

District Newsletter

SIDNEY

Central Schools

www.sidneycsd.org



December 2013

Volume 17, Issue 1

Superintendent's Message

As we approach the holidays, we are very proud of the accomplishments we have had this year and have truly worked hard to build on the success we have seen from the past few years. There is no doubt that schools are faced with significant challenges and those challenges have trickled down to our classrooms. Know that our teachers have done an exceptional job recognizing the expectations of the new Common Core Learning Standards and actually began the transition to the standards three years ago. This exceptional work has been demonstrated by our steady increase in academic achievement and improvement from near the bottom to near the top of our region in a short period of time.

There is plenty of media coverage around the Common Core and academic changes that students in New York are facing. The reality is the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are a national movement that started several years ago. There is little argument that schools need to improve, but the controversy over the past couple of years has moved from the teacher evaluation system last year to now the implementation of the CCLS. I recognize the challenges the implementation has created for our staff and most importantly for your child, but I also know that the CCLS is really not any different than other academic standard changes that New York State and other states have made. What is very different is how the standards are being taught, the increased rigor, and how the state mandated tests that have been given for many decades are being used. Teachers and administrators are now being evaluated by the tests children take and schools are evaluated by how well all students perform. There is much debate about the testing process, but your child taking tests is really not a new process. Most of us took the Iowa or Stanford 9 exams in elementary school along with Regents exams all through high school. Many of which were high stakes. Is this the best way to evaluate staff and

schools? Research clearly points out that a single evaluation point, like a state test, is not the best way. However, we also know that your child will be judged, not only in New York but in the country, on how well they do on these tests. This is just like how many of us were evaluated when we took SATs to go to college, exams to go into the military, or had to pass Regents exams to graduate. Therefore, as a district, we have a responsibility to ensure your children are prepared, competitive, and most importantly ready for their future pursuits after high school. This is not a new responsibility and is why we made significant changes to our assessment system, grading system, and curricular design two years before the CCLS were required. We recognized that Sidney students were not performing at the levels they needed to perform at. Those significant changes, in conjunction with a balanced curriculum, instructional, and assessment system, has resulted in student outcomes that now exceed state average and are clearly near the top in our region. Simply put, there is a lot of talk in the media about "going back" to how schools were. We cannot go back to how we previously performed in Sidney. We must continue to move forward and insist that our students improve.

Enrichment Programs

Another exciting change we have made this year to support our rigorous curriculum and assessment program is with our afterschool programs. The past three summers we have been providing summer camps for children. These camps exposed children to robotics, cooking, art, sports, Zumba, swimming and academic intervention. They have continued to grow and have become well attended by not only Sidney students, but by students from many of our neighboring districts. This year we have taken the summer camp program and incorporated it into afterschool opportunities for students. The programs

continued on the next page

Superintendent's Message *continued*

are running in four to five week sessions and provide students similar opportunities to the summer programs. We know school is stressful, we know we have very high expectations for our students, and therefore we know that more "tutoring" or "academic only" programs afterschool will not help them. They need the opportunity to explore the new CCLS skills by building a garden, an underwater robot, or by cooking their favorite holiday cookies. Students need experiences other than just "modules" and we know children learn by experience, "doing", and discovery. Our staff members have really stepped up to the plate and have offered these exciting opportunities for your children. If you have any questions about the programs, please contact the school offices.

USA Swim Club

This winter we also started a USA Competitive Swim Club. The club currently has 37 USA registered swimmers from four different area school districts. The team has competed in several swim meets around the State and we are looking forward to the upcoming months meet schedule. The swimmers are progressing quickly and practice every day from 4:00-6:00 p.m. and compete on the weekends. It is intended that the club will run year round and always has room for more swimmers. The team has a variety of levels for swimmers to start at so regardless of how well they swim, your child can be involved. It is a goal to have our children compete as it builds confidence and self-esteem, but we just want our children engaged and having fun with the sport. If you want more information you can find us on Facebook, on the District website, or by emailing sidneyswimclub@sidneycsd.org.

Construction

In the next few months you will start to see quite a bit of activity on our construction project. We have secured State Education (SED) approval and are preparing the bids to be released and awarded in January. The project will be done in phases with the auditorium and boilers starting in February and the fields around the beginning of March. We have set up a link off our district webpage that will have photos and updates.

New Website

Lastly, we are in the process of launching our new district website. The new site is much more user friendly and has many more capabilities for communication. I would encourage you sign up for electronic notifications. These will be used to notify you of school closings, athletics, school events, and can be used to communicate to community members. You do not have to be a parent to sign

up. In addition, you will find more information about academic results, budget information, construction, and items that you may find interesting. We will continue to maintain our Facebook page, but we also know the importance of having a variety of different ways to communicate.

Again, I want to thank you for your continued support and know that our academic and organizational improvement is not only as a result of improved instruction, but also by a committed and supportive community. We always have room for improvement and we always will have areas to address, but we are very proud of the results we have and the overall organizational direction we are in.

*William H. Christensen, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools*



**Have a Happy
and Healthy
New Year!**

Public Notice/ Non-Discrimination Notice

The Sidney Central School District does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, religious practice, national origin, ethnic group, sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), gender identity, sexual orientation (the term "sexual orientation" means heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or asexuality), political affiliation, age, marital status, military status, veteran status, disability, weight, domestic violence victim status, arrest or conviction record, genetic information or any other basis prohibited by New York state and/or federal non-discrimination laws in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding the District's non-discrimination policies should be directed to the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinators below.

Corey Green
95 West Main St.
Sidney, NY 13838
(607)561-7700, opt. 3
cgreen@sidneycsd.org

Robert Hansen
95 West Main St.
Sidney, NY 13838
(607)561-7701
rhansen@sidneycsd.org

Confidential Reporting

TROOP C of the New York State Police reminds people of the creation of the toll-free line for the confidential reporting of potentially dangerous situations. This system, housed at Troop C Headquarters, is answered by a machine which is regularly checked by police officials. This system is not designated for callers reporting an immediate threat such calls should be reported to 911 or other appropriate emergency service providers. The phone number (1-866-535-5599) is available on posters placed in the school districts and also through school district publications.



Notification to Parents — Right to Know

Dear Parent/Guardians:

Per Title I legislation labeled No Child Left Behind; you may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessional staff.

You may request the following information:

- A. Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- B. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- C. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and
- D. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualification.

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 561-7700.

Sincerely,
William H. Christensen, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Weight Status Reporting

As part of a required school health examination, a student is weighed and their height is measured. These numbers are used to figure out the student's body mass index or BMI. The BMI helps the doctor or nurse know if the student's weight is in a healthy range or not. Recent changes to the New York State Education Law require that BMI and weight status group be included as part of the student's school health examination. Our school will be reporting to New York State Department of Health information about our students' weight status groups. Only summary information is sent. No names and no information about individual students are sent; however, you may choose to have your child's information excluded from this survey report.

The information sent to the New York State Department of Health will help health officials develop programs that make it easier for children to be healthier.

If you do not wish to have your child's weight status group information included as part of the Health Department's survey this year, please print and sign your name below and return this form to one of the school health offices by January 6, 2014.

Please do not include my child / children's weight status information in the 2013-2014 School Survey.

Date _____

Print Child's Name _____ Grade _____

Print Child's Name _____ Grade _____

Print Child's Name _____ Grade _____

Print Parent's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____

Notes from the School Nurses

The district's School Health Services program supports your student's academic success by promoting health in the school setting. One way that we provide care for your student is by performing the health screenings as mandated by the State of New York.

During this school year, the following screenings will be required or completed at school.

Vision

- Distance acuity for all newly entering students and students in kindergarten, grades 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 10.
- Near vision and color perception screening for all newly entering students.

Hearing

- Hearing screening for all newly entering students and students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7 and 10.

Scoliosis

- Scoliosis (spinal curvature) screening for all students in grades 5-9.

Health Appraisals

- A physical examination including body mass index and weight status category information is required for all students in PK or kindergarten, grades 2, 4, 7 and 10 and on all new entrants.

A letter will be sent home if there are any findings on the screening done at school that would cause concern or need medical follow-up. Please contact one of the health offices if you have any questions or concerns.

Nurses' Contact Information

Susan Smith, UPK-4th Grades 561-7705
Susann Hoskins, 5th-8th Grades 561-7706
Ruth Boyce, 9th-12th Grades 561-7707

Substitutes Needed

The Sidney Central School District is in need of the following:

- Substitute teachers:
 - Retired NYS certified teachers (\$105/day)
 - NYS certified teachers (\$95/day)
 - Non-certified teachers (\$80/day)
- Substitute school nurses, RN required (\$18.00/hour)
- Substitute LPN's (\$11.68/hour)
- Substitute bus drivers (\$12.43/hour)
- Substitute bus monitors (\$9.34/hour)

Please apply online at www.sidneycsd.org, click on LINKS and Employment and Online Application tab and follow instructions. EOE

Snow Closing/Delay Procedure

We are already at the time of the year when the weather becomes a factor in the daily operation of your schools. The decision to close or delay the opening of school is made only when the road conditions in all, or a large segment of, the District makes the transportation of children to and from school or the operation of school buildings unsafe. Input on road conditions is received from the road superintendents of the towns and village of Sidney and communicated with the Transportation Supervisor and the Superintendent. Every attempt will be made to make the decision as early as possible. The announcement of school closing or delay will be broadcast via the following media.

Automated Notification System

Important announcements (school cancellations, closings, delays, etc.) will be sent to each parent/guardian at their primary (home) phone number. This system allows the school district to directly notify and update parents and staff during an emergency. The system has the capability of sensing whether or not an answering machine is picking up the call and will not leave a message until someone answers; therefore, if your child's notification information changes, we will need updated information immediately to continue to notify you using this system. Your cooperation is sincerely appreciated.

Broadcast Emergency Closing Information

Radio		
Sidney	WCDO FM 101	WCDO AM 1490
TV		
Binghamton	WBNG – CBS	

*Please note, we make every attempt to contact the above media. There have been times when we could not get through. School closings and delays are also posted on the school district website, www.sidneycsd.org and on our Facebook page.

Accident Insurance

The Sidney Central School District provides student accident insurance through a group plan underwritten by the Insurance Company of AGIA administrated by QBE Insurance Corporation. This insurance is a secondary plan that is designed to supplement the family's primary policy. If your child is injured in a school sponsored activity, you will need to file your claim within 90 days at the District Office or call 561-7700, option 1, for more information.

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

STAR Registration Fact Sheet

For Persons residing outside of New York City

New legislation requires all homeowners receiving a Basic STAR exemption to register with the New York State Tax Department in order to receive the exemption in 2014 and subsequent years.

This is part of a new initiative to protect New Yorkers against inappropriate or fraudulent STAR exemptions.

Who must register?

- **Resident homeowners** who currently receive the Basic STAR exemption must register with the New York State Tax Department in order to receive the exemption in 2014 and subsequent years.
- Homeowners do not need to re-register every year.
- Based on the information provided in the registration process, the Tax Department will confirm homeowners' eligibility in future years.
- **Senior citizens** receiving the Enhanced STAR exemption are not affected by the new registration requirement; however, in order to receive Enhanced STAR, seniors must continue to:
 - Apply annually, or
 - Participate in the Income Verification Program.
- **Resident homeowners applying for STAR for the first time** are not affected by this year's registration procedure. To apply for STAR a new applicant must:
 - Use Form RP-425, Application for School Tax Relief (STAR) Exemption, available on the Tax Department's Web site, and
 - File the application with their local assessor.

When does registration begin?

- Registration will begin August 19, 2013 and continue through **December 31, 2013**.
 - The Tax Department will mail instructions to all homeowners who currently receive the Basic STAR exemption. The letters will include a STAR code that homeowners will need to register.
 - Because seniors who receive Enhanced STAR are not affected by the new requirements, they will not receive new instructions from the Tax Department.

How does a homeowner register?

- **Online registration**—The fastest and easiest way for homeowners to register is through the Tax Department's Website, www.tax.ny.gov.
- Homeowners will need their STAR code to register. In addition to being included in the instructions that were mailed to them, homeowners will be able to find their STAR code through an online lookup or by calling the Tax Department at (518) 457-2036.

• Online registration is a simple process that will require homeowners to provide some basic information about their eligibility for the STAR exemption. Homeowners will need to:

- Provide the STAR code and confirm the property address;
- Provide the names and social security numbers for all owners of the property and spouses;
- Confirm that the property is the primary residence of one of its owners (married couples with multiple residences may only claim one STAR exemption);
- Confirm that the combined income of the owners and their spouses who reside at the property does not exceed \$500,000; and
- Confirm that no resident owner receives a residency-based tax exemption from another state.

• Telephone registration—(518) 457-2036

- Homeowners who are unable to register online will be able to register over the phone. The Tax Department will also provide telephone support to any homeowners who have questions about online registration.

What happens when homeowners do not register?

- The Tax Department will send homeowners additional letter reminders in December 2013 and January 2014.
- In February 2014 the Tax Department will give assessors the names of any homeowners who did not register, or who were determined not to be eligible for STAR. The assessment roll entries for these homeowners will not include the STAR exemption.
- Homeowners who the Tax Department found to be ineligible for STAR will have the right to administrative review within the Tax Department, and review before the State Board of Real Property Tax Services.

RP-425-FS (9/13)—www.tax.ny.gov



Office of the Superintendent of Schools
Request to Withhold Directory Information

It is important for parents to know and understand the law as it relates to the disclosure of directory information. This law was written to address all rights and protections given to parents under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent in order to release any information from a student's education record; however, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

According to the district policy, the Sidney Central School District designates the following personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records as directory information, and it will disclose only this information without prior consent.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. name | 8. weight and height (for members of athletic teams) |
| 2. address | 9. dates of attendance |
| 3. telephone listing | 10. honors, degrees and awards |
| 4. date and place of birth | 11. email address |
| 5. major field of study | 12. photograph |
| 6. grade level | 13. name of educational institution previously attended |
| 7. participation in sports and activities | |

Directory information does not include:

1. a student's social security number; or
2. a student's identification (ID) number, except as provided below.

Directory information includes a student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, or that is displayed on a student ID card or badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user. Parents and eligible students may not, by opting out of disclosure of directory information, prevent a school from requiring a student to wear or present a student identification card or a badge that displays information that may be directory information.

Parents/Guardians, however, may choose to not have directory information related to their child(ren) disclosed. If you would prefer that the school district withhold this information, please complete and return the attached form to the Superintendent's Office by **Monday, January 6**.

Request to Withhold Directory Information for My Child(ren)

Please complete and return to the Superintendent by Monday, January 6.

To: Superintendent of Schools

I do not wish to have the School District or any agent thereof release directory information related to my child(ren) during the present school year, 2013-2014.

Name(s) of children attending the Sidney Central School District:

Name _____ Grade _____

Name _____ Grade _____

Name _____ Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Notice of Rights Relating to Homeless Students and Youth

Pursuant to McKinney-Vento 42 USC §11434a(2) and Education Law §3209(1)(a), a homeless child is defined as a child who does not have a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence or whose primary nighttime location is in a public or private shelter designated to provide temporary living accommodations, or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. This definition includes a child who is:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason (sometimes referred to as double-up);
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Awaiting foster care placement; or
- A migratory child who qualifies as homeless because he or she is living in circumstances described above.

An unaccompanied youth is a homeless child for whom no parent or person in parental relation is available (8 NYCRR §100.2 (x) (1)(vi).

Homeless students and their families have rights specifically granted to them under State and Federal Law in order to assist the education of those students. Those rights include:

- The right to choose to attend either the school district of attendance before the student became homeless, or the school district where the student is currently living, or certain other schools where a regional placement plan exists;
- The homeless child or youth may not generally be required to attend a separate school for the homeless or otherwise segregated solely due to homelessness;
- Homeless children and youths shall be provided services comparable to the services offered to other students in the school selected, including transportation services, educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria, programs for vocational and technical education, programs for gifted and talented students and school nutrition programs;
- The right to a written explanation regarding a school district's decision relating to school selection or enrollment and the statement of the right to appeal such decision; and

- The local school district must appoint a homeless liaison to assist in providing such rights and further information.

The New York State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth is also available to provide assistance in exercising a student's rights under these provisions.

If you have questions about being homeless, please contact Homeless Liaison Corey Green, 561-7700, option 3.

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

The Dignity for All Students Act prohibits harassment and/or discrimination of students by employees or other students on school property or at school functions based upon a student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

Incidences of bullying and/or harassment should be reported to the school district by completing a Sidney Central School District Bully Prevention Form or Sidney Central School District Complaint Form 3420F (this form is to be used for all complaints within the Sidney Central School District, including incidents of alleged discrimination or harassment.) These forms are located in the guidance office, in each building's main office, and on the district's website. Forms can also be accessed online on the Sidney Central School District homepage: www.sidneycsd.org. Forms can be deposited into any specified drop boxes in the building or turned into the main office.

For additional information or to report incidences of harassment, which includes bullying, contact one of the building level DASA coordinators.

District DASA Coordinators

Elementary School Coordinator

(Grades UPK-6)

Mr. Robert Hansen.....(607) 561-7701

Junior/Senior High School Coordinator

(Grades 7-12)

Mr. Eben Bullock.....(607) 561-7703



Parental Notification

Right to Withhold Certain Information from Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Learning

Withholding Consent for the Release of Certain Student Information Under the No Child Left Behind Act

Please do not release the name, address and telephone number of

to:

(name of student)

Check all that apply.

- military recruiters
- institutions of higher learning

Parent Signature

Date

Release of Certain Student Information Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Pursuant to the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the school district must disclose to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning, upon request, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of high school students. The district must also notify parents of their rights and the right of their child to request that the district not release such information without prior written parental consent.

Parents wishing to exercise their option to withhold their consent to the release of the above information to military recruiters and/or institutions of higher learning must sign and return the attached form to the Building Principal by **Monday, January 6**.

All Board Policies/Notices

All Board of Education Policies on Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment are available on the school website at www.sidneycsd.org, go to LINKS, then click on Board Agendas / Minutes.

Annual FERPA Notification

NOTICE TO PARENTS AND ELIGIBLE STUDENTS OF RIGHTS UNDER THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT.

To: Parents and Eligible Students of the Sidney Central School District

You are notified that you have the following rights in relation to student records:

1. The right to inspect and review a student's educational records.
2. The school district shall limit the disclosure of information contained in the student's education record except: (a) by prior written consent of the student's parents or an eligible student, (b) directory information, or (c) under certain limited circumstances, as permitted by FERPA.
3. The right of a student's parents or an eligible student to seek to correct parts of the student's education records which he or she believes to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's rights. These rights include the right to a hearing to present evidence that the records should be changed if the district decides not to alter it according to the parents' or an eligible student's request.
4. The right of any person to file a complaint with the Department of Education if the school district violates FERPA.
5. If either a student's parents or an eligible student desires to obtain copies of the policy pertaining to student records, notification should be presented to the appropriate Building Principal, Sidney Central School District, Sidney, New York 13838.

You are further advised that you have the following rights:

1. The right to exercise a limited control over other people's access to the student's education records;
2. The right to seek and correct the student's education records, in a hearing if necessary;
3. The right to report violations of the FERPA to the Department of Education; and
4. The right to be informed about FERPA rights.

All rights and protections given to parents under the FERPA and this policy transfer to the student when he or she reaches age 18 or enrolls in a post-secondary school. The student then becomes an *eligible student*.

Pesticide Notification Application

Dear Parents, Guardians, and School Staff:

New York State Education Law Section 409-H, effective July 1, 2001, requires all public and nonpublic 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 Sidney 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;
- Non-volatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- Non-volatile insecticidal baits in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- Silica gel 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 40 CFR 152.25;
- 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 prior 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 Donald Alger at 95 West Main Street, Sidney, NY 13838, or he may be reached at 561-7715 or by fax at 563-2110 for further information.

Sidney Central School District Request for Pesticide Application Notification (please print)

School Building Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

*Return form to: Donald Alger,
95 West Main Street, Sidney, NY 13838*

SCS Open to Adult Walkers

Each year, the District opens the High School complex to adult residents who wish to walk indoors during inclement weather and winter months. The program is open to all adult district residents who wish to participate. The building is open for walkers from 6:00-7:30 a.m. and 5:30-8:00 p.m. when school is in session. We ask all walkers to sign in by the Curriculum / Payroll Office, near the high school auditorium, and complete and return the form below.

Adult Walker Agreement

I, _____, plan to participate in the Adult Walker Program at the Sidney High School. I understand that the established hours for this program are 6:00-7:30 a.m. and 5:30-8:00 p.m. when school is in session. I understand that I am to wear rubber-soled shoes. I hereby agree that I will take responsibility for my own actions and will not, in any manner, hold the Sidney Central School District responsible for any accident or injury incurred while on the School District property.



Signature

Date

Parent's Backpack Guide to Common Core State Standards



FOR PREKINDERGARTEN–5TH GRADE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

In 2011 New York adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to make sure that all children succeed once they graduate from high school. This guide is designed to help you understand how the standards will affect your child, what changes you will see and what you can do at home to help your children in the classroom.

Why Are the Common Core State Standards Important?

The Common Core State Standards are important because they will help all children – no matter who they are – learn the same skills. They create clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: **reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics**. If you know what these expectations are, then you can work with the teacher and help your child prepare.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

The new Common Core State Standards make several important changes to current standards. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what these shifts change, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child. If your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will now <u>read more non-fiction</u> in each grade level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for your kids to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read non-fiction books with your children. Find ways to make reading fun and exciting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child <u>learn about the world through reading</u>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for your kids to bring home more fact-based books about the world. For instance, your 1st Grader or Kindergartener might read Clyde Robert Bulla's <i>A Tree is a Plant</i>. This book lets students read and learn about science.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Know what non-fiction books are grade-level appropriate and make sure your children have access to such books.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will <u>read challenging texts very closely</u>, so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your kids will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book. For example, your 2nd or 3rd Grader might be asked to read aloud Faith D'Aluisio's non-fiction book titled <i>What the World Eats</i> and retell facts from the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide more challenging texts for your kids to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will <u>use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say</u>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence. Evidence means examples from the book that your child will use to support a response or conclusion. This is different from the opinion questions that have been used in the past.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will <u>learn how to write from what they read</u>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for writing assignments that ask your child to make arguments in writing using evidence. For 4th and 5th graders, this might mean reading and writing about <i>The Kids Guide to Money</i>, a non-fictional book by Steve Otfinoski.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will <u>have an increased academic vocabulary</u>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary and teach them that "language is power."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Read often to babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children.

MATHEMATICS

To improve student learning, the new Common Core State Standards are different from the old ones. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what is shifting, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child. Again, if your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will <u>work more deeply in fewer topics</u>, which will ensure full understanding. (less is more!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will <u>keep building on learning year after year</u>, starting with a strong foundation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. Building on that, they will then focus on Algebra. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will <u>spend time practicing and memorizing math facts</u>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for assignments that ask your child to master math facts such as addition groupings up to 20 or multiplication tables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will <u>understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding</u>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child might have assignments that ask her or him to show or explain their mathematical thinking - to SAY why they think their answer is the right one.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Talk to your child about their math homework and ask them to teach you new concepts. Help them figure out ways to explain their thinking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child will now be asked to <u>use math in real-world situations</u>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For instance, homework for 5th graders might include adding fractions as part of a dessert recipe or determining how much pizza friends ate based on fractions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

When talking to your child's teacher, try to keep the conversation focused on the most important topics that relate to your child. This means asking the teacher how your child is performing based on grade-level standards and expectations.

Also, ask to see a sample of your child's work. Compare your child's samples to those found at <http://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-common-core-sample-questions>. Also, feel free to bring those samples to your child's teacher and ask the teacher to explain how the samples are used in the classroom.

This information will enable you make important adjustments at home that can help your child achieve success in the classroom.

For more information, please visit: www.engageny.org or contact your local principal or superintendent.

Robotics with Lego's

Lego Bricks, little Lego guys, and tiny pieces that make terrible noises when sucked up in the vacuum cleaner may have you rethinking the wisdom of buying that Lego kit for your child last year. But don't bundle them up to sell just yet . . . if your child is in grades 3-6, you might be seeing some fresh activity with those pieces. This year, a good investment might include organizing trays and containers.

Students in grades 3-6 have been exploring science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts while attacking real-life challenges like working with people you didn't pick, making good use of your time, and finding solutions to problems while developing structures that will perform tasks usually performed by humans.

This is the first year for Robotics in the third and fourth grades, expanded from grades 5 and 6 last year. Currently, there are over 100 teams building and programming a robot of some kind. There is something for everyone in Robotics.

Students enjoy the hands-on experience and connect very easily to the real life experiences addressed in Robotics. Students in grades 3 and 4 are currently exploring gears along with drag and drop programming language using Lego Wedo kits. Students in 5th grade have built robotic cars that utilize Lego NXT kits. The 6th grade students are using brand new Lego EV3 kits to expand on the concepts they learned last year, and are currently working on three specialized robots of their own design: a vehicle equipped with a robotic arm, a vehicle equipped with a robotic crane and a vehicle with a trailer. These specialized vehicles have been built for a purpose, which is to complete a task usually done by humans. The task? Deliver a cup of coffee to the principal!

The Robotics program leads into the Gateway program in grade 7. Students in high school participate in Project Lead the Way, which provides further STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) studies.

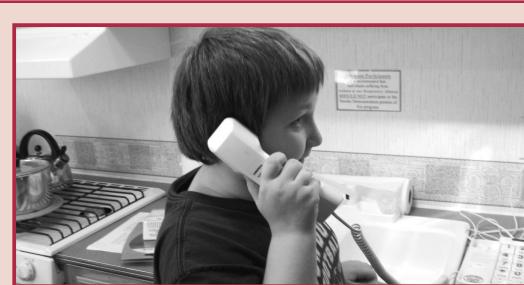


Troop 99 Boy Scout Promoted to Eagle Rank



In June of 2013, **Kyle Smith**, Boy Scout of Troop 99, completed his Eagle project by building a can shed to benefit the Sidney Varsity Letter Club. The idea of a can shed for his project came about by visiting various schools and noticing that many already had a shed in place. After speaking to many people, he decided it was a great opportunity for the school as well as the community to have a place to recycle their cans and bottles. Kyle started the project in February by getting approval from his local troop, the district council, Sidney Board of Education and the Varsity Letter Club. After countless number of hours, it is now finished and ready for cans and bottles to be dropped off. The shed is conveniently located in front of the Sidney Central High School at the West Main Street entrance. All proceeds received will go directly to the Varsity Letter Club. Please support the students and drop off any returnable cans and bottles. As of the first four months of the shed being opened it has raised over \$950 for the Sidney Varsity Letter Club. All monies collected will be used to buy new sporting equipment for all Sidney sporting teams.

Kyle recently received his Eagle Award at a ceremony at the First Congregational Church in Sidney on November 10. Kyle is a freshman at Sidney Central School.



Shawn Bennett practices making an emergency 911 phone call during fire safety day. Students were able to listen to a presentation by Sidney Fire Department, and participate in fire simulations.

News from the Healthy Warriors Clinic

Flu season is coming! The CDC has confirmed sporadic flu activity throughout 26 counties in New York State. Every year, there are pediatric deaths in New York due to the influenza. Kids with asthma and other chronic illnesses are at higher risk in becoming hospitalized from the flu. Protect your family by getting immunized. The Healthy Warriors Clinic has flu vaccine and all other childhood vaccines available. Please call 561-7795 for a consent form or for more information. In addition to flu shots, the Healthy Warriors Clinic can complete your child's physical exams, acute and chronic illness management, counseling, and dental care. Our dental hygienist Teresa Woodard, RDH, is in Sidney throughout December, and then moves on to another School Based Health Clinic. If you would like your child's teeth cleaned, now is the time. Please contact Hannah Nolan to schedule an appointment, 561-7795 (AM) or 561-7796 (PM).

Elementary Educator of Excellence Award

Sidney Elementary School would like to congratulate Mrs. Tina Woodyshek, first grade teacher, for the recognition she received in October 2013 as the recipient of the 2013 Elementary Educator of Excellence award presented by the New York State English Council! The NYS English Council is the largest gathering of English educators from K-16 levels in New York State, and their theme this year was *Getting to the Core of the Uncommon Learner*. To be nominated, Mrs. Woodyshek had to receive letters of support from Sidney Elementary School administration, fellow teachers and students. She was recognized for her passion and creativity in the classroom, designing learning experiences that are both engaging and fun for all her students' diverse learning needs and which help them excel to higher standards.

Thank you, Mrs. Woodyshek, for the exemplary work you do on behalf of our first graders every day!



Sidney Dollars for Scholars is Online!

In 1984, Sidney made a commitment to the future of our youth by establishing the Dollars for Scholars Program. The organization's purpose is to provide financial assistance to Sidney High School graduates in their pursuit of higher education. It is the organization's belief that any sincere and determined student should have the opportunity to continue his or her education after graduation. Sidney High School seniors, living within the Sidney Chapter boundaries, are eligible to apply for the DFS scholarships. Awards are granted to students enrolled in vocational or technical schools as well as to students enrolled in two- or four-year colleges.

In October 2013, Sidney Dollars for Scholars launched their online website as part of *Scholarship America*. The website will include keeping the Sidney community updated on chapter news, events and deadlines; providing information on what's going on in education on a national level; and giving students and parents a one-stop-shop for chapter scholarships, educational resources, opportunities and events. Sidney Dollars for Scholars encourages the 2014 graduating seniors to begin developing their online profiles **today** to assure they are alerted about scholarship opportunities in advance of deadlines. Visit our website at www.sidneyny.dollarsforscholars.org to find out how. In addition to scholarships, students will also have access to exclusive volunteer and internship opportunities that may be available to them, as well as a wealth of financial aid and college success tools and resources provided by Scholarship America.

If you are interested in making a donation to a scholarship, please send a check, made payable to:

Sidney Dollars for Scholars
42 Union Street
Sidney, NY 13838

Should you wish to make a donation to a particular scholarship funded through Sidney Dollars for Scholars, please make note of the scholarship in the memo line of the check; otherwise, the monies will be deposited in the Sidney Dollars for Scholars General Fund. All of the funds raised through Sidney Dollars for Scholars are tax deductible and remain in the community for distribution.

We are pleased to report that in 2013, Sidney Dollars for Scholars awarded 89 scholarships, totaling \$77,250, at Sidney High School's graduation ceremony. For further information, please contact Tracy Young, 42 Union Street, Sidney, NY 13838 or Sandra Egli, Sidney High School Guidance, at 561-7703.

Yearbooks on Sale!

The 2013-2014 Reflector Yearbook will include grades 7-12 of the Jr./Sr. High Schools. All portraits, clubs and sports teams will be included (over 100 pages) in this one yearbook! Visit www.sidneycsd.org and click on the *Yearbook Orders* link to order your copy today. The reduced price of \$50 will be available until January 15.

Safety Reminder

Medications are not allowed in school unless you provide the following requirements:

- Medical Providers written order or prescription;
- Parental/Guardian consent in writing; and
- The medication in its original, labeled container.

Considerations can be made for students to *self-administer* or *self-carry* certain medications, like inhalers. There is a process for that as well, to ensure the student knows what the medication is for and how to use it properly.

Items considered to be medications, regardless of whether they are prescribed or over-the-counter, include: cough drops, lip balm or lotions. Exclusions to the policy include: hand sanitizer and most recently, sunscreen. For students who use sunscreen we still need written parent consent and the product in its original labeled container.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school nurse. Susan Smith, Elementary School Nurse, is available for students from Pre-K to 6th grades; she can be reached at 561-7705. Ruth Boyce, High School Nurse, is available for students from 7th to 12th grades. Ruth Boyce can be reached at 561-7707.

Scoliosis Screenings

Per New York State guidelines, all students in grades 5th-9th must be assessed for deformities or abnormal curvatures of the spine. The High School nurse will be doing these evaluations throughout the school year, during the swimming sessions of these students. The registered nurse will look at their torso and back in various standing and bent over positions. If an area of concern is found, per the regulations, another medical professional will reassess the student. If there are any concerns at that point, a referral will be sent home so the student can be seen by their doctor.

If you wish to have your child exempt from this assessment, please send in a written request to the High School nurse. If you have any questions please contact Ruth Boyce, RN, at 561-7707.

Welcome to Our New Website!

The Sidney Central School District welcomes you to our new website. Besides having a sharp new look, there are new features to make help keep the site relevant and up-to-date.

The site is also extremely user-friendly. We'll also be continually working on the website and adding new information as we go along, so we thank you for your patience as we continue to grow the site.

Some of the new features of the site include:

- **E-News and Alerts:** This feature allows parents and community members to sign up for a customized user setup. Users will be able to have a custom "dashboard," which allows one to view specific schools and events when they login. There's also the ability to receive e-mail showing the newest content on the site, as well as closings and delays. Community members can also sync mobile calendars with events on the district calendar. News and events can also be shared via social media. *It's highly encouraged to sign up for this service.*
- **Closings/Delays or Special Messages:** When there is a closing, delay or special announcement, a banner will be displayed prominently across all pages of the site.
- **Menu System:** The menus are designed and organized to make for easier navigation through the site. The menu selections on the top are on each page, top and bottom. The left side features "touts," which helps users easy access to some of the most popular pages.
- **School Pages:** Each school – the junior and senior high school and the elementary school – will each have their own pages and content.
- **Staff Directory:** There is now a searchable staff list on the site. Users can search by name, building or the entire district. Contact information for staff members will be available.
- **Calendar:** The calendar is user-friendly, allowing visitors to search events by building or district.



Welcome New Staff!



Tiffany Campbell
Temporary Teacher



Kara Dodd
Grade 6



Joanna Fuller
Grade 4



Melissa Gardner
Grade 4



Wendy Gollogly
Grade 4



Jamie Hillegas
Temporary Teacher



Carlee Hoyt
K-12 Physical Education



Tauna LaBare
MS Special Education



Suzanne Leslie
Physical Education



Melissa Massee
Grade 5



Maggie McNamara
HS Physical Education



Samantha Oliver
Elem. Guidance Counselor



Katie O'Rourke
HS Mathematics



Cody Osterhout
MS Mathematics



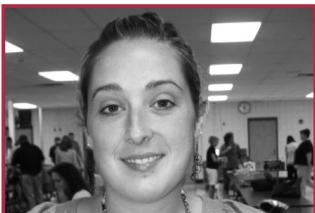
Kelly Sanford
Grade 1



Roseanne Slater
Elem. Special Education



Alysha Stephens
HS Social Studies



Tiffany Thomas
Elementary Read 180



Uday Muklhis
Science



Jenna Waldron
Grade 1



Erica Webster
Elem. Special Education

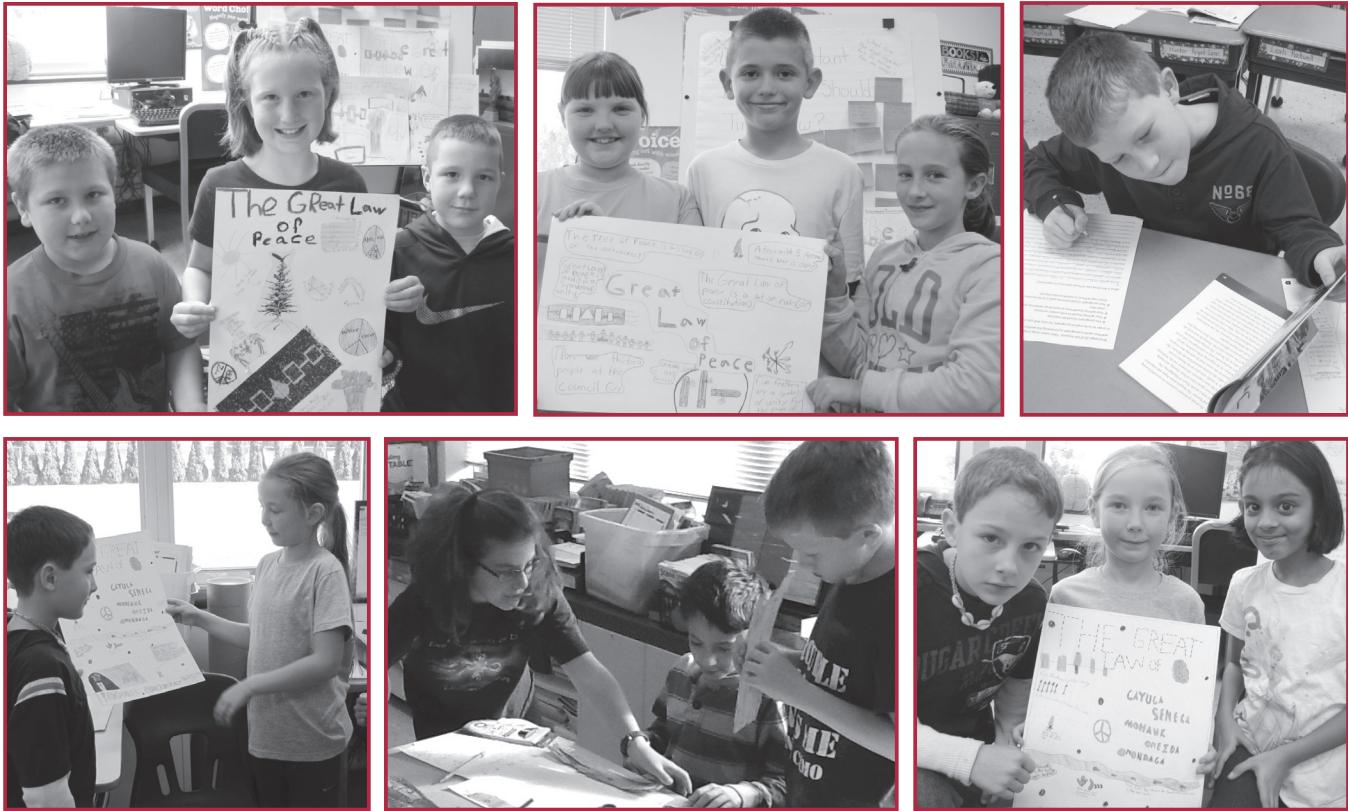


Beth Whittaker
Grade 1



Elizabeth Wunderlich
Elementary Art





Fourth Grade ELA classes delved deeply into a study of the Iroquois Confederacy this Fall. Students collaborated on designing and creating posters, and publishing a newspaper, representing and presenting the important information they learned from a variety of texts and sources.



Foreign Language students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade studied Spanish and American Sign Language this Fall. First year students learned vocabulary for numbers, colors and body parts, along with sign language and songs. Second year students got into projects, exploring different ways to learn and teach others a foreign language.



Green Thumb Growers Guild members harvested a bounty of sweet potatoes in their after-school program this Fall. They also prepared raised beds for December garlic planting by weeding and applying lots of rich Alpaca manure, donated from teacher Denise Jacobus' Alpaca farm.

Sidney Central Unveils iPad Initiative for 2013-14

The educational landscape in the Sidney Central School District is changing quickly.

Sidney has implemented a 1-to-1 iPad Initiative for the 2013-14 school year, giving every student in grades 7-12 an Apple iPad to use. The technology will be utilized in conjunction with Schoology, a learning management system.

Students and parents signed permission slips, which outlined expectations and policies for acceptable use.

Teacher training has been ongoing for the past three years and instruction will be migrated to a more 21st century platform.

Mackenzie DeCocker, a seventh-grade physical science teacher, has taught science for 12 years. She's using the iPad in class for the second year.

The technology has proven to be invaluable in helping her students.

"In the past, when drawing atom structures, we'd use chalk and a chalkboard or a whiteboard," DeCocker said. "It would take a tremendous amount of time. With the iPad, we learned to draw atoms in about five minutes."

"They can visualize the particles and see the energy in the atom," she said.

The benefits outweigh the negatives. In a society that is becoming more and more driven by technology, teachers can use the iPads for engaging, relevant and age-appropriate resources to enhance the learning experience, DeCocker said.

On top of that, it gives students a mode of communication.

In one of her classes, DeCocker gave a quick quiz – and the students can see whether or not they got the question right as soon as they answer. Assessments can be created for immediate feedback and grades can be accessed.

Thomas Cartossa, a 12-year-old seventh grader at Sidney, created an avatar in an application called Tellagami. What he created was a cartoon-like presentation to show how he uses an iPad during science class.

It's also like second nature to students. Cartossa zipped around the iPad, showing off educational programs, how they work and how he uses them for classwork and homework.

"It's great," Cartossa said. "It's been a lot easier for me to get my notes for class. You don't have to use a pen and paper."

DeCocker said the iPads also speed up the learning process as students will go through assignments quickly. If they finish, they have certain apps and learning-tool games that they can use until the next part of the lesson starts.

"They learn so fast," she said. "I'm able to provide

more enriching content. There's not as much time spent copying notes."

There are a few downfalls—but ones DeCocker said she isn't upset about, such as the time needed to research resources and to convert previous materials into digital format. Because students are learning quicker, it's also a challenge to provide more enriching content.

"That's a good problem to have," she said.

Teachers also need to make sure students know iPad etiquette, so they know what they can and can not do on a school-owned iPad.

"You have to give them specific boundaries," DeCocker said. "You have to teach them because they have the universe at their fingertips. You have to be watchful."

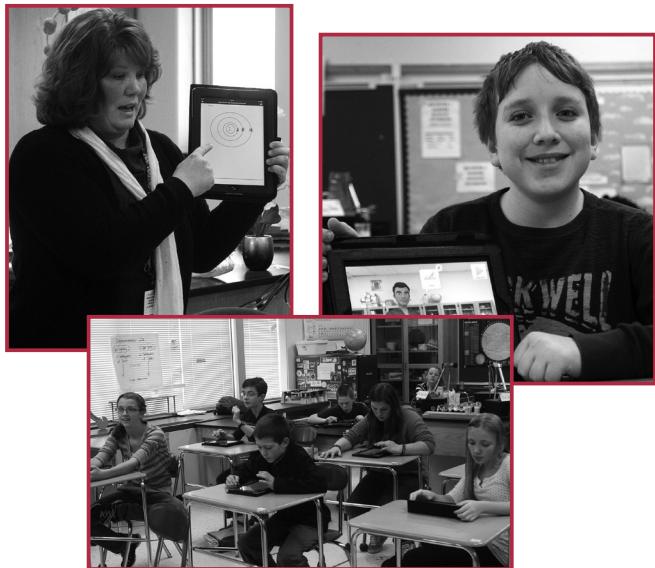
The District utilized bulk pricing and BOCES Aid to offset the cost of the iPads.

Sidney used a collaborative purchasing program, which means the total cost for the District is very similar to what the cost of annual textbooks and instructional material normally would be. The cost of the iPad is essentially the same amount a month as five to six textbooks.

"The educational field has seen a tremendous amount of growth in the past few years, and most of it is positive," said Sidney Superintendent Bill Christensen. "What has really changed is the technology in the schools. Classrooms, libraries, and just about everywhere in schools have started to rely on technology more and more."

The iPads are a step toward moving students using iPads as textbooks. Christensen also noted the school is looking to have many more digital books through the library.

—P.J. Harmer, Public Information Specialist



Freshmen Hold Toy Drive

The Sidney Central School freshman class reached out to help the Chenango County Toys for Tots program.

A recent fire wiped out about \$8,000 worth of stored toys for the program. The freshman class went on a quest last week to try and help replenish the stock, working on a fundraiser in the school.

"I asked the kids if they wanted to do it and they were excited to help," freshman class advisor Bonnie Schoonover said. "It's awful for something like this to happen this time of year. I brought this to them and they wanted to give back."

The class helped raise 50 toys and \$50 in monetary donations.

The ninth graders worked to drum up donations from in and out of the school. Sidney offered drop areas at Main Offices in each school building. Unwrapped toys or monetary donations were accepted.

The school packed up the toy donations Monday, December 9, to give to the Toys for Tots program.

"I'm extremely proud that our students were able to give back in a time of need like this," Sidney Superintendent Bill Christensen said. "Though this was a terrible situation, we hope our students were able to help as much as they could during this holiday season."



Freshmen Victoria Perry, Nickolas Lopez and Carolee Pierce stand with some of the toys the class raised to help the Chenango County Toys for Tots program.



NEW! Area-Wide Swim Club

A District-sponsored swim club has been approved by Sidney Central School. The team will compete locally and around the State.

The Sidney Area Swim Club, which currently has 37 members, is USA Swimming approved. The club has also been designed to work with swimmers of all levels, from beginner to competitive.

Uday Mukhlis, a science teacher at Sidney, is the club's coach.

The club is accepting swimmers in grades 3-12. Students don't have to be from the Sidney district. There is a cost of \$25 per month for each swimmer, but scholarships are available for reduced or free fees.

Practices are held Monday-Friday at Sidney High School, depending on availability.

Please email sidneyswimclub@sidneycsd.org, if you are interested in joining. All ages and abilities are welcome.

SHS Announces DAR Recipient

It is our privilege to announce Sidney High School's recipient of the DAR Good Citizen Award. This honor is given to a graduating senior who exemplifies the characteristics of good citizenship: dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism. The recipient is selected through a nomination process by faculty and staff. Please join us in congratulating **Bethany Karl**, this year's DAR Good Citizen.

On December 19, Bethany and fellow award winners from area schools were honored at a reception held by DAR. Refreshments were served and students read their essays on "Our American Heritage and Our Responsibility for Preserving It." Bethany is the daughter of Sarah and Jim Karl of Bainbridge.



**Sidney Central School District
95 West Main Street
Sidney, New York 13838**

Board of Education

Nancy Parsons, President

Gary Schoonover, Vice-President

Kimberly Ayres

Kerri Green

Robert Holt

Tammy Schunk

Jay Suriano

Superintendent of Schools

William Christensen, Ed.D

**Assistant Superintendent for Student
Accountability and Support Operations**

Corey Green

Newsletter Editor

Sheri Kinsella

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Sidney, New York
13838
Permit No. 16

Current Resident or

**ECRWSS
Postal Customer**

District Communication Guidelines

Frequently, parents and other community members request help in knowing the best way to communicate with the school. The communications guideline chart below will serve as a helpful resource. By contacting the following people in the prescribed order, questions will be answered efficiently.

For Questions About	1st Contact	2nd Contact	3rd Contact	4th Contact
Academics	Teacher	Guidance Counselor	Building Principal	Superintendent
Athletics	Coach	Athletic Director	Superintendent	
Behavior	Teacher	Building Principal	Superintendent	
BOE Policies	District Clerk	Superintendent	Board of Education	
Budget	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent		
Building Use	Building Principal	Buildings & Grounds Supervisor	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent
Cafeteria	Cafeteria Manager	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent	
Classroom Procedures	Teacher	Building Principal	Superintendent	
Co-Curricular	Advisor	Building Principal	Superintendent	
Curriculum	Teacher	Building Principal	Curriculum Coordinator	Superintendent
Facilities	Buildings & Grounds Supervisor	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent	
Health Office	Building Nurse	Building Principal	Superintendent	
Scheduling	Teacher	Guidance Counselor	Building Principal	Superintendent
Special Education	Teacher	CSE Chair	District Administrator for Special Programs	Superintendent
Transportation	Bus Driver	Transportation Supervisor	Assistant Superintendent	Superintendent