



Greene Central School NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXII, Number 3

January/February 2012

Superintendent's Message

As we begin 2012, we celebrate our accomplishments of 2011, think fondly of the good times we have had and look forward to what this New Year has in store. While I share your excitement and anticipation for this New Year, I must honestly tell you that I began this year with much trepidation and outright concern.

As you are well aware, the last few years have been marked by significant economic challenges that have had far reaching implications on Greene CSD as well as many other schools across New York State. Unprecedented cuts in state funding for schools coupled with costly mandates have forced us to slash spending, cut close to 20% of our staffing and begin to deplete our reserve funds.

We are all cognizant of the fact that New York State is facing very difficult economic times and that the business of educating our children is not immune from this fiscal reality. We too have had to tighten our belts, make sacrifices and begin to do things differently. However, one glaring fact must be communicated and addressed before it causes irreparable harm to our children. The reality is that the brunt of New York State's aid cuts to schools has been shouldered by our state's poor and rural schools. The very schools that depend the most on state funding. The current funding formula has a disproportionate and increasingly devastating impact on schools like Greene.

The inequities in our current aid formula were exacerbated by the 1988 *shares agreement* which was intended to level the playing field between the wealthier and poorer school districts. In reality, this adjustment has hurt the poorer districts, which tend to have greater needs and less local wealth. In good times, this reality was often overlooked. However, in today's economic climate, cuts in aid have a much greater impact on lower-wealth districts. In districts like Greene, these cuts comprise a significantly larger percentage of our budget and we cannot recover this aid because we lack the wealth and tax base of our wealthier neighbors.

Greene CSD is identified in our School Report Card as a high needs, low wealth district. On average, we count on New York State aid for about 70% of our annual budget. Our local tax levy provides about 25% of this annual budget. With this reliance on state aid, and in light of the recently enacted property tax cap, Greene CSD is being squeezed to a point that is threatening our ability to provide our children with a sound basic education as is guaranteed in our New York State Constitution.

So . . . what can we do? I continue to work with other school leaders from our BOCES and across the state to sound the alarm, plead with our legislators and continue to stand up for our children's educational rights. We are not asking New York State to allocate more funds to education during these tough fiscal times, rather, we are asking them to reallocate current funding in a fair and responsible way that will ensure that the educational opportunities our wealthier counterparts enjoy will be afforded our children.

We will continue to provide you with information through public meetings, newsletters, on our web site and through every medium available to us. This is a concern that has been expressed to our state's leaders for years. Just a few years ago our former Superintendent Gary Smith and Board President Chris Cox took this message regarding funding inequities to our areas legislators.

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**Dollars for Scholars
Phone-A-Thon**
MARCH 5, 6 AND 7, 2012
each day from
4:00-8:00 p.m.

*Check inside for recent
Dollars for Scholars
Happenings!*

Check out our NEW school website — www.greenecsd.org

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Unfortunately, they did not listen. This is why I and school leaders across New York, are seeking your help.

I believe our leaders are more likely to listen to our children, parents and other concerned constituents. Please find a way to voice your concerns, fears and frustrations with our state leaders. I have attached contact information (see below) as well as an illustration on page 5 showing the magnitude of these funding inequities.

The disparity between poor and wealthy schools is not new. This inequity was addressed as long ago as 1972 when the Fleischmann Commission issued this assessment of our school funding system “It is repugnant to the idea of equal educational opportunity that the quality of a child’s education . . . is determined by accidents of birth, wealth or geography; that a child who lives in a poor district is . . . entitled to a lower public investment in his education than a child in a rich district. It is unconscionable that a poor man in a poor district must often pay local taxes at higher rate for the inferior education of his child than the man of means in a rich district pays for his superior education of his child . . . incredibly, that is the situation today in most of the 50 states and that is the case in New York.”

Please join me and other New Yorkers who care about the education we provide our children and insist on a change in our state’s funding system that will allow schools like Greene to survive and more importantly provide an education that is functionally equivalent to that offered our wealthier communities.

—Jonathan R. Retz, Superintendent of Schools

Legislative Contact Information

ASSEMBLYMAN CLIFFORD W. CROUCH — ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 107

Albany Office

LOB 320
Albany, NY 12248
(518) 455-5741
CrouchC@assembly.state.ny.us

District Office

1 Kattelville Road, Suite 1
Binghamton, NY 13901
(607) 648-6080

SENATOR TOM LIBOUS — 52ND SENATE DISTRICT

Albany Office

429 Capital
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-2677
Senator@senatorlibous.com

District Office

44 Hawley St. Room 1607
Binghamton, NY 13901
(877) 854-2687

THE HONORABLE ANDREW M. CUOMO — GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK STATE

NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224
(518) 474-8390
contact through the following link:
<http://www.governor.ny.gov/contact/GovernorContactForm.php>

New York State’s Property Tax Levy Cap

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Can my school tax levy increase by more than 2 percent?

A: Yes, despite how it has been communicated, the new cap does not limit levies to 2% but rather it establishes a *tax levy limit*. This tax levy limit may exceed the commonly used threshold of 2%.

Q: What is a *tax levy limit*?

A: This is the highest proposed tax levy for a school district that can be approved with a simple majority vote (50 percent or better). The tax levy limit is calculated using an eight step formula. Each district will be required to calculate their own tax levy limit which is designed to take into consideration factors that influence each district’s wealth. Any district wishing to propose a levy increase beyond this tax levy limit will require a 60% supermajority vote for approval.

Q: How might my tax bill be different as a result of the tax levy?

A: The method of calculating an individual tax bill has not changed. Your tax bill is calculated using your property’s assessed value and the tax rate (amount of taxes per \$1,000 of assessed value). The state may also adjust tax rates by applying equalization rates in an effort to even out the tax burden across a district. The new law only imposes conditions on the level of voter approval for different tax levy increases.

Q: What are the implications of this tax cap legislation on my district?

A: The tax cap will impact all districts across NY State to varying degrees. Some will be affected more than others. Schools with lower property wealth will have a more difficult time managing the impact and may likely find it difficult to maintain current educational programming.

Q: What if my school’s budget is not approved by voters?

A: School districts have the same options available in the event the initial budget is not approved. These options include putting the same budget up for a re-vote, adjusting the budget and re-voting or adopting a contingent budget.

A Tale of Two Schools

SCHOOL DISTRICT	GREENE	PORT JEFFERSON
County	Chenango	Suffolk
K-12 Enrollment	1,165	1,225
Combined Wealth Ratio (2011-2012)	0.446	3.222
% Free & Reduced Lunch (3 year avg.)	47%	4%
2010-2011 Budgeted Spending	\$23,910,568	\$37,354,521
2010-2011 Estimated Local Tax Levy	\$5,903,787	\$29,538,898
Tax Levy Raised per 1% Increase	\$59,038	\$295,389
Enacted State Aid Cut 2010-2011 (GEA)	-\$1,554,853	-\$702,273
GEA as % of 2010-2011 Budget	6.5%	1.9%
GEA as % of 2010-2011 Tax Levy	26.3%	2.4%
State Aid Cuts per Student	\$1,335	\$363

NOTE:

Combined Wealth Ratio (CWR): CWR is a measure of a district's relative wealth, indexing each district against the statewide average on a combination of two factors, property wealth per pupil and income wealth per pupil. A CWR 1.0 reflects the median wealth of districts across New York State. CWR below 1.0 indicates decreasing wealth levels, CWR above 1.0 indicates increased wealth.

Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA): The 2010-21011 Executive Budget proposed a \$2.1 billion Gap Elimination Adjustment that was distributed amongst school districts in NY State. Local schools' GEA is computed through a formula that recognizes districts' pupil need, fiscal capacity, tax effort and administrative efficiency. NYS has experienced two consecutive years in which GEA was assigned to local districts.

High School Guidance News

CREATIVE SCAMS — SEMINARS AND CONSULTANTS

Seminars and consultants sometimes charge fees for services or information you can obtain for free.

CONSULTANTS

Paying a fee to a financial aid service to help you apply for aid may be an unnecessary expense. Here's why:

Claim: "We'll help you complete complicated forms."

Reality: You still have to fill out the same basic information for a fee-based service that you would for the FAFSA; how else would they get your information?

Claim: "We'll find different ways to report your assets and obtain more aid."

Reality: a. This information is available for free at FinAid:

www.finaid.org.

b. While these services can be legitimate, remember that colleges can request additional documentation about your finances.

c. Not reporting information accurately is against the law (punishable up to a \$20,000 fine, prison or both).

SEMINARS

You may be able to do what they do on your own.

Claim: "Our presentation is completely free."

Reality: While the presentation is free, they may use high-pressure tactics to try to get you signed up for their service. They may also claim that the price will increase, if you don't sign up now, or that they can answer questions after payment.

Claim: "We can help you complete complicated forms."

Reality: Everyone needs the same basic information to complete financial aid forms, so even if you pay for help, it is still up to you to do the work of assembling the information. Help with the FAFSA is available for free at *www.fafsa.ed.gov* or by phone at 1-800-4-FED-AID.

Claim: "We'll find loopholes to help you save money."

Reality: The company may be encouraging you to commit fraud by entering inaccurate information to make it seem like you earn less money. These practices are dishonest and illegal!



Check out our **NEW** school website — www.greenecsd.org

Insufficient Sleep Among High School Students Associated with Drinking, Smoking and Marijuana Use

In my work with students I often hear that they are not getting to sleep until after 11:00 p.m. and in some cases not until the wee hours of the morning. This behavior is often attributed to playing video games or *talking* on Facebook or other social networking sites. Unfortunately, the late hours are rarely attributed to *cramming* for a test or completing homework. From my personal observation, these behaviors and resulting lack of sleep have a definite and obvious impact on students.

About 70 percent of U.S. high school students do not get enough sleep on school nights and this is linked to health-risk behaviors, according to a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

They concluded that insufficient sleep is associated with a variety of health-risk behaviors, including: physical inactivity, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, drinking soda, fighting, being sexually active, marijuana use and seriously considering attempting suicide.

High school students participating in the 2007 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey were asked, "On an average school night, how many hours of sleep do you get?"

The study, published online by Preventive Medicine, said 68.9 percent of adolescent responders reported insufficient sleep on an average school night. Insufficient sleep was considered less than 8 hours and sufficient sleep 8 or more hours of sleep.

Students who reported insufficient sleep were more likely to engage in the health-risk behavior than students who reported sufficient sleep, researchers said.

"Many adolescents are not getting the recommended hours of sleep they need on school nights. Insufficient sleep is associated with participation in a number of health-risk behaviors including substance use, physical fighting, and serious consideration of suicide attempt," Lela McKnight-Eily of the CDC said in a statement to United Press International.

If your child is struggling in school or simply not performing to the best of their ability, taking action in this area might be a great idea. For more information visit CADCA.org or contact me at knial@greenecsd.org.

—Kevin Nial, CPP/CASAC Prevention Counselor

Regents Week Information

All students will have school during January Regents. The only exception is on Tuesday, January 24. There will *not* be regular classes for students 6-12 that day. The *only* high school students that must attend are those who will be taking Regents on that date.

Students in the Primary and Intermediate Schools will attend the entire week with only Tuesday being a half-day. Students UPK-5 will attend morning only on Tuesday, January 24. Students will be dismissed at 11:00 a.m. This is a change from the academic calendar distributed early this year.

Monday 1/23	All students attend as usual.
Tuesday 1/24	UPK-5—Morning only. All students dismissed at 11:00 a.m. No afternoon UPK MS/HS—No classes. Only students taking Regents are to report.
Wednesday 1/25	All students attend as usual.
Thursday 1/26	All students attend as usual.
Friday 1/27	All students attend as usual.

GREENE DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS™ PRESENTS

A Day in the Life of . . .

The Greene chapter of Dollars for Scholars™ has implemented a new program designed to offer our High School students insight into various career paths. Students are able to sign up for these lunch time sessions held in the Board of Education Room. DFS™ provides a lunch at no cost to students prepared by the Greene CSD cafeteria. While students enjoy their lunch, our guest speakers share about their work, education and preparation needed and other information that offers students a glimpse of that particular career field.

In November this program was kicked off by highlighting the field of sales. Gair Adams (Home Instead), Dean Driscoll (ASICS Tiger Corp.) and Tom Adams (Xerox) shared their time and experiences with our students. In December we anticipate welcoming Ashley McCabe, an Architectural Interior Designer for Bearsch Compeau Knudson, Architects and Engineers and Chris Engler, Associate Vice President and Engineer for Arcadis.

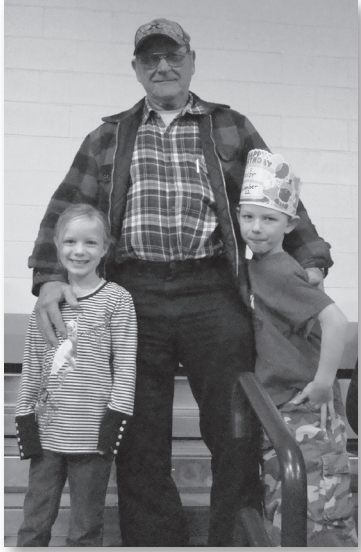
Start Your Engines!



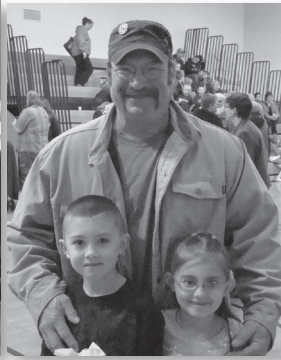
During their study of motion, students in 7th grade Physical Science learned that small objects can teach them a large science concept. The students raced match box cars to study and calculate speed. Students measured the distance and time of their car, calculated the average speed (speed = distance/time), and compared the speed of their car with others in class. This year's winners include (as shown in the photo): **Dominick Fink, Mike Mulderig, Eion Tanner, Madison Puglisis, and Katie Anderson.** Mike had the overall fastest car, with a speed of 1.6 m/sec. Great job to all!

—Mr. Rullo

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2011



Guided Reading

WHAT IS GUIDED READING AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL?

- Small group reading based on similar strengths, needs and interests.
- Is used to teach students how to use reading strategies to improve their reading from an instructional level to an independent level.
- Differentiated instruction based on students needs, strengths or interests.
- Continuous observation and assessment of student progress.
- Leveled texts based on Fountas and Pinnell Assessments.



HOW IS GUIDED READING UTILIZED IN THE CLASSROOM?

- Leveled books are chosen per group based on strengths, needs and/or interests.
- Each group meets with a teacher for approximately 15 minutes 3-5 times a week.
- Each student in a group will have their own copy of the text.
- The teacher will guide students through a series of lessons, some of which include:
 - Prediction
 - Discussion of reading strategies
 - Introducing a specific skill to be used while reading
 - Whisper reading the entire text or parts of text
- Teacher will adjust level of books and skills practiced based on performance of previous text.



WHAT ARE OTHER CHILDREN DOING WHILE A GROUP IS READING WITH THE TEACHER?

- Other children are also placed into groups based on strengths, needs and/or interests.
- 3-5 reading groups in a classroom, containing 3-5 students per group.
- Children in each group *travel* through other centers during the Literacy Block.
- Centers without an adult are independent centers and can be completed by the students with limited teacher direction.
- Centers may include, but are not limited to, activities such as:



- Spelling
- Poetry
- Word Work
- Skill work
- Comprehension
- Silent Reading
- Word Work
- Additional tasks correlated to their small group reading text



- Each center is approximately 15 minutes long — the students are usually able to rotate through all four centers during the Literacy Block each day, having different centers each day.

Student Artwork Featured in UHS Holiday Exhibit

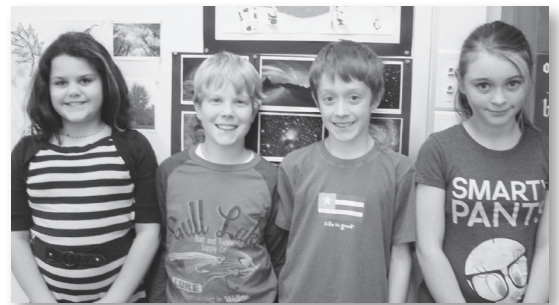
Artwork by our talented Primary, Intermediate School and Middle School students is included in The United Health Services Hospitals Children's Holiday Art Exhibit at Wilson Hospital, Johnson City. The exhibit, which runs from December 11-January 14, highlights the talents of hundreds of children from many local school districts.

A festive reception was held December 11 for the children, their families and teachers. Our students who have work displayed are included below. Congratulations student artists. Keep up the great work!

—Ms. Dajnowski and Mr. Turturro



Primary — Dawson McGraw, Sydney Rideout, Nadia Brown, Ben Taft; absent: David Hughes, Skylar Nowalk



Intermediate — Mikaela Sepulveda-Kiefer, Conner Grant, Spencer Klumpp, Sara Tanzini



Middle School — Dalton Whitman, Lindsey Branigan, Chrissy Boeltz, Hayden Mowatt, Coy Austin; absent: Brooke Dillenbeck, Dominic Solerno

Student Citizens of the Month

October

3RD GRADE



Jonathon Lee — Mrs. Browning
Quintin Pezzino — Mrs. Erickson
Halie Young — Mrs. Russ
Leah Decker — Mrs. Whittaker

4TH GRADE



Robert Champlain — Ms. Hunter
Emma Smith — Mr. Komperda
Nate Erickson — Ms. Sanderson
Shania Phelps — Mrs. Gell

5TH GRADE



Rebecca Sullivan — Mrs. Beach
Nicole Repp — Mrs. Giannetto
Brooke Fitzgerald — Mrs. McDermott
Cameron Shepard — Mr. Evans

SPECIAL AREA STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Art — Jonathon Lee, Tiffany Johns, Jennifer Rayne;
Music — Wyatt Willard, Mackenzie Fowler, Cameron Shepard;
Computer — Hailey Glover, Anjolie Cronin, Brandyn Scott;
Reading and Math — Wyatt Willard, Josh Hofmann;
Chorus — Maggie Roosa;
Band — Kelsey Wahlers;
Girls' PE — Victoria Fluery, Brooke Austin, Ciara Gunderson;
Boys' PE — Luke DeJager, Conner Grant, Michael Repp

November

3RD GRADE



Gabe Blasko — Mrs. Browning
Riley Stanton — Mrs. Erickson
Aidan Kiefer — Mrs. Russ
Josh Titus — Mrs. Whittaker
Eryn Wilson — Mrs. Gell

4TH GRADE



Amy Bentley — Ms. Hunter
Grace Wentlent — Mr. Komperda
Maggie Roosa — Ms. Sanderson

5TH GRADE



Kevin Gyurik — Mrs. Beach
McKenna Sergi — Mrs. Giannetto
Spencer Klumpp — Mrs. McDermott
Deven Ardis — Mr. Evans

SPECIAL AREA STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Art — Wyatt Willard, Rylee Gollogly, Eric Repp, Lilac Shaffer, Lacey Bigler;
Music — Kathleen Becker, Tiffany Johns, Christopher Stark;
Computer — McKenzie Drew, Steven Mills, Sierra Griffin;
Reading and Math — Alyssa Davenport, Danny Kovalev;
Chorus — Julianna Ayres;
Band — Anjolie Cronin;
Girls' PE — Leah Decker, Emma Smith, Ashlie Shaffer;
Boys' PE — Tristan Austin, Nate Erickson, Destin Foley

GREENE CENTRAL SCHOOL Greene, New York 13778

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Mission Statement

Greene Central School, in partnership with the community, will inspire students to learn the skills and behaviors necessary to become productive citizens.

- Provide quality programs to prepare all students with skills and knowledge to become responsible citizens, productive workers, and lifelong learners.
- Provide safe, quality facilities, which enhance the programs for the District's students and community.
- Ensure long-term fiscal stability in order to provide the necessary programs and facilities to educate the children of the Greene Central School District.
- Communicate effectively with all members of the community to promote quality education in the Greene Central School District.

Kindergarten Registration

Greene Central School Kindergarten Registration will be held February 6-10, 2012 in the Primary School. If your child will be five years old on or before December 1, 2012, and you *did not* receive a registration packet in the mail, please call Dedra Ingraham at the Primary School Office at 656-5174, ext. 1.

Kindergarten Screening

Greene Primary School welcomes you to our Parent Information Night on Thursday, March 22, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

Parents of our incoming Kindergarteners will have the opportunity to learn about our program and to meet the Kindergarten staff that will be working with their children. Screening appointments will also be scheduled at this time.

KINDERGARTEN SCREENING DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Tuesday — April 17, 2012
Wednesday — April 18, 2012
Thursday — April 19, 2012
Tuesday — April 24, 2012
Wednesday — April 25, 2012

If you have not registered your kindergartener please contact the Primary School Office at 656-5174, ext. 1.

In order to complete the registration process, we must have a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunization records. The office will be open on this night should you need to submit any additional records.

UPK Registration

Applications for Greene Central School District's Universal Prekindergarten Program will be mailed on March 9, 2012. If your child will be four years old, on or before December 1, 2012, and you do not receive an application, please call the Primary School Office at 656-5174, ext. 1. Applications must be received by March 26, 2012.

High School Calendar

JANUARY

14 Winter Ball Dance
16 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day — No School**
20 Talent Show (Tentative)
24 **No Classes — Grades 6-12**
24-27 Regents Exams
27 End of 20 Week Marking Period
28 All-County Music Festival
30 **NO DCMO BOCES Classes — Staff Development**

FEBRUARY

2 Report Cards Mailed Out
3 Eligibility Begins
10 Valentine's Dance
17-21 **President's Day/Winter Recess — No School**

Check out our **NEW** school
website — www.greenecsd.org