

# Schalmont News

CENTRAL SCHOOLS

■ Data found in state's new parent reports also on nySTART.

## nySTART Helps School Administrators Help Students, Parents

Across New York State, schools now have access to a system with a huge store of data on student performance: nySTART.

Though the state is still working on some features, the New York State Testing and Accountability Reporting Tool (nySTART) is the new, online method for accessing detailed reports on students' test results. Just as parent reports were revamped in response to new state exams and overview efforts prompted by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, so to was the method used by administrators and teachers to access, review and analyze state exam results.

The nySTART tool offers administrators and teachers access to results from the NYS

Testing Program (NYSTP, which provides English language arts and math testing in grades three through eight), NYS Alternative Assessment (NYSAA, which usually tests students with severe cognitive disabilities), and NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Beginning with the 2006-07 school year, regents exam scores will also be reported on nySTART.

Superintendent Valerie Kelsey said, "It is our hope that having access to the performance data will encourage an active dialogue between parents, teachers and administrators about education in our district. Parents should always feel comfortable speaking with us about their

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*School celebrates 80 years.*

pg.6 ■ **Teachers, Technology and Literacy**  
*Professional development benefits students too.*

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*Student sets high bar.*

### Students Learn from Real Life

Project Lead the Way takes students off campus for some hands-on training.



**SEE PAGE 7**



*Congratulations to the members of the Boys' and Girls' Varsity Soccer teams, who advanced to the New York State Class B Semi-finals this November. The hard work of the players and their coaches, Chris Bailey (boys, pictured above) and Angelo Caschera (girls, pictured at right), this season made the Schalmont community very proud. They set a high bar for our sports program as this is the farthest any Schalmont soccer team has ever gone. These Section II champions showed outstanding playing and sportsmanship.*



## SCHALMONT SOCCER SUPERSTARS!

## New Reports Let Parents Stay on Top of Student Achievement

Starting this year, parents of students at Schalmont will be more informed than ever about how their children are performing in school. That is because all New York State school districts will now issue special "parent report" cards on individual students' results

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# Deciphering Parent Reports

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for standardized English and math tests administered in grades three through eight.

The new parent report breaks down a student's scores in three ways: by numerical score, by performance level and by performance on content strands.

The first breakdown is simply the student's score based on a scale specific to that exam (for example, ELA scores range from 452 – 800).

The second breakdown, performance level, helps you interpret the significance of the scale score by indicating whether or not your child is meeting the NYS Education Department's learning standards. There are four levels of performance:

- 1) Not meeting learning standards,
- 2) Partially meeting learning standards,
- 3) Meeting learning standards, and
- 4) Meeting learning standards with distinction.

The parent report also explains the

school's required response in relation to your child's performance level.

A student's performance on content strands is presented as a Standard Performance Index (SPI) number. This third breakdown essentially evaluates how your child uses his or her English and math skills. Scores are not comparable from strand to strand, so the key element to focus on is whether or not your child's score falls within the SPI target range for that strand.

These reports are an important tool in education, but parents should remember to view them as a complement to other information about their children's academic performance. Director of Curriculum Susan Cook said, "These exams do not fully reflect a

student's capabilities, so be sure to consider information from things like progress reports, classroom projects, homework, and teacher conferences."

Visit [www.NYSParents.com](http://www.NYSParents.com) for more information on parent reports, state exams, educational activity ideas, and a variety of tips to help your child(ren) succeed at school.

Revised 05/03/2006  
Grade 4  
School: SANDY VALLEY  
District: SANDY VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**More about the Mathematics score for Joe Student**

**Your Child's Performance on This Test: Level 2, Partially Meeting Learning Standards**  
Read mathematics content strands and your child's results.

Use the report to discuss with your child and the parent/guardian. Offer the student an overview of the test and the student's performance on each content strand.

Content Strand	Score	Performance Level	Target Range
1. Operations and Algebraic Thinking	75	Level 2	65-80
2. Number and Operations in Base Ten	85	Level 2	75-90
3. Operations and Algebraic Thinking	80	Level 2	70-75
4. Operations and Algebraic Thinking	75	Level 2	65-70
5. Operations and Algebraic Thinking	80	Level 2	70-75

Use the report to discuss with your child and the parent/guardian. Offer the student an overview of the test and the student's performance on each content strand.

Standards: These standards describe what your child should know and be able to do in mathematics. The standards are organized into content strands and performance levels. The standards are organized into content strands and performance levels. The standards are organized into content strands and performance levels.

Use the report to discuss with your child and the parent/guardian. Offer the student an overview of the test and the student's performance on each content strand.

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**Parent Report**

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
 For the parent or guardian of:  
**Joe Student**  
 Student ID: 507432146  
 Grade: 4  
 School: SANDY VALLEY  
 District: SANDY VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Score Range/Strand**

Beginning in 2005-06, students in Grades 3 through 8 will take part in the annual New York State Testing Program (NYSTP) for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. These tests are required by the Child Earth School (CES) and are used to monitor the progress of students in meeting NYS Learning Standards in English language arts and mathematics.

This report explains your child's scores and lists resources available to you to support your child's education. The information in this report can help you talk with the teacher and other school personnel. It may also help you talk with your child and help him or her understand his or her performance on the test. Use this report along with the other information in your child's report card to help you and your child's teacher support your child's achievement.

Richard P. Mills  
 Commissioner of Education

**Your Child's Score and Performance Level**

**Mathematics**

**Year Child's Performance Level: 2**

Your child partially demonstrated the knowledge and skills required by the Mathematics Learning Standards. This level is the lowest of the four performance levels for your child. The student's score is 842, which is below the target range for this level.

Performance Level	Score Range
Level 4	852-900
Level 3	845-851
Level 2	823-844
Level 1	452-812

Your child's score is 842, which is below the target range for this level. Discuss with the teacher how these test results compare with your child's classroom performance on similar tasks.

Level 1: Not Meeting Learning Standards  
 Learning Standards are not met. The student's score is below the target range for this level.

Level 2: Partially Meeting Learning Standards  
 Learning Standards are partially met. The student's score is below the target range for this level.

Level 3: Meeting Learning Standards  
 Learning Standards are met. The student's score is within the target range for this level.

Level 4: Meeting Learning Standards with Distinction  
 Learning Standards are met with distinction. The student's score is above the target range for this level.

*A sample Parent Report from the New York State Education Department*



## Students Show Some Love

This October, Jefferson Elementary School students gathered for a special morning assembly called "Stop the Hurt" (pictured at left). The presentation by Show of Love aims to prevent bullying and violence by highlighting how important it is to be aware of people's feelings and the timing and tone of the things you say.

Mariaville and Woestina students saw a different program, "Are You Listening?," which highlighted the importance of respect for others, taking responsibility for your actions and following the rules at school and at home.

Both programs were made possible thanks to the support of parent-teacher organizations at each school.

# Getting Psyched at Schalmont

Thanks to Schalmont High School's distance learning lab, Bronson Knaggs' psychology class consists of local students from Schalmont and Mohonasen as well as those from remote locations like Middleburgh, Duanesburg, Cobleskill, and Sharon Springs. Each year,

Schalmont hosts a Psychology Day to unite all of these young minds.

As participants in a distance learning class, Knaggs and his students use large TV screens at the front of the classroom to dialogue with each other.

"It's difficult to talk to

someone you don't know," said Teaching Assistant Amy Henges, who helped organize Psychology Day this year. "This enhances the learning experiences in psychology for these students. Individual classes usually become more cohesive, and discussion activities flow smoother."

Over 50 students participated in Psychology Day this October. After ice-breaker activities, they worked on labs and projects designed to increase their understanding of classroom subject matter. They also heard a special talk on professions in psychology, and engaged in creative skits about stress and coping strategies.



## nySTART Keeps Track of Student Stats

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children's test scores."

Not all nySTART users have access to all data, though. Superintendents and principals act as a gateway for determining what information can be seen by whom. Generally, users can only see test data for their own school or district as well as limited comparison data, like district and state averages. For example, teachers can see individual student data, but only for their specific grade level at their assigned school.

The nySTART system provides three broad types of reports: verification reports, assessment reports and accountability reports.

The first type allows district officials to review and verify the accuracy and completeness of the data (test scores, enrollment numbers, demographics, etc.) reported on their schools.

The second type, assessment reports, is meant to enable

teachers and administrators to make strategic decisions and implement plans that improve student achievement. They come in three sub-types:

- Individual Student Reports – provide concise explanations of students' performance on state tests.
- Summary Reports – provide BOCES, district and school performance information for 3-8 testing and NYSAA results.
- Interactive Reports – allow for the creation of customized reports based on student demographics.

Finally, the accountability reports are what are known as "School Report Cards" – the basis for the U.S. Department of Education's decision on which schools are in need of improvement.

In a September press release, State Education Commissioner Richard Mills said, "These tools give parents and teachers new and better ways to pinpoint academic problems and improve student performance."

## Middle School Welcomes New AP



There's a new face at Schalmont Middle School: Matt Morgan, who replaces John Gallo as assistant principal. Morgan comes to us from the Galway Central School District, where he served as assistant principal for more than three years. Visit the school's Web site at [www.schalmont.org](http://www.schalmont.org) to learn more about our new administrator, and please help us give him a warm welcome to the district.

■ *A snapshot in time...*

# “Happy Birthday, Mariaville!” Elementary School Celebrates 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Almost 80 years old, but still young at heart.*

That would be an apt description if Mariaville Elementary School were a person. Though Schalmont Central School District celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, Mariaville did not join the ‘family’ until 1959. Prior to that, it was the Mariaville Central Rural School, formed in 1927 as a consolidation of several area one-room schools, also known as common schools.

## Mariaville: Setting the Scene

Let’s start with where the name “Mariaville” came from. This lakeside community in western Schenectady County takes its name from that of Maria Duane, daughter of James Duane, the founder of the Town of Duanesburg. Maria was said to have enjoyed visiting the area that is now Mariaville.

Many early grain and lumber mills as well as farms and rural homes were located in the Mariaville area. First called Maria Pond, Mariaville Lake was formed by a dam for a mill, and to this day, that dam is maintained by residents of

the community.

In the 1920s, Mariaville became a summer resort area when increasing numbers of camps and homes were built near the lake.

## Early Schooling in Mariaville

In 1814, the New York State Legislature made it a requirement that town/city officials establish common school districts, which would be funded by local property taxes and matching state aid.

The one-room Mariaville Common School was built for about \$200 in 1816, and located on Mariaville Road near the current Mariaville Lakeside Store. The school’s first teacher was John V. Waters, who earned \$60 for teaching students six months out of the year.

The first schoolhouse was



*The Mariaville Central Rural School*

replaced in 1837 (for \$250), and then again in 1885 (for \$1,200) with a relocation to the corner of Route 159 and Route 160. This new schoolhouse had 63 students in grades one through eight, and sadly it burned down in 1925.

But the damage to the school and the Cole-Rice Law of 1925 – providing for increased financial incentives for the formation of

central rural school districts – helped spur the centralization of Mariaville-area schools.

Five common schools closed to consolidate under the new Mariaville Central Rural School. Those one-room schools were Mariaville Common School, Green’s Corners School (on Route 159 at the intersection with North and Wells roads), Eaton School (on Route 160), Common School #4 Princetown (on Ennis Road), and the Sanson School (near the corner of Route 160 and Sterling Road).

Mariaville Central Rural School was constructed on the same site as the current Mariaville Elementary School. Built in 1927, it first housed grades one through 10, but eventually housed



*Eaton School House*



just kindergarten through sixth grade.

Children were bussed to school (see Mariaville Central Rural School picture at left), and upon graduation from Mariaville, some were bussed to the former Draper School District in Rotterdam to complete their high school education.



*The plaque on the oldest wing of the modern Mariaville Elementary School reminds passersby of the school's long history.*

### Becoming a Part of Schalmont

A map of the Schalmont Central School District in 1957 looks quite different from a map of the district today. The district's name, adopted following a student contest (see "Did you know...?" article on page 6), was derived from the beginning letters of the three counties it served – **Sch** for Schenectady, **al** for Albany and **mont** for Montgomery. Even though it covered a broad geographic area, Schalmont did not include

Mariaville until 1959.

In 1957, a citizens committee in Mariaville was tasked with studying the possibility of merging Mariaville Central Rural School with an adjoining school district. At the time, the school had about 175 students in grades one through eight, and most were sent to Draper High School in Rotterdam to complete their secondary education.

Since the advent of the Cole-Rice Law, New York State had moved towards

greater centralization of schools. This effort included those central schools of a small size, so the committee looked at the possibility of merging with the Schalmont or Delanson school districts.

Our district was more than happy to welcome the school and its students to the Schalmont family. After consolidation, Mariaville was reduced to kindergarten through sixth grade, and it now offers only kindergarten through fifth grade. It also has a new face after major renovations in 2002 – 2003.

Elements of the old central rural school still remain. On the way to the playground, today's students pass a plaque with the words "Mariaville Central Rural School." This plaque once hung on the front of the

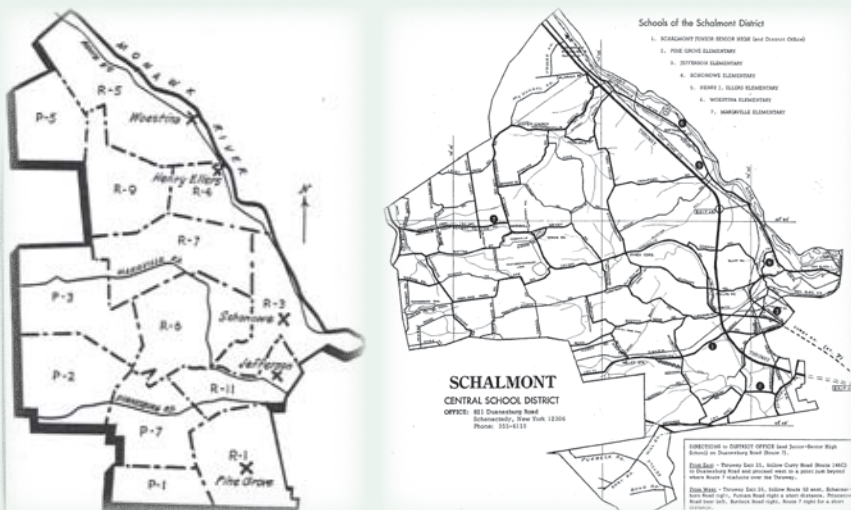
1927 building, and the old wing it hangs on now was an addition later made to that original structure.

Today, we look back on those early days in education with amazement at the challenges faced and gratefulness for the predecessors who 'paved the way.'



*Mariaville Elementary has big plans to celebrate turning 80! Please visit [www.schalmont.org](http://www.schalmont.org) to learn about special events to be held at the school this year, including student art displays, history discussions and more. You'll also find information on celebrations planned to honor Schalmont's Golden Anniversary and nomination forms for our new Schalmont Alumni Wall of Distinction.*

The information and images in this article were gathered in large part thanks to research conducted by Mariaville Principal Brian Hunt and newspaper clippings gathered over the years by Edna Tinning, a Princetown resident. **Have your own Mariaville memories to share?** If so, please contact Principal Hunt at [bhunt@sabrenet.net](mailto:bhunt@sabrenet.net) or call 864-5411, x6001.



*Schalmont Central School District looked very different before (left; 13 small school districts originally consolidated to create Schalmont) and after (right) the addition of Mariaville.*



## Did you know...?

This article originally appeared in the *Schenectady Gazette* on Jan. 9, 1956.



**YOUTHS NAME SCHOOL**—David Brinkman, 15, left, and eight-year-old Carl Hogman are winners of a contest to name the central school in Rotterdam-Princetown district 1. The boys who named the school Schalmont will each receive a \$25 savings bond as a prize.

## *Schenectady Albany Montgomery* Schalmont Chosen as Name For Central School District

By MARIAN HOGLE  
(Gazette Correspondent)

The board of education of Rotterdam-Princetown Central School District No. 1, Towns of Rotterdam and Princetown, county of Schenectady, Town of Florida, County of Montgomery, and Town of Guelderland, County of Albany, will henceforth be simply known as Schalmont central school district.

**SCHALMONT** (pronounced shall-mahnt) is a combination of the initial letters of the three counties, parts of which are included in the central school district. To select a popular name for the district, the board conducted a contest among pupils residing in the district. The winning entry was submitted by two youngsters who will receive \$25 savings bonds as prizes.

One of the winners is Carl Hogman, 8 years old, who is a third grade pupil at Jefferson school. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hogman, 2732 Caroline Ave., Carl told Bernard O'Neil, supervising principal of the district who asked how he happened to select that name, "Oh, I just worked it out."

The other winner is David Brink-

man, 15, a Draper high school junior who plans to attend RPI. David, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Brinkman, Giffords Church road, said, "I worked it out one night like a crossword puzzle. First I tried the names of the towns, then the names of the schools, and finally ended with the three counties."

**THE BOARD CONDUCTED** the contest to select a popular name because the imposing official name, which must still be retained, is too long, awkward, and unwieldy for daily use. Schalmont will appear on the district's letterheads, checks, stationery, and in public communications. It may also be used as the popular name for the new junior-senior high school to be constructed on Duaneburg road.

Activities in the central district have moved at a rapid pace during the ten months since last March when residents of 13 common and union-free school districts voted to centralize.

A seven-member board of education was elected in April. A budget of over \$700,000 was approved by district voters in June. The b-

## Teachers Focus on Technology and Literacy Efforts

Schalmont schools have a long history of producing academic achievers, but today's students need to be innovative problem solvers in the face of new technologies and global challenges. That is why teachers must continue their own education even as they instruct students: our world and work expectations change daily.

"Professional development opportunities help ensure that faculty members are fully equipped to prepare today's students to be tomorrow's leaders," said Superintendent Valerie Kelsey. "When teachers expand their knowledge, students' learning experiences are enhanced."

During a recent professional development program, secondary teachers gathered for a special day dedicated to technology. After a morn-

ing presentation on Web site design, fellow teachers demonstrated instruction tools that incorporate some of the latest technologies, including SMART Board™, Project VIEW, Blackboard, the Texas Instruments Navigation System, and more.

This "tech expo" not only showcased the latest education technology, but it also gave teachers the opportunity to discuss ways they might incorporate such tools in their own instruction.

Elementary teachers spent their morning devoted to an increasingly global challenge: literacy. While not new, the problem of poor reading skills presents numerous challenges to the livelihood and future success of today's students. That is why this district is

*continued on page 8* →



At Jefferson Elementary, first-grade teacher Melissa West works with her students on their reading skills in small groups like the one pictured. Professional development opportunities for teachers that focus on student literacy have a direct, positive impact on the learning experience at Schalmont.

# Adventures in Engineering with PLTW

Schalmont High School students participating in Project Lead the Way (PLTW) saw engineering principals at work first-hand during a recent trip to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's School of Engineering.

The two-year-old PLTW program helps introduce students to the scope, rigor and discipline of engineering and engineering technology prior to entering college. A trip to RPI offered the 63 participants, currently all freshman and sophomores, a chance to learn about engineering from some of the college's professors and students.

Computer science teacher Anthony Cassale heads the PLTW program. "By introducing students to the field of engineering and bringing them to the college, we get to show them what kind of courses they can look forward to," said Cassale.

While at RPI, students were exposed to engineering processes like plastic injection molding, abrasive water cut-

ting, laser cutting, robotics, and CNC machining.

Students will have another field trip in December, this time to visit GE's



This year, 63 students are participating in the PLTW program. They recently visited RPI to learn about studying engineering in college.

global research department to see engineers working on real life projects.

"When we visited GE last year, the general manager told us there aren't enough engineers graduating from college to fill the available jobs, particularly in biomedical and computer engineering," said Cassale. Programs like PLTW will help fill that gap by offering students an introduction to this wide-open job market.

But college comes first. So, at the

end of each school year, PLTW students have the opportunity to take an engineering exam from the Rochester Institute of Technology. If they pass, they receive four college credits that are transferable to post-secondary schools across the country. That means students who participate in all four years of the PLTW program can graduate with up to 16 college credits already under their belt. Just last year, nearly 92 percent of those who took the test at Schalmont passed and received college credit.

This year, four of them were selected to make a special presentation about their work at the Northeast Regional Information Center's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Technology Awareness Day this December. Sophomores Daniel McCrossan, Robert Dufek, Ashlene Potter, and Seanna Ryan will discuss the projects they've worked on and Schalmont's PLTW program with school district administrators from across New York State.

## Student Achieves AP First

Passing just one advanced placement exam is an achievement.

So, when Devin Fortman, a Schalmont High School senior, passed three last year, he had a lot of which to be proud. Fortman will earn the title of AP Scholar with Honors this year when he takes his fourth AP exam,

this time in Calculus.

He has averaged a score of 4 or 5 on previous AP exams, including AP History and AP Java A and AB (computer science). In addition to receiving college credit, Fortman will be the first Schalmont student to earn this special title.

Congratulations!



Devin Fortman

**Schalmont**  
**SNN**  
 SCHOOL NEWS NOTIFIER

Find out what Schalmont students are up to at [www.schalmont.org](http://www.schalmont.org) and be sure to register for Schalmont's **School News Notifier** to receive the latest news on the district, schools and emergency closings or delays!



## Babin Earns State Honor

Congratulations to Diane Babin, Schalmont Middle School family and consumer sciences teacher, who was recently named “New York State Teacher of the Year for Family and Consumer Sciences” by the NYS Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Educators. This annual award recognizes excellence in the classroom and the profession.



“We’re very proud of what Diane has accomplished,” said Principal Michael Kondratowicz. “Our students benefit from having such an experienced, talented educator.”

A teacher for 13 years, Babin has taught at both the middle and high school levels, providing instruction in areas such as nutrition and wellness, human development, child development, occupations, and the economics of work. She is a Nationally Board Certified teacher, and has helped train over 300 home and career skills teachers throughout New York.

She also has developed classroom curriculum used in schools throughout the country, received grants for curriculum development and teacher manuals, and collaborated with other teachers to develop the Parenting Scope of Instruction for the NYS parenting requirement.

## Focusing on Literacy – continued from pg.6

focused on creating a comprehensive framework that addresses all students’ reading needs, particularly in the early years of development.

According to Director of Curriculum Susan Cook, “Literacy is at the heart of students’ success in school and life. At Schalmont, we address not only the needs of children below the standard reading level, but also those who are excelling.”

So far, the district’s literacy efforts include providing new reading materials for students; working with a literacy consultant to develop model lessons, student skills assessments and teaching tips; and offering teachers special training to enhance their literacy curriculum.

“We’ve used some title grant monies to support this initiative, so it has been very cost-effective,” said Cook.

Academic Intervention Services teacher Laurie Hughes often works with students to help strengthen their reading skills.

According to her, “This comprehensive literacy initiative centers on a balanced approach to instruction. It enables students to build a strong foundation of skills as they progress through developmental stages of literacy.”

“Teachers are better able to match materials to a particular student’s instructional level, which allows all students to experience success,” said Hughes.

**“Literacy is at the heart of students’ success in school and life.”**



Produced in cooperation with the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service.

# Schalmont

CENTRAL SCHOOLS

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