



THE COMET'S TALE

Sandy Creek Central School

Board of Education:

President: Brian MacVean

Vice President: Shannon Akey

Amy Guarasce

Steven Haskins

Creg Ivison

Tammy Miller

John Shelmidine

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

High School: Maureen Shiel

Dean of Students:

Michael Stevens

Middle School Coordinator:

Carolyn Shirley

Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds:

Chris Ouderkirk

Cafeteria:

Cook Manager: Debbie Archibee

Transportation:

Transportation Supervisor:

Robin Cashel

Technology:

Coordinator: Paul Goulet

Athletics:

Coordinator: Mike Stevens

Testing:

Coordinator: Amy McCormack

Special Education:

Coordinator: Janice Burns



Stewart R. Amell
Superintendent of Schools

It's Budget Development Time!

It's that time of the year again when school districts throughout New York State begin budget deliberations.

For some, it is a painstaking process. Over the past three (3) years, most school districts have seen a tremendous decrease in state aid, especially, high need, rural schools like Sandy Creek. We depend heavily on state aid because our wealth and tax base is very limited compared to down state communities. This year won't be any different. For the first time, school districts will also have to build their expenditure plans around a new property tax cap.

Our Governor proudly stated in his budget address on January 17th that school districts throughout New York State will receive an additional 4% in state aid compared to this year's aid. When we carefully analyzed our budget worksheets we received from the state after his address, we were not surprised to find that the increase he has touted was actually a 0% increase compared to the current year. So again this year, we are faced with some very challenging budget decisions.

During the months of December and January, the Board of Education set their parameters for developing the 2012-2013 expenditure plans. As in the past, the Board always strives to offer our children the best education they can afford but realizes that the taxpayers just can not take on any additional tax burden. Unemployment is high and families are scrambling just to make ends meet. Our School Board has a tough task again this year.

The Board would like to see our expenditure plans stay at the 2011-2012 level and will aim for another 0% increase in the local tax levy. The administration is presently hard at work trying to meet those parameters.

The Board of Education invites all community members to our budget meetings and work sessions. The Board usually meets the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Check our website for dates and times. Also, our budget calendar is posted for your review. As always, we appreciate your support.

STAR Program May Lower Property Taxes: Have you filed your application?

Lower school taxes result from the homeowners who participate in the state's School Tax Relief (STAR) Program. STAR provides primary residence homeowners with a reduced assessment.

There are two STAR programs, as follows:

BASIC:

- * All eligible homeowners
- * Exempts first \$30,000 approximately [11-12 ranges of \$25,500 - \$30,000 specific by town](full value) of assessment for school tax purposes

Note: Do not have to renew this annually

ENHANCED:

- * For homeowners 65+ years of age
- * 2012 Enhanced Exemption based on 2010 Income for STAR purposes less than \$79,050
- * Exempts first \$60,000 approximately [11-12 ranges of \$51,090 - \$60,100 specific by town] (full value) of assessment for school tax purposes
- * **Must Be Renewed Annually by MARCH 1ST**
- * Cannot be combined with Basic STAR

Q. How do I get my Basic STAR tax cut?

A. You must file an application with your town assessor. The application has been made as simple as possible. Property owners who are granted the Basic STAR exemption generally will not need to reapply in subsequent years because the Basic STAR exemption is granted regardless of income. However, Basic STAR recipients will need to notify their assessor if their primary residence changes.

Q. Where do I get the STAR application?

A. Star applications are available from your town assessor, your county real property tax office, or on the internet: <http://www.orps.state.ny.us/ref/forms/pdf/rp425.pdf>. The Enhanced/Renewal Form: <http://www.orps.state.ny.us/ref/forms/pdf/rp425rnw.pdf>.

Q. Is there a deadline by which I must file the application form?

A. Yes. The deadline for applications is March 1st.

Q. Where do I file the STAR application form?

A. With your town assessor. The application is processed locally, not by the State. Do not file the application with the State Office of Real Property Services, the Governor's Office, your school district, or any other State agency.

Additional information on the STAR program can be obtained from your town assessor, county tax office, or on the internet at www.orps.state.ny.us/star.

**PRE K AND KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION
AT SANDY CREEK CENTRAL SCHOOL**

Sandy Creek Elementary will be conducting registration for the PreK and Kindergarten classes of 2012 on **Thursday, March 29th, 2012 from 1:00-6:00 PM** in the Elementary Office area. This registration is for:

- ◆ Incoming PreK students, who must be 4 years old on or before December 1st, 2012
- ◆ Incoming Kindergarten students **who do not attend our PreK program** in our elementary building. Incoming Kindergarten candidates must be 5 years old by December 1st, 2012.

Students and parents/guardians must be residents of the district. Parents/guardians must provide a valid birth certificate and shot record for their child. Proof of residency or custody may be necessary if there is a question.

PreK registration on this day determines participation. If more than 40 students are registered on this day, all candidates enter a lottery and the first 40 drawn are those chosen to participate. If 40 or less register, all candidates can participate from the start. A waiting list is established if we exceed the maximum of 40 students.

Students currently enrolled in our PreK will bring home paperwork for kindergarten registration, which should be returned to Mrs. McNitt or our office. This begins the process for those students.

All students will be screened in separate sessions, and more information regarding that will follow.

Please call the office if you have questions. We look forward to meeting you at registration!

Revised NYS 3-8 Testing Schedule

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has made additional changes to the 2012 NYS 3-8 testing format and schedule. In order to make the assessments a stronger indicator of student learning, NYSED has updated the format of the tests by increasing the numbers of tests items and length of testing times. These changes are reflected in the revised schedule below:

2012 Tests	Dates:
English Language Arts Grades 3-8 (3 days)	Tuesday, April 17 th – Thursday, April 19 th
Mathematics Grades 3-8 (3 days)	Wednesday, April 25 th – Friday, April 27 th

As part of accountability in meeting instructional targets, all schools are required to test 95% of their students on each NYS assessment. This means that it is very important for all students to be present for NYS testing as the mandated testing windows only include a few days for each assessment. Please review the chart above and plan accordingly. We appreciate your assistance. If you have any conflicts or questions about this revised schedule, please contact your child's building principal or Amy Howard-McCormack, 3-8 Testing Coordinator, at 387-3445 (extension 1113) or ahowardm@sccs.cnyric.org.

News from the SCCS High School

This school year Sandy Creek High School and Pulaski High School began sharing courses that each other did not offer. These courses are primarily advanced level or college courses that benefit our college bound seniors. To date we have Pulaski students taking college English 101 and 102, college Biology 208, college Algebra and Trigonometry, college level Leaders of the Twentieth Century, and Introduction to Government at Sandy Creek. Sandy Creek students are currently taking college Pre-Calculus and Calculus at Pulaski. We are hoping to expand the course sharing opportunities for the 2012-2013 school year.

In the Fall of 2012 Sandy Creek will offer to Pulaski students: college English 101 and 102, college Biology 208, college Algebra and Trigonometry, college Leaders of the Twentieth Century and Introduction to Government. Pulaski will offer Sandy Creek students: college Pre-Calculus and Calculus, college Spanish 221, college Political Science 121, college Economics 102, Introduction to Web Design, Music Theory, Forensics and Anatomy. As enrollments continue to decline sharing services will become even more valuable and economical. The Sandy Creek Central School District appreciates the alliance it has built with the Pulaski Central School District and hope that other school districts will take advantage of sharing services with each other.

8th Grade News

December 14th's Community Building event proved to be a HUGE success. Mrs. Maxon's 8th period Home and Career Skills students made nearly 12 dozen cookies. After school, more students volunteered their time to make cards for the Maintenance workers, Bus Drivers, Cafeteria staff, School Nurses and Main office. A third group of students arranged and packaged the cookies on platters to be delivered to each area. Budding engineers were evident as the platters began to look more like art than food. We received thank you emails and notes from each of the recipients of the tasty platters. It was apparent that the beneficiaries enjoyed the gesture as much as the students enjoyed making the effort together. Pizza, chips and soda were served to the students while watching Holiday movies. Students and teachers alike had a great time. A special thanks to the Middle School Student Council, who provided the funds for the food, and to Mrs. Maxon for integrating our event into her class.



Platters are complete! They looked too good to eat.



Students worked hard on cards to say thank you to bus drivers, nurses, custodians, maintenance staff and office ladies.

Technology News & Notes

The changes coming to the educational environment are exciting and challenging. Schools across the nation are scrambling to face the challenges of restructuring curriculum and assessment. At the same time the technology we use to prepare, present and record the mind boggling array of data and media used in the classroom is rapidly progressing. Personal devices are quickly becoming the norm for most individuals. Our phones now carry so much more than just phone numbers. We have access to complete contact info, email, texting, web browsers, media and personal calendars. We carry our lives in our pockets. That same change is coming to the computerized world. Tablets that are smaller, faster, wireless, and can access info from a variety of sources are making their appearance. As we prepare students for the future it is our responsibility to further expose our students to this type of learning environment. With the partnerships that are developing between textbook publishers and tablet devices this is becoming more of a reality for many districts.

The challenge in any school district is to find the balance between affordable technology and our return on investment (ROI). For example if we provided some type of tablet for every student (a fairly expensive proposition) then we would need to consider where that money would come from and where we could reduce other costs.

One possibility would be the elimination of textbook purchases in printed form and purchasing e-versions. Textbooks typically cost around \$75 to \$125, and they have a 3-5 year life span. A similar e-version of that same book may set us back \$15/year. We need to also consider if students would gain advantages from interactive e-versions of texts over printed material. The ability to have imbedded video, touch definitions, hyperlinks to relevant content, etc., may be very appealing, but does it increase learning? These are factors that are difficult to evaluate from a strictly monetary point of view. Other savings may be realized by reducing or eliminating the computers in every classroom. There are many other factors that need to be considered including student document storage and printing, device security and repair, tablet compatibility with on-line formats, etc.. The only clear choice is that we can't just stand still. We need to adapt to provide our students with relevant resources.

The requirements coming from the New York State Education Department are considerable and many of them are changing as we speak. This presents us with both a challenge and an opportunity to meet the needs of our students. The SCCS District will continue to investigate relevant and successful technology integration methods so that we may provide our students with the education they need and deserve.

Winter Themed Family Reading Night a Hit!

Families who attended the January 18 Family Reading Night had rave reviews for the event. A simple pizza dinner kicked off the evening followed by three centers. Each center had a winter theme including: writing instructions for how to build a snow man, a snow fort and having a snow ball fight; snowman glyphs where families colored snowmen following certain criteria; and a family reading center in the Library. Each student went home with a surprise bag full of books!

The next Family Reading Night will be held on March 14th from 5:45-7:30 and will celebrate Dr. Seuss with related activities and books. Hope to see you there!

School Nurse's Notes

FEBRUARY IS CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

Your child's dental health is very important. You have probably heard: **"Your smile is a window to your health"**. That statement is really true! Poor dental health can lead to serious health problems (cardiovascular disease, diabetes complications, and many other conditions).

Here's what we are doing here at SCCS to help keep your child's smile healthy:

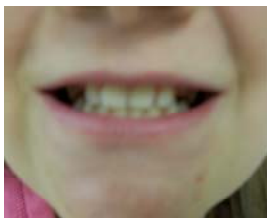
Annual toothbrush giveaway grades Pre-K-5: Every year, your child is given a new toothbrush in February. Any student in Grades 6 thru 12 is welcome to come to the Nurse's Office and request one as well.

Fluoride Swish Program: Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay. With parent permission, students in Grades 1 -5 can participate in a weekly "swish" of fluoride solution on their teeth. Currently, about 85% of our students participate in the program.

Sandy Creek Dental Program, School Based Health Center:

Val Graf, Dental Hygienist, is available three days per week to help meet the dental needs of students Pre-K-12 who are enrolled in the program. She does cleanings, sealants, and can also see that the child's *Dental Certificate* (which is requested in grades K, 2, 4, 7 & 10) is filled out. Mrs. Graf also does a lot of teaching. Her annual **Tooth Talks** will be in March this year. Sandy Creek Parents are very fortunate to have this program available to our school. If your child is not enrolled in this free program, please contact the **School Based Health Center** at **387-3620** for enrollment forms, if you are interested.

Remember: Your smile is a window to your overall health!



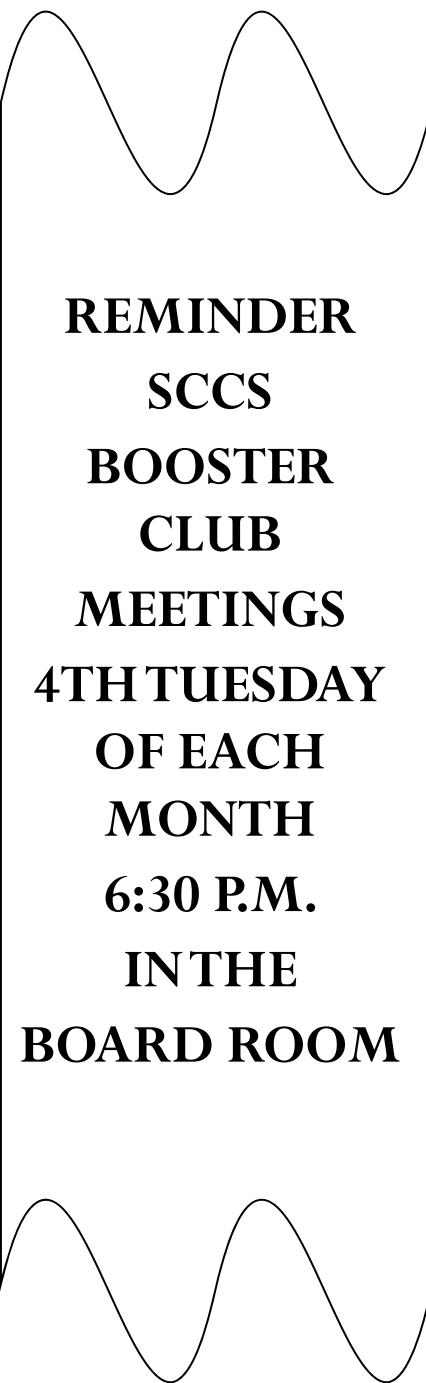
Calendar of Coming Events

March

- 3/1**, Music in Our Schools Concert @ 7:00pm - HS Gym
- 3/6-10**, Pre-K Health Screening
- 3/6**, MS/HS Progress Reports Mailed Home
- 3/8**, Board of Education Mtg. @ 7 pm
- 3/10**, SAT Test Date (register online or with Guidance)
- 3/14**, Family Reading Night, 5:45 pm dinner; 6:30 pm Centers
- 3/16-17**, Drama Club Production
- 3/19**, STAFF DEVELOPMENT ~ NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
- 3/22**, BOE Work Session @ 7:00pm
- 3/27**, Booster Club Mtg. @ 6:30pm
- 3/28**, 7th-12th Grade Spring Band Concert @ 7:00pm
- 3/29**, Pre-K & Kindergarten Registration 2:00-6:00pm

April

- 4/2-9**, SPRING RECESS ~ NO SCHOOL
- 4/10**, 4th Quarter Begins
- 4/12**, Board of Education Meeting @ 7:00pm
- 4/12**, Rising Stars Program Ends
- 4/13**, MS/HS Report Cards Mailed Home
- 4/14**, ACT Test Date (register online or with Guidance)
- 4/17**, Elementary Report Cards Sent Home
- 4/17-19** 3rd-8th NYS ELA Exams
- 4/24**, BOE Work Session @ 7:00pm
- 4/24**, Booster Club Mtg. @ 6:30pm
- 4/25-27**, 3rd-8th NYS Math Exams
- 4/30**, Fall Sports Sign-ups Begin



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

Coming Events Continued...

May

- 5/1**, Early Literacy Group ends
- 5/3**, Science Fair 8:00am-8:00pm
- 5/3**, SCCS Budget Public Hearing & Board of Education Meeting @ 7:00pm
- 5/5**, SAT Test Date (register online or with Guidance)
- 5/14**, MS/HS Progress Reports Mailed Home
- 5/15**, 5th & 6th Grade Spring Band & Choral Concert @ 7:00pm
- 5/15**, Budget Vote and School Board Elections 12:00-8:00pm
- 5/17**, Fall Sports Sign-ups End
- 5/18**, STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY ~ NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
- 5/18**, Kindergarten Screening for New Entrants not in our UPK
- 5/19**, Armed Forces Day
- 5/21-25**, Elementary End-of-Year Testing
- 5/22**, Booster Club Mtg. @ 6:30pm
- 5/24**, BOE Work Session @ 7:00pm
- 5/28**, Memorial Day, No School

June

- 6/2**, SAT Test Date (register online or with Guidance)
- 6/5**, MS Awards at noon; HS Awards 1:15 pm
- 6/6**, 7th-12th Grade Spring Choral Concert @ 7:00pm
- 6/8**, Elementary Awards 2 pm
- 6/14**, Flag Day Ceremony 2 pm
- 6/14**, Board of Education Meeting @ 7:00 pm
- 6/15**, Kindergarten Graduation 9 am
- 6/19**, Pre-K Sail-a-bration 10am & 1pm
- 6/21**, 5th Grade Graduation 10am
- 6/21**, Elem. Report Cards Sent Home
- 6/22**, Last day of school
- 6/23**, Commencement 10 am

Dear Parent, Guardian, and School Staff:

New York State Education Law Section 409-H, effective July 1, 2001, requires all public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools to provide written notification to all persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the school year. The following pesticide applications took place in the Sandy Creek Central School from September 1, 2010 to February 10, 2012:

There have been no pesticide applications during the above stated period.

As a reminder, the Sandy Creek Central School District is required to maintain a list of persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff who wish to receive 48-hour prior written notification of certain pesticide applications. The following pesticide applications are not subject to prior notification requirements:

- A school remains unoccupied for a continuous 72-hours following an application;
- Anti-microbial products;
- Nonvolatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- Nonvolatile insecticidal baits in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- Silica gels and other nonvolatile ready-to-use pastes, foams, or gels in areas inaccessible to children;
- Boric acid and disodium octaborate tetrahydrate;
- The application of EPA designated biopesticides;
- The application of EPA designated exempt materials under 40CFR152.25;
- The use of aerosol products with a directed spray in containers of 18 fluid ounces or less when used to protect individuals from an imminent threat from stinging and biting insects including venomous spiders, bees, wasps, and hornets.

In the event of an emergency application necessary to protect against an imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour prior notification list.

If you have not yet registered to receive 48-hour prior notification of pesticide applications that are scheduled to occur in your school, please complete the form below and return it to Shelley H. Fitzpatrick, Sandy Creek Central School District Business Administrator, PO Box 248, Sandy Creek, NY 13145, Phone: 315-387-3445 x1510, Fax: 315-387-2196.

Sandy Creek Central School District
 REQUEST FOR PESTICIDE APPLICATION NOTIFICATION
 (Please Print)

_____ School Building

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Please feel free to contact Chris Ouder Kirk, the Sandy Creek Central School District pesticide representative at: PO Box 248, Sandy Creek, NY 13145, Phone: 315-387-3445 x1510, Fax: 315-387-2196 for further information on these requirements, including information on the products that have been applied in this school.

Sincerely,

Shelley H. Fitzpatrick
Business Administrator

Congratulations to our teams!!



BOYS VARSITY SOCCER

Frontier League Sportsmanship Award Class C

GIRLS VARSITY CROSS COUNTRY

Frontier League Sportsmanship Award Class C



VARSITY CHEERLEADING

**Frontier League C Division Champions and Section III Class C Champions,
Michaela Mothersell & Torre Edwards Senior All-Stars at both
2d place at NY State Championship**

VARSITY WRESTLING

Frontier League C Champions

Individual Champion—Derek Pfluger

Section III Class D Champions—6th Year in a Row

Individual Champions—Jake Benedict, Derek Pfluger, Jared Soule & Ian Miller

Derek Pfluger named Most Outstanding Wrestler



**Overall Section III Wrestling Champions for their weight classes
are Derek Pfluger & Jared Soule. They now advance to NY State Championships**

**Always check the Sandy Creek website for the most
current calendar information. Visit us at
www.sccs.cnyric.org**

WALL OF DISTINCTION

The Sandy Creek Central School District, will again be accepting nominees for the "Wall of Distinction". Graduates of distinction are those who have achieved a high level of prominence in their personal and professional lives and who represent a positive role model to our youth.

- Candidates for the Wall of Distinction must be recommended by a resident of the Sandy Creek Central School District. Candidates must meet the following criteria:
- Must have achieved a high level of professionalism and distinction.
- Must be of sufficient moral character as to represent a positive role model to students in the school district.
- Candidates must be graduates of the Sandy Creek Central School District.

An Advisory Committee will coordinate the program. The members of the Advisory Committee are non-graduates of Sandy Creek. Please complete the nomination form located on the opposite page and return it to Stewart R. Amell, Superintendent of Schools, Sandy Creek Central School District, PO Box 248, Sandy Creek, NY 13145. The deadline for nominations is March 30, 2012.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

The Sandy Creek Middle School Student Council has been hard at work this year. We started off with our "no bullying" campaign by selling pink t-shirts designed by the students. The shirts were so popular we did a second round of sales that included hoodies as well. For two weeks in December we had a food drive to benefit the local food pantries. Our goal was to reach 500 or more food items with the incentive for the students to see their teachers dress up as Christmas elves. It worked! The students collected 502 items and the 8th grade teachers sported their best elf outfits.

The end of January began the middle school magazine sale. This sale helps support the funding for the 8th grade trip to Seabreeze in June. The sale is off to a productive start, and students have been working hard to sell their magazines. Many students met the first deadline of selling 3 magazine subscriptions, and will earn a "cash cow" that includes a small cash prize tucked in the back.

Another middle school dance will take place on March 9th for all middle school students. The dance is free of charge and supported by student council for all students to come out and have a good time. Finally, don't forget to keep collecting those box tops you see on many food products. Student council has been clipping and counting box tops throughout the year. The local Tops Market is a supporter of *Box Tops for Education* and carries many products with the small squares to be cut out and submitted to school.

The students are very lucky to have such a supportive community. Thank you for all you do.



Congratulations Rosie!!

On February 4th, 2012, Sandy Creek's own Rosie Morgan traveled to Onondaga Community College to compete in the Regional Spelling Bee.

Rosie is an 8th grade student at Sandy Creek Middle School and has been a part of the Scripps Howard Bee since she was in 4th grade. Rosie worked her way to 3rd place as just a 5th grader, and pulled off a trifecta; winning the bee in her 6th, 7th, and 8th grade years. The spelling champions and the runners up from all over Central New York move on to the next round which is a written test consisting of 35 questions. From there, the top 35 spellers advanced to the Regional Oral Bee. The next step after this round would be to head to Washington, D.C. Rosie was eliminated from the Regional Bee in the fifth round with the word *Vivace*. Sandy Creek is extremely proud of Rosie's accomplishments and congratulates her on her extraordinary spelling efforts and hard work!

**SANDY CREEK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
WALL OF DISTINCTION RECOGNITION PROGRAM
NOMINATION FORM**

Date: _____

Nominee to the Wall of Distinction: _____

Present Address: _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____

Year of Graduation: _____

Reasons for Nomination: _____

Nominated by: _____

Daytime Phone Number: (_____) _____

Mail to: Stewart R. Amell, Superintendent of Schools
Sandy Creek Central School District
PO Box 248
Sandy Creek, NY 13145

Deadline: March 30, 2012

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. 1503; HS: Ext. 1505
Transportation: Ext. 3330

We're on the Web!
www.sccs.cnyric.org

COMMUNITY TRACK/WEIGHT ROOM INFORMATION



The Sandy Creek Central School District Weight Room and Track are open for the community's use every evening that school is in session from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. 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.

The Comet's Tale Newsletter
Sandy Creek Central School
PO Box 248
Sandy Creek, NY 13145