The Property Tax Cap

This past June, our state legislature enacted a new law that places restrictions on how school districts and municipalities may increase their tax levies.

Although the new law has been referred to as the “2 percent tax cap”, it does not in fact restrict any proposed tax levy increase to 2 percent. The law does, however, require at least 60 percent voter approval for a school budget if the proposed levy increase exceeds a certain amount. That amount, called the “tax levy limit,” will be determined by each district according to a complex formula outlined in law, and will vary by district.

What does this all mean for you as district residents as you prepare to vote on the SCCS School Budgets in May 2012? There will be new terminology to understand and new ways that the district will present budget information in relation to this new law. But probably most importantly, some school districts will be under intense pressure from the community to stay within the “tax levy limits” and others who will strongly advocate for districts to save valued programs and services by invoking what Governor Cuomo calls the law’s “built-in relief valve—the 60 percent voter approval option.

One thing does seem certain, the new tax cap legislation is likely to complicate the struggle to find meaningful tax relief and to build and sustain world-class schools.

Sandy Creek Central School District and Past Graduate Joshua Ward Receive Statewide Employment Award

After Pomp and Circumstance plays at graduation ceremonies, most teens experience trepidation and uncertainty about their future, and Joshua Ward, of Sandy Creek, was no different. Joshua was not likely to pursue a college degree. Instead, he was considering his options after graduating from an inclusive class at Sandy Creek High School.

During his secondary school years, Joshua participated in a number of internships and work experiences, particularly Make Sense Shop, a café in Pulaski. It was here that Joshua made an impression on his advisors and mentors as someone who works very hard and has a solid and strong work ethic. Josh really didn’t think that experience would shape his life; that’s just who he is. However, it paid off as Sandy Creek Superintendent Stewart Amell called him shortly after graduation to offer him a temporary position as a cleaner at the school.

Initially, the adjustment was difficult and Josh wasn’t sure he would succeed at the job. But Amell and the school district were not ready to give up on Josh. They contacted ACCES-VR for assistance, and Oswego Industries stepped in to help with job coaching. Sherry Mahoney, job retention specialist, stepped in to help Josh adjust and learn the job.

In no time, it was evident that he was successful as the Sandy Creek Board of Education voted in February to hire him as a full-time employee.

"Hiring Josh was not a difficult decision at all,” said Amell. “He worked in several job internships that demonstrated his productivity. Josh is fun. He arrives early for work every day and stops by the office to say hello. He is a team player and an excellent worker.” Josh presently works 40 hours per week, on the evening shift during the school year and days during the summer. He says he likes cleaning and “there’s nothing about my job that I don’t like.” When he’s not working, Josh enjoys watching television and playing video games.

The perfect partnership between Josh, Sandy Creek School District, and Oswego Industries was enough to convince the Central New York Placement Consortium to nominate the school district for a statewide award. Fifteen ACCES-VR offices (formerly known as VESID) review nominations select five award winners throughout the state. And with Josh’s success, Sandy Creek was presented with the award at the 11th Annual Disability Mentoring Day breakfast, held on October 19, 2011. The mentoring day is held in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and pairs individuals who have disabilities with area employers to spend a day together at the worksite. In addition to Sandy Creek, four other area businesses were also recognized for employing people with disabilities. They are Dollar Tree, Inc. on West Seneca Turnpike, Sam’s Club/Members Only on Erie Blvd.; Walgreens on James Street and in Cicero, the Syracuse VA Medical Center; and Driver’s Village, Inc. Congratulations to Sandy Creek and to Joshua for this terrific partnership.
Creating a Caring School Community

Teaching middle school students can be challenging. Adolescents are experiencing major intellectual, physical, and emotional changes. Socially students are seeking to gain acceptance from their peers. As students struggle with this transition, some may begin to behave antagonistically, or bully other students.

With this in mind, the middle school teachers have coordinated their efforts in providing a safe, civil, and intellectually stimulating environment. During the week of November 14-18, teachers took a few minutes during the 4A/5A period to educate our students concerning bullying and its impact. More importantly, discussions will lead to giving and getting respect, which, in turn, will lead to a caring and comfortable place for learning and friendship.

News from the Middle School

By Carolyn Shirley, Coordinator

Middle School Student Council has begun work already this year. We started off by electing officers. This year the President is Zeke Durham, the Secretary is Skylynn Salzman, and the Treasurer is Morgan Ranieri. We have also resumed collecting BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION and are on the move cutting and counting. Last year, we collected enough money, as a middle school, to purchase a Nintendo Wii, which students will be allowed to use during Circle Free. Please continue to send in BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION.

The next upcoming activity is the T-shirt sale. Students in Middle School entered their own drawings supporting the middle school theme in a design contest. One or two designs will be chosen to go on the T-shirts. We will be selling these T-Shirts to all interested students and staff.

On November 9th, students wore camo, red, white, and blue or yellow ribbons to remember and honor the men and women who serve our country. On the 18th of November, Middle School Student Council held a harvest dance for all students. It was free of charge and open to students in grades 6-8. Students were encouraged to bring a canned good to the dance, as National Junior Honor Society was holding a food drive that night. Speaking of food drives, we will be having our annual food drive later in the year. The dates are still to be determined, but all the food will go to our local food pantries. Last year, we were able to help 246 families within our school district. This year we hope to match and hopefully surpass that number. We hope to keep the community posted more frequently this year through the school website, so keep checking our updates.

Thank you for the continued support.

Zeke Durham
Middle School Student Council President

Assemblyman Blankenbush Recognizes Josh Ward and the Sandy Creek School District

Another reception was held at the Sandy Creek Central School District on November 14th to honor Joshua by Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush. Several Board of Education members, family, friends and co-workers attended. Assemblyman Blankenbush presented the District with the New York State Employee Recognition Award. He also presented a Proclamation to Joshua extending his best wishes.
News from the Elementary

Cool Cat Program Grows at Sandy Creek Elementary

Each year our second grade classes spend time learning about, practicing and demonstrating “Be Cool” strategies for dealing with stress, bullying, frustration and anxiety, and situations that can cause students to lose control. Cool Cat strategies help them stay in control of their emotions and behaviors. The program has grown in popularity over the years, and last year it was recommended by our Bully Prevention Committee students to expand recognition for students using Cool Cat strategies to third through fifth graders. Its instructor, Mrs. Peterson, is making that happen this fall.

To kick this off, we will begin including a Cool Cat award winner in our Principal Award presentations each month. October awards will be the first to include this certificate for one student from each classroom. Staff in grades 3-5 will learn the Cool Cat language and concepts of the program, so they can incorporate components into daily activities. We are very excited about expanding this successful program and look forward to recognizing those who have demonstrated the Cool response.

Calendar Changes

Please remember to check the monthly calendar that we send home with the menu for the most up-to-date information and events. There are several changes that have occurred since the District calendar was printed in August, and we send them home in the monthly packet. We would be happy to send home an extra copy if you need more than one, just contact your child’s teacher. Call the office with questions.

NHS Students Support Elementary Literacy at Reading Night

Twenty-two families of young readers and adults gathered for the first Family Reading Night of the year, held on Wednesday, October 19th. Guests enjoyed a hearty meal, courtesy of Ms. Michelle Miller, before rotating through three activity centers of the night. Nine high school students in the National Honor Society appeared as guest readers: Brittany Foster, Elizabeth Houck, Zack Lehman, Fiona Lewis, Marissa Ranieri, Sarah Tyrrell, Emily Washburn, Amelia Yousey, and Katlin Allen. They read aloud a variety of fall-festive books to small groups of children and families in the Elementary Library, illustrating the importance of family reading time. In addition to listening to stories read, guests also cycled through a center where students practiced their classification skills through an interactive Halloween-themed Smartboard activity. Attendees also competed in a nutrition trivia game, complete with buzzers, testing their knowledge of healthy eating.

Another successful Family Reading Night is anticipated in January, where more excitement and reading will most certainly take place!
Wall of Excellence 2011

On Saturday, September 24, 2011, the Sandy Creek Central School District Board of Education inducted four past educators in the Annual Wall of Excellence Program. The program recognizes past and present Faculty and Staff Members who have gone above and beyond for the students of the school district.

In order to be eligible, candidates must have achieved a high level of professionalism while employed by the School District, displayed a true commitment to the mission of the School District, and during their service, demonstrated an extra-ordinary level of performance for the benefit of students, staff, and the community.

Shown above are this year’s inductees: Lester Poole, Custodial Worker & Bus Driver; Fred Schug, Social Studies Teacher & Coach; Ray Pennock, Elementary Teacher, Coach & Advisor; and Nancy Hinman, Reading Teacher, Reading & Testing Coordinator.

PaRP Month

October was People as Reading Partner Month at Sandy Creek Elementary, with grades PK through 5 participating. This year’s theme was “Score with a good book”. Students were awarded prizes for confirmed participation, and the class with the highest participation rate overall won a class prize as well.

Many students included their reading selections in our Halloween Parade of Books. Pictured are some students who chose to dress as a character from their favorite reading selection, and who carried their books on the parade route with them at school. It was impressive to see the wide range of interests our students displayed.

On your visit to the school, note grade level progress as charted on the walls in the lobby. Thank you for your support of this program, and remember to read for 20 minutes every day as you score your own goals as a family at home!

Sandy Creek Morning Program Honors our Veterans

On November 8th the Sandy Creek Morning Program and Elementary Student Council held a ceremony honoring our Veterans. We had over 20 Veterans attend the event which took place in the elementary gym. Sarah Balcom, Hailey Miller, and Evelyn Bice were our announcers for the event which included a powerpoint presentation, a song sung by all of the students entitled “Thank a Vet!”, and refreshments after the program for the Veterans and their family members who attended.
SCCS Transportation Department

School Bus Safety

We got off to another safe and successful start to a new school year, thanks to the drivers, bus aides, students and parents. Without your support and cooperation of all the new changes in bus routes, it couldn’t have been accomplished so smoothly.

Thank you!

With the upcoming winter weather fast approaching, comes a few reminders to students & parents, please remember:

♦ Be ready for the bus at least 5 minutes before it is due to arrive, drivers cannot wait or sound the horn, students must start out the door when the bus pulls up.
♦ Stay back 15 ft. from the road and wait for the driver’s signal before boarding the bus.
♦ Follow the riding rules.
♦ Dress appropriately for colder weather, including footwear.

Thanks again for your support, let’s all continue to have a safe and successful school year!

VCR – Living Life to the Fullest

Sandy Creek Central School students in grades 6-12 enjoyed an uplifting and powerful message by Bob Lenz, an author and national speaker. In his message to the students, Bob stressed the Value of each person and their tremendous worth, Courage to stand up for what is right, and Respect for each other, teachers, their parents, and for the diversities that make each of us unique.

Bob Lenz speaks to over 350,000 teens and parents across North America each year though school assembly programs and events. He connects with the hearts and minds of youth, sharing personal stories and experiences that help youth deal with real life while challenging them to make a difference in their world. He explores sober issues while using his unique gift of humor, and somewhere between laughing at one of his embarrassing moments and getting choked up over one of his true stories, they realize their lives have been changed.

Freshman Class Supports CNY Ronald McDonald House

The class of 2015 collected items from the CNY Ronald McDonald House wish list (found on their website). Over 200 items were donated and delivered by the group of students above. Also donated were the Disney characters created by the freshman students for their homecoming wall. The Ronald McDonald House of Central New York is a safe haven for families of seriously ill children hospitalized in the Syracuse and surrounding areas.

Pictured above: Matt Ennist, Adrian Ranieri, Alina Quintana, Anita Glenister, April Miller, Jordin Christian, and Sarah McDougal.

3d Annual Alumni Basketball

Friday, Dec. 30th 6 p.m., H.S. Gym

Boys & Girls Games

3-Point Bonanza Contest sponsored by Fravel Masonry, Inc.

Contact Nate at Barbershop for more information

Sponsored by SC Sports Booster Club

** PLEASE NOTE **

The MOST

9th Grade Science Trip

Date Has Changed To March 30, 2012
Japanese Educators Visit Sandy Creek Central School District

On October 6 Sandy Creek Central School hosted a group of visitors from Japan. The group of seventeen included several elementary, middle and high school teachers, a college professor and representatives from the Japanese Department of Education. The purpose of the visit was to observe and ask questions about the award winning inclusive education program at our school. The visit was part of a project researching how to improve educational experiences for students with disabilities in Japan. While here, the group was able to observe students in Kindergarten through high school while they attended classes, ate lunch in the cafeteria and socialized in the hallways. They spent time visiting with teachers, administrators and support staff to gain insight into how our program works and what the benefits are for all students. The Japanese educators learned about the inclusive education program at Sandy Creek through the School of Education at Syracuse University, which named Sandy Creek Central School a District of Promise as a result of our commitment to inclusive education.

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

Ketchup with the Kitchen

We have some new food items this year that have gone over very well. For breakfast, we have had omelets and for lunch, beef quesadillas and chicken riggies. In December, we’re planning a barbeque chicken flatbread sandwich. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.
Concussions

“What is a concussion?”

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head could be serious. Concussions are usually temporary, but may cause headaches and problems with concentration, memory, judgment, balance and coordination.

“Is there new legislation about concussions?”

Governor Cuomo recently signed a new law in New York called the “Concussion Management and Awareness Act”. Starting in July of 2012, one of the requirements of the law is that any student-athlete suspected of a concussion must be immediately removed from play, and must then see a Health Care Provider. New York State is the 33rd state to pass such a law.

The purpose of this law is for the safety of the student and to ensure that every school is prepared to treat and monitor for concussions.

“Will more information be coming about this?”

Yes, as guidelines and policies are developed for this legislation, we will keep parents informed. More information about concussion can be viewed on the “Nurse News” bulletin board outside the Nurses Office.

Cold & Flu Season

“If the flu shot is the same as last year, why does my child need one again this year?”

Every year, the CDC decides what strains of influenza will probably be circulating in the United States. For only the 8th time in history, they predict that the same strains of flu will be prevalent, and that is why the formula for the vaccine is the same. The reason that everyone does indeed need to be immunized again is that the antibodies the body makes from the vaccine do not last in the blood stream for more than a year typically. So last year’s shot has probably “worn off”.

“If my child is well enough to be in school with a cold, what are some things I should remind her of to keep her comfortable and from spreading her germs around?”

Remind your children to use and discard tissues promptly. Send them with their own box of tissues, if possible. Advise them not to share personal items. Remind them to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze (preferably into a tissue or their elbow), keep their hands away from their face, and wash their hands often with soap and water. Suggest that they silently sing the “Happy Birthday” song while washing their hands. Hand sanitizer is also a good idea in between hand washes.

“When should I keep my child home?”

Please do not send your child to school if they have a fever over 100.4, a significant cough that seems “constant”, vomiting, diarrhea, honey-crusted sores around nose or mouth, large amount of discolored nasal discharge, or if their eyes are red and draining. If your child was diagnosed with strep throat, they need to stay home at least 24 hours AFTER they have started the medication to treat it.

“Wouldn’t it be better to send my child to school sick if I want them to be seen at the School Based Health Center?”

It is better if you keep your child home, call the Health Center and make an appointment, and then bring your child in, for at least 2 reasons: First of all, the Health Center may not be able to see your child right away in the morning. They are very busy, especially during cold/flu season. So your child is then in the classroom exposing the other students to illness while they wait for the appointment, and secondly, if your child is too sick to be in school, the Health Center will be calling you to pick them up, and you will have to leave work anyway. Missing a day of work is a very tough decision for parents, so if your child DOES NOT have any of the symptoms mentioned in the previous question, they SHOULD be in school. If your child is well enough to come to school, but you do want them assessed at the School Based Health Center, please SEND A NOTE GRANTING PERMISSION for this. The school nurses will have to track you down and disrupt you to get your permission if your child tells us that you told them to “go to the Health Center to have their throat checked”, for instance.

Dimitri Dawson, grade 5, observed looking at some of the information available on the “Nurse News” Bulletin Board.

As always, if you ever have a question, feel free to contact the School Nurses at 387-3445, extensions 1501 and 1502. Laurie Crast, RN (MS/HS) and Claudia Hurne, RN (Pre-K / Elementary) are available to help.
Technology Updates – Email request

The advances that have occurred in technology over the last decade have dramatically improved our level of communication and access to information. We can send or receive information better, faster and more accurately than ever before. At SCCS we are constantly seeking to improve our communication with parents and the community. Recently, the superintendent sent out an e-mail via our mass communication system (the same system which sends school closings via telephone). This e-mail was sent to all parents who had registered an address with the Sandy Creek School District. If you did not receive this e-mail, then we ask that you please register an address with us. The e-mail system will send you school closings (although we will still utilize the phone calling system), but the primary purpose for this part of the system will be to send information to parents about upcoming events. This newsletter can keep you up-to-date on events and information at the school, but there are times when it may be important to get information to the community immediately. To register your e-mail address with us, please visit: www.sccs.cnyric.org/collection. If a security warning pops up, please disregard the message and proceed with the registration of your e-mail address. This will allow us to send you important information about school events or messages directly to your computer. You can still visit our website at www.sccs.cnyric.org to review any other information you may need or contact the school directly.

Mobility and education

As we look forward and plan for the future of technology in education one trend that is becoming more evident is the importance of mobility. The advances in the wireless platforms and the applications that are being developed for mobile devices are leading more school districts down this path. Some schools are actually reducing their infrastructure and taking a BYOD (bring your own device) approach. They are providing wireless access and housing more information in “the cloud”. This allows access to any device which can connect to the internet. Our goal for this coming year will be to expand our wireless coverage and explore the use of mobile devices. Currently the district has a number of iPads in service and we are looking at Apples Education platform. More information will be forthcoming in future newsletters.
SCCS Athletics

The Varsity Football Team had a successful season, 4-3 in Class D—West; 5-3 overall. I’m very proud of our team & coaches' effort and commitment.

Our Modified Football team had an excellent season this year. We finished the season 6-0!

The Varsity boys Soccer struggled early in the season with a lack of players and later with the injury bug. Overall our record wasn't great at 1-14 but as a team, we progressed and learned a lot. I enjoyed very much my first year coaching and appreciate the opportunity I was given.

The Varsity Cheerleading team celebrated success on and off the field. They completed the following service projects to the community: Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk, raised $250 for the fight against cancer, Breast Cancer Awareness Night at Homecoming Game, Service at Stone Soup Dinner, Assisting with APW cheerleaders' routine. The Cheerleaders also performed their routine at pep rallies and welcomed Ice Inc. as their guest dance crew at the pep rallies. Competitively, the cheerleaders earned 4th place at Liverpool, 3rd place at NNY, 2nd place at the Frontier League and ended their season with a first place victory as Section III Class D Champions. Michaela Mothersell and Torrie Edwards earned Frontier League Senior All Stars. Section III All Stars named were Torrie Edwards, Michaela Mothersell and Sarah Tyrrell. The team also won the Sportsmanship banner at the NNY Competition. Great job ladies!

Cross Country had its biggest team in 8 years. The boys team was led by Cody Donahue who placed 30th at the state championships. The girls team had 16 members and was led by freshmen Rachel Yerdon. Both teams had members finish many of the races in the top 10. The teams had a very successful season as a whole. Congratulations!

Captains Liberty Yalch and Josh Kilts provided the team leadership to bring the Cross Country Modified squad to another winning season! Our modified squad showed great depth, outscoring their opponents at most dual- and tri-league meets. Our girls modified runners WON the Chittenango Invitational, thanks to outstanding puddle-jumping and mud-running. All 22 runners made great improvement in their pace and endurance, with personal best times posted at League Championships. Both the Boys and the Girls teams brought home trophies from the Adirondack Invite. Thanks to our XC families and to our running community, the Cross the creek home invitational was a huge success, with nearly 600 runners here at Sandy Creek. Congratulations, Mudpuppies, on another successful season!

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Congratulations to Girls Soccer, Girls Cross Country and Cheerleading for qualifying as New York State Scholar Athlete Teams with a combined average of 90% or higher:

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Winter sports have started and schedules are available. We hope to see you at the games!!
National Honor Society
Blood Drive a Success

The National Honor Society hosted their annual fall blood drive on Tuesday, November 8th from 8:30am-1:30pm in the High School gym.

NHS blood drive recruiters were able to fill 74 of the 79 appointment slots for the day. Hosting blood drives is a simple community service project that has a huge impact on not only the NHS members, but our whole student body and our community. On the 8th, NHS checked-in 56 student donors and 15 adult donors. The National Honor Society exceeded the drive goal set by the American Red Cross by 10 donors!! Typically the NHS hosts two blood drives a year. This year, however, they have worked with the American Red Cross and administrators to add a third drive. All drives are open to the public. If you were not available to donate at the November drive, you will have another opportunity to donate in early March and again in May. Thank you to everyone who supports the National Honor Society and the American Red Cross.
The Sandy Creek Central School District Weight Room and Track will be open for the community’s use every evening that school is in session from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. They will not be open on snow days, holidays, vacations, weekends or any day that after school activities are cancelled. If you have any questions, please call the District Office at 387-3445.