



Superintendent's Message

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? SUGGESTIONS?

Thank you for your support of the Building Project and the Bus Referendum. I appreciate your support of the District's project, but most importantly, your support of the education of our children in the classroom, on the athletic field, and in all that they do!

Your questions, concerns, and suggestions are important! Please feel free to call me at 674-7343 or e-mail me at hellertg@secsd.org.

Check out our web site at www.secsd.org. You can find curriculum maps for all of the classes your children are involved in and you will also find that many of our teachers have web sites that post the daily assignments.

If you are in need of a computer, call me.

Gayle H. Hellert, Superintendent

Board Report

What do you do as a school district leadership team (administrators and school board), when you realize that you've fallen short in one of your primary obligations to parents and other community members? You fix it. That's why in the coming months you will see a much more dedicated effort to focus our communications on the key academic goals, objectives and strategies that are currently in place and continue to evolve within the S-E school district. In other words, *what are we doing to give our kids the best possible chance to learn and achieve?*

This is the first in a series of newsletter articles on our district's integrated school improvement plan, referred to as LINKS. The process began in 1999 and has been updated and improved each subsequent school year by a team of highly dedicated teachers and administrators. This year's update is referred to as LINKS 7. There are five top-level goals, each with

a series of objectives (measurable targets) and strategies (action steps) that focus and guide district staff in their day to day efforts.

GOAL #1: By June 2006, all students will achieve a level 3 or above on the State Math Assessments.

GOAL #2: By June 2006, all students will achieve a level 3 or above on the State ELA Assessments.

Were you aware that we, as a district, are required to comply with elements of a "New York State Testing Program" in ELA and Math? In past years, 4th and 8th graders have taken tests assessing their mastery of foundational skills in both subjects. We had some difficulty, particularly with Math, in the past and were labeled a School In Need of Improvement (SINI) by the State. Through LINKS and the tremendous efforts of our teaching staff, we were recently removed from SINI status (we'll give the kids some credit too). However, we can only pause briefly to celebrate. Beginning in January and March 2006, the testing requirements will include grades 3 through 8. Beyond 2006, we can expect testing to expand into high school grade levels. Helping each of our students achieve a score of 3 or above (on a four point scale) is a very challenging goal and will be an awesome achievement. As parents, our awareness, involvement and encouragement can only have a powerful impact.

GOAL #3: By June 2006, all students will pass the five core Regents Exams with a 65 or better.

For students entering 9th grade between now and 2008, the High School graduation standards will change, incrementally, for general education students as it relates to the five required Regents exams. Students entering grade 9 in 2008 and beyond, must achieve a score of 65 or above on all five of the required Regents. Our primary focus in this goal is to identify root causes related to skill deficiencies, student motivation and drop-out rates so that we can

rapidly apply strategies to either change existing academic processes or, at minimum, find ways to identify problems and intervene as early as possible.

GOAL #4: By June 2006, we will engage in activities that enhance our school Community.

This is, perhaps, the most difficult goal to quantify. Yet, it may be the one that gives us “breakthrough” capability tackling the other four. We include the efforts to foster a safe and nurturing learning envi-

ronment for students, such as character education and bullying awareness. We also include two other critical components. First, how does it become second-nature for us to behave as a professional learning community in which all of our staff regularly seek and share new skills, methods or strategies aimed at student achievement – and, how do we create the urgency to achieve positive change while managing the inevitable insecurity some may feel? This is where we hear the phrases “differentiated instruction,” “new teacher mentoring,” “error coding,” “horizontal and vertical alignment” and “staff development.” Second, how do we engage more parents in the education of their children? Many parents are highly engaged. Many are not. We know that parental involvement can have a dramatic impact on a child’s success. We’ll be attempting to understand the reasons and to determine how we can bridge that gap.

GOAL #5: By June 2006, the District CSE classification rate will be at a statewide average of 12%.

We’re encouraged by the State to trend lower in our special education classification rate, which is currently 17%. While we will, obviously, continue to provide appropriate support to at-risk students, this goal is intended to examine the effectiveness of that support – assessment, staff capabilities, teaching methods, communication – and to increase our declassification rate by successfully addressing student needs.

In the next several editions of the newsletter, we’ll include an article discussing each individual goal in more depth, beginning with goals #1 and #2 on State Math and ELA Assessments. I encourage you to discuss the LINKS 7 process with teachers and administrators, particularly if you have any questions.

Finally, if you have a Middle School or High School student, please don’t forget to visit the school office for your PowerSchool® user ID and password (you’ll need your driver’s license for identification). PowerSchool® is an on-line tool, available to both parents and students, that helps monitor student performance on a “nearly” real-time basis (rather than waiting for report cards). You can find it at www.secsd.org.

If you’ve made it this far, you have successfully completed your first homework assignment.

Thanks,
Tom Caton

Sherburne-Earlville Central School

The Maroon and White is published monthly by the Sherburne-Earlville Central School Board and Administration, 15 School Street, Sherburne, New York 13460.

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DISCLAIMER

Please take notice that the viewpoint articles that appear in this Newsletter are the personal expressions of individual authors and do not necessarily represent the official policies or positions of the Sherburne-Earlville Central School District or the Board of Education.



Message in a Bottle

Kevin Costner's movie, *Message in a Bottle*, and the real life event of a girl in Long Island launched the idea for a writing project in our summer school program. A 14-year-old girl found a letter from a 14-year-old boy from Portugal in a bottle on the Long Island beach. The bottle had floated the ocean currents for over two years. The movie and the real life event encouraged my students to write and send a message in a bottle. The students first wrote their letters, laminated them, rolled them tightly and sealed them in a plastic soda bottle with hot glue.

On August 24, 2005 our family, while on vacation in Cape Cod, threw the bottles into the ocean. The bottles were thrown into the ocean 7 miles off shore of Chatham, Massachusetts. On August 29, 2005, one of the bottles was found on the southern shore of Nantucket.

Our first week of school was extremely exciting. On Wednesday, September 7, a post card arrived for one of our students. Their bottle had been found by a woman on vacation from Washington, DC. Along with the post card, came a wonderful letter from the new pen pal.

Our students are hoping and eagerly waiting to see if their bottles will reach another shore. This project has crossed the curriculum and fulfilled our expectations. It encourages students to develop writing skills, learn geography, understand ocean currents and find out about different cultures.

— Dawn Dando

Books for Those in Need



Mrs. Johnson's third grade class wanted to help the people affected by the tsunami. We decided that we would try to have a "gently used" book sale. We got permission from Mr. D and we came up with a lot of books. We never had the sale. Our class looped with Mrs. Johnson's fourth grade. We have a new student in our class, her name is **Gemma Godfrey**. Because we didn't have the book sale, we still had the books. Mrs. Johnson had an idea that we could send the books to where hurricane Katrina hit. We tried the Red Cross but we did not get a response. Mrs. Johnson asked us to try to find a web-site so we could send the books. That's where Gemma steps in. She found a place to send the books. We packaged all the books, and now they're in the mail!

— Jessica Lathrop from Mrs. Johnson's fourth grade class

Constitution Day

Mr. Thomas and Mrs. McDowell's fifth grade class celebrated Constitution Day on September 16 by studying about the signing of the United States Constitution. Our class had written a document about what makes a quality classroom and then our students and teachers signed our class constitution with a quill pen.

— Margaret McDowell



S-E Students Go Canoeing



On Thursday, September 15, Mr. Dushko and Ms. Christopher took their classes canoeing on Lake Moraine. This trip was arranged through one of our PE teachers, Mary Fraser. The students and staff were able to enjoy a great canoe ride around the lake through Mary Fraser's relationship with Colgate University and their Boathouse. The students and staff doubled as partners in the canoes and paddled around the lake. Everyone involved in this trip had a great time, and it was a wonderful experience for the children.

After the canoe rides, we headed to Maxwell's in Hamilton to visit retired PE teacher Pat Drahos for some wonderfully refreshing ice cream treats.

A very special thanks to Mary Fraser, Colgate University, and Pat Drahos, for arranging a very special memory for these S-E elementary students. This will be a trip that no one will ever forget!

— Sarah Christopher and Joe Dushko



PowerSchool®

Find out what's going on at your student's school anytime, anywhere! With PowerSchool®, you can read our daily bulletin, catch up on your student's class assignments, and check out your student's grades.

PowerSchool® provides real-time access to your student's grades, attendance, assignments, fee balances, and more!

Sign up at the Middle School or High School to receive your password. If you already have access, and have questions, please call us: Middle School — 674-7350, High School — 674-7380.



Connect with Your Student's Education

Whether you want to view your student's attendance and grades or simply email a teacher, open your web browser to our school's PowerSchool® web site (www.secsd.org). Then, enter your username and Password to log in to PowerSchool®.

Click "Grades and Attendance" to:

- open a blank email message to send to the teacher,
- view grades,
- view absences and tardies.

Click "Grades History" to view final grades from previous classes. Click "Attendance History" to view attendance. Click "Email Notification" to set your email preferences. Click "Teacher Comments" to view any notes left by the teacher. Click "School Bulletin" to view the daily announcements. Click "Class Registration" to request classes for next year. Click "Meal Balance" to view deposits and fees.

— Gayle H. Hellert, Superintendent

CSO CONGRATULATES 2005 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



The Sherburne-Earlville Community School Organization would like to extend our congratulations to **Sarah Paul** for being our 2005 scholarship recipient. In order to be eligible for this \$1,000 scholarship, an applicant must fulfill the requirements as set forth by our organization. Said

requirements are as follows: being a graduating senior from the Sherburne-Earlville High School, planning to attend college to seek a higher education, maintaining a minimum of a B (85) average, and having volunteered his/her time and energy towards making a positive impact on our community and school.

Great job Sarah! We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors!

Applications are accepted in May of each school year for a new recipient. Please see the High School Guidance Office for more information.

— Terri Doing, CSO President

Reminders from the Health Office

All current 6th grade students must have documented history of chickenpox from their health care provider, or have been immunized with the varicella vaccine. Please send this information to the Health Office.

Students requiring medication during the school day **MUST** have written permission from a parent/guardian **AND** a doctor. The forms are available in the Health Office.

Students wishing to participate in a sport, must have had a physical exam within one year to begin playing the sport. If a student plans to play a winter sport, he/she should check at the Health Office for the date of their last physical.

If you have a question or concern please contact the Health Office.

— Kathleen Steward

Yearbook News

The yearbook staff is already hard at work creating the 2006 edition of the *Archivon*. Here are some dates to keep in mind.

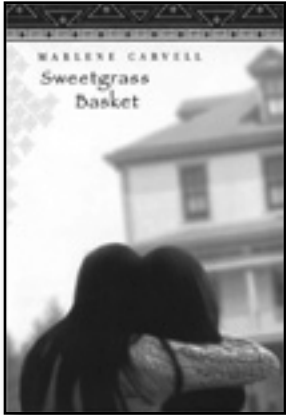
- Order your yearbook now! November 14 – 18 staff members will be taking orders for the yearbook in the cafeteria during lunch mods. The cost is \$45 until December 23 and \$50 after December 23. Only students who pre-order a book will be guaranteed one. The number of books ordered from the company will be based on student orders.
- Senior options: Seniors may order a name stamp (\$3) or a name plate (\$5) for their books. They may also order a supplement (\$5), which will include activities and events that occur between March and June.
- Retake day for student photos is scheduled for Tuesday, October 25. The photographer will be here until 3:00. All students must be photographed. You do not have to order a package to have your picture taken. Students should report to the auditorium on a free mod or during lunch.
- **Senior pictures** must be submitted by **November 1** to be included in the senior section.
- Club and Activity pictures are scheduled for Tuesday, December 13, and Wednesday, December 14 (not December 14 and 15 as stated on the calendar).

To make the 2006 edition of the *Archivon* even more successful than past books, four students gave up five days of their summer vacation to attend the Gettysburg Yearbook Experience in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Each day, staffers **Heather Barley**, **Leanna Brown**, **Becky Eccleston** and **Dana Hodge** attended a series of lectures and labs taught by experts in the field of yearbook production.

There was also a theme group work session each evening. Several theme groups met in a common area where they were assisted by veteran yearbook advisors. During labs and theme group work sessions, the girls created a theme packet that we are currently using as a guide for the book. On the final afternoon of the workshop, the theme groups presented their packets to the full group. For their efforts, the Sherburne-Earlville team brought home an award for Best Design Group. **CONGRATULATIONS!**

— Joanne Blenis

Learning Goes Beyond the Classroom



When *Who Will Tell My Brother?* was published, how could I possibly have imagined what path my journey as a writer would take? My first book has done very well in the marketplace, but more important, to me, is that it has done very well in the educational world and is now being taught in middle schools and high schools

across the country. It is even currently being considered as the title for the "One Community Reads One Book" program for a community in Illinois. My goal was not to publish a book; it was to enlighten readers about issues of identity and tolerance that confront many young people. Hopefully, it has done that.

But with success comes expectation, and so it didn't take long for my editor to ask about my next project. I explored several ideas and acknowledged that we write best about the things in our lives that are meaningful to us. So, I went to work, once more drawing from family experiences. As a result, in mid-September, *Sweetgrass Basket*, my second novel, hit the bookstores.

So what is *Sweetgrass Basket* all about? Perhaps the summary from the publisher (Dutton) is the best explanation:

In prose poetry and alternating voices, Marlene Carvell weaves a heartbreakingly beautiful story based on the real-life experiences of Native American children. Mattie and Sarah are two Mohawk sisters who are sent to an off-reservation school after the death of their mother. Subject to intimidation and corporal punishment, with little hope of contact with their father, the girls are taught menial tasks to prepare them for life as domestics. How Mattie and Sarah protect their culture, memories of their family life, and their love for each other makes for a powerful, unforgettable historical novel.

Like *Who Will Tell My Brother?*, it is fiction; yet, also like *Brother?*, it is steeped in fact. I took family history, added lots of research (the story is set in 1910), and let years of experience working with young people take hold.

Being a teacher will always be my focus, but being a writer has helped me also to be a better teacher. Whether in my classroom or in my books, my goal is to enlighten and inform, to inspire and encourage, to understand and accept. Whether teaching or writing, I continue to learn.

— Marlene Carvell

American Cancer Society Relay for Life 2005



The Mad Hatters teams were the top money-raisers again this year. We are so proud and thank you all!



Pat Drahos reads the names on over 285 luminaries in front of the Mad Hatter campsite. What a wonderful way to remember those near and dear to you.



Band Travels to the Nation's Capital



The Sherburne-Earlvile Marching Marauders participated in the 2005 National Independence Day Parade on July 4 in Washington, DC. The band left on tour buses from the High School on Sunday, July 3. Upon arrival in Washington, DC they were given a motor coach tour of the Capitol Building, Pentagon, World War II Memorial, Washington Monument, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery and Iwo Jima Statue. The walking tour of the Nation's Capital consisted of the Smithsonian Museums, the White House, Korean War Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial.

On Monday, July 4, the Marching Marauders were one of two high school marching bands to represent New York State in the National Independence Day Parade. The other high school was from Pulaski, New York. Both high school bands gave fantastic performances along Constitution Avenue. Upon completion of the parade, a boxed lunch was served and the band departed for home.

Thank you to all area communities, area businesses, families, friends, and the school district for supporting the Marching Marauders.

—Terry Mastro and Cathy Martin,
S-E Music Boosters

Boys' Basketball Runs Successful Camp



In August, the Sherburne-Earlvile Boys' Basketball Program once again held its annual basketball camp for boys and girls entering grades 4-9. Over 60 future S-E athletes, along with an additional 20-25 campers from surrounding communities, attended the week long half-day camp. Throughout the week, campers were instructed on the fundamentals of the game and competed in daily games and contests.

The camp was directed by S-E Varsity Basketball Coach Kevin Vibbard and assisted by JV Coach Jon Burke. Many current and former S-E coaches and players donated their time to work as coaches, counselors, and referees to make the camp a huge success.

Sherburne-Earlvile basketball was also honored to have Emmitt Davis, Head Coach of the Colgate University Men's Basketball Program, as a guest speaker. Coach Davis spoke for over an hour on the importance of balancing athletics with education, and also shared many individual skills that players can work on to improve their game. His talk to the camp participants was clearly a highlight of the week!

Coach Vibbard and Coach Burke would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped with the camp, and also recognize the following local businesses for their contributions . . . Joe & Vinny's Pizzeria, Gilligan's Island, and Sherburne Video. Lastly, they would like to congratulate all of the young campers for their hard work and commitment to S-E basketball. Come out and support the program this winter as we look forward to an exciting season.

— Gary Weeks



AP English Scores Reach New High

Teaching an Advanced Placement class often results in an overwhelming amount of work, but when students meet the challenge, it is also an enormously rewarding experience. Although my students have always done well on the AP English Test, this past year saw unprecedented scores here at S-E.

The AP program is sponsored by the College Board, the same entity that develops exams such as the SAT. In the spring of each year, AP students take this three hour exam that tests their ability to analyze, rather than a body of general knowledge.

The test results, determined by AP graders from across the country, will range from 1 (no recommendation) to 5 (strongly recommended). We aim for 3's, are delighted with 4's, and occasionally see a 5. Those scores result in possible course credit or the opportunity for students to schedule advanced courses, depending on the colleges they attend. Through our AP program, we have had students who have earned a whole semester's credit before entering as freshmen.

The AP English Examination in Literature and Composition is very intense. In the first hour, students read three or four literary passages and answer approximately 60 very challenging, analytical multiple choice questions. After a 15-minute break, they have two hours to write three essays,

two which require reading and analyzing complex pieces of literature that they have not seen previously. The tests are then sealed and sent to the College Board in Princeton, New Jersey to be scored.

Last spring, a total of 21 students took the AP English exam. Five students (**Mike Bagnall, Nathaniel Furey, Svante Myrick, Jennifer Pope and Carl Richardson**) each received a score of 5. Globally, the percentage of students achieving a score of 5 generally ranges between 6-10%. Here at S-E, almost 25% of our AP English students reached this level of achievement. We should be very proud of these students and our school.

Why were we able to achieve this level of success? There are some important factors that need to be noted. First of all, we have a strong high school English faculty. No one teacher can be responsible for preparing students for such an intense program and test. We have also had a commitment to small classes which allows for more writing to be accomplished. This commitment resulted in the scheduling of two sections of AP English for the first time last year, which allowed for more individualized attention to the progress of each participant.

We have excellent resources and children with great potential. Let's continue to do the right thing for them!

— Marlene Carvell

Sherburne-Earlville Central School
15 School Street
Sherburne, New York 13460

Sherburne-Earlville is committed to students. By providing an environment of educational excellence which emphasizes the learning of academics and life skills, nurtures self-respect, and fosters life-long learning, we enable our students to pursue challenging individual goals and to become positive, contributing members of society.

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