

Schalmont News

CENTRAL SCHOOLS

Energy Efficiency Brings \$140K Drop in Expenses

This year, Schalmont Central School District will continue the energy conservation and management program that reduced energy costs by more than \$140,000 during the 2008-09 school year. The program, which was launched in October 2008, is helping change old habits and increase awareness amongst staff and students about the importance of energy efficiency.

Theresa McCreadie serves as both the energy educator/manager and the network administrator for the district. She received intensive training on conducting energy audits and motivating staff and students before helping launch the energy conservation and management program in Schalmont last fall.

“Our students and our teaching staff have taken to the program with dedication. Several classrooms incorporated energy discoveries in their writing and classroom assignments. Many teachers approached me with clues about where there was energy waste. Many of our cleaners, custodians and maintenance staff went above and beyond in their efforts to reduce our energy consumption,” said McCreadie.

“They’re working very diligently,” agreed Head Custodian Joseph Caldara, whose custodial staff members often shut off power strips at night and close windows and blinds as they go about their regular duties.

Staff members and students’ support

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A Sweet Greeting: This August, the Jefferson Elementary School PTO hosted an ice cream meet and greet activity to welcome new Assistant Principal Jason Thompson. He is pictured above with students who stopped by to say hello and grab a treat.

Renovation Work Winds Down

Students returning to Schalmont High School and Middle School this September were greeted by a revitalized campus as well as by teachers and friends. This was because most of the \$9.7 million renovation and reconstruction project, which was approved by voters in October 2007, was completed this summer. Only a few projects remain in the effort to extend the life and usefulness of the school facilities.

“Due to the support of our community, we have a campus that we all can be proud of and enjoy for many years,” said Terence Nash, principal of Schalmont High School.

Facility Improvements

The Bond 2007 capital project was designed to increase
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Renovation

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student safety and comfort, increase cost-effectiveness and energy efficiency in district facilities, and improve the appearance and usefulness of school facilities.

The majority of the work took place in the original 1957 wing of the high school. While other areas of the school saw renovations over the years, this wing remained much the same as it did when the school first opened more than 50 years ago. Work in this area included reconstruction of the cafeteria, roof, two restrooms, and some second-floor classrooms as well as projects to improve energy efficiency, such as replacing the 52-year old steam boilers and heating and ventilation system.



Reconstruction to Help Reduce Energy Expenses:

Replacing the 52-year-old single pane windows in Schalmont High School will help continue to reduce energy expenses. The old windows have already been replaced in the high school cafeteria (pictured).

The projects at the middle school included exterior structures and interior areas not addressed in Bond 2000 renovations. For example, a gym floor reconstruction project rectified a moisture problem that caused cracks, buckling and unpleasant odors.

“The renovations have enhanced the

atmosphere of our gym, which is used by students – for classes, Sabre City events and school dances – and by the community. The replacement of the old floor is a great improvement for both our physical education program and our modified sports program,” said Michael Kondratowicz, principal of Schalmont Middle School.

The middle/high school bus loop area was also reconstructed to improve the safety of pedestrians.

Some of the capital project work took place at Schonowe School. Since 1980, various programs and organizations have leased the school from Schalmont. Reconstruction work on the school heating will allow the district to continue to maintain it as an income-earning, quality facility.

One of the few projects remaining is the replacement of the original, single pane windows in the 1957 wing of the high school. “The windows should be installed by mid-October with minimal impact on daily classes,” said Mark Kellett, the Schalmont business administrator.

“This project has provided an excellent environment for our students and teachers. It will allow the educational process to conduct itself without distractions like temperature control problems. It will also bring a lot of energy savings for the district,” said Kevin Thompson, president of the Schalmont Board of Education.

Financial Impact

As outlined in the October 2007 proposal, the cost of the capital project is primarily covered by New York State

District Office Finds New Home

By the end of October, the Schalmont Central School District Office will have a new home in the renovated 1957 wing of Schalmont High School.

The move should save the district approximately \$15,000 in annual costs related to operating out of the old location, 401 Duanesburg Rd.

All contact phone numbers will remain the same, but at that time, the mailing address will change to 4 Sabre Dr., Schenectady, NY 12306.

building aid, the Expanding Children’s Education and Learning (EXCEL) grant program, and rental income at Schonowe. Together they cover more than 71 percent of the project cost.

The 2009-10 school budget is the first to include the cost of the project for local taxpayers. The cost was originally estimated as a 0.2 percent (i.e., two-tenths of a percent) increase in the tax levy (i.e. total amount of money that the district collects from local taxpayers). However, the tax levy in the 2009-10 budget remained the same as the tax levy in the 2008-09 budget, primarily due to cost-saving measures and budget cuts by the district.

“We are right on target fiscally with this project, and it looks like we’ll have everything finished earlier than originally planned,” said Superintendent Valerie Kelsey.

“The board is thrilled to see the changes in place. I look forward to continuing to work with our Facilities Committee to strategically plan for the preservation of Schalmont schools,” said Thompson.

Fun with Science Builds Future Skills

Elementary Teachers Explore Wonder of Chemistry

Chemistry principles are all around you, or at least that's what Schalmont elementary students will soon discover. Several of their teachers gathered this summer to explore ways to expose young students to the science of chemistry. Joining them was retired chemist John Fisher, who illustrated ways in which chemistry can be incorporated into the existing school curriculum.

The Earlier, the Better

"It's important to introduce science often and early," said Fisher, who spent more than 35 years as a chemist and more than 20 years visiting classrooms as part of the SI Group community outreach program.

He demonstrated experiments and shared ideas designed to help elementary teachers become more comfortable with chemistry and to help students strengthen their knowledge of

this "harder" science. Fisher said his goal was to help teachers expose students to chemistry at a younger age so that by the time they took a chemistry course in high school, they would already know some of the fundamental concepts.

According to fourth-grade teacher Kathy Cathell, "The more we introduce students to chemistry vocabulary, concepts and skills now, the better their foundation for middle school and high school."

A stronger foundation in chemistry should help improve students' performance on tests, such as the New York State science exam for eighth-graders, and in science classes. That was the reason the district and the Schalmont Teachers Institute organized the workshop with Fisher. The STI has hired Fisher as a consultant to assist with chemistry curriculum and activities at both the elementary and secondary levels.

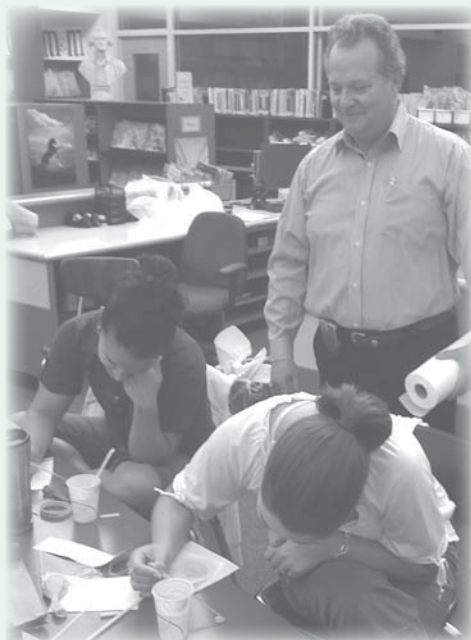
"We can't expect students to walk into 11th-grade chemistry and do well if they've had no exposure to the science at an early age," said STI Director Bronson Knaggs.

Creative Chemistry

"The morning was full of fun chemistry experiments to get kids psyched," said Cathell.

Fisher shared a variety of experiments that could be used in grades 1-5. One was an activity to discover how many drops of water could fit on a penny (73 drops!). Another took a look at the properties

of soap and water that make them the preferred method for sanitizing hands. A third used a coffee filter, a permanent marker, and a washable marker to illustrate the "capillary action" of water.



Building Science Skills Early: Retired chemist John Fisher (standing) shows elementary teachers an experiment that they could add to their science curriculum.

Each school year, second-grade teacher Lori Demeo exposes students to some basic science concepts in a unit called "changes." While she was a little overwhelmed at first with how to fit Fisher's activities into the existing curriculum, she said, "I will certainly think about these ideas when I'm talking to students. What I always just considered 'science,' I can talk about now as being life science, physical science or chemistry."

"Mr. Fisher really encouraged us to try to throw out chemistry vocabulary words every now and then even if we

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Inspire Your Child's Love of Science

Join the local chapter of the American Chemical Society in celebrating

National Chemistry Day

Sunday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

New York State Museum

222 Madison Ave., Albany

There will be a "mad science" show at 1 p.m., hands-on activities, cool chemistry demonstrations, and a poster contest. E-mail kehlbecj@union.edu for more information.



NUTRIKIDS at All Schalmont Schools

Schalmont students have a new way to get school meals this fall: the NUTRIKIDS Point of Sale (POS) Computer System. The Food Services Department recently implemented the POS system to improve the speed, accuracy and privacy of cafeteria purchases.

Under the POS system, all students were issued a four digit pin number to use for all meal plan-based cafeteria purchases, both breakfast and lunch. Students should have received a copy of their pin number with their class schedules/back-to-school packets. A student who does not have a meal plan will still have a four digit pin number, but he/she may choose not to use it and instead pay by cash.

Each student's pin number will remain the same throughout his/her K-12 education.

For the immediate future, parents will continue to use the current system of adding money to students' meal plan accounts, which involves sending in a check or cash to the cafeteria.



Speedy Food Service: A Schalmont Middle School student enters her pin number into the NUTRIKIDS system to purchase lunch.

By this winter, parents should be able to go online to add money – via credit card – to their children's meal plan accounts. They should also be able to review their children's purchases by accessing an online database of information linked to students' pin numbers.

For more information about meal plans, NUTRIKIDS, and pin numbers, visit www.schalmont.org and click on "What's for Lunch?" or call Food Service Director Marcy von Maucher at 355-1342, x5069.

and then with both hot and cold water based on the instructions – is a simple way for young students to be exposed to very basic chemistry concepts.

Cathell and Demeo both see such experiments as a way to expose children to the wonder of the world. "Creating that sense of wonder is an important responsibility for us as teachers," said Cathell.



Homecoming 2009

Homecoming will begin with a week of celebrations leading up to the homecoming football game on Saturday, Oct. 17, at 7 p.m. at Schalmont High School.

Community members are invited to attend the athletic events and the festivities on Saturday.

Following are highlights from the week-long celebration. Visit www.schalmont.org/HS/HShome.htm for the most up-to-date information.

Oct. 13-16

Sabre Spirit Week

Friday, Oct. 16

Homecoming Pep Rally

3:30 p.m. – Girls JV/V Soccer vs. Watervliet

7 p.m. – Homecoming Kick-off Dance

Saturday, Oct. 17

10 a.m. – Modified Girls Soccer vs. Watervliet

1 p.m. – Boys JV/V Soccer vs. Lansingburgh

3-7 p.m. – Homecoming Activities (games, booths, raffles, refreshments, etc.)

4:30-6:30 p.m. – Musical Entertainment

3 p.m. – MS Dodge Ball Tournament

7 p.m. – V Football vs. Broadalbin-Perth

Fun with Science

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don't test students on them," said first-grade teacher Melissa West.

She is hoping to incorporate this vocabulary into more classroom activities, such as one in which students make JELL-O. The JELL-O activity – where students first try to make JELL-O with just cold water

Energy Efficiency

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of the effort complemented the energy use adjustments made as part of the program. Energy costs were successfully reduced through ongoing, daily evaluation of energy needs in the district and the implementation of energy efficient cooling/heating schedules and shutdown schedules for weekends/holidays in Schalmont schools. District operations staff also increased insulation for leaky doors and windows and rewired hallway lighting for better half-lighting control.

“We made great strides in our first year,” said McCreadie.

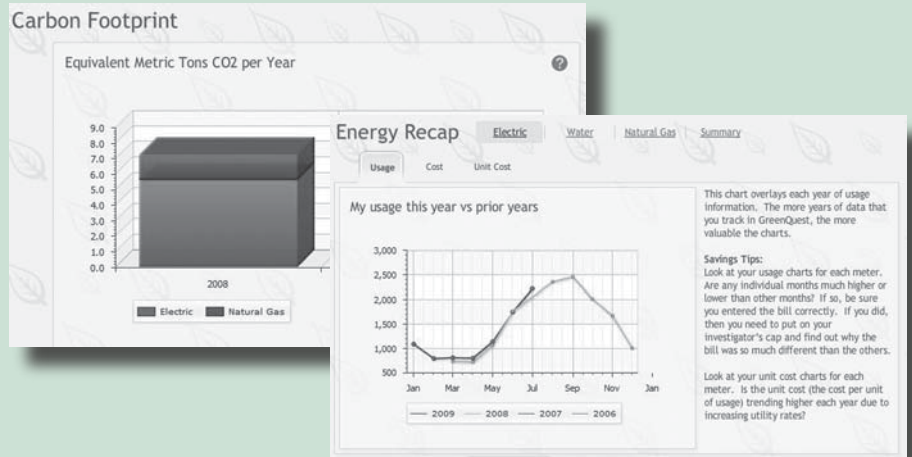
In the coming year, the district will continue to focus on developing good energy habits. The Bond 2007 capital project will aid in that effort, with the completion of projects such as replacing the 52-year-old single pane windows, steam boilers and heating and ventilation system with more efficient models. McCreadie will also continue to educate staff and students about effective energy use; review and update district energy policies; and take a closer look at district boilers, exterior lighting and water use. The goal is for the district to eventually receive the Energy Star label for its schools.



Visit www.schalmont.org and click on “See It with Your Own Eyes” throughout the year to view videos about Schalmont students and 21st century education.

GreenQuest

A free, online, money-saving service for residents



GreenQuest is an online service that allows users to discover money- and environment-saving ideas by analyzing their energy and water bills. It is being offered as a free service for Schalmont residents because of the district involvement in an energy conservation and management program.

Visit <http://mygreenquest.com/schalmontcsdny/> to compare your expenses with other similar users in your area, spot costly utility bill errors, get an accurate carbon footprint, and more!

“At home, work and school, we need to make changes for our future and for those we leave behind. Learning to think about energy use will take some time, but our efforts will have a

great impact on our long term global footprint,” said McCreadie.

Want to save on energy at home? Use the GreenQuest tool mentioned above.

Golf Tournament Supports Student Athletes

The Schalmont Athletic Association held its 3rd Annual SAA Golf Tournament this September. Thanks to generous community support, SAA will be able to continue to support student-athletes and the Schalmont athletic program. Visit www.schalmont.org to view pictures, a list of sponsors, and the tournament results.





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Schalmont

CENTRAL SCHOOLS

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WHAT'S INSIDE? NUTRIKIDS at All Schalmont Schools, Homecoming 2009, Fun with Science Builds Future Skills

School Board Calendar

Schalmont Board of Education public meetings are held at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Tuesday, Oct. 13

Mariaville Elementary School
9210 Mariaville Rd.
Pattersonville

Monday, Oct. 26

Middle School LGI Room
2 Sabre Dr.

Monday, Nov. 9

Woestina Elementary School
1292 Main St.
Rotterdam Junction

Monday, Nov. 23

Middle School LGI Room
2 Sabre Dr.

Reunion Calendar

Class of 1985

Nov. 27, 2010, at 7 p.m.
Rotterdam Elks Club
1152 Curry Rd.

Class of 1989

Sept. 26, 2009, at 6 p.m.
Mill Road Restaurant, Latham
schalmont89@yahoo.com

Class of 1999

November 2009
Details TBA
vallye33@hotmail.com

Budget Vote Exit Poll Recap Part I

The annual budget vote exit poll is an opportunity for voters to share their concerns with the Schalmont Board of Education and administrators. Almost 61 percent of those who voted last May chose to complete an exit poll. While reviewing the results, the school board discovered some common concerns and misperceptions. Following is some clarification on issues raised in last year's exit polls.

Q. Why do I see empty school busses?

A. When you seen an empty school bus, it is likely just beginning or has just finished its pick-up route. The occupancy level for Schalmont Central School District busses is currently 72 percent. This means that, on average, each school bus is carrying enough students to be at 72 percent of its total carrying capacity. The occupancy level for a school district is influenced by several factors, including the number of students in a district, the number of square miles in a district, and transportation requirements set by state education law. Schalmont currently has more than 2,100 students, and the district is approximately 75 square miles in size. The number of school busses on the road and the number of students on those busses reflects these factors and is designed to meet legal requirements for the amount of time that students can spend on a bus.

Q. Where does Schalmont rank in comparison to other school districts?

A. Schalmont students consistently perform well when compared with other Capital Region school districts. The district rose from a rank of 49 in 2005 to a rank of 25 in 2009 in an annual ranking of 85 Capital Region school districts by "The Business Review" (based on state Education Department data). Last spring, students in grades 3-8 achieved a 95.4 percent rate of proficiency on state math tests. This was the second highest score among Schenectady County schools and the fifth highest score among Capital Region school districts. In the Class of 2009, 92 percent of students received a Regents, Advanced Regents or Advanced Regents with Honor diploma. Visit www.schalmont.org/HS/HHome.htm and click on "Schalmont HS Student Spotlight" to read about some more student accomplishments.



Visit www.schalmont.org to register for Schalmont School News Notifier and receive e-mail updates on school news, emergency closings and delays.