

SCHROON LAKE CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

January 2012

**NO SCHOOL: Superintendent's Conference Day Jan. 13th.
Martin Luther King Day Jan. 16th.**

Greetings from the Superintendent.

Happy New Year! This is the time of new resolutions and commitments. At Schroon Lake School we are committed to providing the highest quality educational experience to our students. This commitment comes at a time when doing so is becoming increasingly challenging. Within every challenge lies opportunity. As we move forward into what may certainly prove to be our most challenging budget year to date, we will seek to find opportunities to create rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning experiences for all students while taking actions that will yield more long-term, sustainable cost savings. With such dramatic changes and challenges facing school districts, we will be forced to reconsider the way they deliver educational programs and services. Rather than do more with less, we must begin to envision how to do things differently with less. I invite you to attend upcoming Board of Education meetings and budget meetings. Together we can navigate the difficult course before us.

This month I have included excerpts from a recent article from the New York State School Boards Association entitled, "The New 3 R's: Reducing, Restructuring, and Redesigning, School Districts in the Tax Levy Cap Era." You may read the article in its entirety at www.nyssba.org.

The Tax Cap

New York's property tax levy cap law establishes a limit on the annual growth of property taxes levied by local governments and school districts to 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. The cap applies to all independent school districts. The tax levy cannot exceed the cap unless 60 percent of voters in each school district approve such an increase. The cap first applies to school district budgets in the 2012-13 school year. If voters reject the spending plan twice, schools must adopt a budget with the same tax levy as the prior year – a zero percent cap. "Reducing, Restructuring and Redesigning" have become the New 3 R's as school leaders work to preserve educational programs under New York State's new property tax levy cap. The New 3 R's include many of the familiar budget strategies that school leaders have adopted over the past three years – drawing on reserves, cutting personnel, negotiating salary freezes, and using attrition and retirements to reduce costs. They also represent a move beyond these one- or two-year savings toward actions that will yield more long-term, sustainable cost-savings. These actions may include reducing non-mandated programs, restructuring school buildings and grade configurations, and redesigning programs by sharing teachers and administrators with other districts. One school administrator summarized the New 3 R's as "finding a different way to do business as we move forward." The reasons for the paradigm shift are clear. School districts and the tax levy cap are on a collision course.

Projected expenditures for health insurance and pensions alone for all school districts subject to the tax levy cap would exceed the maximum allowable tax levy increase under the levy cap by \$103 million in 2012-13 (see Figure A). An analysis by the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) of revenue and expenditure data from 121 school districts for school years 2010-11 and 2011-12 clearly illustrates that if the tax levy cap had been in place this year: Nearly three-quarters of these districts (74 percent) would not have been able to raise enough property tax revenues to make up for increased expenditures and decreased state and federal revenues without going above the property tax levy cap and requiring 60 percent voter approval.

The “New” Normal

Right now, school districts across New York are preparing budgets for the 2012-13 school year, their first ever under the state’s new property tax levy cap. Below are predictions for how districts will adapt to the new era:

1. Many school districts will seek structural changes as opposed to one-time savings. Longer-term savings will be derived from staff reorganizations.
2. Many school districts will continue using reserve funds (if available), attrition and retirements to control costs. Especially in the first two years under a levy cap, districts may rely heavily on reserve funds in order to keep tax levies lower and try to stay within the 50 percent threshold for budget passage. Districts with revenue-expense shortfalls under the cap most likely will continue to seek concessions from employees – including salary freezes – and propose budget reductions based on attrition, retirements and layoffs of both instructional and non-instructional staff, including administrators.
3. Districts may forego tax levy cap exemptions in an effort to remain at or below the “2% tax cap.”

The Way Forward

For many districts, the days of slow, gradual change are largely over. Districts are now in the realm of dramatic change that will force them to reconsider the way they deliver educational programs and services. Now is the time to rethink fundamental assumptions about how schools deliver educational programs and services in New York State. That means challenging the status quo and budgeting from a new perspective: not just cost, but establishing productivity measures and student learning outcomes as well. (Article excerpt from “The New 3 R’s: Reducing, Restructuring, and Redesigning, School Districts in the Tax Levy Cap Era.” www.nyssba.org).

I encourage all Schroon Lake School community members to read the full article and to become involved as we seek to begin the important work of creating our 2012-2013 school budget.

Sincerely,

Bonnie R. Finnerty
Superintendent



SCHROON LAKE YOUTH COMMISSION

DATES TO REMEMBER FOR 2012

GORE MOUNTAIN SKI TRIPS 2012

Jan. 8,22,29 Feb. 5,12,26

CARDBOARD DERBY

Sunday Feb 19, 2012 at the Ski Tow

11:00 FOR REGISTRATION

WATCH FOR MORE DETAIL ON THIS EVENT

HOCKEY RINK is OPEN

SKI/TUBING AND SLEDDING HILL LOCATED AT

THE GOLF COURSE

WE JUST NEED SNOW!!!

FRIDAY 4 -8 P.M.

SATURDAYS AND ALL SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

AND SNOW DAYS 10 A.M. – 8 P.M.

SUNDAY 10 A.M. – 4 P.M.

ELA REGENTS REVIEW SCHEDULE

Review classes will be held on the following dates from 3:05 to 4:00:

Wednesday, January 4th
Monday, January 9th
Wednesday, January 11th
Wednesday, January 18th
Monday, January 23rd

The purpose of these additional review sessions is to provide more individualized instruction to interested students. We will review your writing folder, work on multiple choice questions, and establish a plan for each student to do his or her best on the exam.

This ELA Regents exam will take place on Tuesday, January 24th. All juniors will be participating.

Wildcats Sports Update

Mr. David Williams

The winter teams are in full swing and are doing very well. The varsity girls are very competitive and are getting better every game. The varsity boys are off to a very strong start and have challenging games ahead. The cheerleaders cheer during the home games and often have a half time number you will not want to miss. Please check out the January schedule within this newsletter. The youth commission basketball has practices during the week and games on Saturdays. Hope for cold and snow as the youth commission ski program starts January 8. Check out our web site for game schedules. Please come on down and support the Wildcats!

Pre-K and Kindergarten News For The New Year!

Mrs. Gereau

We have a dream....

Tyler thinks the world needs more children!
Hunter says the world can have his old games to use.
Carly hopes that everyone has something to eat.
Lydia thinks that there needs to be more food for the babies.
Salman believes the world needs more help.
Morgan thinks the world needs more snow!
Matthew knows that the world needs more food for the animals.

Lacey believes the world needs more mermaids.
Martin hopes the world can get more presents.
Jace hopes for more sunshine.
Micah thinks there should be more boats, trucks and cars.
Brittany's dream is for more Mommies.
Drake's dream is for more rain for the forest fires.
Owen thinks we need more snow!
Christian hopes there is more toys!
Gabriel hopes the world can make more fruit snacks.
Hannah thinks the world needs more food.
Tristan thinks that more friends would help.
Michael hopes that everyone has shelter.
Felisha thinks the world needs to do more recycling.
Paige hopes there is more fresh water.
Zander thinks the world needs luck.

Happy New Year from First Grade

Mrs. Harrison

As we begin the New Year, we have made resolutions to help us throughout the year.

I will try to do my best.	Julia LaPerle
I will not yell at my brothers.	Carissa Nightingale
I will wash the dishes.	Caleb Tierney
I will respect my house.	Michaela Udes
I will try to write more.	Patrick Scoville
I promise I will be nicer to my dog, Lou.	Saige Shaughnessy
I will learn how to tie my shoes.	Wilden Bruce
I will eat more fruit.	Shaun Fleteau
I will play with my cats more.	Gabryelle DeZalia
Next year, I will clean my room.	Niko Marnell
I will get better at swimming.	Riley Smith
I will eat more vegetables.	Aradia Talarico
I will not drive my mom and dad crazy.	Sydney Wilson
I will eat less chocolate.	Ashley Beecher
I will make my bed every day.	Quintin Sprague
I will do my homework when Mom tells me to.	Izabella Slyman
I will cook better.	Madison Anauo
I will eat more carrots.	Sierra Gregson
I will do more push ups.	Isaiah Armstrong
I will not get mad at my sister.	Blaise Bearor
I will spend more time with my mom.	Clayton Fish
I will brush my teeth.	Lauren Peace

2nd Grade News

By: Mrs. Shaughnessy

Brrr! What a cold start to January! We always love to chart the weather during the month of January to watch the temperatures drop below zero for a few days and then creep back up to slightly more bearable weather! Our Snowflake Warriors are soon to be assembled and they promise to bring us a nice snowstorm soon! Please be sure to send all the required snow gear to school so we can enjoy our recess time playing in that fresh snow that the Snowflake Warriors promised us!

We will be reading some stories about weather as we move through January. The True Story of Balto and The Snow Walker will be some of our favorites. The story of Balto will fit in great with our weather unit and with our recent study of rescue dogs.

During December, Trooper Ramos and his police dog visited SLCS and demonstrated the skills used by police rescue dogs. It was great seeing him again and we look forward to having him return next year for another exciting demo. Some of the rescue dogs we researched did some amazing rescues. A German Shepherd named Buddy was responsible for alerting a police officer that his home was on fire and his owner was injured inside. Another dog named Shirley was a Hypo-alert dog that helped a young girl know when her blood sugar was dropping to a dangerous level. A Bloodhound named Chip was another police dog that sniffed out and captured over 600 criminals! Amazing but true!

Our math skills are sharpening as we work on addition with regrouping. We practice our timed addition sheets every day and prizes are awarded when students reach a certain level. Our ability to recognize and count coins is also improving.

3RD GRADE

Mrs. Dunkley

The 3rd Grade had a very busy month in December studying Europe. Each student made a book for their family on the traditions of Europe. After studying a country, they would make a replica of the tradition that was brought over to the United States. When the book was opened there was a description of the tradition and a sample in the corresponding pouch to go with it. I hope each family enjoyed reading and looking through the books. I know the students enjoyed making them!

Before vacation we were very excited to hear from our pen pals in Johnsbury. Each student received a letter and a Q-tip snowflake that they can hang up for the winter. We typed letters back to them in the computer lab and sent reindeer bags with treats in them. It is a learning experience communicating with students from another school.

For the month of January we will finish our study of Europe with the creation of castles made from boxes, paper tubes, and scraps. Then we will journey to Asia starting with Russia and China. January 23rd is the 2012 Chinese New Year and we will compare our New Year traditions to theirs. In science we will learn about solids, liquids, and gases while looking at the land in Asia and animals that live there.

Please listen to your child read nightly for the month of January and sign their homework chart Monday thru Thursday. This will increase their reading level and help them learn to sound out new words and remember what they have read. Please make sure they hand in their completed Book-It chart for December. Reading is so important!!

I hope everyone had a great holiday and New Year!! Mrs. Dunkley

4th GRADE NEWS

Mrs. Gath

The 4th graders will be rested up and ready to go after vacation. That's a good thing because we'll be in GO mode to get ourselves ready for the ELA and Math state exams coming in April.

We also have some great things to look forward to in social studies, like learning about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the American Revolution, and our country's first presidents. Science will bring us from life science to earth science and we'll discover how volcanoes erupt, how mountains are made, and how wind and water cause erosion. The Multiplication Olympics will be starting soon, with gold, silver and bronze medals awarded daily. We'll also look at some problems to solve from old state exams. In writing, we'll be thinking and then writing about how the world can be a better place. We may even write letters to the president.

Literature groups will be meeting again to read about winter adventures, and our tasks will be completed and done in a much better fashion since we are experienced in how these groups work. We'll absolutely be writing to Bill Wallace. Another author we'll be discussing is Chris Van Allsburg. After reading several of his books, we'll be writing about our favorites.

As December ended, we learned our Statue of Liberty creation made it to the top 100 finalists. There were between 3 and 4 thousand entries, so we are very proud of our green recycled giant. We learned a great many facts about her as we built and read about her. I hope we get all of this accomplished! Happy New Year!

5th Grade News

Happy New Year! I hope everyone has had a happy and restful break. I want to first thank everyone for all the gifts, gift cards and baked goods that were given to me for Christmas. I truly appreciate your kind sentiments and generosity. I also want to thank Mrs. Plumstead for all her time and effort that she has put forth for our class this year.

In science, students are currently working on exploring the oceans. Many students have found underwater exploration very intriguing, especially information about the Titanic! We will soon venture into our solar system!

In history, students have researched the Native Americans of North America. In our next unit of study students will be leaving the Americas and learning about Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Congratulations to Alysen, Sienna, and Khaleah for earning a free pizza for reading at least twenty minutes for twenty days in December!

Reminder! It is cold outside! Make sure you are wearing your winter coat, hat, and mittens.

Mr. Humphrey

Winter Ball Semi-Formal

The Class of 2012 will be hosting a Winter Ball semi-formal dance on Saturday, February 4 from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. in the cafeteria. Tickets are \$10 each. Refreshments will be provided and pictures will be available for purchase.



Semi-Formal / Prom Dress Event

The ***Junior class*** is sponsoring a semi-formal / prom dress drive on Saturday, February 11th in the auditorium from noon to 3pm.

We are asking for donations of dresses that do not fit you any longer in all different sizes and all different colors and all different lengths. Please drop them off to Ms. Masiello or Ms. Royer-Loiselle before February 11th.

The event will allow anyone to come and get a dress for ***FREE***. This is a perfect way to recycle some of the dresses you may have in your closet that you will not wear again.

We thank you in advance for your generosity!

Freshmen Class News

By Class Advisor: ML Shaughnessy

The Freshmen class would like to say thank you to all of the folks that purchased one of our Wildcat beanie hats! We appreciate your support! If you didn't get a chance to order a beanie hat there are still a few left. You may pick one up during a basketball game when they are on display and available for purchase, or you may call 532-7164 ext. 3292. Thanks!

The Class of 2015 participated during the First Night Celebration held at SLCS. We sold lots of tasty treats at the "Freshmen Café." We enjoyed seeing everyone that visited the school that evening. Happy New Year!

Our next fundraiser will be lots of work for the classmates of 2015 but well worth the effort! We are now taking over a bottle donation box at the Schroon Lake Town Landfill. The students will be responsible for cleaning the box every two weeks during the winter and once a week during the summer. All money collected from the bottle recycling will go toward to the Class of 2015. Please help support the class by donating your recyclable bottles in the box labeled "Wildcats of 2015". We thank you for your donations!

Our next class meeting will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 11th from 3:15-4 in the second grade room.

The Trout Project

Ms. Barker

The Trout Project continues to expand its educational outreach and shows that it can be fun and exciting for all ages. Small groups of kindergarteners have been visiting the trout this past week, we are told they had just learned the letter F (for Fish). They loved learning about the trout from their personal tour guide, Will Lowe, and were especially excited to watch the trout eat. The jumping and splashing from the trout received some applause and much laughter and squealing from the very surprised children. The kindergarteners were then able to each feed the trout a piece of food and share their own fish stories. Ms.Barker and Mr.Riddle had better be ready; I see a whole group of little fish enthusiasts in the future for Trout Project!

The Hydroponics trays are also doing incredibly well, almost too well. The salad greens grew so big that they began to burn in the lights above the trays. When they were turned on their sides, they continued to grow towards the light into a perfect "L" shape. The Trout Project has put new trays in that now grow half salad greens and half basil, proving that biology is as delicious as it is fun (but, as all chemistry students know, eating is strictly prohibited in Ms.Barker's room!). The Trout Project hopes you all have a wonderful new year filled with learning and fun!

Trout Project Leaders : Cookie Barker and Mat Riddle

Team Members :

Senior – Will Lowe

Juniors – Jeff Armstrong, Mitchell Beers, Jim Bowen, Joe DeZalia, Dan
Maisonville, Clare Whitney, Lucas Wilson

Sophomores – Ian Lowe, Abby Veverka

Article By: Brandi Busick

Trout Obituaries .

The Trout Project has recently suffered a few losses and would like to honor those fish that have passed on.

The baby trout now are numbered between 30-35, also the baby trout “born” with two heads has passed away. More recently one of the large rainbow trout jumped too high and fell out of the tank; despite the valiant efforts of Ms. Barker and the team to revive him, he didn’t make it. The Trout Project accepts our deepest condolences for the fallen trout.

Pre K Reading News

The pre-kindergarten continues to be super busy learning, reading, and writing. In December we worked on many new letters and concepts including the letter F. To celebrate the letter F, we went upstairs and visited the Trout Project with some of the high school students as our guides. The Pre K students were fascinated with Schroon Lake Central school’s aquatic visitors and really enjoyed learning more about them. Their favorite part? Of course, it was feeding and getting splashed by the trout.



After our mini field trip, we read A Fish Out of Water by Helen Palmer and came up with our own solutions just in case the trout become too big for their tank. You can check out our work outside the science rooms.

We would like to send a special thanks to Ms. Barker and Mr. Riddle for allowing us to visit. We would also like to thank Abigail Veverka, Will Lowe, and Brandi Busick for sharing their time and knowledge with us.



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

INDUCTION CEREMONY

On Thursday, March 1, 2012 at 7:00PM the National Honor Society will be holding an induction ceremony in the Schroon lake auditorium. Desserts will be provided following the ceremony in the cafeteria.

This year, for the first time, membership will include eligible 10th grade students along with eligible 11th and 12th grade students. Membership in the National Honor Society at the local level is an honor bestowed upon a student. Selection for membership is by a Faculty Counsel and is based on outstanding scholarship, character, leadership, and service. Scholarship requires an average of 87% or higher. Once selected, these students have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate these qualities.