

The Panther Point

Glebe Street Elementary Newsletter for the month of JANUARY 2012



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE...

Happy New Year, Panthers! I hope that your Holiday Recess was as enjoyable and restful as mine. I had the opportunity to catch up with many loved ones over this break, and with my mind now on New Year's resolutions it's time to start looking for that gym membership card.

While visiting family in the Rochester area an article from the local newspaper caught my attention, and I'd like to share. The article, called "Rural students suffer under New York state aid losses,"¹ dealt with the challenges that rural schools are facing in that area, but it could just as accurately describe our own region. School districts statewide educate their students with funds that are generated by a combination of local property taxes and State Aid, and the amount of State money that each district receives is calculated using a complicated formula. In other words, districts filled with very valuable properties are able to generate a great deal of tax revenue, making them less reliant on State Aid. On the other hand, districts in poor and rural areas without high property values and the tax revenue that goes with them absolutely depend on State Aid to pay the bills. With the State's economic crisis, the amount of State Aid that districts receive has been cut, which has led to a much greater relative burden for those districts that cannot offset the loss through their tax base.

For example, the article references one public school district in our state in which "elementary school students learn six foreign languages and high-schoolers have their pick of more than 200 elective courses — including 30 Advanced Placement courses — and can get in-school training from voice coaches for the Metropolitan Opera." What great opportunities, but while I would never wish to deny that district's children any of its impressive offerings, the sentence was difficult to read as a principal in a district that last year found itself forced into the difficult decision of no longer funding elementary field trips or arts in education.

The truth is that there is no longer any "fat" to cut in most rural districts. Johnstown's Board of Education, with years of prudent decision-making and careful planning, has protected us from the types of large-scale lay-offs and cuts that many of our neighbors have already faced. In our buildings we have become more efficient and more creative with our use of fewer resources. And parents- thank Heavens for our PTA and parents!- have stepped up and filled gaps through volunteerism and fundraising. But unfortunately our combined efforts simply cannot slow the increasing cost of education in New York State, and our leaders must be made aware of how current policies are impacting our children and our community.

My concerns can be summarized in two phrases- "equity" and "mandate relief"- that have nothing to do with politics, nothing to do with raising taxes, and everything to do with providing for all children in a way that is fair and realistic.

1. ***Equity***: The current State Aid formula creates inequity for low wealth school districts, so we need our elected officials to **change the way funds are distributed**. By directing a greater share of the available State money to the districts whose citizens have been taxed to their limit, they can help maintain a quality education for students in Johnstown and elsewhere.
2. ***Mandate relief***: The new 2% "tax cap" is a welcome relief to millions of New Yorkers who are fed up with shouldering one of the highest tax burdens in the country; and when school leaders statewide warned that the cap could make it impossible for districts to operate, lawmakers promised to remove some State-mandated costs. This has not occurred. Instead, the quantity of "unfunded mandates" has reached an unprecedented high with the requirements that districts foot the bill for expensive new tests and days of training related to a new evaluation system and new learning standards. Don't get me wrong- these innovations, while unproven, sound promising. But something has got to give. We need our elected officials to either **fund the new and pre-existing mandates on schools or remove them** so that local school districts can fund the programs that help their students.

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE continued

Our children deserve a well-rounded public education, and the citizens of this community deserve to have a level playing field when it comes to providing that for them. To that point, I'll leave you with the words of Mike Ford, Superintendent of the Phelps Clifton-Springs CSD in Ontario County, whose district, he says, "cut costs last year by shuttering a middle school it's still making mortgage payments on, laying off teachers and cutting some athletics and other enrichment programs." In the article, Mr. Ford gives a chilling example of how one student has been hurt directly:

"My valedictorian a couple of years ago was denied admittance to SUNY Geneseo and the reason was that they didn't have 'depth of transcript.' That's the issue. There's a lot my district doesn't have. I don't have International Baccalaureate, and only have six Advance Placement classes. So how is that child supposed to compete in a global economy with kids who have so many other options?"

Superintendent Ford goes on to share the message he has delivered to our elected officials.

"In my letter to the governor about this, I wrote that our children are defenseless, and they deserve the same education regardless of their geographic location in this state... This is a civil rights issue and a doing-what's-right issue."

I couldn't agree more with Mr. Ford, and if you feel the same perhaps you, too, will consider sharing your thoughts on educational equity and mandate relief with those in a position to do something. After all, while I wish all of Glebe's students a Happy New Year, what I really want for them is a Happy Future.

Sincerely,
Mr. Carroll

¹ McDermott, Meaghan M. "Rural students suffer under New York state aid losses."

Democrat and Chronicle. 18 Dec. 2011. 30 Dec. 2011.

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/article/20111218/NEWS01/112180345/Rural-students-suffer-under-New-York-state-aid->

Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow!

Tune to your local TV or radio station regarding school closings or early dismissal on stormy days. A great resource, too, is to go online to:

<http://www.wgy.com/pages/storm> or
<http://www.johnstownschoools.org>

Decisions are usually made by 6 am.
A 2-hour Delay means our students can enter the building at 10:45 am., and school will begin at 11:00 am.

Important Health Information from Mrs. Ruggeri, LPN...

FLU SEASON IS HERE!

Watch for the following symptoms:

Fever
Aches
Chills
Tiredness
Sudden

Symptoms

PREVENT THE FLU:

- Wash hands with soap and water to get rid of germs.
- Blow your nose with a tissue, then throw it away immediately, followed by hand washing
- Cover your nose or mouth with a tissue or your arm when you cough or sneeze.
- Keep scrapes and cuts clean.
- Try not to rub your eyes or your nose.
- Do not come to school with any of the above symptoms.

If you have had a fever, please do not come to school until you have been fever free without medication for 24 hours.

Every student...Every minute...Of every day!



Don't forget that **the Glebe academic day begins promptly at 8:45 a.m.**, when morning work and important "school business" set the stage for the day ahead. When students arrive tardy to school they start their day a few steps behind and interrupt instruction for their classmates who are already busy at work. We depend on the partnership of parents and caregivers to ensure that students arrive on time for school every day, and if we can support your efforts to deliver your child to school on time, don't hesitate to call Mr. Carroll at 762-3714. Please support our mission to provide Glebe's students with the best education available: *every student...every minute...of every day!*



Price Chopper "Tools for Schools"

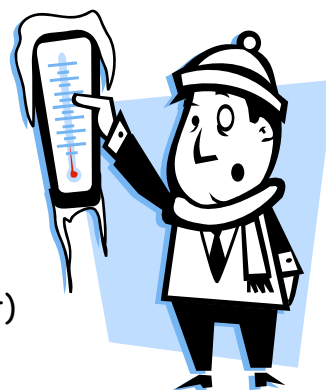
Would you like to help provide Glebe's students with new recess equipment, art supplies, and classroom materials without any additional work, effort, or expense? If you would, please be sure to enroll in Price Chopper's "Tools for Schools" program and register your AdvantEdge card to benefit Glebe Street Elementary School. It's simple, just bring your AdvantEdge card to the customer service desk, or even easier, follow this link:

<https://www2.pricechopper.com/toolsforschools/single.shtml>

There are currently 324 students at Glebe, but only about 50 cards are actively registered for Glebe with Tools for Schools! If you are unsure if yours is one of them, or if you have not enrolled in the last year, please follow the link to check. We appreciate it!

Remember...

Glebe students go outside for recess every day to enjoy the benefits of exercise and fresh air. Except in cases of rain or extreme cold, when the temperature or wind chill is 20 degrees or below, there is not an indoor alternative to outdoor recess. **This means that students must come to school prepared for going outdoors.** Please be sure to check that your student leaves home in the morning with clothing (hats, boots, gloves, and coat) that is appropriate for the day's weather conditions.



JANUARY Cheers for a Happy New Year!

- 1/3 School's Back In Session! Hurray! Welcome Back!
- 1/5 Board of Ed. Budget Workshop, 6 pm @ JHS
- 1/6 Lunch with the Principal, 12:30 p.m.
Glebe Street Elementary "Bingo Night", 6:30 p.m.
Founder's Day Nomination forms due
- 1/9 SDM Committee Meeting, 3:30 pm.
PTA meeting, 6:30 pm.
- 1/13 BINGO snow date
- 1/16 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observed—NO SCHOOL**
- 1/19 Accelerated Reader Night, 6:30 –7:30 pm
Board of Ed. Business Mtg, 6 pm @ Pleasant Ave
- 1/20 2nd Marking Period Ends
- 1/31 EARLY DISMISSAL AT 11:45 A.M.

FEBRUARY (looking ahead...)

- 2/2 Lunch with the Principal, 12:30 p.m.
- 2/3 Elementary School Report Cards Issued
- 2/3-2/4 All County Festival @ JHS
- 2/9 Board of Ed. Business Mtg, 6 pm @ JHS
- 2/10 PTA Winter Dance
- 2/13 SDM Committee Meeting, 3:30 pm.
PTA meeting, 6:30 pm.
- 2/14 Valentine's Day Parties
- 2/15 Accelerated Reader Night, 6:30 pm
- 2/20-2/24 **Winter Break. NO SCHOOL.**
- 2/27 School Resumes