Tax Department has updated information on its website at [www.nystax.gov](http://www.nystax.gov), as well as through a special hotline at 1-877-6-STAR-NY (1-877-678-2769).

*Shelley H. Fitzpatrick, Business Administrator*

## **BUCKLEY AMENDMENT – ANNUAL NOTIFICATION DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

*The Buckley Amendment is a Federal statute which imposes upon school districts receiving Federal funds the obligation to protect the records of students from inappropriate disclosure or review. Chapter 13 reviewed the procedures of the Buckley Amendment and also set forth a proposed bylaw pertaining to student records.*

One of the requirements is to publish annually a notice of rights to the students and parents. Many districts do not do this. Further, many districts have been releasing information pertaining to students without parental consent. These items generally would be referred to as *directory information* but, before this information is released, it is necessary to publish a notice indicating that certain information would be released unless a parent objects. If a parent or an eligible student objects, it must be noted in the file that the information classified as directory information will not be released for that particular student.

### ***Proposed Notice***

We recommend, and the bylaw set forth in **Form 21** of the previous chapter states, that within the first three weeks of each school year the district publish in the legal section of a newspaper having general circulation in the school district, a notice to parents and eligible students of the rights under FERPA. If the district desires to designate certain information as directory information the school district also should publish this information at the same time. We advise that the notice of rights and directory information be combined into one form. **Form 22** is proposed.

### **Sandy Creek Central School District Annual Notification Notice to Parents and Eligible Students of Rights Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

To: Parents and Eligible Students Of Sandy Creek Central School District

You are notified that you have the following rights in relation to student records:

1. The right to inspect and review a student's education records.
2. The right of a student's parents or an eligible student to seek to correct parts of the student's education records which he or she believes to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's rights. These rights include the right to a hearing to present evidence that the records should be changed if the district decides not to alter it according to the parents' or an eligible student's request.

3. The right to report or file a complaint with the Department of Education if the school district violates FERPA.
4. The right to exercise a limited control over other people's access to the student's education records.
5. The right to seek and correct the student's education records, in a hearing if necessary.
6. The right to be informed about FERPA rights.

You are further advised:

- a. The school district shall limit the disclosure of information contained in the student's education records except: (a) by prior written consent of the student's parents or an eligible student, (b) directory information or (c) under certain limited circumstances, as permitted by FERPA.
- b. If either a student's parents or an eligible student desires to obtain copies of a policy pertaining to student records, notification should be presented to: Stewart R. Amell, Superintendent, Sandy Creek Central School District, PO Box 248, Sandy Creek, NY 13145.

All rights and protections given to parents under the FERPA and this policy transfer to the student when the student reaches age 18 or enrolls in a post-secondary school. The student then becomes an "eligible student."

### ***Directory Information***

The school district proposes to designate the following personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records as directory information, and it will disclose that information without prior written consent:

1. The student's name;
2. The student's address;
3. The student's telephone listing;
4. The student's date and place of birth;
5. The student's class designation (e.g., first grade, tenth grade, and the like);
6. The student's participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
7. The student's achievement awards or honors;
8. The student's weight and height if a member of an athletic team;
9. Dates of attendance;
10. The student's photograph; and
11. The most recent educational institution attended before the student enrolled in the school district.

***You have two weeks to advise the school district in writing, directed to the office of the school superintendent, of any and all items which you refuse to permit the district to designate as directory information about the student. The district may disclose directory information about former students without following the procedure specified for directory information.***

Sandy Creek Central  
School District

PO Box 248  
124 Salisbury St.  
Sandy Creek, NY 13145

Phone: 315-387-3445  
Fax: 315-387-2196  
District Office: Ext. 1510  
Business Office: Ext. 1510  
Elementary : Ext. 1110  
Middle School/High School: Ext.: 1910  
Nurses Office—  
Elem: Ext. 1501: HS: Ext. 1502  
Transportation: Ext. 3330

## COMMUNITY TRACK/WEIGHT ROOM INFORMATION



The Sandy Creek Central School District Weight Room and Track will be open for the community's use every evening from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please call the District Office at 387-3445.

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.sccs.cnyric.org](http://www.sccs.cnyric.org)

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