



WEEKLY WARRIOR

Webutuck Central Schools
194 Haight Road, P.O. Box 405
Amenia, New York 12501

April 8, 2011

REMINDER

Please be reminded that Thursday, April 14 and Friday, April 15 are now regular school days and all students are expected to attend.

Superintendent's Notes

Who Are Our Students?

Over the past couple of decades, we have heard about names or designations for each new generation. There were the Baby Boomers born in late 1940's through the early 1960's, the Generation X'ers born in the late 1960's through the early 80's. Then came the Gen Y (Or the Millennials) born between the late 1980's and early 2000's. This new generation, born in the 21st Century, is different.

In his article, "Turning on the Lights," in *Educational Leadership*, Mark Prensky has classified these individuals as "**digital natives.**" He goes on to state that these students are just different. Not only do they use technology with ease, they actually think differently and therefore need to be taught differently. Simply put...

"They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and other tools of the digital age. Computer games, e-mail, the Internet, cell phones, and instant messaging are integral parts of their lives."

Not only does this present us with the issue of how to best instruct these new students, we are also have the challenge of effectively integrating new "digital native" teachers with our veteran staff members and administrators who are largely "**digital immigrants.**" It is critical that we assist our veteran "digital immigrant" staff members in changing the way they teach in order to reach these students, without sacrificing achievement and excellence. Dr. Prensky asserts that while the content of the curriculum always needs to be considered, the ways teachers make content available must also be reconsidered ---now!

The reality is that many of today's students are simply tuning out when teachers stand and deliver lectures. Prensky accurately indicates that while today's students are not reading their textbooks, they will read a multitude of web pages to learn something interesting. They multitask by listening to podcasts, surfing the Internet, and checking RSS feeds while simultaneously texting friends. Teachers don't believe that this is possible because they didn't grow up multitasking.

A large number of today's students complain that they are bored when they come to school where they have to sit all day, listening to one person talk at length, reading outdated textbooks, or being asked to study things they feel they have already learned by watching the Discovery or History Channel or surfing on-line.

So what do these students want? Researcher Claire Raines provides some insight into engaging these new students. She indicates that they crave: role models, challenges, collaboration, fun, respect and flexibility. They are looking for instructional facilitators who will provide them with interesting **challenges** as learning opportunities, the ability to **collaborate** with their peers in generating creative ideas and solutions, an infusion of **humor** and lightheartedness into the learning environment, a genuine **respect** for their ideas and opinions, and **flexibility** to allow them to express their individuality within the learning process.

By working together, we can make it happen!

Steve Schoonmaker

Educational Quote of the Week

Handling Failure

"Avoiding consequential failures means rapidly identifying and correcting small failures...

Those that catch, correct, and learn from failure before others do will succeed.

Those that wallow in the blame game will not."

Amy Edmondson

READING AROUND THE WORLD -----UPDATE

In their efforts to read their way around the world, our students in grades 4 through 6 have now read over 250,000 pages. So far the students have visited all of the continents except Antarctica. At our next culinary stop they will be in Mexico City.

As always, we invite you to follow the travelers with us on the Peter's Projection World Map mounted outside of our high school library as they traverse the globe. Also, we expect our second world map, the Mercator World Map to be mounted within the next week so take a look and see the differences.

Bon Voyage!

HIGH SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

**Kenneth H. Sauer, Principal
Webutuck Jr./Sr. High School**

The Marathon Project - is "off and running" with a number of our students participating. Those students include Ashley Carr, Zac Cope, Glen Gilbert, Andrew Hope, Kayla Khol, Veronica Malloy, Destiny Patnode, Amber Smith, Andrew Thrasher, Leshawn Thrasher, Sophia Tomasetti, Jesse Capallero, and Shyla Winters.

The National Honor Society - would like to remind everyone that they are sponsoring a Blood drive this Friday April 8th. If you are able and interested in being a donor, please feel free to call the High School Main Office at 373-4106 to schedule a convenient time for you to come in and donate.

Spring Sports - started this week with baseball, softball, and track all competing in their first contests. We have a talented collection of athletes and it is always nice to see community support for them as they follow their individual passions. Just a reminder though...it always feels a bit cooler up here on the hill so be sure to wear an extra layer or two in case the wind starts to blow.

The Teen Driving program - will be offered at the Webutuck Jr./Sr. High School, in the auditorium on April 28, 2011. Registration starts at 6:30. The program begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. and goes until 8:00 p.m. Please be sure to be on time because there will be no admittance once the program has begun. Attendance at this annual program is necessary for any and all students who want to be able to park on school grounds and they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Science Night - The Middle School students have been busy preparing for the Science & Math Night (Wednesday, April 6th). Students have been helping Mrs. Gillette and Ms. Duffy prepare for their science tables. One table will feature a collection of fossils and the younger students will even have a chance to pan for shark teeth fossils. Another table will feature UV detection beads that change colors in the presence of sunlight. Students have been busy making UV bead bracelets to give out at the event. Mrs. Nowak's enrichment classes have been busy working on their science fair presentations. We are looking forward to a terrific event and hope to see many of you there!

We are steadily approaching the time of year (mid May) when our Middle School students will be confronted with the battery of mandated tests that come from New York State. Students in grades 7-8 will be taking ELA exams during the first week of May. It is important then, as it is always, that students get a good night sleep and eat a healthy breakfast consisting of proteins, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Your child may be a little on edge that week and even the week prior to testing. It might help for them to talk about how they are feeling about these tests and what they might do to prepare for them. We'll surely be talking more about these assessments as those dates approach.

Mr. Havranek of Webutuck Jr. /Sr. High School in Amenia, NY, was recently selected as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS). This award recognizes teacher role models who have made a lasting difference in their classrooms by encouraging students to strive for excellence.

Mr. Havranek was nominated by Alexandra Coffin, a Webutuck junior, for outstanding dedication and commitment to excellence in the classroom.

The president of NSHAA, James Lewis said, "Dedicated educators who exhibit a commitment to excellence deserve our highest praise and appreciation. We're pleased to provide an ongoing means to do so, and we encourage our members to nominate teachers who have contributed to their academic success." We add our recognition and congratulations to Mr. Havranek for this honor.

Elementary & Intermediate Schools

Kathleen A. McEnroe
WES & EBIS Principal

On March 18th a St. Patrick's Day social for grades 4-6 was held at Eugene Brooks Intermediate School, with the proceeds benefiting the sixth grade class. The social included games, music, food, and everyone's favorite, "cake walk" throughout the night. As co-advisors, we would like to thank the following faculty and staff members for the donation of their time, energy, and lively spirit: Jen Gdula, Karen Rubin, Evelyn Peters, Dan Hart, Cheryl Katan, Cara Tomasetti, Joelene VanWagenen, Jean Rocanova, Judy Westfall, Denise Conway, Sally Chamberlain, and Ruth Ramos. We were also very fortunate to have Life Boy Scouts, Shayn Clair, Adam Wheeler, Justin Katan, and Andrew Schultz helping out throughout the night. Jason Gray, substitute for Ms. Brizzie, stopped by with his young family to enjoy the festivities, as well.

This event was well attended by the Eugene Brooks Intermediate School students and we would like to commend them on their wonderful behavior during the entire evening. It is a very rewarding and gratifying feeling to be a part of such a winning, supportive team.

Thanks to all,

Sue Pomeisl and Mari-Ann Hoke

Webutuck Elementary School's Japan Relief Week

During the week of March 21st to March 25th, the students and faculty at Webutuck Elementary School held a spirit week to raise funds for victims of Japan's devastating earthquake and tsunami. Each day a different event was planned (Hat Day, Slipper Day, Stuffed Animal Day, Backwards Day and Red and White Day). Students and faculty donated \$1.00 for each day that they chose to participate. Many donated much more! As a thank-you, Mr. David Friedman, a WES teacher whose wife is from Japan, donated a handmade paper crane to each person who participated. Working together, our K-3 school raised \$1006.00. In addition, thanks to a community friend who is an employee of Panasonic, Panasonic matched the first \$1000.00. In all, \$2006.00 was sent to the American Red Cross to help with Japan Relief! Our small community never ceases to amaze with what it can accomplish when we all work together.

Spring is here!

Now that the weather is getting warmer, take a walk with your child and ask him to notice the changes taking place. Encourage your child to use describing words and his senses. After your walk, guide your child to write a story about what he saw and learned on the walk.