

We teach someone you love.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Although the financial news coming from Washington and Albany is anything but encouraging, we approach the new calendar year with a renewed sense of purpose. We will be spending the next several months working on a responsible budget that will enable us to continue to offer a quality education for our students while keeping in mind the fiscal realities in which we all must operate. We have received Governor Paterson's budget proposal calling for a reduction in aid to education throughout New York State.

We are fortunate that our school district is in sound financial condition due to the fiscal decisions made by our boards of education spanning several decades. We have a "savings account" called fund balance from which to draw to help offset this reduction in state aid. However, we are keenly aware that it would be irresponsible to tap into these savings without also reducing spending. The current board of education has charged us with looking for ways to reduce spending just like all of us are doing in our own personal and family budgets.

We will be working on developing the 2009-2010 school year budget throughout the months of January, February and March. Principals and directors will be meeting with the finance committee of the board of education in the coming weeks to discuss measures we will take for reducing spending while keeping important academic, athletic and extracurricular programs viable for our students. These budget development meetings are open to the public. They will be held in room 108 of the middle school on January 29, February 11, February 26, and March 12 at 6:30 PM. A budget presentation will take place on March 26 at 7:30 PM in the middle school auditorium. Please join us.

According to a report from the MidHudson School Study Council produced in the spring of 2008, Minisink Valley had the lowest per pupil spending in Orange County. We've accomplished this while still providing a quality education for the children and young people of this community. However, we can do more. We must do more.

Sincerely,

Dr. Martha Murray
Superintendent of Schools

Federal Breakfast and Lunch Program

Children need healthy meals to learn. Minisink Valley offers healthy meals every day that school is in session. Children from households that meet federal income guidelines are eligible for free meals or reduced price meals. To take part in this program and to see if you meet federal income guidelines, download the application from www.minisink.com. Look under the *Forms/Publications* page under "Lunch Program Application." You may also call our registrar, Mrs. Ann Shand, at 355-5812. We post a daily menu on the individual building web pages.

American Heart Association Heart Walk

We are proud to announce that the American Heart Association has once again selected Minisink Valley as the site for the 2009 Orange County Heart Walk. This year's walk, scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2009, will honor Samantha Pryde and Chris Fiorillo and will also be in memory of Jason Horner, a Minisink Valley graduate. Registration for the walk begins at 8:30 AM with step-off at 10:30 AM. For more information, visit www.orangeheartwalk.org.

Equal Opportunity Employer

The Minisink Valley Central School district does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, gender preference, creed, color, national origin, marital status, or disability in educational programming activities that it offers. This nondiscriminatory policy includes the following areas: recruitment and appointment of employees, pay and benefits, access by students to educational programs, course offerings and activities.

Title IX and Section 504 Compliance

The Minisink Valley Central School District hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities, including vocational education opportunities, without regard to sex, gender preference, race, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Inquiries regarding this nondiscrimination policy may be directed to the Minisink Valley Central School District, Box 217, Slate Hill, New York, 10973, 845-355-5110. Information and complaint procedures will be provided to any citizen, student or employee who feels that his or her rights under Title IX or Section 504 may have been violated by the district or its officials.
Title IX Coordinator - Brian Monahan, Director of Personnel
Section 504 Coordinator - Ruth Zuclich, Director of PPS

Important Message for MVCSD Taxpayers

STAR is the New York State Tax Relief Program that provides a partial exemption from school property taxes for owner-occupied, primary residences.

The Basic STAR Exemption, for all primary residence homeowners regardless of age or income, will provide a \$30,000+ full value assessment exemption for the school year 2009-2010. If you are a new homeowner or have recently moved to a new residence, you must submit your application to your local assessor by March 1, 2009 to qualify for the exemption in the following year. You do not need to re-apply if you already receive this exemption and your residence is unchanged.

The Enhanced STAR Exemption is available to taxpayers who are 65 years of age or older by December 31, 2008 and whose total income does not exceed \$73,000. The Enhanced STAR Exemption provides a \$50,000+ full value assessment exemption on your school tax bill. You may need to re-apply each year to receive the Enhanced STAR Exemption.

STAR exemption forms are available at your local assessor's office or may be picked up in the Minisink Valley Central School District's Business Office. Complete and submit your application form to your local assessor, along with proof of residency and proof of income (required for Enhanced STAR, only). Your local assessor can advise you of what forms of proof are acceptable.

STAR applications must be filed with your local assessors office by March 1, 2009.

Budget Development Calendar

January 29, 2009	Finance Committee Meeting Budget Development - 6:30 PM
February 11, 2009	Finance Committee Meeting Budget Development - 6:30 PM
February 26, 2009	Finance Committee Meeting Budget Development - 6:30 PM
March 12, 2009	Finance Committee Meeting Budget Development - 6:30 PM
March 6, 2009	Deadline for Propositions Submitted by Registered Voters
March 26, 2009	Public Budget Presentation 7:30 PM
April 2, 2009	BOE Approval of 2009-2010 Budget at Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting
April 20, 2009	Submission of Petitions by Board of Education Candidates by 5:00 PM.
April 20, 2009	Absentee Ballot Applications Available
May 7, 2009	Public Budget Hearing - 7:30 PM
May 14, 2009	Last Day to Register to Vote
May 19, 2009	Budget Vote and Board of Education Election Noon to 9:00 PM

Intermediate Drama Club presents
101 Dalmations
March 24 @ 7:00 PM
(snowdate - 3/25)

Middle School Drama Club presents
Once Upon a Mattress
March 26 & 27 @ 7:00 PM

High School Drama Club presents
State Fair
April 2, 3, and 4 @ 7:30 PM
April 4 @ 2:00 PM

Otisville Drama Club presents
Welcome to the Jungle
April 6 @ 7:00 PM
(snowdate - 4/07)

Minisink Valley CSD
P.O. Box 217, Rte. 6, Slate Hill, NY 10973

Board of Education
Ethel Crow, President, Michelle McDonald, Vice-president
Alfred Gibbs, John M. Lenane, Shawn O'Connor, Robert Prokopchak, Gina Richichi, Paul Rickard, Joan Romanyschyn

Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Martha Murray

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Newsletter
Debbie Roda