

# Excellence on Display

www.victorschools.org • March 2008

Victor Central School District

## Teaching...Reaching With Technology

### *Victor Touts Leading Education Technologies*

If you walked by Mr. Dahlstrom's High School Science class during a quiz recently, you might have thought his students looked more like the audience of the popular game show, "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire," holding up hand held devices as if they were locking in the million dollar answer. The truth is they were locking in an answer, but not to a game show question, but rather, to a science question.

Eric Dahlstrom is just one of several teachers on the Victor campus using a wireless Student Response System (SRS). This new hand-held technology gives new meaning to test taking by allowing

students to physically lock in answers to questions projected onto an overhead screen via a computer.

Test taking is not all SRS is used for. With the help of special software, Dahlstrom is able to create reviews and even incorporate picture answers when appropriate. He says the system is flexible on many levels. It can be teacher led, which gives teachers the power to set the pace of content, or student-paced, which lets students maneuver through material at their own speed.

Other system features include instant feedback on how students answer questions.

*continued on page 6*



*Eric Dahlstrom's High School Science class locking in answers on a test.*

# VCS Superintendent Announces Retirement Plans

## *Board Of Education Begins Search For New Leader*



**A**t the January Board of Education meeting Superintendent Timothy J. McElheran announced his plans to retire effective January 27, 2009. McElheran, who has been at the helm of Victor Schools since July, 1998, has been a leading force behind many district-wide changes.

In the 10 years since Mr. McElheran was named Victor's Superintendent, the district's student population has grown by more than 30 percent and the districts facilities have expanded to meet not only the 1,000 additional students influx, but numerous world-class educational programs.

The Board of Education describes Mr. McElheran as: "a man of great vision and character whose commitment to excellence is paramount. The enormous positive impact Tim has made on our school continues to be measured by the thousands of student lives he has touched. Victor has become a destination school district under Tim's guidance. Our community has been most fortunate to have his leadership for 10+ years."

Filling McElheran's shoes will not be an easy task. The process for finding a new Superintendent is already underway. The Board of Education shared a projected Search Timeline at its March 6 meeting. A community forum outlining the attributes/qualities of the next Superintendent will be held on April 8. At this time, a link for an online survey will also be made available on the Victor Central School's website, [www.victorschools.org](http://www.victorschools.org).

## 2008-2009 School Budget Process Well Underway

### *Community Vote Slated for May 20*

**T**he month of March has been a busy one for the Board of Education, teachers, administrators and community members as they reviewed individual elements of the budget in three separate sessions. Among the topics covered during these special meetings were Buildings and Grounds, Transportation, School and Community Relations, Technology, Pupil Personnel Services, Athletics and Enrollment. Business Manager, Mike Vistocco told the Board that an increase in student enrollment was a key driver in the new budget. Victor's student population is projected to grow by nearly 100 – a trend begun a decade ago.

### *Face of VCS Board of Education to Change*

Two 3-year terms and one 2-year term on the Victor Central School Board of Education will be decided at the May 20, 2008 district budget vote. Board member James Dailey resigned from his post earlier this month opening

up the two-year term position. Board President, Stephen Martin and Board member Kenneth Weigert will complete their current terms in June. Board of Education candidates are nominated by petition. Petitions for the May 20, 2008 election are available now. For more information, please contact District Clerk, Maureen Goodberlet by phone at 924-3252, ext. 1402 or by email her at [goodberletm@victorschools.org](mailto:goodberletm@victorschools.org)

### ***Timeline of Upcoming Budget Events:***

- **Budget Newsletter:** A special budget newsletter will be mailed to residents in early May.
- **Public Forum:** On Tuesday, May 6, a Public Forum will be held at the Victor Education Center at 7:00 p.m. Highlights of this evening will include a budget overview as well as the opportunity for residents to meet the new Board member candidates.
- **Budget Vote:** On Tuesday, May 20, the official budget vote will be held at the Victor Junior High gymnasium from 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Eligible voters must be at least 18 years old, a registered voter and a resident of the district for at least 30 days prior to the May 20 budget vote.

# Victor Primary School Students Explore Saudi Arabia

## *Through a Teacher's Journey*

Michele Linse may have returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia last November but her journey continues today in the classroom.

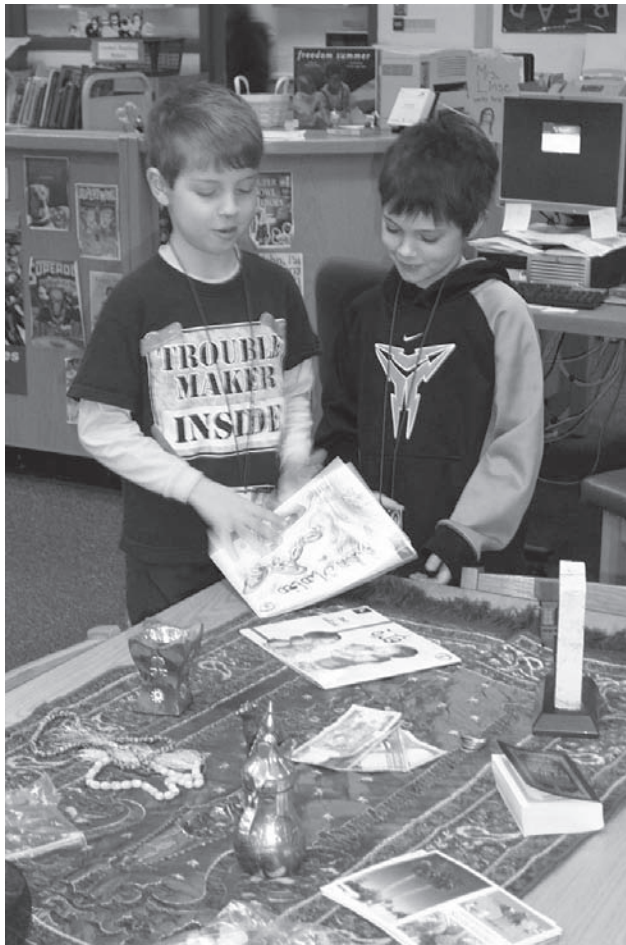
This Victor Primary School Teacher Librarian was one of 25 teachers nationally who was chosen to participate in a two week Educators to Saudi Arabia Program. For two weeks Linse immersed herself in the Saudi culture, meeting with students, teachers and business women, eating exotic foods and touring storybook landscapes. Linse says her experiences gave her a brand new perspective of this faraway place, a view that she hopes her Primary students will embrace.

And, it seems they already are.

Whether they are listening intently to stories of the cultural differences of separation of genders and clothing, or simply exploring the brass trinkets, books, prayer rug, Koran and other treasures she carried back in a suitcase to share with them — “They especially love the candy,” she said. — Linse has managed to build an educational bridge of sorts between two distinctly different worlds.

“When students can see pictures of me in this distant land, it brings it all to life,” Linse said.

While VPS students’ view on Saudi Arabia is clearer and closer than it ever was before, there is still more to learn. Linse said one VPS student likened her abaya – a woman’s traditional full-length black robe to that of a Ninja. A Ninja, it is not, but now, thanks to Michele Linse’s Arabian journey, they know this.



*Mrs. Linses' Students explore her treasures.*







# The Ultimate Exchange

## ***VHS's Foreign Exchange Students and Resident Host Students Learn from Each Other***

You already “met” two of our foreign exchange students —Stan Wang and Puttipath (Arm) Tasnavites — in our January 2008 magazine. Now we would like introduce the remaining three.

Much like Stan and Arm, they speak different languages and espouse different cultures, but when they are placed together in the same room, all of their differences seem to fade away. They all laugh. They all learn. They all see the world through the eyes of a teenager.

Victor’s foreign exchange students may come from such faraway lands as Thailand, China and Germany, but as they, along with their Victor counterparts have discovered, some of life’s greatest lessons do not come from books. They come from each other.

Monika Prokesova comes to Victor Central Schools from the Czech Republic through the Rotary International Foreign Exchange program. Although this 17-year old student says communication has been the most challenging thing about being here,

that has not stopped her from making lots of new American friends. One of those friends is 16 year old junior, Lindsay Manning. What have they learned from each other?

Prokesova says she has learned how enjoyable school can be. “In the Czech Republic we only study. Here, it is very fun

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***“Students in China don’t have as many options as we have here at VHS,”***

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and the classes are much more diverse.”

As for Manning’s discoveries on Monika’s culture; “In history, Monika taught us that the Czech Republic is equivalent to the size of New York City. The other thing that I have learned is how much more lenient American students are than students in the Czech Republic. We can do so much more here.”

Transportation is the biggest issue 17-year old

Qian Yu (Susy Q.) faces in America. Susy, who comes from China through AFS, is used to being more mobile. “Back home I take buses, subways and taxis everywhere. Here, teens rely much more on their parents.” The other distinction Susy makes about life at VHS is how much more exciting school is here compared to China. “In China, there are not as many classes to choose from. Here, I also get home earlier. Back home, I go to school from 7:10 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. each day. “Susy’s new VHS friends, 15-year old Maddie Rochford and 15-year old Alisa Johnson have a new appreciation for Victor Schools. “Students in China don’t have as many options as we have here at VHS,” Rochford says. Alisa Johnson says she also prefers our dress code. “In China, they have to wear uniforms to school everyday!”

Seventeen year old Rici Grewe, an AFS student from Germany has one pet peeve -- keys! “Keys in America work differently than they do in Germany. They turn in the opposite direction!” All

*Top: Monica Prokesova and Lindsey Manning. Center: Maddie Rochford, Qian Yu (Susy Q), and Alisa Johnson. Bottom: Rici Grewe and Erin Thomas.*

kidding aside, Rici loves life at VHS, even though she finds the curriculum difficult at times. "School here is very hard. You have VERY high standards here but I am learning a lot and am on the high honor roll."

Grewe, who was on the indoor track team until she hurt her leg, is intrigued by American sports, especially football. Similar to Susy Q. Grewe also thinks that students here are much more dependent on their parents for transportation. "In Germany, I use trains and subways and go everywhere by myself."

The lack of public transportation has not stopped Rici and her new VHS friend, 17-year old Erin Thomas from having fun. "Rici and I go to a lot of birthday parties together or just hang out and talk." Thanks to Rici, Thomas says she has learned a lot about the German culture, in particular about the foods they eat, such as tea and chocolate.



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While students can not see how they have performed on an individual basis, teachers can choose to post percentages of how the class performs on questions. Says Dahlstrom, this feature not only gives

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**“... We are reaching out to this next generation of “digital natives.”**

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instructors the power to score students on demand, it offers them the knowledge they need to determine whether they should spend more time reviewing a topic or move on. For students this instant scoring feature creates an element of excitement and healthy classroom competition.

Dahlstrom, who separates his classroom into groups named after famous scientists, says his students, each of whom have a designated SRS or clicker number, love this new interactive learning tool because it offers variety and makes material more active and interesting.

The Student Response System isn't the only new technology Victor teachers are using to make classroom learning more

interactive and interesting. Another highly popular technology being in many campus classrooms is the SMART Board™.

VIS fifth and sixth grade teachers Kylie Rohr and Kristen McAllian are just a few VCS teachers leading the way with this new interactive white board technology. Similar to SRS, teachers use SMART Board™ software to create and record interactive lessons. Whether they use the software to produce general lessons or quizzes—their material is then projected onto the SMART Board™ screen using their laptops.

This is when the real magic begins.

Rohr says a variety of hands-on SMART Board™ manipulative tools allow you to do things you could not do otherwise, especially when it comes to math and science. For example, digital markers and highlighters allow teachers and

students to write, draw and highlight information, while a magnifier unveils hidden answers to questions. From measuring items using an interactive ruler, to moving, flipping and even weighing objects, the SMART Board™ gives learning a literal depth and dimension that cannot be found in a text book.

Second grade teacher, Carolyn Harper says that when she uses SMART Board™ the students are “all eyes.”

“You can almost see them thinking in their heads the entire time,” she said.

“This technology not only engages the children, it challenges them. They have even become good at troubleshooting the technology if it is not working properly,” she added with a smile.

Rohr's and McAllian's student responses are similar. “The kids are very excited and it makes present-



*Eric Dahlstrom's High School Science class.*

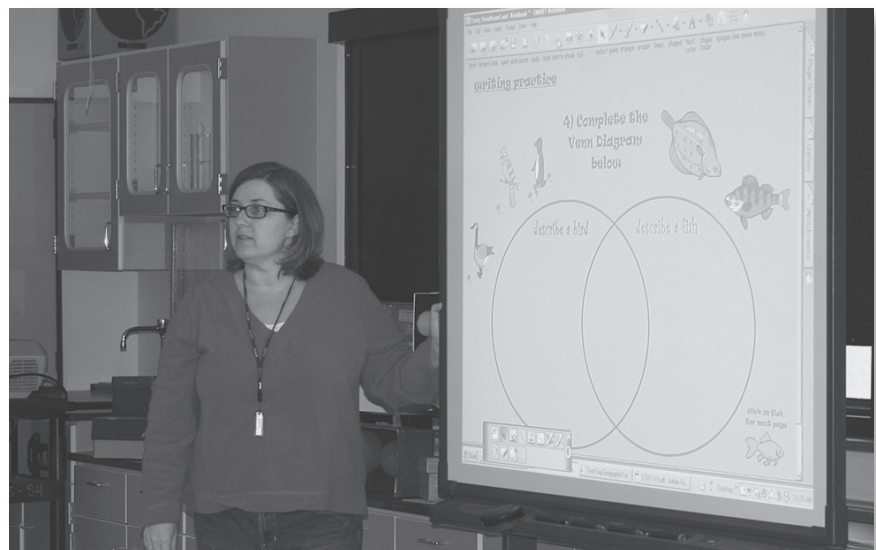




*Left: High school student using the music laboratory. Below: High School Science teacher Marcy Pembroke using a Smart Board™ during class.*

ing lessons more exciting. It is definitely all Wows and Whoas when we pull out the SMART Board™,” Rohr said.

In a world of the endless internet, Wiis and Xbox 360s, it is safe to say that education today is not just about teaching, it is also about reaching a new generation of techno savvy students on platforms that they can relate to – mediums that motivate and inspire them to learn. With technology like the Student Response System and SMART Board™, VCS is doing more than teaching. We are reaching out to this next generation of “digital natives.”



### **<sup>1</sup>dig•i•tal na•tive**

Pronunciation: 'di-jə-təl 'nā-tiv

#### ***adjective***

A person who has grown up with digital technology such as computers, the Internet, mobile phones and MP3. A digital immigrant is an individual who grew up without digital technology and adopted it later. A digital native might refer to their new “camera”; a digital immigrant might refer to their new “digital camera”.\*

Marc Prensky, an internationally acclaimed speaker, writer, consultant and designer in the critical areas of education and learning claims to have coined the term digital native, as it pertains to a new breed of student entering educational establishments.

\*Source: Wikipedia

# Kindergarten Registration



***Children who turn five on or before December 1, 2008  
are eligible to register for Kindergarten.***

*The following documents are required at time of registration:*

- Original birth certificate. (Copies of baptismal certificates can not be accepted as proof of age.)
- Immunization records signed by a doctor.
- Proof of residency. (e.g., driver's license, utility bill, lease agreement, letter of intent.)
- This is also a good time to provide a complete dental examination for your child. Proof of a dental examination will be required in September. If you need assistance in securing dental care for your child, please contact the school nurse.
- Proof of a physical exam will be required to begin classes in September, 2008. This physical must have taken place between September 1, 2007 and September 1, 2008. For more information, contact the VECEC main office at 924-3252, ext. 6410.

## **Required Immunizations for Kindergarten Registration**

***Students who will be starting school in September, 2008  
are required to have the following immunizations:***

- 3 doses of diphtheria toxoid (usually DTP, DT, Td or DTaP)
- 3 doses of OPV (or 4 doses of IPV or 3 doses of eIPV)
- 3 doses of live measles virus vaccine after the age of 12 months (given as MMR #1 and MMR #2)
- 1 dose of live mumps vaccine after the age of 12 months (given as MMR#1)
- 1 dose of live rubella virus vaccine after the age of 12 months (given as MMR#1)
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B
- 1 dose of varicella or proof from health care provider of having had chicken pox disease (varicella)



# The Psychology of Video Games

Video games get a bad rap. So says MIT Professor, Henry Jenkins in his recently published article Reality Bytes: Eight Myths about Video Games Debunked.

The perception that video games promote violence and create anti-social behavior is unsubstantiated, says Jenkins. On the contrary, research suggests that good quality video games backed by healthy parental guidance and monitoring offer many benefits to kids. According to the Media Awareness Network, they provide an enjoyable and social form of entertainment, encourage teamwork, increase children's self-confidence, develop skills in reading, math and problem-solving and improve hand-eye coordination.

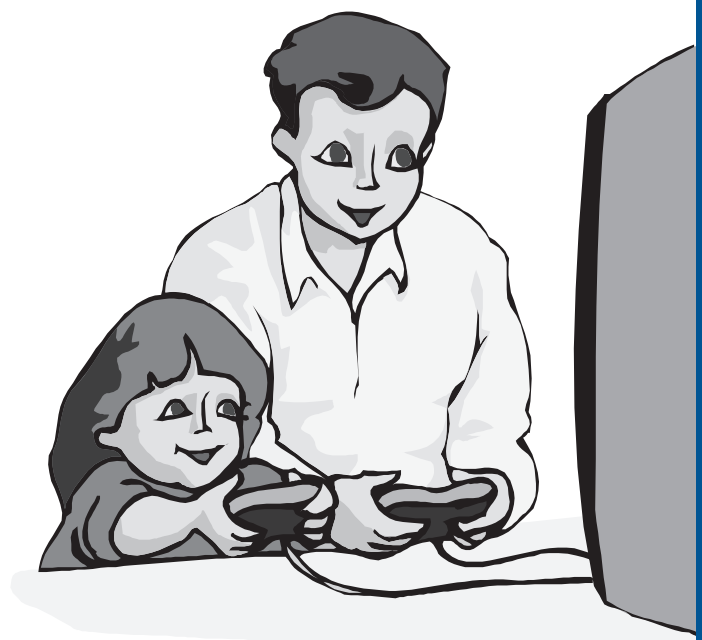
It is these positive attributes that the district's pupil services staff are tapping into thanks to the donation of multiple video gaming systems by one generous VIS parent who recognized the benefits of this technology at home with his own children. Thanks to this community donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, staff have been using Wii and X-Box systems as adjuncts since December of 2006.

From teaching social skills and learning how to handle frustration to becoming versed in paying a compliment, problem solving and organizing, VIS school psychologist Mark Behan says the use of video games has been very successful.

While the staff still uses a variety of other traditional activities, Behan says the kids absolutely love the gaming alternative.

## Powerful Parent Tips for Video Games

- Limit video game playing time.  
Recommendation: no more than 1 hour.
- Use Ratings. Do not your children play age-inappropriate games.
- Check KidScore for parent-generated reviews at [www.mediawise.org](http://www.mediawise.org)
- Rent a game to preview it before buying.
- Avoid ultra violent first person shooters.
- Do Not Put consoles in bedrooms.
- Talk about game content.
- Require that homework and chores be done before game playing.
- Learn about parental controls and use them.
- **PLAY WHAT YOUR KIDS PLAY!**



## **6th Grade Parent Orientation Rescheduled**

Due to the snow day on Wednesday March 5, the 6th grade parent orientation has been rescheduled. The new orientation date is Tuesday, April 23, 6:30 p.m. in the new VHS Auditorium. The orientation will last about an hour and parents will have the opportunity to ask questions. Parents that attend will leave with a copy of the PowerPoint, the new Curriculum guide, and information on our parent organizations in the community.

## **Curriculum Survey**

Every year, VCS conducts K-12 program reviews. During these reviews, we collect data from many different sources including industry, colleges and universities, parents, teachers, and students. This year, we are conducting two reviews; Foreign Languages 6-12 and Business 9-12. For both reviews we will be placing an online survey for parents on our VCS website. We ask that you consider taking a few minutes of your time to complete these. Go to [www.victorschools.org](http://www.victorschools.org) and click on Curriculum Survey under Quick Links. You will find both surveys there. Please submit online or call 924-5232, ext. 1406 for a hard copy of the survey. We ask that you complete these surveys by April 11th.

## **Attention: Parents New to School District**

For anyone who currently has a child attending a private school or who is new to the district and plans to send their child to Victor Primary School in the Fall, please call 924-3252, Ext. 2410 to receive placement information and events that will take place this spring.

## **Victor Schools Seek Distinguished Graduates**

Do you know a Victor Central School alumnus who has made a significant contribution to society? We have established a Graduates of Distinction program to honor such individuals. The program selection committee is now soliciting nominations for 2008. Alumni selected for this honor will be recognized in the spring.

Posthumous nominations will be accepted. Upon request, information on individuals making nominations will be kept confidential. Honorees must meet the following criteria to be considered: (1) Victor Central School graduate of at least 15 years; (2) Post-graduation achievement that includes job-related achievements: professional honors and awards, professional affiliations; publications; (3) Civic or community involvement; (4) Educational achievements; (5) Other appropriate qualifications that merit consideration.

Nominations must be submitted by April 11, 2008. Nomination forms can be downloaded at [www.victorschools.org](http://www.victorschools.org) (under quick links)

## **Community Education**

The Victor Central Schools Community Education brochure will be coming to you in the mail soon. Classes will take place from April 21 - June 13. Courses are open to ALL residents of the Victor Central School District. Non-Victor Central School District residents are welcome at an additional \$5 fee per course. Our Spring session features a variety of offerings from Driving and Astronomy courses to Culinary and Athletic classes. There is something for everyone.



## Are You Connected? Connect-Ed Up and Running.

VCS' new Connect-Ed automated phone messaging system is up and running and has already successfully relayed several school closings and cancellations.

The new system is performing extremely well and the community response has been overwhelmingly positive. In an effort to keep our new lines of communication running smoothly we ask that parents who have NOT received a Connect-Ed school closing message to please contact their child's school so that we may add their name and phone number to the list.

## Dates to Remember

April 5 ~ Junior Prom

April 10-18 ~ April Recess

April 29 ~ JH/SH String Recital

April 30 ~ Grandparents Day

## VCS Graduation Ceremony

*featuring a new time*

Sunday, June 29, 2008  
at 12:00 pm



SAVE THE DATE

## Family Fun Festival

May 20, 2008, 3:30 - 9:00 p.m.

VCS Campus

## Special Transportation requests due by April 1.

New York State requires districts to provide transportation for students up to 15 miles to private or parochial schools. Mileage is measured from the student's home to the school legally attended.

District residents whose children are or will be transported to private or parochial schools and will be requesting transportation would submit a request in writing to the VCSD Superintendent of Schools by April 1.

### Request for Non-Public Transportation for the 2008-2009 School Year

Name(s) of student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address(es) of student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level(s) 2008-09: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to Superintendent of Schools,  
Victor Central School District, 953 High St., Victor, NY 14564



# The 112th VCSD Alumni Banquet

June 8, 2008  
DiPacific's Restaurant

Cocktail hour ~ 6:00 p.m.  
Dinner ~ 7:00 p.m.

Call Ken Weigert at 924-2944  
for more information.

## Save the Date! *Seventh Annual Senior Citizens Ball*

April 26, 2008, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Victor Intermediate School Gym  
**Free** and Open to All  
Victor Community Seniors

Entertainment by  
"For Dancers Only"  
Refreshments will be served

Call 924-3252 ext. 1407 for more information

Presented by  
*the Senior High School Key Club  
and VCS School and  
Community Relations*

Victor Central School District  
953 High Street  
Victor, NY 14564

### **VCS Board of Education**

Stephen R. Martin  
Scott S. Sprague  
Timothy M. DeLucia  
James C. Dailey  
Mark J. Hamilton  
Kathryn G. Hart  
Kenneth R. Weigert

### **Board Clerk**

Maureen Goodberlet, (585) 924-3252 ext. 1402

### **Superintendent of Schools**

Timothy J. McElheran

The Board of Education meets on the second Thursday of the month in the Victor Education Center at 7:15 p.m. Residents are welcome to attend.

*Excellence on Display is the official publication of  
Victor Central School District.*

Non-Profit  
Organization  
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Victor, NY  
Permit # 10

To: Victor Central School District Residents

*The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services maintains a list of registered sex offenders and offers many resources through its web site, <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us>. People may search the Sex Offender Registry using the criteria of name, county or zip code. Parents and guardians may want to talk with children about interacting with adults and people they do not know.*