

The

Chalkboard

A Report from the Wattsburg Area Schools

2005/2006 School Year

December 2005

<http://www.wattsburg.org>

WASD Welcomes Mrs. Rullo!

If you haven't met her already, please introduce yourself to our new co-principal at the elementary center, Mrs. Gina Rullo. Mrs. Rullo is excited to be working with the children, staff, and parents at the elementary center as she comes to Wattsburg Area School District with a background in Comprehensive Literacy. She has taught Adult Education for the NW Tri-County Intermediate Unit, English as a Second Language at the International Institute, and has worked in the City of Erie as a high school English and Reading teacher, a Reading Recovery and Title I teacher and an elementary classroom teacher. Mrs. Rullo holds a degree in English from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a Masters in Education and Reading Specialist Certificate from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, and earned her principal certification at Gannon University. She enjoys riding her bike to the beach to read, making music and traveling with her husband, John Johnston. Originally from Philadelphia, she lives in an old house in Erie with her husband and their three pets. Welcome, Mrs. Rullo!



Mrs. Gina Rullo

State to Address Funding, Property Tax Issues

Governor Edward G. Rendell recently convened a special legislative session to address property tax relief in Pennsylvania. Dozens of bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate for consideration. As this issue of *The Chalkboard* goes to press, none of those bills has received overwhelming support and the overriding question still remains: How can Pennsylvania meet the constitutional requirement of providing children with a thorough and efficient system of public education and, at the same time, reduce the tax burden on local property owners? It is a question with which our state legislators will continue to wrestle. Of course, one of the best ways to limit the increases in property taxes is to provide adequate state funding for school districts when imposing mandates from the state level. Although the legislature has often not done so in the past, our school directors have worked diligently to minimize the local tax increases necessary to maintain a top quality educational program. The data and accompanying graphs on pages 6, 7, and 8 serve to support that fact.



District and School Report Cards

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires each school district to complete Report Cards for school buildings and for the district in general. This year, Report Cards were created for the Wattsburg Area Middle School and Seneca High School. An elementary school Report Card is not required at this time. Data contained in these Report Cards for the 2004-05 school year include teacher qualifications, graduation data, accountability reports, assessment reports, and Adequate Yearly Progress toward proficiency on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

The Report Card is posted to the WASD website at www.wattsburg.org. It may also be viewed in any of the school libraries or in the District Administration Office.

Katy Holland - A New Heart, A New Life!

Thank you to everyone who has supported our family during Katy's wait for her new heart and the support after that special gift of a new heart arrived. The "Katy Walk" that was held here on the Wattsburg campus was a huge benefit. We'd like to thank all of you who did so very much to make it the success it was.

Katy arrived home on November 22 from the Cleveland Clinic. She is at home and getting stronger each and every day. For the first time, she's able to do many things that she hasn't been able to do in her entire life. The gift of the new heart has opened many doors and her smile shows how wonderful she feels. Katy will continue to make monthly trips to the clinic for check-ups and biopsies.

The support that we received from the Wattsburg community was fabulous. It meant a lot to all of us! We are forever grateful! Thank you for all of the positive thoughts and kind words that have been shared with us. Have a wonderful holiday season!

— The Holland Family

Seneca High School Honored for Academic Achievement by PA Dept. of Education

The Pennsylvania Department of Education recently honored Seneca High School with an award for meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards for two consecutive years.

The keystone-shaped award is presented to schools across the state where students have exceeded the math and reading standards required by the state's accountability system and the federal No Child Left Behind Act. To meet AYP standards, a high percentage of students must reach proficiency in both math and reading.

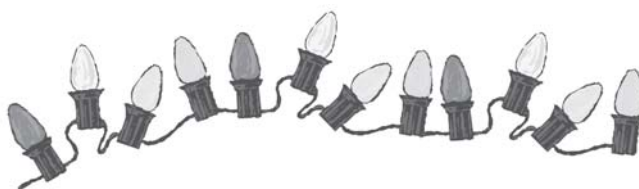
Seneca High School is receiving its second consecutive Keystone Achievement Award for its high achieving students. The teachers, school staff, parents, community and students have worked hard to achieve at this level. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has added the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System to its ever growing slate of tools that helps our school achieve at this sustained level of achievement.

This is the second year that the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators have partnered to create the Keystone Achievement Award and Seneca High School has been a recipient both years. In recognition of the award, Dr. Gerald Zahorchak, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Education, termed the achievement another "great milestone" for Seneca High School.

How Good are Your Schools?

How good are your schools? It is a question which all community members have a right to ask and which all school districts should be able to answer. Here, in the Wattsburg Area School District, residents will have the opportunity to hear the answer to that question at a presentation scheduled for March 30, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the newly renovated auditorium of Seneca High School. District residents will also have the opportunity to raise specific questions regarding topics of interest at a question and answer period following the presentation. All of the district's administrators will be present to field questions about the educational and extra curricular programs in each of the schools, the forecast for the 2006-07 school budget, Act 72, the status of state funding, property tax reduction, or any other topic of interest.

Our state senators and representative will also be invited to attend. Please reserve the date and plan on joining your elected officials as well as the district's entire administrative team on March 30th at 7:00 p.m. Special parking will be available in the area usually reserved for "buses only" and entry to the auditorium will be available through the east doors immediately adjacent to this parking area.



There's a Doctor in the House!

Congratulations to Assistant Superintendent, Rosalie Constantine on the completion of her Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership from Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio. Dr. Constantine also holds two Masters degrees, one from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, and one from State University of New York at Genesco. Her undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree is also from Genesco.

Dr. Constantine has taught high school English in both public and private schools in New York State and Pennsylvania. She has served in administration in public schools as Assistant High School Principal, Acting High School Principal, and Assistant Superintendent. She has been a member of the Wattsburg Area School District family since 1996.

Dr. Constantine and her husband, Atty. Francis Constantine, have two children, Capt. Chris Constantine, Navigator, U.S. Air Force, and Cara Constantine, 1st grade teacher, Cary, North Carolina. Congratulations, Dr. Constantine!



*Dr. Constantine,
Assistant Superintendent*

Good Luck, Retirees!

The end of the 2004-05 school year brought with it the retirement of three Wattsburg Area School District's employees.

Mr. Ed Travis taught mathematics at the high school level for 36 years. Upon retirement, Mr. Travis planned to visit with his grandchildren and teach math at Mercyhurst College.

Mrs. Patricia Stankiewicz has been with Wattsburg for 10 1/2 years. She originally started in the Cafeteria at Seneca, and then transferred to Housekeeping at the middle school. Mrs. Stankiewicz is enjoying her retirement by shopping, playing with her dogs, Samantha and Rags, and gardening in the summer.

Mrs. Imogene Steenrod worked in the cafeteria at the middle school for 29 years. Since retiring, she stays busy around the house and spends time at the Senior Center crocheting with her friends. "I miss the kids and girls I worked with," said Mrs. Steenrod, "but I'm trying to keep busy."



Mr. Ed Travis

Seneca Welcomes Foreign Exchange Students

Two new foreign exchange students are experiencing Seneca life this year. Leonie Unger is a 16 year-old junior visiting the United States from Hildesheim, Germany. She is currently living with her host family, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Laupp of North East. She enjoys the drama program at Seneca and was a cast member in the fall play. Leonie enjoys dance, reading and watching movies and would like to become an actress.

Yuko Sayama is visiting from Akita, Japan. She is a 17 year-old junior who enjoys reading fiction books and listening to music. She is currently living with her host family, Mr. & Mrs. Steven Gorniack of Wattsburg. Yuko was a member of the Volleyball team at Seneca this year.



Leonie Unger and Yuko Sayama

AFJROTC Program Provides New Opportunities for Students

by Heather Baldwin, Sr.

Chief Holmes and Major Johnson, AFJROTC instructors, are bringing a new sense of pride to Seneca and molding students interested in the military in the process. The Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps is one of the many new additions to Seneca this year. "Once somebody signs up, they usually want to stay the whole year," stated Major Johnson. In this program, students can learn military etiquette such as raising and lowering the flag and better citizenship.

Aside from learning leadership skills, students also experience wearing a real Air Force uniform. The uniforms are light and dark blue and are worn every Wednesday on drill days. "By wearing this uniform, we're teaching a sense of belonging and a sense of pride," commented Chief Holmes. However, there are some restrictions that come along with wearing the uniform. Female cadets cannot have multiple ear piercings, and only wear one earring per ear. Boys must cut their hair, and girls must have theirs' pinned back. By wearing these uniforms, students are accepting the rules and discipline that come with being a cadet.

Both Chief Holmes and Major Johnson are pleased with the number of students who have joined the AFJROTC program. In its first year, the program already has fifty students. In the coming years, both instructors hope that number will grow. Each student in the program comes from a different group of friends, and that adds to the atmosphere of the classroom. "The thing that impresses me the most is that students don't cluster," commented the Major. He hopes this will bring more students into the program.

If students are interested in making the military part of their future, Seneca's AFJROTC program is a great way to get on track. With three years in the program, cadets can get an extra \$200 per month added to their pay if they enlist in any branch of the military. Also, if cadets are planning to go to college after high school, chances of getting an ROTC scholarship are much greater. "It also helps give the students a little bit of an edge if they want to go on to any one of the military academies," added Major Johnson.

The class enjoyed a field trip to Pittsburgh to see the Soldiers and Sailors Museum. Chief Holmes also has hopes of taking his cadets to Washington, DC.

Both instructors are impressed with the camaraderie of their students. "It's really rewarding to me because when they come into class, they don't know what to expect and we're gelling together as a corps.," stated Chief Holmes. The cadets are working together and making friendships, which make the experience more enjoyable for everyone.

Along with the instructors, Seneca students are also enjoying the experience. Senior Dustin Bebee was unsure of what he was signing up for. He has been surprised by how much he loves the class and the content taught in it. "I like learning about history," commented Dustin. Aviation history is a big part of the class. Bebee is hoping to enter the Air Force or the Marines after high school.

Chief Homes and Major Johnson would like to see each cadet have more respect for the people they are around every day and have a higher respect for themselves. The Chief would like to see students open up their minds and think outside the box, "I want them to read the newspaper. I want them to listen to the news, and I want them to put themselves into somebody's else's shoes," Chief Holmes summarized.

Seneca Students Make a Difference!

Erie's Promise

Seneca students have been working hard to give back to our community. Freshman Sarah Shreve, sophomore Sarah Mahalski, junior Megan Towner, and senior Shirley Hill are involved in Erie's Promise. The students work together to come up with solutions to problems that are present in schools around Erie County.

Seniors Ashley Giewont and Kelly Walko are involved in the Peer Jury program at Seneca. The program helps to keep juveniles from probation. Jury members require offenders to complete community service or write an apologetic letter.

Student Recognition

John Jewell, an E.C.T.S. student, has earned recognition from the Automotive Youth Education Systems (AYES). Interns at Bianchi Honda have selected students for the award out of a pool of 140 students across Pennsylvania. Congratulations, John!

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SHS Performing Art Students Shine!

From Marching Band and Color Guard to District Chorus and District Band, students of Seneca are bringing pride to our school district.

Sampling the music from the Broadway musical *Wicked*, the band and color guard marched to another victory at the Lakeshore Marching Band Association (LMBA) championships on October 29, 2005. This is the fourth consecutive year that the marching band and color guard have won.

Students who participate in the concert band will also have a chance to show off their talents at the District Band Festival being held January 18-21, 2006, at Saegertown High School. Seneca students attending the District Chorus Festival this year are: senior Tim Steadman for the clarinet, junior Katrina Good for the clarinet and sophomore Brandon Peck for the baritone.

Seneca students have been taking their talents to the next level, which has earned them district recognition. Six students from Seneca have been selected to attend the PMEA District Two Choral Festival on February 1-4, 2006, at Conneaut Lake High School. Seniors Helene Waldemarson, Mary Jacquel, and Laurel Gibbons and juniors Heather Donaldson, Kyle Yaple, and Tom Sallach were chosen by Seneca Choir Director, Mr. Robert Reid, to attend the festival. Seneca students will be placed in an environment with other choir members from around the area, and will sing more challenging music than that seen in a high school choir. Students will also compete individually for a bid to State's competition.

Seventh through ninth graders also have a chance to sing in the same environment as those attending District Chorus. Two Seneca freshmen, Sarah Shreve and Olivia Kimmy will be attending The Junior District Choral Festival on November 11 and 12, 2005, at Fort LeBoeuf High School.



Sports News

Seneca sports have been setting the bar for the years to come!

Fall Baseball was a new intramural sport played at Seneca this year. The team consisted of players in grade 8-12. Team members were hoping to gain more experience for the spring season, and seniors Kevin Woods and Hunter Chaffee were the leaders of the team.

Cheerleading has brought a new spirit to Seneca, adding more cheerleaders than last year. The squad has gained a new head coach, Ms. Elizabeth Majer, who had eight years of cheerleading and captain experience under her belt. Leading the squad to a wonderful season are captains Christen Cornelius and Amber Mann. The squad is planning to attend a cheer camp held by the Universal Cheerleader's Association (UCA) or the National Cheerleader's Association (NCA) in the near future with the help of fundraising.

In golf, Levi Chaffee earned the right to compete in the District 10 Golf Championships by qualifying at the District Qualifier held on November 4. Levi traveled to Greenville on October 14 to compete at Districts.

This year, the Football team made history! This was the first time in the history of the football playoffs that Seneca made the District 10 Football Playoffs. The team finished 6-2 in the region, which tied them for second place. In the final game of region play, the Bobcats defeated the Region Champ, Girard, 21-7. In the playoffs, the Bobcats traveled to Wilmington High School to play Reynolds High School. Although Seneca lost, we congratulate them and their coaches on a great season and we're looking forward to bigger and better things next year!

Girls Soccer kicked off to a decent season this year. The Bobcats gained a new head coach, Mr. Chris Ward, and were lead by seniors Amy Condo, Theresa Schwartz and Cryste Willcox. Mr. Ward felt positive about the soccer season, especially defense. The team won against opponent Fort LeBoeuf and tied against competitors Saegertown and Eisenhower.

In Cross Country, Mary Jacquel placed 17th at Districts, which earned her a trip to the State Playoffs at Hershey, PA on November 5th. At the State Playoffs, Mary placed 83rd out of 287 runners. Congratulations, Mary, on a great running career at Seneca High School for the Cross Country Team.

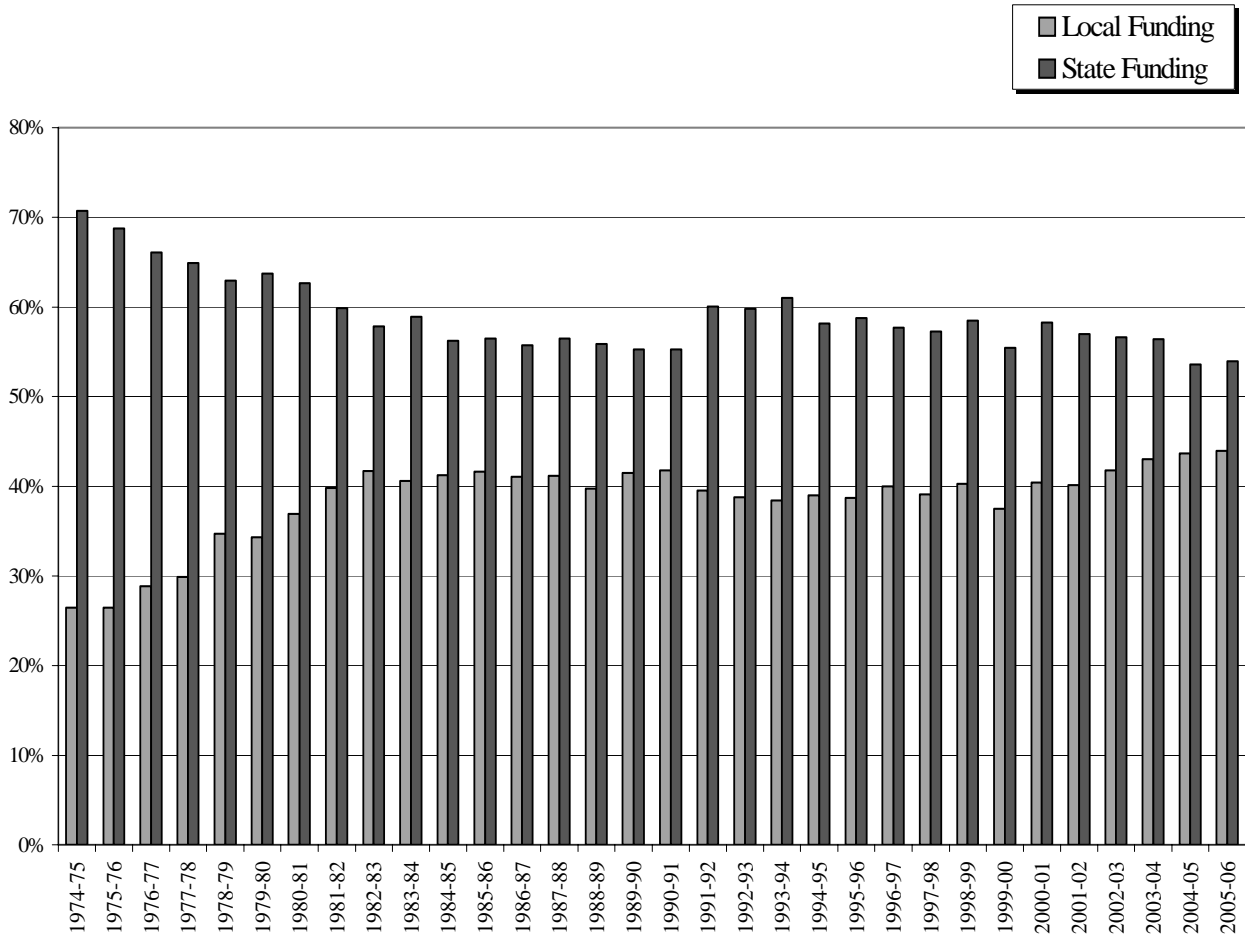
Congratulations, Bobcats, on a wonderful season!

SHS Bobcat Bullet...

Making a difference at Seneca, one student at a time.

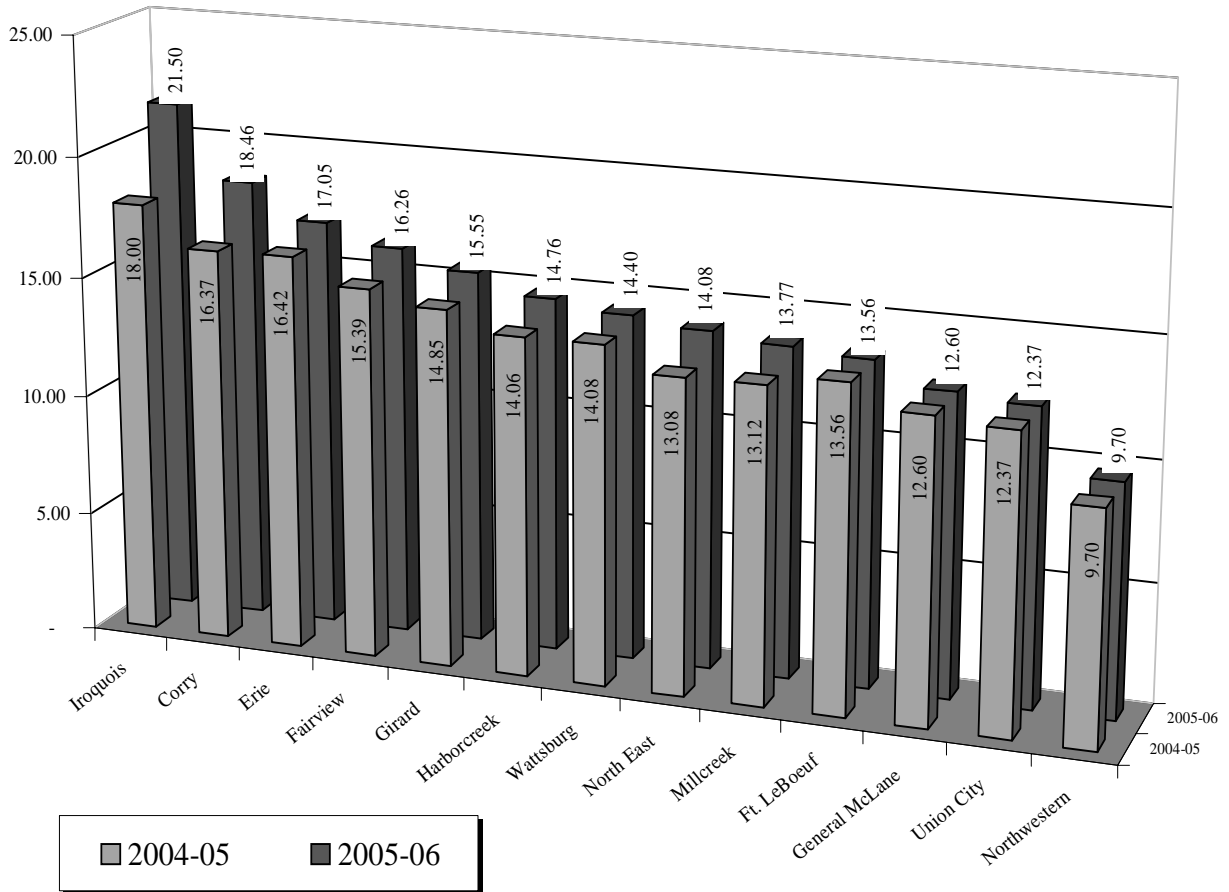


As State Funding Declines, Local Burden Must Increase



In the 1974-75 school year, the state funded 71%
 of the school district budget and the local portion was 26%.
 Currently, the state funds 54% and the local portion is 44%.
 Federal funds account for the remaining percentage.

Millage Rates for Erie County School Districts



The graph above reflects the 2005-06 millage rates for the school districts in Erie County. As indicated, the millage for the Wattsburg Area School District is below the average of 14.92 mills.

Recent Millage Rate for the WASTD

Year	Total Mills	Millage Increase
2002-03*	11.77	.75
2003-04	12.52	.52
2004-05	14.08	1.56
2005-06	14.40	.32

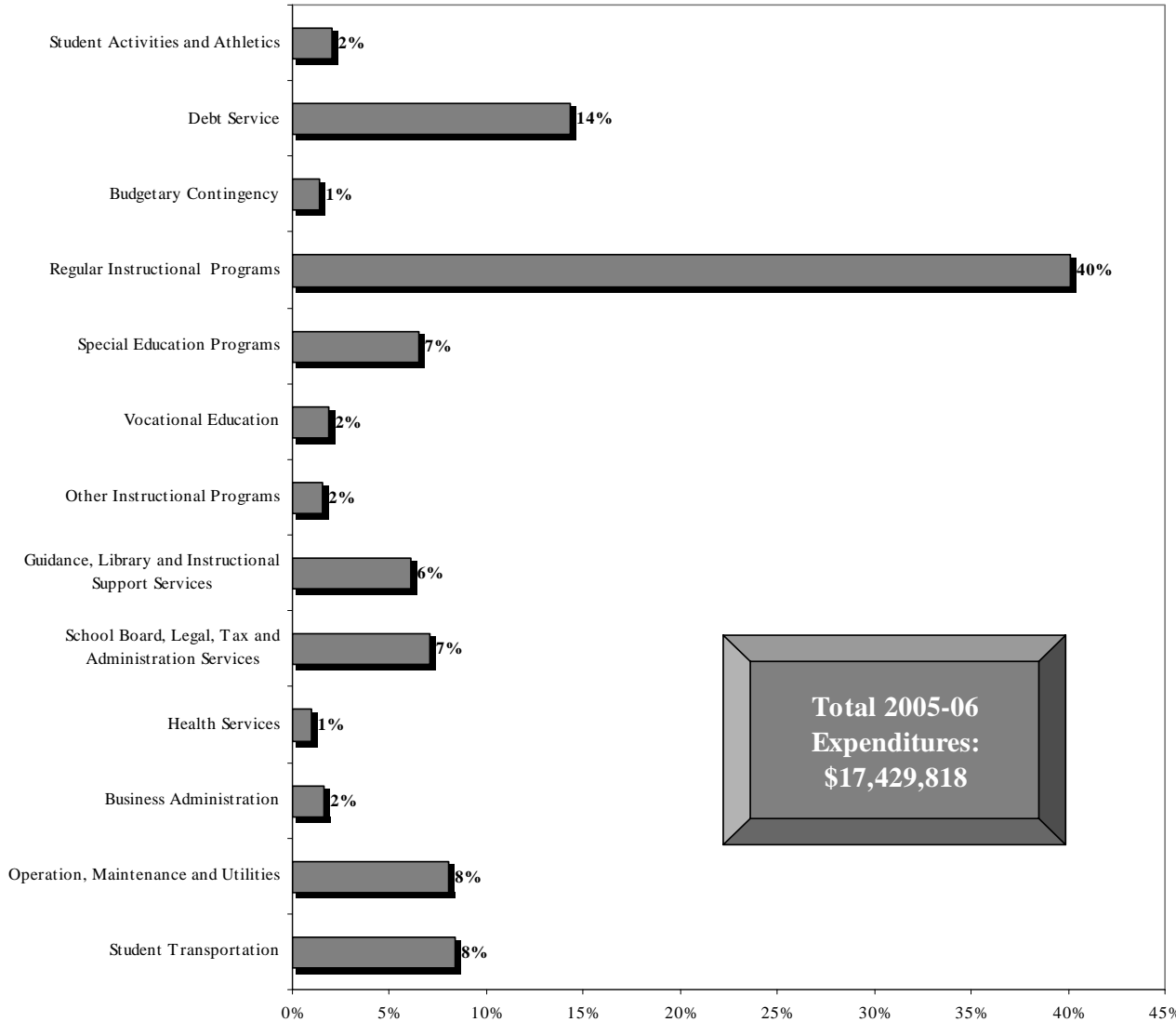
*Millage has been converted to reflect the newest county assessment figures.

In spite of reductions in the percentage of funding from the state, Wattsburg's local tax increases over the past four years have been minimal. Of the total increase of 3.14 mills, .75 mills were required to fund the greatly needed renovations of Seneca High School

In spite of rapidly rising costs, an increase of only 2.39 mills, over the three year period, was required to sustain district operations and programs.

In three of the preceding four years, from 1998-2002, there was no millage increase.

Expenditures as a Percentage of Budget



The district is now in the beginning stages of development of the budget for the 2006-07 school year. Significant cost increases are projected for fuel and heating costs, health care costs for employees, mandated retirement contributions and charter schools. As we prepare to face these rapidly increasing costs, district representatives continue to communicate with Senators Jane Earll and Mary Jo White, as well as Representative Curt Sonney to encourage their support for meaningful legislation which will reduce the burden on the local property owner, especially senior citizens and those on fixed incomes, while simultaneously insuring adequate state funding to support the quality educational programs which our students deserve and our community has the right to expect.

CSI Comes to Wattsburg Middle School

Criminals, beware!

CSI: Wattsburg is on the case!

Under the guidance of WAMS teachers, Mrs. Hengelbrok, Mr. Logan, Mrs. McNulty, and Mrs. Szymanski, 6th graders became CSI crime investigators in early November.

First, students learned metric measuring skills in science class. Armed with this background knowledge, they began to read and solve mystery stories. Next, the boys and girls studied and outlined nonfiction selections about fingerprints in criminal investigations and the development of DNA in the identification of suspects. Finally, "crime scenes" were set up in the gathering area. Students used their new skills to analyze each scene, weigh and measure each clue, and create a scenario that logically explained the evidence. Students completed this mini-unit by writing essays detailing their theories.

On Monday, November 14th, The Erie Times News featured a color photograph of WAMS student in the CSI lab on the Learning page.



6th Grader Dan Kimmy Investigates a Crime Scene

WAMS Students Honor the Sandwich

To honor 243 years of the invention of the sandwich, the reading classes of Mrs. Tonks engaged in a reading, writing, eating activity. First, students read about how the sandwich was invented and created their own favorite sandwich in writing journals. The students then brought their creations to school. As a writing activity, they wrote a "How To" article showing the steps involved in making their special sandwich. Finally, the students enjoyed eating their creations. Some examples included: Pancake, egg, and bacon sandwich; Beef Jerky and banana sandwich; zucchini sandwich; Peanut Butter Fluff; Bologna Cracker; Beef Jerky and Lettuce; and Pizza sandwich. In math class, Mrs. Ward had students create graphs showing the most popular types of sandwiches.

A well-composed book
is a magic carpet on which
we are wafted to a world that we
cannot enter in any other way.

— Caroline Gordon
(1895-1981), Writer

First Aid Training at WAMS

On Monday, November 7, 2005, fifth graders demonstrated their newly learned first aid knowledge in a hands-on simulation in the middle school gym. They used their expertise to rescue high school students posing as victims with various injuries that needed medical attention. Another team of high school student volunteers applied special effects to simulate injuries. Mr. Gibbons and Mrs. Willert, physical education teachers, organized this annual event.

WAMS Bobcat Bullet...

During the first marking period, 146 students made the Honor Roll and 47 students made the Faculty Honor Roll. That means almost 40% of the student body made the honor roll! WAMS has some serious Brain Power!!!





Mr. Porter with Carilyn White and Erin Urbaniak (in front) and Heather D'Andrea and Jonathan Shuhart (in back)

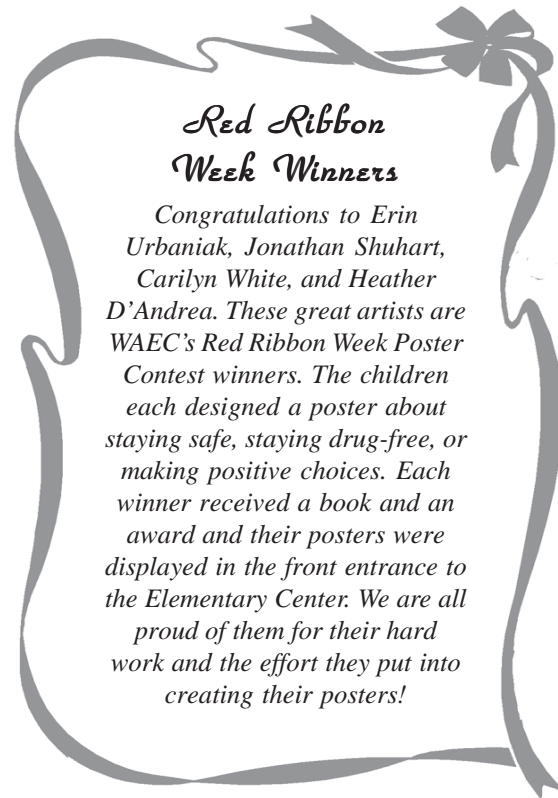
Medication and Asthma Inhaler Policies

This is a reminder that a district-wide policy is in place for the administration of all medication at school. If your child requires any type of medication while at school, it must be given to the school nurse and dispersed by her. For the safety of all students, **please do not put medication in your child's lunch box**. All medication, including over-the-counter medication, should be sent in the original box or bottle, with a note from the parent stating what the medication is for, the dosage, and the time it is to be given. Prescription medication must also be accompanied by a doctor's orders.

The Wattsburg Area School Board has recently approved a policy that will allow students to possess and self-administer inhaled medication used to treat asthma. Students may carry "inhalers" in school when this medication is prescribed by their health care provider and its use is authorized by their parent.

Students with proper authorization to possess and self-administer an inhaler must be able to demonstrate to the school nurse the capability for self-administration and responsible behavior in the use of the medication. Students should also notify the school nurse immediately following the use of an inhaler. Violations of this policy by a student will result in immediate confiscation of the inhaler and loss of the privilege.

For more detailed information regarding the specifics of the policy, please contact your child's school nurse. For Seneca High School and the Wattsburg Area Middle School, please contact Mrs. Lisa Zarger at 824-4121 or by email at lzarger@wasd.iu5.org. Mrs. Mary Rea, school nurse for the Wattsburg Area Elementary Center, may be reached at 824-4117 or at mrea@wasd.iu5.org.



Our Children Read! Read! Read!

Elementary Center children love to read and to be read to by teachers, parents, grandparents, and community volunteers. November's book fair, which took place in the Elementary Center library, was very successful. Children and families purchased favorite books for home or to give as holiday gifts to friends.

If you wish to volunteer to read to children, please join us for Storybook Cafe. Starting in January, parents and community volunteers will be reading with every single child at the Elementary Center at least once during the school year. If you

would like to volunteer to read, or have attended our volunteer training program and would like to be a part of Storybook Cafe, please call 824-3400, ext. 4566.



Mrs. Wright reading to her granddaughter, Macy Pusateri, and Wesley Brooks



Elementary students browse for books at Book Fair

Adults as Life-Long Learners

The Wattsburg Area Elementary Center staff was excited to discuss student progress with so many parents during both parent conferences and the Parent Literacy Seminars held in November. In the Literacy Seminars, parents were offered morning and evening sessions with the Elementary Center principals to learn more about the Comprehensive Literacy approach. Look for future parent sessions offered throughout the year to learn more about our curriculum at WAEC.

WAEC Bobcat Bullet...

Wattsburg Area Elementary Center hosted 115 visitors on a single day in November! Parents came to learn more about Comprehensive Literacy and grandparents visited to read to their kindergarten grandchildren and their classmates.



For the safety of your child, all kindergarten students must have a parent or guardian at home when they are returned home after school.



The Chalkboard

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BOX HOLDER OR
CURRENT RESIDENT

This year, Seneca High School has partnered with Jostens Photography in order to make your yearbook purchase as easy as possible. Paying for your yearbook from home is quick, convenient, and eliminates the need for your child to bring the money to school.

You will receive a bill in the mail which will display all of the add-ons your child selected. On this bill, you can make any changes necessary to your order. You can even choose to pay half of the total on one bill and the other half on another! Payment may be made by cash, check, money order or charge card.

We hope you find this service to be an easy, efficient way to purchase your son's or daughter's yearbook this year. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Patricia Gomersall at 824-3400, ext. 5578.

Attention - Parents of Seniors!

Congratulate your son or daughter by placing a Public Display of Affection (PDA) in the school yearbook. Place a PDA in the 2006 yearbook to display your pride in your child, while at the same time, supporting the yearbook!

Text Only		Text with Photo	
1/8 pg. (3 1/2" w x 1 1/2" h)	\$35.00	1/8 pg. (3 1/2" w x 1 1/2" h)	\$55.00
1/4 pg. (3 1/2" w x 3" h)	\$65.00	1/4 pg. (3 1/2" w x 3" h)	\$85.00
1/2 pg. (7" w x 5" h)	\$125.00	1/2 pg. (7" w x 5" h)	\$140.00
Full Page (7" w x 10" h)	\$200.00	Full Page (7" w x 10" h)	\$225.00

Remember, all PDA submissions are due **January 20, 2006**. If you are interested in ordering a PDA for your child, please contact Mrs. Patricia Gomersall, 824-3400, ext. 5578, or Ms. Laura Vogel, ext. 5576.