



HAT'S HAPPENING

CITIZENSHIP • CHARACTER • EDUCATION • WISDOM • KNOWLEDGE • SCHOLARSHIP • SERVICE • INTEGRITY

SEPTEMBER 2008

CLASS of 2012



New Staff at WCS – Pictured are some of the new staff members: Amy Pete, Amanda Bailey, Erica Reid, Joanna Alexander, Bridget Coon, Heidi Montondo, Christine Wing, Manuela Noble and Shannon Sabin.

REMINDER:

Report Card Night

Grades 5-12

November 20, 2008

6:00-8:00 pm

Project Lead the Way

This year, students at the Williamson High School will have the opportunity to participate in an exciting new technology education program that promotes hands-on learning with a project and problem based approach. Project Lead the Way, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that promotes a cutting-edge, activities-based technology education program for middle school students called Gateway to Technology (GTT) and pre-engineering courses for high school students called Project Lead the Way (PLTW). The Williamson Central School District began implementation of the GTT Curriculum for seventh and eighth grade students during the 2007-2008 school year with students participating in the first two modules of the program, Design and Modeling and Automation and Robotics. The remainder of the GTT modules, Magic of Electrons and Science of Technology, will be offered for the first time this year. Each course is ten weeks in duration.

The initial PLTW course will be offered at the High School this year. Fifty-nine (59) students are currently enrolled in the first course, Design and Drawing for Production. Design and Drawing for Production is an introductory level technology course designed to develop problem solving skills, evaluation, and product design competencies. Models of product solutions are created, analyzed, and communicated using Inventor solid modeling computer design software. Students will learn the engineering design process through problem identification, brainstorming and sketching, refining and analyzing. The high school will reach full implementation of the PLTW program during the 2011-2012 school year by adding one or two courses each year.

PLTW focuses on teaching and learning through a hands-on, project and problem-based approach. By engaging students in hands-on, real-world projects, students understand how the skills they are learning in the classroom can be applied in everyday life. Key classroom components include focusing students on one project over an extended period of time, working individually and cooperatively, and integrating mathematics, science, technology, and English language arts skills to solve complex problems. This ever growing program provides instruction to 175,000 students in 1700 schools within 46 states.

Elementary Foreign Language Update

The Elementary Foreign Language Program began during the 2007-2008 school year in the Williamson Elementary School for students in kindergarten, first and second grades. Research demonstrates that early foreign language study supports achievement in all areas through increased understanding of English, increased cognitive and problem-solving skills and enhancement of communication skills. Based on this research and the increasing workforce demands for individuals who can speak foreign languages at a sophisticated level, the Williamson Board of Education made a commitment to begin foreign language study at the elementary level. The first year of implementation was very successful with the students enjoying their study of the Spanish language. This year, foreign language instruction will be provided for students in grades kindergarten through third grade so that all students who received instruction last year will continue with the program this year. The goal for the District is to add one grade level each year so that by the 2011 school year, all students in grades kindergarten through sixth will participate in Spanish instruction. Students will be given the option to participate in Spanish or French as they enter seventh grade and can continue with that language at the High School or change their course of study to the alternate language.

Elementary School News...

Capital Project Update

The Elementary School cafeteria, classroom bathrooms, bus circle sidewalk and the main office of the school were renovated over the summer. The majority of the renovations were completed to increase security to the building and provide our students with additional safeguards. The cafeteria received a new terrazzo floor that will be virtually indestructible and easier to clean and maintain. The classroom bathrooms in the first and second grade wing have also been resurfaced to provide the students with a clean non-slip surface. The bus circle sidewalk has been expanded so that the students will be able to walk on a sidewalk the entire length of the bus circle. The main office to the school has been reconfigured and additional security measures installed.



Anne Ressler
Elementary School Principal

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)

Our Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program has been able to continue to expand through additional funding from the NY State Education Department. We are pleased to be able to offer four half-day sessions of Universal Pre-Kindergarten to our community's 4 year old students.

Introduction to our New Faculty and Staff members

The Elementary School is pleased to introduce our newest faculty and staff members: Mrs. Manuela Noble/ Spanish Teacher, Mrs. Heidi Montondo/Teacher Assistant, Amy Burdett/Nurse, Connie Myers/Student Aide, Mrs. Keri DeNagel/Monitor, Mrs. Victoria Schrader/Monitor and Mrs. Tori Kolyer/Monitor. New to the building staff members include: Mrs. Lori Happ/Special Education Teacher, Ms. Kate Orbaker/Teacher Assistant, Mrs. Rhonda Tuchrelo/Teacher Assistant, Mrs. Christine Wing/School Psychologist, and Louis Eck/Student Aide.

School Improvement Team (ABLE)

The 2008-2009 school improvement team consisting of parents, teachers and an administrator met for two days in August to set academic goals for the year. The team consists of: two parent representatives Mrs. Alice Sharp and Mrs. Kris Henner, teachers Mrs. Barb Tomeno, Mrs. Christie Graves, Mrs. Chris Sharp, Mrs. Joan Miller, Mrs. Carole Picha, Mrs. Emily Hancock, Mrs. Christi Byron, Mrs. Stacey Newmyer, a CSEA Representative Mrs. Nancy Barton and the Principal Ms. Anne Ressler. This team set four goals that will be the focus of our faculty for the coming school year. The ABLE team meets throughout the year to monitor the progress and assure the successful attainment of our goals.

The building has been renovated and cleaned, the 2008-2009 action plans have been developed, new faculty hired and trained and we are now ready to begin our new year.



Welcome Class of 2021!

It is a pleasure to welcome our enthusiastic, young learners who make up the Williamson Central School District's Class of 2021. Representing the class of 2021 in the photo, are: Maeve Hoody, Austin Steurrys and Connor DeNagel.

Middle School News...

As students enter the Middle School this fall they will be met by faculty committed to engaging instruction and high academic expectations. We continue to strive to offer educational opportunities for the children of the community, in an atmosphere that promotes student and family engagement. The Middle School years are ones of development and opportunity. Together success can be achieved with perseverance and some patience.



John E. Fulmer
Middle School Principal

We encourage our students to be involved in their school and community through a variety of activities including volunteer club, newspaper club, intramurals, band and chorus, learning fair, ski club, student association and Ripples magazine.

The Middle School Building Planning Team met in August to discuss and map out action plans that focus on building student success. Our direction is to enhance student achievement through promoting literacy and vocabulary development throughout the content areas; increasing student passing percentages; and increasing student proficiency on standardized tests.

We are excited to have six new staff members and two experienced staff joining us at the Middle School, each bringing their own unique abilities:

New Staff to the District

Amanda Bailey-5th Grade Reading Teacher (long term sub 1 year)
Bridget Coon-8th Grade Science Teacher
John Drake-Day Custodian
Erica Reid-Building Substitute (after 1st 10 weeks)
Shannon Sabin-Teaching Assistant
Shaye Tanner-Teaching Assistant
Laura Stultz-6th Grade Science Teacher (long term sub 6 to 8 weeks)

Staff Changing Position

Alison Maloney-Special Education Teacher
Christine Wing-Full time School Psychologist (3 days Middle School/2 days Elementary School)

Staff New to the Middle School

Donna Gobeyn-Student Aide
Sue VanStaalduinen-Student Aide

The faculty consistently discusses the excitement and optimism they have for the upcoming school year. Continuing to review existing educational opportunities, adding a few new faces along with the core of experienced teachers, we look forward to the upcoming academic year.

High School News...

Never stop learning...Progress every day!

As always, it was a very busy and exciting summer preparing to open the doors of Williamson High School for the 2008-2009 school year. In addition to our routine summer maintenance there was major construction and fresh paint, which means new and improved facilities for our students, staff, and community! A few examples include our new electronic sign out in front of the building, our completely redone cafeteria, new carpet in the study hall room, the redesigned Learning Center complex, and newly "sodded" soccer field.

We have many outstanding achievements to celebrate and build on at the high school to start the new school year! A few academic highlights from last school year include, of the 101 June graduates, 62% earned advanced regents diplomas, and 26% received regents diplomas. Throughout the school year an average of 43% of the student body achieved merit, honor, or high honor roll. Fifty-one different students attended summer school and completed 76 courses for credit, which should keep them on track for graduation. The recently released NYS Report Card, based on the 2003 Cohort, or Class of 2007, reported Williamson with the 2nd highest graduation rate within W-FL BOCES (made up of 25 districts) and 10% higher than the W-FL BOCES average graduation rate! Our students continue to perform well on State assessments and our daily attendance rate remains above 95%.



Douglas Lauf
High School Principal

Although there are many wonderful achievements to build on as we start the new school year, much time was spent over the summer reviewing achievement data and looking at strategies and opportunities to ensure the success of every Williamson High School student. We will continue to look for new ways to meet the needs of our most at-risk students including making staying after school for extra-help mandatory and expanding our mentoring programs. We have new opportunities to enhance and enrich our students' experiences at the high school, including Advanced Placement Studio Art, Introduction to College Studies, Accounting II, and Stress Reduction through Exercise. The Project Lead the Way pre-engineering program begins this fall with a re-vamped Drawing and Design for Production curriculum that includes state-of-the-art, 3-dimensional solid modeling and design with the use of Autodesk Inventor CAD software.

In closing, our Mission is to provide a learning community that inspires character, service, knowledge, and wisdom. To that end, we will end the first week of school with a special guest speaker, Mr. Jeff Yalden. Jeff is a world-renown motivational speaker for teens, published author, and former star on the hit MTV television show, "Made." Feel free to visit www.jeffyalden.com for more information. Our first priority at WHS is that each student experiences academic success, and has the opportunities necessary to pursue their dreams no matter how big or small! We hope to motivate students to adopt a philosophy to never stop learning and make progress every day of their lives!

New to the High School for 2008-09 or change in their position within the District:

Joanna Alexander – Daily Building Substitute
Colleen Boyce - Student Aide
Edgar Brown – Art (.2 HS/.8 MS)
Mark Cottrell – Social Studies (.6 HS/.4 MS)
Tammy McIntosh – Monitor (full-time)
Manuela Noble – Spanish (.5 HS/.5 ES)
Melissa Plyter – Monitor (full-time)
Mark Schichtel – Assistant Principal
Dan Sherman – Science (full-time)
Kacy Vendel – Monitor (part-time)
Kelly Wirthman – Monitor (full-time)

Capital Project Report

The summer of 2008 presented many opportunities and challenges for the Williamson Central School District's Capital Improvement Project. High oil prices and persistent rain created various delays throughout the process. In addition, while excavating the Middle School and District Office parking lots, three large underground fuel tanks were discovered. Immediate action by the District, Board of Education and Contractors allowed this obstacle to be removed less than 3 weeks after discovery. While there are still a few things to finish, many noteworthy accomplishments are highlighted below.



Elementary School:

- The Elementary School will open with a new two color terrazzo floor in the Cafeteria that has been enhanced by a fresh coat of paint.
- The main entrance to the building has a new security door routing visitors through the Main Office. The Main Office has new furniture to compliment the new traffic configuration. The layout enhances interaction with parents and students as well as provides an additional layer of safety for the children.
- New lockers have been installed in the 1st and 2nd Grade wings and new epoxy floors replaced the unsightly and odor soaked tile floors in the children's bathrooms.
- Outside, the bus loop sidewalk has been reconfigured with a continuous concrete sidewalk in front of the dumpster enclosure. This provides a safe walkway to all buses during student loading and unloading times.
- The issue regarding standing water at the entrance to the north side playground is being resolved by re-grading and providing improved drainage.
- Finally, an access road behind the building will provide for quick and easy access for emergency and maintenance vehicles.

Middle School:

- On the outside of the building, you will notice that the parking lot and driveways have been completely reconstructed and freshly paved.
- Windows have been replaced with energy-efficient windows that are easy to operate. (A few windows have been back ordered and will be installed in the early part of September.)
- The corridor ceilings have been replaced with suspended ceilings that contain new energy efficient light fixtures. These new ceilings provide easy access to mechanical systems and equipment located above them as well.
- One Science Room has been renovated. In addition to being enlarged, a new floor has been installed, desks have been refinished, new cabinets, white boards, and a projector have been provided as well.
- The Main Office and Guidance Suite have received new carpet and paint making this a welcoming environment to students, staff and visitors.





- The chimney has been restored inside and out to provide many more decades of service to the school.
- Likewise, upgraded alarm systems, security cameras and new heating and ventilating controls are also in place.
- Wireless internet access is now available throughout the building.
- Finally, the damaged entrance floors have been refinished and a newly renovated Girls' Locker room add to the upgrades for the building.

High School:

- As you enter the High School drive, you can't miss the new electronic sign. The sign will be used to advertise important district events such as sports events, public votes, Board of Education meetings, etc.
- Installation of the soccer field drainage system and sod has taken longer than anyone had hoped but the outcome is fantastic. The field looks spectacular. The electrical feed to the pole lights and concession stand has been replaced and with a few weeks of growth and root establishment the players will be out there winning games.
- The tennis court has a new fence and windscreen material installed making this a nice final touch to the athletic infrastructure at the High School.
- Inside the school, the Boys' and Girls' Locker rooms are nearly complete. The lockers will be installed in the early part of September. The rooms have received ADA compliant bathrooms, new acoustical ceilings, new energy efficient lighting, and a gathering place for team discussions during half times.
- The Music Room and Study Hall (Rooms 17 & 27) now boast new carpet and fresh paint.
- In conclusion, the air conditioning in the server/network center and computer labs have been expanded or replaced, air handling units throughout the building have been retrofitted with new pulleys, motors, dampers, etc. for many more years of service, and a new student work space has been created between the old science rooms.



District Office:

Even the District Office has had some improvements. New windows, foundation waterproofing and a new drainage system have been installed to eliminate water problems.

Many improvements have been made throughout all buildings and grounds within the District. The community as a whole benefits from these improvements as they enhance the safety, appearance and function of each of the buildings.

Sincerely,

Todd LaBarr
Construction Manager

Code of Conduct

As part of the newly enacted SAVE legislation dealing with student safety and the school's response to emergency situations, a code of conduct has been passed by the Board of Education. This code addresses many issues of concern. A summary of the code can be found below. A full version of the code can be found in each building library, the public library, and on our website (www.williamsoncentral.org).

I. Introduction

The Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive and District personnel may deliver quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, other school personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

The District has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity.

The Board of Education recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, identify the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline when necessary is administered promptly and fairly.

II. Students Rights and Responsibilities

The District is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. Students will also have a set of responsibilities for which they will be accountable.

III. Essential Partners

These include parents, school personnel, teachers, counselors, administration, Superintendent and Board of Education.

IV. Student Dress Code

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other school personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

V. Prohibited Student Conduct

The Board of Education expects students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school personnel and other members of the school community, and for the care of school facilities and equipment. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline. Students who will not accept responsibility for their own behavior and who violate these school rules will be required to accept the penalties for their conduct.

VI. Disciplinary Procedures and Penalties

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. School personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline.

VII. Discipline Of Students With Disabilities

The Board of Education recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior. The Board of Education also recognizes that students with disabilities enjoy certain procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them. The Board of Education is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing or otherwise disciplining students with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations.

VIII. Student Searches and Interrogations

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring an atmosphere on school property and at school functions that is safe and orderly. To achieve this kind of environment, any school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty on a student may question a student about an alleged violation of law or the district code of conduct. In addition, the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school personnel has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the students violated the law or the district code of conduct.

IX. Visitors

The Board of Education encourages parents and other district citizens to visit the district's schools and classrooms to observe the work of students, teachers, and other school personnel. Since schools are a place of work and learning, however, certain limits must be set for such visits. The Building Administrator is responsible for all persons in the building and on the grounds.

X. Public Conduct on School Property

The district is committed to providing an orderly, respectful environment that is conducive to learning. To create and maintain this kind of an environment, it is necessary to regulate public conduct on school property and at school functions. The purpose of this code is to maintain public order and prevent abuse of the rights of others.

The full "Code of Conduct" is on file in the main office of each school building, in the library of each school building, in the Public Library, and on the District website.

PESTICIDE NOTICE

The Williamson Central School District does not intend to use pesticides; however, New York State Education Law Section 409-H, effective July 1, 2002, requires all public and non-public elementary and secondary schools to provide written notification to all persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the school year.

The Williamson Central School District is required to maintain a list of persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff who wish to receive 48-hour prior written notification of certain pesticide applications. The following pesticide applications are not subject to prior notification requirements:

- a school remains unoccupied for a continuous 72-hours following an application;
- anti-microbial products;
- nonvolatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- nonvolatile insecticidal baits in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- silica gels and other nonvolatile ready-to-use pastes, foams, or gels in areas inaccessible to children;
- boric acid and disodium octaborate tetrahydrate;
- the application of EPA designated biopesticides
- the application of EPA designated exempt materials under 40CFR152.25;
- the use of aerosol products with a directed spray in containers of 18 fluid ounces or less when used to protect individuals from an imminent threat from stinging and biting insects including venomous spiders, bees, wasps, and hornets.

In the event of an emergency application necessary to protect against an imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour notification list.

If you would like to receive 48-hour prior notification of pesticide applications that are scheduled to occur in your school, please complete the form below and return it to Terry Pulver, the Williamson Central School District pesticide representative at: PO Box 900, Williamson NY 14589 or fax (315) 589-7611.

Williamson Central School District Request for Pesticide Application Notification (please print) _____ School Building Name: _____ Address: _____ Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____ Please feel free to contact Terry Pulver, the Williamson Central School District pesticide representative at: PO Box 900, Williamson NY 14589, telephone no. (315) 589-9661, or fax no. (315) 589-7611.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS AND DIRECTORY INFORMATION

As required by law and school district policy, this public notice is made to advise parents and guardians of students, and to students 18 years of age or older, about access to and use of student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Rights of Parents/Guardians and Eligible Students

Student records are privileged and confidential. Records are not disclosed to persons other than a student's parents or guardian, or the student, if over 18. At the time of inspection of student records appropriate school personnel must be present.

Parents or Guardians and eligible students over 18 have a right to:

- inspect and review a student's educational record.
- know that the intent of the school district is to limit disclosure of personally identifiable information in those records, except:
 - (A) by prior written consent of the student's parents or guardian, or student, if over 18.
 - (B) disclosure as directory information as defined below
 - (C) as otherwise legally allowed for access by school officials
- request that records be amended to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of a student's privacy or other rights
- file a complaint with the US Department of Education alleging failure of the school district to comply with FERPA rules & regulations.

Requests for access to student records or procedures to be followed for amending student records should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools.

Release of Directory Information

The Williamson Central School will release or publish in school newsletters, school or student newspapers, athletic programs, musical or theatrical programs, news releases, district web page some and/or all of the following directory information pertaining to students as may be appropriate under the circumstance; name of students, photographs of students, name of parents, grade, age, height & weight of athletic team members, major fields of study, participation in school activities, extra-curricular activities and sport programs, academic honors, degrees, achievements, awards and scholarships.

Pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act, Williamson Central School District must disclose to military recruiters and institution of higher learning upon request the names, addresses and telephone numbers of high school students.

Under Title 34, Part 99, parent or eligible students who do not want this information released must make a request in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within 30 days of this notification. Failure to make such a request shall be deemed consent to release directory information during the present school year.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL FIRE INSPECTION

Notice is hereby given that the annual inspection for the 2008-09 School Year of the school buildings of the Williamson Central School District for fire hazards, which might endanger the lives of students, teachers, and employees therein, is current, and the report thereof is available at the Business Office for inspection by all interested persons.

By Order of The Board of Education

Wendy E. Havens
District

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents and students who are 18 or emancipated minors ("eligible students") certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; Sex behavior or attitudes; Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; Critical appraisals of others whom respondents have close family relationships; Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of – Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use- Protected information surveys of students; Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and Instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum.

Williamson Central School has adopted policies regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

We are notifying you that you have the option to opt out your student and/or inspect the following survey.

Activity: Risk & Preventative Factors Survey
On or about: Fall, 2008
Grades: 7-12

Summary: This is an anonymous survey that asks students questions about behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, sexual conduct, violence, and other at-risk behaviors. The survey also asks questions of a demographic nature concerning family make-up, the relationship between parents and children, and use of alcohol and drugs in the community.

Opt-out: (If you do not want your child to participate in this activity, contact the District Office at 589-9661 or me personally (mehresman@williamsoncentral.org) within 10 days of receipt of this note if you do not want your child to participate in any/all of these surveys.)

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

NOTICE - ASBESTOS CONTROL

AHERA is the acronym for a federal law that was enacted in 1987. It requires all school districts to re-inspect facilities for building materials containing asbestos.

Our facilities have been inspected and response actions are planned to insure a continued safe environment for our students and employees. Activities include training of maintenance staff to prevent disturbance of asbestos and periodic re-inspection and surveillance activities by trained personnel. Details of such activities are described in the District's AHERA Management Plan that is available for your review in the Business Office. If you have any questions or concerns in this regard, feel free to contact Terry Pulver, Williamson Central School Director of Facilities (315) 589-9661.

Message from the Superintendent...

"The strength of the United States is not the gold at Fort Knox or the weapons of mass destruction that we have, but the sum total of the education and the character of our people."

~ Clairborne Pell



*Maria Ehresman
Superintendent of Schools*

It is the job of our education system to make sure that the education of our young people is world class. Anyone who watched any of the recent Olympics knows that China is on the way to becoming a world power. The students who graduate from Williamson need to compete with these Chinese students and others on a global stage for the jobs of tomorrow. Over the last few years, we have taken a look at what that means to K-12 education and have drawn some conclusions.

- Our young people will need to be fluent in languages other than English.
- All graduates of the K-12 system will need some form of post-high school education.
- There is a great need for more students to go into the engineering, math and science fields if we are to compete on the global stage.

We have taken actions on all of these over the last two years.

Our young people will need to be fluent in languages other than English.

Last year we implemented an elementary foreign language program. Last year all students in Kindergarten through grade two were part of that program, this year the program will be extended to grade three. In future years, we will add one grade per year till we get to seventh grade, which is when our present foreign language begins.

All graduates of the K-12 system will need some form of post-high school education.

We have taken two actions in this area. The first is that we have added to the number of college level courses available to our High School students. At present, we offer 12 Gemini courses and 7 Advanced Placement classes. These classes are a low cost alternative for parents. We have some students who have entered college with up to one year of credit. This is a substantial savings for parents who have now cut the cost of a four year college program by twenty-five percent.

The second action we have taken is to join with the community in a project called Project 2017. This committee is chaired by Richard "Bucky" Jordan. The goal of the committee is to raise ten million dollars by the year 2017 so that each child who earns an Advanced Regent's diploma and has taken at least one college course in High School receives a scholarship towards the cost of their first year of college. This group has a link on our website if you would like to learn more about it.

There is a great need for more students to go into the engineering, math and science fields if we are to compete on the global stage.

We have taken several steps towards this goal. The first is that we have partnered with a program called Project Lead the Way. This program starts in the seventh and eighth grade and ends with High School courses that lead to credit with Rochester Institute of Technology. Students involved in this program are involved in pre-engineering curriculum. This program is now in place for grade seven through nine and will move forward to one additional grade level per year.

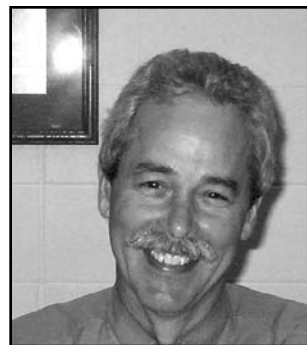
Another step we have taken is to offer both Algebra and Living Environment (Biology) to our eighth grade students. This head start will allow them to take more rigorous science and math courses in High School.

If you believe that the end result is what is most important, than you need to look no further than where Williamson stands in relation to surrounding districts as far as graduation rates. These rates were released just a few weeks ago. Williamson ranked **eighth out of forty-two schools** in the greater Rochester area. This included all of the suburban schools in Monroe County and all of the twenty-five schools in the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES. We are proud of this accomplishment and thank you for your continued support.

Message from the BOE President...

New year. New opportunities

Stop and think about what you did this past summer. Do you feel a sense of accomplishment? Did you balance the things on your "to do" list with the ones that were on your "wish list?" In today's hectic lifestyle, we can lose track of the rhythms that provide an ebb and flow that incorporates, family, job, home and community. Time is a precious commodity. Before you know it, this school year will be a memory. That's why it's so important for each of us to get involved. From providing your children with support at home to volunteering in our community, your time and energy are some of the best investments you can make for the future. Take a few moments to look at the articles, news and announcements in this issue of "What's Happening." You'll see that your district has been busy during the summer break. You'll also notice a sense of optimism and excitement as we start the 2008-2009 school year. It's up to each of us to sustain the momentum. Of course there will be challenges. Working together we can find solutions and reinforce the sense of community that is critical to success as we move forward.



Michael Collins
Board of Education President

One of the easiest (and tastiest) ways to get involved, is to attend the **upcoming Chicken BBQ picnic on September 14** to support Project 2017. With **music by Perry Plyter & Friends**, it's sure to be a great time for a great cause. For those of you who are not familiar with Project 2017, here's a brief description. We have embarked on a groundbreaking effort to promote our students and the future workforce of New York State. All students must now meet the Regents requirements. However, we are determined to urge our students to achieve higher. Every Williamson student who graduates with the Advanced Regents Degree and takes at least one college level course in high school will receive a substantial scholarship toward their first year of college. To make this goal a reality, our community must raise \$ 9-10 million to endow this scholarship. We have identified the Class of 2017 as the first recipients. If the endowment is funded before then, scholarships will be awarded as soon as economically possible. (For more information, go to the District Website and click on Project 2017.)

Project 2017 is just one initiative. There are many others that are making a difference in the lives of our children and in our community. Find a place to use your talents; then choose a level of involvement that is right for you. Strive for balance but engage in the life of our community.

"Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It's not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it's when you had everything to do, and you've done it."

- Margaret Thatcher

Welcome back.



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