Make the most of parent-teacher meetings

Studies have shown that children whose parents are involved in their education do better in school. Every time you attend a parent-teacher conference, you learn more about your child, strengthen the bond with your child’s school, and help your child succeed. Make parent-teacher conferences a priority and take the following steps to ensure you get the most out of them.

Before the conference:
1. **Talk with your child:** Ask if there are any concerns he or she would like you to discuss with the teacher.
2. **Review Assignments:** Are there areas where your child really shines and others that might need a little extra work?

The day of the conference:
1. **Be on time:** The conference schedule is usually tight and teachers need all parents to be on time. If something comes up, notify the teacher as soon as possible.
2. **Remember that conferences are brief:** If you need additional time, ask for a follow-up session.
3. **Keep an open mind:** Some parents get angry when teachers discuss trouble spots. Remember that these conferences are meant to help you understand your child’s school performance. Working together with the teacher will help your child succeed.

4. **Make plans:** Decide together what you, your child, and the teacher need to do to help your child succeed.

After the conference:
1. **Tell your child:** After the conference, meet with your child and discuss the teacher’s comments.
2. **Follow-up:** In the days and weeks that follow, let your child’s teacher know that you are following through on what was discussed and that you would like to hear how things are progressing.

(Source – Report To Parents, National Assoc. of Elementary School Principals)
District continues to explore capital project

By Mark J. Ward, Superintendent

The Board of Education, administration and the Elementary Task Force are continuing to explore a number of options as the District looks to the future of the school system. While the main focus has been centered on the elementary program, the Board has also sought input from the high school staff as they discuss what a capital project might look like.

Hunt Engineers, Architects and Land Surveyors have been working with the District to provide cost estimates based on the work identified in the Building Condition Survey, as well as potential improvements based on the District’s educational needs. Several rough sketches have been provided that outline potential additions, as well as a footprint for a new elementary school.

The preliminary cost figures look as follows:
- It is estimated that it will cost over $27,000,000 to maintain four (4) similar elementary schools.
- The estimated cost of expanding Boardmanville and closing UN is nearly $24,000,000.
- The last option, calling for a new elementary school with improvements to East View and Washington West is estimated costs over $22,000,000. We are looking at locating a new school on Wayne Street in the area where the Athletic Complex is located.

The Board is also looking at the high school which was built in 1935. There are a number of suggestions and ideas that have come forward with a lot of talk centered around the heating, ventilation and air conditioning. The present steam heating system is very inefficient by today’s standards and truly needs to be replaced. A number of other needs have been developed and will be taken into consideration as we move forward with a capital project.

We have recently worked with Bernie Donegan, Inc. in an effort to develop some ballpark figures on the local effort needed to support a building capital project. Using $30,000,000 as a rough number, the average annual share of the District would be $423,000 using some estimates for bond interest rates, building aid ratios, bond percentage and figuring the financing over a mandated 20-year period of time.

There is a “wildcard” in the financing as New York State has established a new aid called EXCEL which can be used for such things as new buildings, safety, health and technology needs of the District. Olean is eligible for $1,872,397 which will help pay the District’s local share. The only problem with this is that it is funded through June 30, 2008, and it requires that contracts be given prior to that date to be able to “access” that money. This is certainly a factor that the Board is looking at since that is a lot of money on which to turn our backs.

The decisions will be difficult, but also exciting. We have a chance to develop a new educational vision for our District that will allow us to meet the challenges our community is facing. As the Board moves forward, they will be examining a number of issues that are listed below.

- A capital project is needed to upgrade and improve our facilities.
- If we build a new elementary school, where is the best location?
- Excel Aid is a great financial opportunity for the District.
- Should we include improvements to the high school in this project?
- What kind of project can we realistically afford?
- The local effort needed for a $30,000,000... roughly $423,000 is very close to the savings generated by closing one school.
- Will the benefits of going to three (3) elementary schools outweigh the disadvantages?
- How do Olean’s facilities compare to area schools?

There are still a lot of questions to answer and more dialogue to take place, but we are continuing to talk openly about the future of our schools and we hope you will become informed. We encourage you to attend meetings, read articles on the District’s web site, watch the meetings played back on Channel 15, or personally contact Board members, committee members or school officials.

OHS shares state Good Sports Award

The NYSPHSA recently honored Unatego (Section IV), Pennfield (Section V), and Olean (Section VI) High Schools as the 2005-06 New York Good Sports award winners. Athletic directors for each of the three winning schools were presented a New York Good Sports award banner at the NYSPHSA’s annual central committee banquet on Thursday, August 10, in Grand Island.

The award is presented to schools which have developed proactive approaches in keeping sportsmanship in the forefront with their students, coaches, spectators, and communities.

“Our goal each year is to have schools engage in a strategic plan to promote good sportsmanship at every level of competition,” said NYSPHSA Assistant Director and NY Good Sports Program Administrator, Lloyd Mott. “Congratulations to our recipients this year for their hard work and we hope to see other schools follow in the footsteps of these model institutions.”

This is the first year that Olean has received the NY Good Sports Award. In the past, Olean has received recognition from Section VI for promoting good sportsmanship. Olean has developed a number of different strategies within their program. Such strategies include recognizing an OHS All-Sportsmanship Team each season (a shirt and certificate are presented to a member of each team that has demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship throughout the season) as well as awarding a member of the opposing team at the end of competition with a magnet stating, “OHS says thanks for being a good sport.”

Olean also asks high school student-athletes to speak at their elementary schools about the importance of sportsmanship in athletics as well as life.

“We are very excited to be receiving this award and remain proactive in creating ideas to encourage good sportsmanship,” said Olean’s Athletic Director Don Scholla. “We received this recognition because we have good students, good teachers, good administrators, good staff members, good parents, good fans and a really great community. Everyone involved with our school and community can be very proud that Olean was chosen as one of only three schools throughout NYS (over 700 high schools) to receive the New York Good Sports Award Banner for statewide recognition of an exemplary sportsmanship program.”

AmeriCorps positions assigned to high school & middle school

Hello to all students and their families. This is Kevin Goodwin and Kryn Palmquist of the AmeriCorps. We have recently been given positions at the high school and middle school. Our goal is to help this school community solve problems in areas of education and the school environment itself. We plan on getting students involved with various community service projects in Olean and the surrounding areas.

If you are interested in knowing more about the program, or have any questions, please contact us by phone through the Olean High School guidance office at 375-8004. Our AmeriCorps office is located on the third floor of the high school in Room 311B. We look forward to working with the students of the Olean School District.

Fund-raising goal for Homeless Huskies ‘bigger than ever’

The annual OHS “Homeless Huskies,” held by the Student Activities Council, will be Thursday, Nov. 9. Our goal this year is bigger than ever! We are aiming to raise $9,000 for the Genesis House, the Warming House, and the Salvation Army.

The students who become involved are responsible for collecting pledges from the students of Olean High School. The annual OHS “Homeless Huskies,” held by the Student Activities Council, will be Thursday, Nov. 9. Our goal this year is bigger than ever! We are aiming to raise $9,000 for the Genesis House, the Warming House, and the Salvation Army.

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OHS GUIDANCE NEWS & NOTES

Career Horizons at JCC Nov. 16
Jamestown Community College’s Cattaraugus County Campus and the Cattaraugus County Counselors’ Association will host Career Horizons, an evening of career exploration, from 6 to 8 p.m. on Nov. 16 at JCC’s College Center. The event is free and open to the public. Professionals from nearly 50 different occupations, representing local businesses, industries and labor unions, will be available to talk to high school students, their parents, as well as adults about various careers. The event will provide an opportunity for the public to discuss career options, requirements, and outlook with specialists in fields such as business, education, medicine, science, law enforcement, computers, trades, journalism, art, and many more.

“Career Horizons is an ideal community event for those who want to explore their career options with individuals who can provide first-hand information about their respective vocation,” said Margie Litteer, admissions/recruitment specialist at JCC. “We are pleased to partner with the Cattaraugus County Counselors Association to make this event possible.”

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our students, and I certainly encourage all our high school students to take advantage of this worthwhile event,” said Mike Howard, director of guidance at OHS.

For more information, contact Margie Litteer, at 716-376-7528.

Financial Aid Workshop Jan. 3
A Financial Aid Workshop will be held at the Olean High School cafeteria on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2007, from 6:30-8 p.m. The financial aid process can sometimes seem overwhelming. This workshop is intended to inform parents and students about the financial aid process, filling out the various financial aid forms (FAFSA/TAP), etc. For more information, please contact Leah Allen, OHS guidance counselor, at 375-8019.

College Applications Due Nov. 21
All college applications are due into the Olean High School guidance office by Thanksgiving Recess, Tuesday, Nov. 21.

Penn-York College Night March 27
Mark your calendars for the 38th Annual Penn-York College Night to be held at the St. Bonaventure University’s Reilly Center on Tuesday, March 27, 2007, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Environmental Science class to tour Alfred
The Environmental Science students will be touring the Alfred State College main campus and Wellsville campus on Nov. 3. Students will be exploring careers in: veterinary technology, engineering, nursing, computers, welding, culinary arts, building construction, and electrical, both 2- and 4-year programs. The juniors and seniors are in Mrs. Yates’ and Mr. Freeman’s classes.

OHS music students accepted into All-State Performing Groups
Congratulations are in order for the OHS students who were accepted into the NYSSMA Conference All-State Performing Groups. Thousands of students auditioned for this state-wide honor last spring. Accepted in Women’s Chorus were Anna Miller, Jocelyn Parks and Kathleen Simon. Deborah McDowell will be playing French horn in the Symphony Orchestra, and Alison Brady, Jacob Carll and Emily Sorokes will be singing with the Mixed Chorus. This four-day event will take place in Rochester in late November and early December.

In order to be considered for Area All-State, students must perform a solo at a very high level of proficiency. This year a few of our freshman were accepted into Junior High Area All-State Performing Groups. Kasey Boutwell, Kaitlin Harvey and Louise Pennman will be singing in the Area All-State Chorus, and JD Olson will be playing trumpet in the Area All-State Band. This event takes place in early November at the Roy-Hart School. Congratulations to our district musicians!
City implements change in use of crossing guards

By Mark J. Ward, Superintendent

During the past two months, City of Olean Mayor David Carucci and Chief of Police Terry Schnell have been monitoring the student traffic in the morning and evening in an effort to see how many students actually walk to school and whether they are accompanied by an adult, another sibling or walk by themselves. Through their research they have determined that the need for crossing guards has changed and therefore they will be implementing a change.

Three (3) crossing guards are stationed at the following locations which became effective Nov. 3, 2006:

- On Main Street in front of Boardmanville Elementary School
- On the corner of 15th Street and Washington Street to monitor students attending the Washington West Elementary School
- On West Henley Street and South Fourth Street in front of Ivers J. Norton Elementary School

Historically, there has never been a crossing guard located at the East View Elementary School. There will be one additional crossing guard located at the Southern Tier Catholic Elementary School. The rest of the crossing guards were eliminated effective Nov. 3, 2006.

As stated in my letter dated Oct. 26, 2006 to parents and guardians, I wanted to make sure all parents were aware of this change in the event it impacted their decision on how their children go to and from school.

Sixth-Graders Dive into New School Year

By Allison Smilnak, OMS Guidance Intern

Every year, OMS invites all students entering into 6th grade to attend an orientation. Its goal is to familiarize students with the functions of middle school, as well as reduce worries and answer questions still lingering in students’ minds. This year, the OMS administration and guidance department joined forces with OASIS (Opportunity After School Inspiring Students) to provide different activities for students to participate in throughout the day. Among the planned events were a hot dog cookout and an open swim by assigned middle school team. In addition, Principal Jerry Trietley and Assistant Principal Joel Whitcher spoke with the students about school policies, student expectations and student opportunities at the middle school. Students were taught how to read schedules and had an opportunity to practice opening their lockers.

As students were coming from five elementary buildings, the addition of the cookout and open swim proved to be a wonderful opportunity for the students. They were able to have fun while getting to know their new team members, which in turn helped to reduce their anxieties and fears about their upcoming middle school experience.

Blue & Purple Teams Unite for Mathematics

By Mr. Charles Locke

The Blue and Purple Teams were recently given a unique opportunity to receive special instruction on the use of scientific calculators. Therefore, Ms. Dunbar created a special two-day workshop to work toward that goal. Each 7th-grade student was paired with an 8th-grader, and the two students worked together as a team to learn about calculator functions such as exponents, fractions, and scientific notation. After an interactive PowerPoint presentation on calculators and their uses, students were given a chance to not only practice themselves, but also help their peers. At the end of the two-day workshop, the students’ new skills were put to the test when they had to use their calculators to solve various problems posted around the room. These problems included a secret code which was needed in order to win a prize.

A.I.M.-90 Working Well

Each year the middle school creates a slogan that focuses on student achievement in all aspects of education. A.I.M.-90 is this year’s slogan and it stands for Academics, Involvement and Manners. The 90 represents the grade goal for which each middle school student should “aim.” Along with A.I.M.-90, students are also rewarded for perfect attendance. At the five-week mark for each quarter, students without any absences or tardies will have their name put in a drawing. One child’s name will be drawn and the winning student will receive a $50 check through the “Great Rewards Program.” Our first winner was Brandon Shaw. He is pictured at right with Middle School Principal Gerald Trietley. Congratulations Brandon!

Clinic Plus Offered by County Health Department

Cattaraugus County Community Services is launching Clinic Plus, a New York State initiative funded by the Office of Mental Health. Clinic Plus is an early recognition and intervention approach that looks at the emotional health of children and youth.

It is known that a child’s emotional health can affect how well they do in school, their ability to get along with others, and their ability to bounce back when faced with life’s setbacks. The approach begins with support from schools and parents. Screenings take place at schools with written consent from parents and verbal agreement from the student. If concerns are raised on the screening, parents are contacted and a referral may be made for a comprehensive assessment. If treatment or intervention is warranted and parents agree, services can include in-home as well as clinic sessions.

Wash Your Hands!

By Celeste Lamb, School Nurse

The single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is proper hand-washing. OMS students heed this healthy advice by cleaning their hands before they eat at the new hand sanitizing stations in the cafeteria. These stations have been made available through a grant from Southern Tier Health Care Systems.

Pictured (l-r) are Cody Mitchell, Cody Weber, Adria Lipka, Deanna Dunbar and Lauren Lawless.
Ms. Gran-dusky’s students are studying density in Science class. In the photo above, the children are preparing to measure the mass of an apple chunk and will re-measure it after it has been sitting out in the air for one week. They predicted what would happen to the mass. They were also asked the reason for their prediction.

Playing in the Leaves: Students in Mrs. Stephens’ kindergarten class completed a theme on leaves and fall. We took pictures playing in the main hallway. We already have over 40 pounds! The tabs will be donated to the St. Jude’s Radio Telethon in March. Join Kalleigh Keis and Hannah Stayer (pictured above) in helping St. Jude’s kids!

Five Little Pumpkins: Mrs. Stephens’ class is learning about the number 5, the color orange, and pumpkins! We acted out “Five Little Pumpkins.” Each time we recited the poem, the children took turns going “pumpkin picking” and found someone else in the group to act out the poem. We are “growing” up so fast!

Lessons from Nature: As part of the second-grade science kit on plants and animals, students from Mrs. Badzinski’s class measuring the circumference of “our class tree,” located outside our classroom windows. They also are using a mirror to view the topmost branches of the tree.

Typing Lessons: East View fourth-grade students are working on their keyboarding skills in the computer lab, using the program Type to Learn. The computer lab is run by Mrs. Sue Grosso.

Reading First - DIBELS: As part of the new Reading First program, students are assessed regularly to determine how well they are progressing, and to identify any areas where they may need help. One tool used to accomplish this assessment is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The DIBELS are short (approximately 1 minute) fluency measures used to monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills. An assessment team consisting of East View’s Reading Coach, Linda Nottingham, Title I Reading teachers Kelly Havens and Gloria Swetland (pictured above), as well as special education teachers Tracy Keller and Tammy Ketchner, administer the DIBELS to students using a Palm Pilot to record their responses.

Within a very short time, the data is gathered and sent to students using a Palm Pilot to record their responses. Within the computer lab, using the program Type to Learn. The computer lab is run by Mrs. Sue Grosso.

Building Level Team News: East View’s Building Level Team (BLT) held its first meeting of the 2006-2007 school year on Oct. 5. The BLT is a committee of parents, students, staff, and members of the community who meet monthly to discuss school issues. The goal of the BLT is to make recommendations that will lead to improved student achievement. Several topics were discussed at the first meeting, including building safety and security as well as staff morale. East View’s BLT meets the 1st Thursday of each month, from 6-7 p.m., in the conference room. New members are welcome. Please contact Mr. Olson at 375-8921 if you are interested in joining BLT.

Olean City School District Newsletter

November-December 2006

East View Elementary School

Grandparents’ Day at East View: On Friday, Oct. 6, Mrs. Deibler’s and Mrs. Marsfelder’s kindergarten classes celebrated Grandparents’ Day by inviting the students’ grandparents into our classroom (see photo below). We had so much fun! We made picture frames, sang our favorite songs and enjoyed cookies and apple cider. The students also had an opportunity to show off their classroom and share all the fun things they do in school.

Exploring Magnetic Fields: Students in Mr. Crawford’s 5th grade are learning about magnets and electromagnets. In the photo at left, Mackenzie Yanisko is exploring magnetic fields.
Welcome to Open House: Once again IJN welcomed its families with open arms at their annual Open House (shown at right) held Thursday, October 12. Open House was especially important this year, as IJN has changed many of its staff members. Many old friends have left and we have gained some new family members. It’s always a fun time when all of the IJN family members can get together.

And the Survey Says ... : Mrs. Monroe’s and Mrs. Martin’s fifth-grade students are working on a graphing unit in math (pictured below). For their performance assessment, the students paired up and surveyed classes to create bar graphs that are on display in the hall.

Developing Math Skills: Mrs. Bates’ and Mrs. Jakubczyk’s kindergarten classes (shown below) are very busy this month making and reading graphs.

A Very Unique Pumpkin Patch: Second-graders in Mrs. Brooks’ and Mrs. Lewicki’s rooms completed a festive fall project—they planted and grew an “Adjective Pumpkin Patch” in their hall! This unique pumpkin patch includes interesting scarecrows accompanied by the descriptive paragraphs students wrote using the “Step Up to Writing” process, and handmade pumpkins, each containing an adjective.

Fifth-Graders Busy as Bees: Fifth-graders in Mrs. Monroe’s class researched one of the Native American Indian tribes with a partner. Students decided what information would be important to a time traveler going back in time. The students wrote mini-reports that included a title and cover page, a map of where their tribe lived, a one- to two-page typed report (in Step Up To Writing Form) and pictures of the tribe they researched. “What an amazing job the students did. I am very proud of them!” stated Mrs. Monroe.

Bringing Parts of Brazil to Olean: Our third-grade students are learning about the country of Brazil using various resources, such as “Many Places Friendly Faces” computer software, and completing neat learning activities. In Mrs. Frederick’s classroom, each student is researching a plant or animal that inhabits the Amazing Amazon Rain Forest. When they finish their projects, they will create a rain forest in the hall showing all their animals and plants. Who knew science and social studies could be combined into one? Mrs. Faulkner’s students made salt maps and learned a song about saving the Rain Forests.

Halloween Fun at IJN: It was a dark and stormy day and IJN was up to some “ghoulish” fun. First, there was the parade of friends (top left). Everyone dressed up to join in the fun. There were princesses and queens and ghouls and “things” (top right). Even the teachers were “clowning around” (bottom left). We took a stroll down memory lane back into the ’60s (right). After the parade, we went back to our rooms for some much needed drinks and refreshments (below). All of that excitement can really work up an appetite. So, we’ll put away our ghoulish ways until next year. Hope you all had a Happy Halloween!
Friday, Oct. 20th, ended another successful “Jar Wars.” It started off slowly, with freshmen in the lead Monday through Thursday. Then Friday morning sophomores took the lead pouring in coffee can after coffee can of pennies. At lunch time, sophomores still appeared to be in the lead, but the juniors were closing in on them. Seniors took the stealth approach, secretly going to the bank on free periods trading in dollars and silver for pennies.

After school, it got intense. Each class battling for the top spot. By that time it was pretty close, but juniors appeared to be in the lead. Then came the dollars - we’re talking big bills! One teacher even put a $100 bill into one of the jars to make them more even.

Although we don’t have the money counted, and the winners announced, overall it was a success. This year, half of the money will go toward the winning class, and the other half will go toward the Julio Fuentes fund. Thanks so much to all students and staff who helped add to one more successful Jar Wars.