Superintendent Amell Announces Retirement

After 12 years as Superintendent of Sandy Creek Schools, Stewart Amell has announced his plan to retire at the end of the 2015-16 school year.

‘This is by far, the best job I’ve ever had,’ said Amell, and with 40 years in education, in nearly every area possible, he has had ample opportunity to assess the educational job market. He has been a classroom teacher, building principal and district office administrator in districts ranging from small rural to very large rural, inner city districts to affluent suburbia. ‘Coming to Sandy Creek was a real good move for me,’ he said, noting that having grown up in the rural Tupper Lake, NY school district, the move was a perfect fit, adding ‘I feel like I am a rural person.’

While the district is rural and has one of the highest poverty rates in the area, Sandy Creek’s student achievement results are consistently among the top ranked in Oswego County. The New York State Education Department just released the 2014-15 graduation rates for NYS districts and Sandy Creek Central Schools is the highest in the county with a 95% graduation rate. This compares to the state average of 79% and the Oswego County average of 78%. Amell credits the wonderful staff, supportive parents, and committed and capable administrators in the district for these successes. ‘You’re only successful by who surrounds you, and I have been surrounded by the most committed and capable administrators and staff who have been at the heart of improving not only academics, but the culture of the district and community.’

The class of 2016 was in first grade when Amell came to the Sandy Creek District and it seems only fitting that they would graduate together. ‘I will be leaving with my head held high, and proud of the work that all of us have done in this district,’ he said, but he doesn’t plan to stop working completely. ‘I will be leaving with my head held high, and proud of the work that all of us have done in this district,’ he said, but he doesn’t plan to stop working completely. While he does plan to spend ‘a whole lot of time’ with his wife and grandchildren, he will also be volunteering and doing consultant work with initiatives in the county such as the poverty task force, Wisdom Thinkers Network and continuing to work with the drug and alcohol council.

Amell and his wife plan to stay in the Sandy Creek community where he says ‘I will always be here for the district.’

Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten Walk-In Registration Feb. 3-4

Sandy Creek Elementary will be conducting walk-in registration for Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten for the 2016-2017 school year on Wednesday, February 3rd and Thursday, February 4th from 1:00 – 6:00 pm on each of these days in the Elementary Office area. This registration is for:

- Incoming Kindergarten students who do not attend our Pre-K Program in our elementary building. Incoming Kindergarten candidates must be 5 years old on or before December 1, 2016 and
- Pre-Kindergarten students who are district residents and will be 4 years old on or before December 1, 2016.

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

Students currently enrolled in our Pre-K Program will bring home registration packets for Kindergarten, which should be returned to Mrs. McNitt or to the Elementary Office no later than Friday, February 5th.

(Continued on page 2)
K and Pre-K Walk-In Registration

(Continued from page 1)

Registrations are not official until all forms are completed and a valid proof of birth is included. Other records required are immunization records, custody papers and possibly proof of residency.

Students that register for Kindergarten will be screened in May and a mandatory Pre-K screening will be held in June. All prospective students must attend to hold their slot in the Pre-K program. More information regarding the screening dates and time will follow.

Forty slots are available for the Pre-Kindergarten program and will be filled by a lottery drawing if more than 40 applications are received. If 40 or less register, all candidates can participate from the start. A waiting list will be established if we exceed the maximum 40 slots by the registration deadline.

Please call the elementary office at 387-3445, if you have questions. We look forward to meeting you at registration!

Wisdom Thinkers County-wide Event

CTI hosted the county-wide celebration of the Wisdom Thinkers Network, 'Inspiring Oswego County,' which brought local schools, community and businesses together to celebrate the character education movement in the county. The evening featured testimonials and examples of how the Wisdom Thinkers and ‘Stories to Light Our Way,’ have changed individuals, classes, schools and communities. Pictured above: Wisdom Thinkers founder Ralph Singh gives the students from Sandy Creek a ‘group hug’ following their presentation about the program and how they have implemented the ‘Stories To Light the Way’ initiative in their school.

Congratulations to the following Fall sports teams for winning the Frontier League Sportsmanship Award:

- Varsity Girls’ Soccer (C Division)
- Varsity Girls’ Cross Country (B Division)
- Varsity Boys’ Cross Country (B Division)

National Honor Society Induction Held at High School

The Carpe Diem Chapter of the National Honor Society at Sandy Creek High School recently inducted 16 new members into its chapter at a ceremony held Nov. 10 at the school.

Membership in the National Honor Society is more than just a recognition of scholastic achievement, the NHS's four principles of character, scholarship, leadership and service represent the qualities that members in the elite organization also possess. Community service is a large aspect of membership into the Sandy Creek chapter as described during the ceremony by Chapter Adviser, Kelly Halko. She explained how NHS members at Sandy Creek recently coordinated a local CROP walk to benefit food pantries in the area and will participate in blood drives, holiday gift and food basket giveaways and more throughout the school year.

Current members and chapter officers shared the four principles and following the NHS Oath, each new member was recognized and congratulated by Sandy Creek High School Principal Maureen Shiel and Superintendent of Schools Stewart Amell. Amell noted with pride that the inductees represent one third of the entire class of juniors at the school.

It was further noted by Principal Shiel that the new inductees are involved in many other activities in the school. ‘These students are scholars, musicians, athletes, artists, and singers,’ said Shiel, further calling them ‘the example centers of the entire school.’

Commending the students for their achievement, Shiel said, ‘You put honor in Honor Society.’

New members joined current members Rosaleen Morgan, Bridget McClusky, Kate Hanni, Morgan Ranieri, Chelsey Blodgett, Tyler Brown, Dylan Bryant, Emily Cheney, Andrew Olin and Kasey Yerdon to make up the Carpe Diem Chapter of the National Honor Society at Sandy Creek High School.

For up-to-date events, sports schedules, activities, contact information and more visit the Sandy Creek Central School District website at: www.SCCS.cnyric.org
Captain Clean - Sandy Creek’s Very Own Superhero!

You may have heard of Captain America or even Mr. Clean, but Sandy Creek Elementary School introduced their very own health-conscious super hero, Captain Clean, during morning program at the school. School nurse Claudia Hurne was speaking with students about germs that might be found on their hands when a masked super hero dressed in red, white and blue and sporting a cape, appeared and shared the importance of handwashing to fight against germs. “Germs in the common cold are responsible for 22 million missed school days,” he told the students and asked them to pledge to wash their hands often.

Sandy Creek Inducts Twenty New Members into NJHS

Sandy Creek Middle School Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society inducted twenty new members in a recent ceremony held at the Middle/Senior High School. Middle School Principal Carolyn Shirley and NJHS Adviser Susan Gafner welcomed the new members who joined the eleven current members of the elite group.


Members of the Sandy Creek High School robotics team competed in a local VEX Robotics Competition, held at G. Ray Bodley High School in Fulton. The teams from Sandy Creek did very well in the competition and gained valuable experience at the competition where they faced teams from all across the Central New York area. The teams are coached by Technology teacher John DeGone.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Sports Signups Begin</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-K and Kindergarten Registration</td>
<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>1-6 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-K and Kindergarten Registration</td>
<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>1-6 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half Day Staff Development</td>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
<td>Elem. Early Dismissal at 11:30 am, No PM Pre-K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Education Meeting</td>
<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>6 pm</td>
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<td>Spring Sports Signups End</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
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<td>President’s Day - School Closed</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
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<td>Mid-Winter Recess - No School</td>
<td>Feb. 15-19</td>
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<td>SAT Test</td>
<td>Mar. 5</td>
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<td>Board of Education Meeting</td>
<td>Mar. 10</td>
<td>6 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Spring Musical</td>
<td>Mar. 11-12</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>County-wide Staff Development Day - No School</td>
<td>Mar. 18</td>
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<td>Good Friday - School Closed</td>
<td>Mar. 25</td>
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<td>Earth Day</td>
<td>Apr. 22</td>
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<td>Grade 3-8 ELA Test</td>
<td>Apr. 6-7</td>
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<td>7-12 Band Concert, 7 pm</td>
<td>Apr. 7</td>
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<td>OCMEA Choral Festival, Pulausk HS</td>
<td>Apr. 8-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3-8 Math Test</td>
<td>Apr. 13-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Education Meeting - BOCES Vote, 6 pm</td>
<td>Apr. 18</td>
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<td>Earth Day</td>
<td>Apr. 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Recess - No School</td>
<td>Apr. 25-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Sports Signups Begin</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Education Meeting, Budget Hearing 6 pm</td>
<td>May 5</td>
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<td>Science Fair 12-6 pm</td>
<td>May 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half Day Staff Development</td>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Elem. Early Dismissal at 11:30 am, No PM Pre-K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Election and Budget Vote 12-6 pm</td>
<td>May 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th &amp; 6th Grade Band/Chorus Concert, 7 pm</td>
<td>May 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-12 Chorus Concert, 7 pm</td>
<td>May 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial Day Observed - No School</td>
<td>May 30</td>
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Student Council Holds Food Drive for Local Food Pantry

Members of the Sandy Creek Middle School Student Council coordinated a food drive to benefit a local food pantry, and the officers from the group took time to deliver their items in time for distribution to needy families during the holiday season. Pictured delivering the many boxes of non-perishable food items are, left to right: Samantha Ranieri, Mia Rupert and Jessica Graham. Student Council advisers, Kim Curley and Karin Johnson, not pictured, assisted the students with the delivery.

NHS Students Help Others Have a Merrier Christmas

More than 100 needy households in the Sandy Creek School District were the recipients of boxes of presents and food items to provide holiday cheer and a complete meal during the annual holiday distribution day in the district. Student helpers from the National Honor Society volunteered to wrap hundreds of presents and pack boxes of food items to support the cause. Pictured above, left: Emily Cheney, Kate Hanni, Brigid McClusky and Rosie Morgan pause during their busy morning of wrapping to smile while Nicholas Radford, (lower right) stacks boxes of food items for distribution. Hundreds of boxes of presents and food were handed out to needy families during the holiday give-away coordinated in the district.

Eighth Graders Say Thank You

Eighth graders at Sandy Creek spent several hours before the holiday break creating goodie plates of homemade delights for district personnel. The students came together in a community building activity to bake and decorate the holiday treats, then packaged them for delivery, complete with a hand-crafted holiday greeting card. The plates were distributed to staff in the bus garage, district office, maintenance, and cafeteria departments, as well as the nurses’ office in the school to show their support and to say thank you to the staff for all they do for the students in the district.

Breanna Davis ties a bow on the platter of cookies and goodies created by the eighth graders to say thank you to members of the support staff in the Sandy Creek District.

At right: Sadie Lurcock decorates a card that will be attached to the goodie platters created by students during a community building project at the school. The students distributed thank you treats to members of the support staff in the district prior to the holiday break.
Middle School Honor Roll and Perfect Attendance Awards Presented

6th Grade


7th Grade


High Honor: Sarah Balcom, Evelyn Bice, Sydney Burgy, Annie Chen.

2016 All-County Band Festival

The Oswego County Music Educator’s Association (OCMEA) 2016 All-County Band Festival was held on Jan. 16th at Altmar-Parish-Williamstown Junior/Senior High School. Music students from all nine school districts in the county auditioned for the elite group and the top musicians were selected to participate. Representing the Sandy Creek Central School District was Caleigh Rosenbaum who played alto saxophone with the senior high band under the direction of Syracuse University Music Professor Justin Jay Mertz, who was guest conductor for the performance. Caleigh is a student of Thomas Artini, band director for the Sandy Creek District.

Sandy Creek Students Learn What It Takes To Work In Sciences

Students at Sandy Creek High School interested in pursuing a post-secondary education and career in a science-related field were recently afforded an opportunity to learn more about what it takes to make their dreams a reality. Five alumni from Sandy Creek Central School District, all of whom have an affiliation with the sciences, recently met with more than a dozen high school students to discuss what it takes to work in one of the branches of science. Former SCCS students Izzy Bray, Rachel Yerden, Sharron Garvin, Collin Reff and Amy Stitt discussed the hard work, dedication and commitment it takes to earn a degree and start a career in the sciences.

Holiday Concerts Delight Audiences

The Sandy Creek Central School District showcased a wide variety of musical entertainment during the recent holiday season. From the Pre-Kindergarten, K-5 Elementary School Concert, and 6-12 Choral and Band Concerts, the shows provided visitors to the school with ample opportunity to ‘get into the holiday spirit’ as well as enjoy the sights and sounds of the season.

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Sandy Creek Students Recreate Natural Environment With Biomes

Sandy Creek Central High School students in Galen Fellows' science classes recently blended creativity, artistic ability and science to create replicas of the world's most distinct locations. As part of a project, students were asked to replicate a biome within a diorama, or in other words, select a specific region of the world and create a miniature model of that region.

From the Sahara Desert to tropical rainforests, students exposed their creative touch on the projects, while also maintaining the authenticity of their particular biome. According to Fellows, the students did an amazing job of capturing the essence of each region.

Student Alayna Blount's diorama featuring the Arctic tundra seemed to be the class favorite, Fellows said. For her project, Blount used an aquarium to showcase the icy tundra, which included figures of animals native to the region.

Sandy Creek Top Speller Crowned

The Sandy Creek Central School District held their annual spelling bee contest to determine the top spellers in the district. Fourteen students earned the right to be on stage for the oral portion of the bee, following a written exam taken earlier in the month. For the second year in a row, Matt Trudell has been named top speller in grades four through eight in the Sandy Creek School District. Trudell, a sixth grader, correctly spelled the final word, 'personnel' to be named the champion over second place finisher Travis Benjamin, an eighth grader. Taking third was Sadie Lurcock, also an eighth grader. The top three students will advance to the next level in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, where they will participate in the WCNY and Syracuse.com/Post Standard spelling bee to be held in early 2016.

Sandy Creek varisty football team, led by head coach Michael Stevens, and assistant coaches Matt Soluri and Kevin Halsey, earned Section III Champion honors and were recognized by the Board of Education at a special banquet held at the school. Team and individual honors and awards were handed out to team members during the banquet including CNY and New York State All Stars: Joe Benedict, 1st team defense; Tyler Brown, 2nd team defense; and Alex Van Ry, honorable mention offense.

Banquet Honors Champions in Cheerleading and Football

The Sandy Creek Fall Competitive Cheerleading team, coached by Tanya VanOrnum won the Section III, Division C Championship and was honored at a special banquet by the Board of Education for their outstanding achievement. Pictured in front, left to right are: Kim Distasio, Mikayla Russell, Sara Castor, and Abby Widrig. In back, left to right are: Rosie Walter, Dallas Blair, Lindsey Goodnough, Bailey Laundre, and Jessica Leppien. Not pictured is Angelina Salzman.

Pictured, kneeling in front, left to right are: Tyler Mason, Matt Trudell, Luke Yerdon and Terry Eggleston. In back, standing, left to right are: Sandy Creek Middle School Principal Carolyn Shirley, Travis Benjamin, Sadie Lurcock, Marissa Brennan, Dorothy Searles, Alex Caufield, Cailey Robbins, Emma Halsey, Hailey McNitt, Sydney Cook, Mackenzie Kwak and Brandie Norton, teacher and coordinator of the spelling bee.

Want to be notified by e-mail, text message or phone call of emergency school announcements? Sign up under the notification registration box on the district website at www.SCCS.cnyric.org and you will receive immediate notification of any school closings, delays, cancellations and early dismissals, as well as other pertinent emergency messages from the district.
OCAY League Competition Puts STEM to the Test

The second Oswego County Academic Youth (OCAY) League competition focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math when its challenges tasked students from eight Oswego County schools to construct parachutes from everyday materials that would be used to complete specific tasks, such as accuracy, rate of descent, passenger safety and replication of DaVinci's parachute design.

In addition to the parachute construction, the teams were given five quizzes based on math, physics and military history.

When all of the points were tallied, only 2.2 points separated first and second place with the team from Oswego taking the gold medal, Fulton finishing in second place and Mexico's team taking the bronze.

OCAY League was founded on the premise of academic excellence through competition and is coordinated by the Center for Instruction, Technology and Innovation's Arts-in-education program. Matt Goodnough is the OCAY League coordinator for the 2015-2016 school year.

Andrew Olin and Rosie Morgan prepare for the safety test of their parachute using a raw egg suspended from their design symbolizing their 'passenger.' Points were scored based on how well the egg survived the drop.

Sandy Creek Students Explore STEM Careers

Sandy Creek students recently attended a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) career exploration series hosted by West Genesee High School where they learned about STEM careers from a panel of speakers from Bristol Myers-Squibb. The speakers fielded questions from students, parents and teachers regarding careers available at Bristol Myers-Squibb and the academic paths and career ready skills that potential employers are looking for in the field. Pictured, left to right are: Adam Yerden, Seth Lurcock, R. Nicholas Potter, Abbey Fitzpatrick, Stephanie Brown, Nicholas Radford and Bridgette Anderson. Accompanying the students were SCCS teachers Karin Johnson, Ted Krenrich and Kelly Halko.

Sandy Creek Elementary School Annual Thanksgiving Pageant

Traditional songs of Native Americans, Thanksgiving and harvest time were sung by students in grades one and two at Sandy Creek Elementary School.

The Sandy Creek Elementary Thanksgiving Feast and Festival of Music is an annual tradition in the district. Principal Bonnie Finnerty, in an attempt to find out how long the tradition has been going on, found out that in many ways the tradition is older than many of the staff and parents, determining that it is 35-40+ years strong.

The students in grades one and two came together, much in the same way the Pilgrims and Native Americans did, to celebrate with a traditional feast. They also performed several songs to the delight of the many parents and family members gathered in attendance. The first grade students, dressed as Native Americans, joined the second graders, dressed as Pilgrims in singing and performing holiday favorites and traditional Thanksgiving and harvest songs.

The Sandy Creek team is pictured during the second OCAY League competition. Team members included Lindsey Goodnough, Rosie Morgan, Oren McDougal, Chris Blount, T.J. Harding, Tyler Brown, Andrew Olin and John McGrew. The team is coached by Caitlyn White.

Maiah Owen is all smiles as she is seated for the Annual Thanksgiving Feast.
At the end of each sport season, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) recognizes those student athlete teams who have excelled in the classroom. In order to meet the stringent requirements, team combined averages must be 90% or greater and the following teams were recognized for this outstanding academic achievement:

Boys’ Cross Country: Isaac Eisch, Jesse Cornell, Nick Radford, David Hennigan, Nic Potter, Oren McDougal and Sean Hennigan.


Girls’ Soccer: Jasmine Williams, Kate Hanni, Carley Stoker, Carley Lyndaker, Allison Burrows, Hunter Gable, Hanna Dasno, Michaela Sullivan, Cassidy Carnes, Toni Duehring, Maggie Vasquez and Tessie Jones.