



The Webutuck WARRIOR

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

November 2011

Superintendent's Notes

My name is Jim Gratto, your new Superintendent of Schools, and I would like to take a moment to share my background and qualifications with you. As a graduate of SUNY Plattsburgh and Nazareth College of Rochester, I am coming to Webutuck after having worked for 24 years at Saranac Central School District, in Clinton County, New York. During my years at Saranac I served as Middle School Principal, Elementary Principal, Elementary Teacher, and boys' soccer coach. I have also worked for several years as an Adjunct Lecturer.

On a personal note, I am the proud father of three college aged children. They attend SUNY New Paltz, Hartwick College, and the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam.

I am pleased and excited to be with you here at Webutuck, and in my short time here I have begun to understand what a special school system we have. The students, staff, parents and Board of Education members are all extremely proud of Webutuck, and their hard work, commitment, and dedication can be seen in many ways. I am thankful for the opportunity to become a member of this community, and I invite you to call, email, or stop in to see me at any time. I look forward to working with you.

We have been busy here at school since the month of September! As you will see in the reports from each of the buildings, there's been a lot going on for the students. At the District level we are working towards the Board of Education Goals for 2011-2012.

Specifically, we are developing plans to achieve a 20% increase ELA and Math scores at Grades 3 through 8 for all students, with a particular focus on Students with Disabilities and Economically Disadvantaged Students. At the High School level we are charged with increasing our graduation rate from 73% to at least 80%. Also, our Advanced Placement (AP) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores are targeted for improvement this year. The staff, administrators, and Board of Education are working towards increased student achievement so that our graduating seniors will be "college and career ready."

On another note, our District Leadership Team, PTA, and Booster club are all up and running and would welcome your involvement if you have time. Parent involvement is one of the many important factors leading to student success, so please feel free to call or come in at anytime, and to be as involved as you are able to be.

High School Happenings

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

The Marathon Project finished its 2011 program season by attending the Hartford Marathon/Half-Marathon. What a glorious day it was! The day was full of various running events. As the name depicts there is a marathon and a half-marathon. There was also a marathon relay and 5K race. We are happy to report that the Marathon



Working hard in Mr. Whitaker's class

Project brought a busload of kids from Webutuck and other participating school districts. We had five students make it through to the end of the program. Those students were still running strong thanks to Shawn Hosier and his fine training. Students involved were Jesse Capellaro, Zach Cope, Danielle Cope (absent on Saturday due to sickness), Andrew Hoke (came with us but couldn't run because of broken arm) and Kayla Kohl. These five students posted some amazing results thanks to the help and support of Coach Shawn Hosier and parent volunteers Carol Keenan-Kohl and Tom Kohl.

Out of more than 1,400 runners in the 5K, Jesse Capellaro came in first in his age group and 8th overall in the race! The success of the Webutuck runners doesn't end there. Zach Cope placed in his age group and came in 33rd overall. Kayla Kohl finished second in her age group and placed 36th overall. Webutuck has a lot to be proud of in these fine student runners – they made a commitment and stuck with it, and they've gotten better and better thanks to Mr. Hosier, our parent volunteers, their own hard work and commitment, and having a school district that supports the concept of this wonderful program. I only wish we could touch many more kids because it is not about the speed – it is so much more than that (commitment, dedication, physical and mental health, and more). Hopefully, we'll be able to entice more students to be a part of this wonderful program.



Seniors building friendships in the Senior Lounge

You will be hearing from our new CAPE Coordinator, the very organized and talented Nicole Alger, about the prospects for a 2012 season. Speaking of CAPE... we are pleased to inform you that Webutuck High School will once again be offering the Student Assistance Program for the 2011-2012 school year. With Ms Chadwick moving into the guidance office we have the opportunity to welcome to the staff this year a new CAPE Counselor, Rachael Bisceglie. Ms. Bisceglie is trained in NYS OASAS approved prevention education and counseling services. The program is sponsored by The Council on Addiction, Prevention, and Education (CAPE) of Dutchess County.

Ms. Bisceglie offers the following services: individual and group counseling, family meetings, classroom presentations, and assemblies. Ms. Bisceglie adheres to strict federal and state regulations regarding confidentiality. She is a resource to students, staff, and parents, and can be reached at 373-4106.

In other great news... congratulations and thank you to the staff and members of the girls' soccer team who participated. Nancy Gagne, Mark Moren, Glen White, Joan Smith and her husband Will, Cobi Adrian, Shelby Adrian, Leslie Robertson, Brooke Dahoney, Meagan McCoy, Cari Cestone, Antonia Robustelli, Denise Ibarra, Allison Flinn, Brianna Baile and Kaylyn Baillargeon all gave of their Sunday to walk for this cause. With their efforts, they helped to raise over \$1,000 for the cause of Breast Cancer Research. We really do have some great kids!

Eugene Brooks Intermediate School

Jay Curtis Jr.
EBIS Principal

It has been a very exciting beginning to the school year and, I can confidently say that the students are getting used to being in a grade 4-8 building. The beginning of the school year brought a few scheduling problems, but the staff and I worked very hard to fix these and provide our students with an enriching school day.

It was wonderful to walk around and hear the students in our ELA classes discuss the imagery produced from a poem about autumn. The teachers have really been stressing with the students the importance of making a picture of the text in their mind as they are reading. This is a skill that would be great to practice with them as they are reading to you at home. In math class, our teachers have spent time reviewing basic operations. One grade in particular was talking about balancing a checkbook and the mathematical operations that are involved in the process. It was very interesting listening to a group of students discuss which operation to use for each activity in the checkbook. The teachers stressed to the students that this was a lifelong lesson, not something they would simply be using in math class.

Our 7-8 students have had a very interesting start to the year. In our science classes, the students discussed what would be the best way to get the smell of a skunk off of human being. The students watched a *Mythbusters* that detailed the different products used to eliminate the smell. While the students were watching the short clips, they were predicting and discussing what they thought would work best. It was very comical to hear the students say that they wanted to find a skunk to test their hypotheses. Luckily, as far as I know, none of our students attempted this experiment at home. In math, students worked on graphing and plotting coordinates. Students in social studies discussed ancient civilizations and the impact on the new world of ancient explorers. They got a better understanding of just how dangerous and difficult it was to be an explorer. It was great to see students writing and discussing, and reading in their ELA classes. These skills have become so important in all parts of our life that we can no longer work on these skills in just a 42-minute class.

It was an incredible start to the school year. It is crucial that we remember to teach our children the importance of respect and tolerance. We are going to be having an assembly soon in which the students will listen about the importance of this very topic.

The students in grades 4-6 at Eugene Brooks Intermediate School spent the Friday before Halloween participating in different Halloween related activities. In one activity the students created masks – as can be seen in the pictures below, they were not afraid to show off their creations. One of the other activities included

students creating “ghoulish” menus. The students really enjoyed all of the activities that were planned by their teachers.



Webutuck Elementary School

Kathleen A. McEnroe
WES Principal

Welcome back! It is wonderful to have our halls filled with the innocence and laughter of our children. My “bucket” is filled each day.

We do have some new staff I would like to welcome and introduce.

Patti Lynch is our school nurse. She replaced Marilyn Unger, who retired this summer. Ms. Lynch has lived in the community many years and has been firefighter and EMT for Millerton Fire Department for 20+ years. She is a registered nurse and has worked in the emergency department of the Charlotte Hungerford Hospital for the past few years. We are fortunate to have found someone so highly qualified to take care of our children.

Joelene VanWagenen has been a special education teacher in the district for many years. She has moved from the intermediate to the primary level this year. We are glad to have her on our team.

Mr. Hart has stepped down from fourth grade to third. He is a great addition to our building.

At Webutuck Elementary School we have practiced Responsive Classroom for many years. Below is information about Responsive Classroom and the philosophy of the program.

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM: THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

As an educator of young children, we are frequently asked, “How do you get all those kids to listen to you?” or “My child doesn’t listen to me at home but you say she listens to you at school. What do you do to get her to listen?” There are times when frustrated parents approach us asking for hints and strategies to help them cope with their children when they are not listening to or following directions.

Here at WES, we implement a research based classroom management practice called **Responsive Classroom**. Responsive Classroom is used primarily by teachers within the classroom environment as a way of teaching and

managing a classroom to emphasize social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe environment within the school community. This method consists of practical strategies for helping children build strong academic and social skills and abilities, while fostering independence and responsibility for one's behavior in a positive way. There are some aspects parents can use at home when trying to solve discipline problems.

One of the important facets of this method is *The Power of Language*. There are three types of language, or ways of talking to children, to consider when working with children. 1-Reinforcing Language: Naming Strengths, 2-Reminding Language: Helping Children Remember Expectations, and 3-Redirecting Language: Giving Clear, Non-negotiable Instructions.

REINFORCING LANGUAGE: Naming Strengths

Reinforcing Language can highlight children's skills, and attitudes and achievements, no matter how big or small. Parents can use reinforcing language to express genuine appreciation for children's efforts. Parents can also apply it to help change behaviors by talking to children about specific behaviors that need to change. Setting age-appropriate goals and expectations are an essential part in achieving success!

REMINDING LANGUAGE: Helping Children Remember Expectations

Reminding Language keeps children organized and on track. When parents give children explicit and specific reminders, children will learn to remember for themselves and accomplish established expectations. In addition, it helps children develop feelings of autonomy and competence that lead to self-control and intrinsic motivation.

In order for **Reminding Language** to be most effective, parents need to be proactive. They should know and decide what it is they want their child to accomplish and outline specific goals and expectations. Parents should give their child reminders about they expect when both parent and child are calm -- when parents notice that their child is beginning to behave in a way that is unacceptable. Following these simple steps will help both parent and child stay on track!

REDIRECTING LANGUAGE: Giving Clear, Non-negotiable Instructions

Redirecting Language consists of statements or directions that are clear and respectful of children. It will allow parents to keep children safe and productive when their self-control is failing them. **Redirecting Language** is most effective when parents: 1. are direct and specific when stating the behavior that must change or stop; 2. name the desired behavior; 3. are brief, and set firm limits (if necessary, actions follows words), and 4. make a statement instead of asking a question.

Here are a few examples of how you can practice **The Power of Language** in everyday situations.

REINFORCING LANGUAGE:

Instead of Saying: "Don't you know how to sit at the table like a lady?"

Try Saying: "I see you sat down at the table and are ready to eat."

REMINDING LANGUAGE:

Instead of Saying: "How many times do I have to tell you to get in the car? Don't you know what time it is?"

Try Saying: "You need to get in the car. It is time to go."

REDIRECTING LANGUAGE:

Instead of Saying: "Do you want me to take those toys away?"

Try Saying: "Put those toys away."

Responsive Classroom and *The Power of Language* is one way teachers have found they can help students learn to begin to gain autonomy and learn to manage their own behavior. Parents too can help their children navigate through the ups and down of childhood by implementing these strategies.



Recently, our Kindergarten focused on the letter *Hh*. We discovered a variety of letter *Hh* words like **H**alloween, **h**ats and a spooky **H**aunted **H**ouse! Mrs. Palmer's friends played a **H**alloween Shape game and shared it with the whole Kindergarten. They now can distinguish shapes according to the number of their sides and the number of their corners. Mrs. Smith's class created a Spooky **H**aunted Mansion and focused on positional words as they placed items on, above, below and beside other shapes. Mrs. Wagner's friends had fun working on writing their numbers from 1-8. Then they practiced writing these numbers as they glued legs to their spider **h**ats! It certainly was a **H**appy **H**alloween playing these fun math activities!



Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Thanksgiving Recess-November 23-Nov 27

Winter Break- December 22-January 2

Please remember all the students go out for recess each day. Now that the weather is getting colder, please dress your child accordingly. Once there is snow on the ground, the students will need snow pants, snow boots and gloves to play in the snow. If the students do not have these items, they will play on the blacktop.