



*Spring 2011*

**DISTRICT UPDATE - PARENT NEWSLETTER**

*Edward Placke, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Bill Federice, Assistant Superintendent  
Jennifer Herrera, District Clerk*

**MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT**

As I begin my third year as superintendent of the Greenburgh North Castle Union Free School District (GNC UFSD), I am both pleased and proud of the progress our senior class has made throughout this past year. Students at our three academies have been positively impacted by a number of educational initiatives and this has been a year of many “*firsts*”.

The graduating class of 2011 has the largest number of students to earn a local diploma in the history of the GNC UFSD; additionally, the class of 2011 features the first GNC UFSD student to be awarded an Advanced Regents Diploma!

The career development component of our District has made significant strides and has positively prepared many of our graduates for the “World of Work”. A cosmetology course has been implemented in our new “Lab” at Kenneth Clark Academy (KCA). Both Kenneth Clark Academy and Greenburgh Academy (GA) collaborated on a customer service program that has provided students with employment related skills. REACH Academy has launched a “life skills” curriculum to prepare students for adulthood which includes skills related to employment and citizenship. Another highlight of GNC UFSD’s emphasis on career development is in the internship program for GA students at Andrus on the Hudson Nursing Home in Hastings.

There are many “*firsts*” our student athletes experienced this year. The KCA Varsity flag football team won the league championship for the second year in a row; whereas the GA team was the finalist. For the first time each academy fielded a Section 1 bowling team. The GA Varsity Basketball team were the finalists in the Section 1 Class D tournament and KCA were semi-finalist.

The senior class has excelled in the fine and performing arts that includes participation in the “Marching Cobras” our District drum corp and dance line. A large number of seniors have also demonstrated a high level of skill in both music and art classes across the three academies.

I am honored to lead the GNC UFSD and extremely proud of the **Class of 2011**. They have left an indelible mark on the staff, administration and the student body. Please go to the District website (<http://www.greenburghnorthcastleschools.com/>) for additional updates and news.

## **PERFORMING AND FINE ARTS**

The art and music classes along with the "Marching Cobras" drum corp, dance line and flag twirlers collectively have become the District's signature programs. The 6<sup>th</sup> annual District Arts Festival held at KCA on May 19, 2011 showcased the art and music skill of students from all three academies. The many highlights of the day included displays of various pieces of art, choral performances, dance routines, a duet and the Marching Cobras concluded the day's events.

## **GRADUATION**

Almost 77 students will graduate in June or in August from the three District academies this year. I am pleased to announce that almost 80% of the District graduate class will earn either a Regents or Local Diploma. As was indicated above, this class includes the first student in the history of the District to earn an Advanced Regents Diploma. I look forward to seeing you at your child's graduation which will be held at REACH on June 24, 2011 beginning at 9:30AM, Greenburgh Academy on June 24, 2011 beginning at 11:00AM and Clark Academy also on June 24, 2011 beginning at 9:00AM.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

The District website which features pages for each of the academies along with a home page that includes a regularly updated message from me and a variety of links to educational websites. The website has become a portal for District communication for both parents and staff. Several banners are posted on the top of the homepage which provides updates regarding District events, i.e., vacations, Regents examination week, student activities, etc. Please visit the website at <http://www.greenburghnorthcastleschools.com>

## **STATE EDUCATION UPDATE**

Recently, the State Education Department has made a variety of changes that impact our students and teachers. The most significant changes include Regents examinations and teacher/principal evaluations.

As you may know, students who are on course to earn a Regents Diploma are required to pass five Regents examinations. If students are unable to pass all five Regents exams they are then eligible to sit for the Regents Competency Tests (RCTs) and if they pass each RCT they may earn a Local Diploma.

Students who entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade prior to September 2012 are still eligible to take RCTs to earn a local diploma. However, those students who enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade as of September 2012 will not be eligible to sit for the RCTs. They may earn a Local Diploma by scoring at least a 55 on the five Regents exams. For further clarification please contact your child's guidance counselor or principal.

The second significant change initiated by the State Education Department addresses the annual evaluation of teachers and principals. As of the next school year, a portion of both teacher and principal evaluations will be based on student achievement, including student results on Regents exams, RCTs and other standardized tests. Other variables will be considered including professional development, instructional planning, teaching strategies, behavior management, contributions to the school community, etc. The State Education Department will shortly release regulations that provide details regarding this matter.

**Donate your old instrument!**

Have an instrument collecting dust in your home? Consider donating it to the District. The music department will accept donations of playing-condition band and orchestra instruments. These instruments are often used to supplement the district inventory and might be played by students whose families cannot afford to provide an instrument for them. Please contact Jennifer Herrera at 914-693-3030 ext. 2244 or [jherrera@sc1881.org](mailto:jherrera@sc1881.org).

**INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs)**

All students enrolled in the District have Individual Education Plans (IEPs). IEPs are State Education Department mandated documents that provide parents and educators with an individual plan for each student's education. Included in all IEPs are student strengths and needs, goals related to student areas of need, a listing of related services such as counseling, speech therapy and occupational therapy. IEPs also feature transition goals related to post-secondary education, housing, transportation, community resources, etc. Transition goals are key to becoming productive adults who positively contribute to society.

IEPs are developed by your school district at Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings. As a parent, you are part of the team that develops an IEP for each school year. You are the primary advocate for your child. Please participate in your child's annual CSE meeting to develop an IEP. If you have not participated in developing your child's IEP for the next school year, I recommend you contact your CSE chairperson to discuss this topic.

**ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS**

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