

# Guidance Newsletter

## Stissing Mountain Middle School

April 20, 2010

### Important Upcoming Dates

As the 4th quarter of the school year begins it is important to mark the following dates on your calendar.

The Middle School **Spring Concert and Art Shows** are coming up in May. The 6th grade concert and art show will be Tuesday, May 18th at 7:30. The 7th and 8th graders will hold their events on Thursday, May 20th at 7:30.

As noted in our previous newsletter, the **New York State Testing** schedule has changed this year. Students in grades 3-8 will be completing the English Language Arts Assessment during the final week in April. Sixth graders will take

the assessment over three days, Monday, April 26th– Wednesday the 28th. Seventh and Eighth grade students will take two days to complete the assessment, Tuesday the 27th and Wednesday the 28th. Each grade level is scheduled for two periods of testing each day.

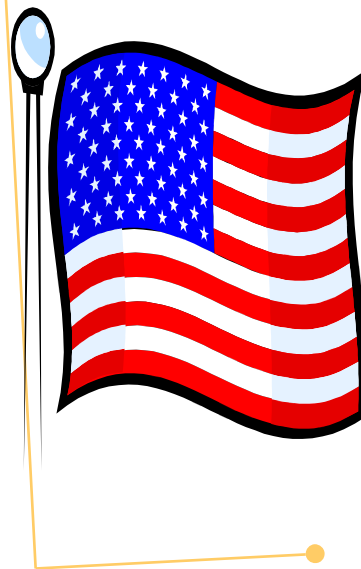
The NY State Math Assessment will be administered to all middle school students May 5th—May 7th.

Eighth grade students will also take Science and Social Studies tests. The Science performance test will be given between May 24th and June 3rd, with the written test on June 7th. The Social Studies test will be given on Monday,

June 14th and Tuesday, June 15th.

Eighth grade students taking the **Foreign Language proficiency exam** will be scheduled for the oral component of the test between June 1st and 4th. The written exam will take place on June 21st. This exam is scheduled during Regents Week. Students will sign up for transportation if necessary.

Also, the Pine Plains School District 2010-2011 **budget vote** will be held on May 18th. Polling places include Stissing Mountain Middle/High School, Stanford Town Hall and the Elizaville Fire House.



### Contact Information

The Middle School Guidance Counselor, Tim Mahon, can be reached at 398-7181 Extension 330

### Final Averages and Summer School

This newsletter is being distributed at the end of the third quarter of the school year. With one quarter left, it is a good time to review final averages and summer school eligibility.

A 6th grade student's final average for any class is calculated by averaging all four quarters (for a class lasting all year), or two quarters (for a semester long class). An average of 65 is a passing mark.

For 7th and 8th grade students the final exam in each class is calculated in the final averages. This means that averages are found by adding all 4 quarter grades and the final exam mark and dividing by 5. Again, a 65 is a passing mark.

A student who fails two or more main core subjects (Math, Science, English and Social Studies) for the year will be required to attend summer school. More information on

summer school will be available as the school year comes to an end.

In the next few weeks I will be meeting with students who are in danger of failing classes or attending summer school. I will review their progress with them and outline what marks they need to pass for the year. They will be given a report to take home and share with parents/guardians containing the information we discuss.

## Looking Back...thoughts from the principal.

It was 1975 and I was completing my Master's thesis on a picnic table in a state park because my landlady would not renew my lease for two months during the summer. She wanted a full year or I wasn't staying. I planned on being a school psychologist someplace soon so it was camping in the state park until I graduated that summer. Living in a tent during the week and going home on weekends was a challenge, especially trying to keep track of the job opportunities in the State. Back in those days, your Master's thesis was typed on something called a "typewriter" and every correction required something called, "white-out" and when the professor made

corrections, it required several pages to be re-typed because words didn't automatically fit in to the new location on the page. I almost didn't get the interview in Pine Plains because I didn't have a local phone number on my resume and there were no such things as cell phones. It is amazing as to how our children survive in this world today! Somehow, Pine Plains got in touch with my parents, I was the last person interviewed and I got the job as the district's first school psychologist. Back then, there were no IEP's, CSE's, IST's or AIS. My job was to help students that were not having success in school and try to find a way to help them and their parents cope with the

challenges that they faced each and every day. A lot has changed in the past 35 years for our district, for education as a whole and for me. What has not changed is my mission to help others in life and the people that surround me in this community. We grow, we change but the character of this school district has remained constant. Our district has been through a great deal this past year and our country is certainly feeling the economic pressures of our past decisions. But through it all, I could not have hoped for a better place to raise my two children and to give them the education that they deserved...through good times and bad. **Bob Hess, Middle School Principal**

## 7th grade Foreign Language

New York State requires students to complete one year of a foreign language as part of their credits for a high school diploma. Students in our middle school take 2 years of French or Spanish to help fulfill that requirement. Students who will be entering the 7th grade will soon have to start thinking about which foreign language they would like to take.

At the end of their 8th grade school year students will take the New

York State Foreign Language Proficiency Exam. When students pass this exam they receive a high school credit in Foreign Language. Students can then choose to continue in more advanced Foreign Language classes. The more advanced classes a student takes, the more attractive they become as a college applicant in the future.

In the near future our 6th grade students will be exposed to some different French and Spanish activities to help them

make their decision.

Please talk to you child about his or her choice. It is very difficult for a student to switch languages once they begin a class.

## Homework Hotline

Don't forget, you can check your child's assignments on the Homework Hotline. Just call the Middle School at 398-7181

For 6th grade dial extension 370

For 7th grade dial extension 371

For 8th grade dial extension 372

Or log on to the internet at [www.ppcsd.org](http://www.ppcsd.org)

