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Board of Ed to act Dec. 5 on proposed \$32.5 million capital construction project

The Pioneer Board of Education is set to act at its Dec. 5 meeting on a \$32.57 million proposal for capital improvements.

At their Nov. 21 regular meeting, board members considered items included in the “fix-it” project. After lengthy discussion, they removed about \$1.23 million worth of items they viewed as unnecessary.

A 30-member Capital Construction Committee comprised of board members, administrators, teachers, custodians, staff and community members met during the summer and fall to review and recommend the projects included in the final proposal.

If approved, the capital improvements

will have no impact on taxpayers’ bills. This is due to:

- Pioneer’s highly favorable building aid ratio of 98 percent
- The retiring of certain debt payments in coming years
- More than \$2 million in Excel aid from the state, which the district can apply directly to capital improvements without the need for a bond issue.

In selecting items for the project, the committee was guided by findings of a building and grounds condition survey conducted by architects Gordon Jones Associates. This company designed Pioneer High School and Middle School.

The survey indicated areas in which the district faces urgent

health and safety needs, and needed upgrades to meet building and equipment code standards. At the same time, the architects made other recommendations with an eye toward safety, health, energy efficiency, and the reasonable life expectancy of aging infrastructure.

One of the first projects called for in the plan is the replacement of the original 40-year-old sewer line to the Yorkshire campus. This would be “fast-tracked” for approval by the state, with construction beginning possibly as soon as Summer 2007.

The remainder of the

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CAPITAL PROJECT COMMITTEE’S STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Pioneer’s Capital Construction Committee was charged with recommending to the Board of Education a comprehensive package of items to be included in a multi-year improvement project. The committee’s Statement of Purpose:

“Recommendations will cost effectively maintain our facilities and grounds in accordance with state and federal standards and codes. Foremost consideration will be given to the health, safety and educational opportunities of the school community, with special attention to the need for continuous growth and development in systems technology.”

projects would take place in 2008 and 2009, as weather permits.

THE COMMITTEE also suggested several additional projects that make sense from an academic or community use standpoint. These include:

- Installing an artificial turf, multisport athletic field on the current football field
- A new multimedia classroom installed in existing storage space at the middle school

- Construction of a barn/classroom for use by the high school agriculture department
- A new 50-car parking lot on the north side of Delevan Elementary School.

IF THE BOARD gives its approval to the project, a brochure explaining the plan would be disseminated, and a public forum would be conducted in early January. That would be followed by the bond vote later that month.



“Pioneer has historically been a source of pride for the whole community and we want to keep it that way for decades to come,” said superintendent Jeffrey Bowen. “The project is practical, sensible, and supportive of area priorities and values.”

LEFT: Pioneer students will immediately benefit from the proposed Capital Construction Project and for decades to come.

Elementary math project involves every day objects

One person looks at a heavy orange gourd with a green stem and a ruddy surface and sees a pumpkin. Another sees it as an opportunity for learning.

Some students at Arcade Elementary School are unlikely to view pumpkins in the same way after they used the veggies for a math project in the third grade classroom of Ms. Julie Gates.

“My main objective was to get kids to look at an every day object—such as a pumpkin— and think about math with it,” said Ms. Gates.

“Math isn’t just paper and pencil anymore. It’s integrated into every day life. We need to teach kids that you can’t stop thinking about math just because the schedule doesn’t say ‘we’re doing math right now’. Math

can be fun!”

Students were split into groups guided by parent helpers. The groups had to predict their pumpkins’ weight, its circumference, whether it would sink or float, and estimate how many seeds were inside.

“We encouraged the groups to think about what they already know—using their prepared outline—about weight and circumference,” said Ms. Gates. “For instance, they might try to guess how heavy the pumpkin is based on their own weight. They might also measure the distance around using their fingers first.”

Once all four predictions were filled in, the students did actual weight and circumference measurements. They tested the pumpkins’ buoyancy in water (they



Arcade Elementary 3rd grade students Elmer Allard, left, Richard George, and Nicholas Karcher tackle a pumpkin math project with the help of teacher Ms. Julie Gates.

all floated). Then the groups scooped out the innards and counted the seeds (in groups of 10, to make it easier), before coming up with a group design to carve on their pumpkins.

“Really, the only

category where the estimates were really off were the seed counts,” said Ms. Gates.

The seeds were roasted and served at the class Halloween party the following day.

Delevan Elementary honored as gap-closing school

Delevan Elementary School has been identified by Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services for significantly narrowing its achievement gap.

Delevan is one of 39 schools from 28 districts in New York to be highlighted in this way.

The report from Standard & Poor's indicates that Delevan significantly raised its math and English language arts (ELA) scores between the

2003-04 and 2004-05 school years, while also closing the academic gap at least 5 percent between students who are economically disadvantaged and those who are not.

Delevan was one of 34 schools statewide to do this, and actually closed by gap by 7.3 percent. The gap was closed specifically in at least one grade — Grade 4 in Delevan's case — another criteria for the distinction.

"The implication is

that Delevan's student performance measurably reflects the twin goals of excellence and equity," said superintendent Jeffrey Bowen.

The list of honorees is a selective one. Only 39 schools from a total of 670 statewide exhibited qualifying criteria. Schools needed to show they had distinguished themselves on at least one performance indicator for higher and lower performance. In Delevan's case, that

indicator was economic data.

"Standard & Poor's hopes that Delevan Elementary and the others being recognized can serve as appropriate benchmarks to aid educators elsewhere in the state as they seek to narrow their achievement gaps and improve the performance of all students," said Thomas Sheridan, vice president of Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services.

ACHIEVEMENT=PIZZA PARTY



Students in the Arcade Elementary School 2nd grade class of Mrs. Jill Wilkie celebrate with a pizza party after their class had the highest level of participation in Family Day back in September. The students returned the most signed pledges, indicating that their families ate dinner together on Sept. 25 in commemoration of Family Day. The award and pizza were provided by the Wyoming County Council on Substance Abuse. Nationally, Family Day is sponsored by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. Shown from left: Taylor Burton, Brooke Tillinghast, Claire Gates-Sandburg, Kimberly Metz and Joe Rice.

VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT FOR ODYSSEY OF MIND

Volunteers are sought to help coach Pioneer's Odyssey of the Mind teams.

According to advisor Mrs. Sarah Farr, Odyssey of the Mind is an exciting, fun and challenging way to interact with students.

Odyssey of the Mind teaches students to learn creative problem-solving methods while having fun in the process. This problem-solving process rewards thinking "outside the box."

Anyone interested in coaching a middle or high school team this year may call Mrs. Farr at 716 492-9300 ext. 2438.

National Junior Honor Society inducts 32 new members

Thirty-two Pioneer Middle School 8th graders have met the academic and character criteria for induction into the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS), and were welcomed into the group in a Nov. 2 ceremony.

NJHS seeks to recognize students who exemplify outstanding leadership, scholarship, character, and service. These students carried a 92 percent average in the four 7th grade core



The newest group of National Junior Honor Society members poses with assistant principal Christian Cornwell, advisors Rebecca Day and Caren Dubay, and principal Ravo Root.



ABOVE: Jared Benkelman signs in as a new member of the National Junior Honor Society, as counselor Jon Krumpek looks on.

subjects (91 percent if taking one accelerated course, or 90 percent if taking two accelerated courses). Their inductions are also based on teacher recommendations, which are sought by the student-nominees.

“We expect our inductees to regularly display positive character traits,” said co-advisor Caren Dubay. “These

include honesty, acceptance, helpfulness, responsibility, and respect toward others.”

The list of 2006 honorees includes:

Joshua Andrzejewski, Kara Armstrong, David Baker, Nicole Bauder, Jared Benkelman, Darren Beyer, Jenna Boza, Maggie Bray, Dylan Chmiel, Natalie Cornell, Jenna Crabb, Erin Darling, Joshua Dubay,

Charles Eley, and Scott Fisher.

Also, Haley Haggerty, Nathaniel Hallock, Alainie Heim, Matthew LaFay, Sarah Martin, Alyxis Mitrowski, Adam Morgan, Lynette Owens, Chelby Rogers, Jessica Rung, Mariah Schaus, Mcleana Schwab, Nicholas Taylor, Hailey Tharnish, Kiley Titus, Courtney Very, and James Wasko.

BELOW: Principal Ravo Root congratulates James Wasko on his induction as a National Junior Honor Society member.



Twenty-eight students join National Honor Society

Membership in the Pioneer High School chapter of National Honor Society swelled to 64 with the Nov. 14 induction of 28 new students.

Eligibility is based on an academic average of 90 percent. Students are also required to submit evidence of their service and leadership, as well as at least three recommendations from adults.

Chapter president Nicole Bower joined high school principal Sharon Huff in inducting the new members. High school math teacher Louise Herrick was the guest speaker.

The list of inductees is



below.

Seniors: Katie Pingrey, Henry Prutsman, Jamie Root, Crystal Sporysz

Juniors: Molly Howard, Amanda Kirchmeyer, Derek Kirsch, Chelsey Schreiber, Danielle Wischman

Sophomores: Nick Carton, Cassondra Conrad, Kayla Cornell, Angela Czesak, Kyle Dash, Simon Fraser, Samantha George, Luke Haskell, Danielle Kinney, Rachel Kirsch, Laura

Martin, Kaitlin Norgren, Janel Phetteplace, Derek Rule, Madeleine Schooley, Alyssa Schreiber, Valerie Walden, Jade Welch, Lauren Woodruff, Allyson Yansick.

BELOW: Kyle Dash is praised by principal Sharon Huff for his new membership in NHS.



Science students go global with temperature project

Schools from as far away as Australia and Japan joined Pioneer High School students in participating in a recent global Internet project that mapped local temperatures and sunlight data.

The classes of high school science teacher David Reling also completed graphs showing the relationship among temperatures, sunlight, and latitude. One of the goals is to enrich students' learning experiences through unique and compelling applications of instructional technologies.

The Global Sun Temperature Project allows students to collaborate in large numbers across great distances to determine how proximity to the equator affects average



Two sophomores, Matt Landphair (left) and Jenna Lisenby, participate in a global, Internet-based science project designed to chart local temperature and sunlight data.

daily temperature and hours of sunlight. Students also had the opportunity to interact with experts online, use a virtual bulletin board to discuss project-related topics, and publish their

own work to a web page.

"This project taught my students how to apply and combine their knowledge and thinking skills in the areas of mathematics, science and technology," said Mr. Reling.

Over the period of one week, students took midday temperature readings and recorded the data in Celsius degrees. They also determined the number of minutes of sunlight (usually found in the newspaper), and determined both the average temperature and average minutes of sunlight per day for that week.

The information was reported by Internet to the coordinating web site, which will be followed by analysis and conclusions in early December.

Mr. Reling said the project met New York State Regents standards for science that included analysis, inquiry, design, and use of information systems.



MEETING OF THE MINDS

*On Nov. 10, members of the Pioneer High School Scholastic Challenge Team attended the "Meeting of the Minds" quiz bowl at the Olean campus of Jamestown Community College. Vying against teams from both New York and Pennsylvania., they finished second. Front row: Kevin Howard, left, Brian House, Cris Davis, Danny Learn
Back row: Nicholas Carton, coach Mrs. Janice Fisher.*

National convention shows promise of FFA chapter

By Amanda Kirchmeyer
FFA Reporter

On Oct. 24, 24 Pioneer FFA members boarded a bus bound for the 79th National FFA Convention, held for the first time in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The two-day trip to the convention included two educational tours. FFA members had the opportunity to visit the Randolph Fish Hatchery in Randolph, N.Y., and the John Glenn NASA Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

While at the hatchery, members learned about the steps involved in raising fish that will eventually be used in stocking New York State streams. A very informative tour of the facility was conducted by the staff. Trout and bass were observed in indoor and outdoor tanks, and members learned saw first-hand what is involved in raising fish.

The second stop was at the John Glenn NASA Research Center. Upon arrival, members watched an informational video on what it was like to be up in space. After the movie was over, the students were free to explore the center's museum. The museum included flight simulators, space models, and information on every American man and woman who has ever traveled into space.

The next morning we arrived in Indianapolis to begin competitions. Five teams from Pioneer, who were also representing New York State, competed against the best in the nation. These teams included Agricultural Issues, Agricultural Mechanics, Agricultural Sales, Farm Business Management, and Marketing Plan. After months of competition and practice, the time had finally come to put our skills to the test!

FFA members Brent Bliss, Katie Bliss, Andy Boldt, Nikki Bower, Jessie Nickerson, and CJ Segelhurst made up this year's Agricultural Issues team. The team discussed the pros and cons of growing organic strawberries. Team members presented their views in a 10-minute skit, and answered a series of questions about organic farming. The team's dedication led



Members of the 2006 Pioneer FFA Agriculture Issues team pose at the National FFA convention in Indianapolis. From left: CJ Segelhurst, Katie Bliss, Brent Bliss, Andy Boldt, Jessie Nickerson, and Nikki Bower.

them to a silver placing this year.

Jacob Ashley, Aaron Czesak, Logan Drummer, and Dustin Pingrey brought home the gold in this year's Agricultural Mechanics event. Some of the team's activities included welding, surveying, estimating rafters, electrical wiring, and checking air pressure on a tractor. The Agricultural Mechanics team used their knowledge to fight off the competition and placed 13th in the nation. Jacob Ashley received a \$500 scholarship for his excellent individual placing.

This year's Agricultural Sales team consisted of members Tonya Kempf, Becky Meyer, Chelsey Schreiber, and Mike Skeels. Team members were required to demonstrate their skills in prospecting for new customers, conducting a sales presentation, and presenting a sales plan for an agricultural product. The team received a silver emblem for their efforts.

The Farm Business Management Team consisted of Jenna Fontaine, Beth Hobin, Amanda Kirchmeyer, and

Kameron Wittmeyer. In this event, a financial analysis was conducted on an operating farm. The three-hour test included cash flow, liquidity, solvency, net worth, and tax management. A team activity addressed the long and short-term goals of the business. After a grueling two days, the team received a silver placing.

Representing New York State's Marketing Plan team this year were Jacob Fontaine, Katie Pingrey, and Mark Skeels. The team completed a written plan geared to marketing value-added honey products, and conducted a 15-minute presentation before a panel of judges. After two rounds of competition, the team captured the silver emblem for their hard work, placing in the top 12 in the nation.

Congratulations to all the members who competed in this year's National FFA Convention. Also, a big thanks to all of the members of the community who made this trip possible for us.

Giving Tree project branches out for holidays

Pioneer's annual Giving Tree project is underway, as Pioneer PRO handles the donations for the high school and Delevan Elementary School.

PRO, a student service group at Pioneer High, has placed a giving tree at both Delevan and the high school. Advisor Kathy Morris said already 48 families with 115 children are on the list as needing aid, and both staff and students are encouraged to help if they are able.

"Directions will be available by each of our trees," said Mrs. Morris. "Fortunately we have been able to obtain help from a number of area businesses and churches who are providing financial support or taking ornaments."

Additional funding for the project has also been received from Pioneer's Agriculture Department through the federal Learn and Serve grant.

Similar efforts are underway in the district. Delevan Elementary is in the



Pioneer PRO members Katie Howell, left, and Kelsey Horrigan stand next to the Giving Tree, which is decorated with ornaments representing local needy families.

midst of its Five Weeks of Caring food drive for the Delevan pantry. Arcade Elementary, having already completed its annual 2nd grade food drive, is getting in the yuletide spirit through its Helping Hands program, while Pioneer

Middle School is also planning its own Giving Tree program.

Helping to cut ornaments for this year's PRO Giving Tree was the Pioneer Middle School class of Mrs. Michelle Schubert.

Student-musicians perform at Area All-State Festival



Some of the best student-musicians from Pioneer High School performed at the Area All-State Festival at Fredonia State Nov. 18. Front row: Johnna Matusik, left, Kyle Conroy, Kyle Dash, and Bridgette Lyon. Back row: Jessica Perkins, Mackenzie Pierce, Kelsey Wright, and Jordan Benkelman.

Eight student-musicians were selected to represent Pioneer High School in the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Area All-State Festival, held Nov. 17-18 at SUNY Fredonia.

The musicians were selected based on the ratings they received for NYSSMA solo auditions last spring. All of these musicians received top ratings of A+ or A.

For the shows at Fredonia, the students were teamed with the best young musicians in Western New York as well as some of the best conductors from across the United States.

The honorees are:

BAND: Jessica Perkins (trumpet), Kyle Dash (trumpet), Kyle Conroy (trumpet), and Mackenzie Pierce (trombone).

ORCHESTRA: Johnna Matusik (cello), Bridgette Lyon (string bass).

CHORUS: Jordan Benkelman, Mackenzie Pierce, Kelsey Wright.

There's room for growth as Pioneer rejoins county legislature intern program

After lying dormant for two years, Pioneer High School's legislative intern partnership with Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES is active again.

The program allows area high school seniors to serve as interns to county legislatures in Cattaraugus and Allegany counties. Pioneer's participation dates back to the 1970s, when the late Steve Smith, a legislator from Yorkshire, was among the originators.

Students can elect to serve as interns in lieu of taking their 1/2-credit government course. Internships last one semester, with students transported to county government centers once per week.

"They spend the entire day learning firsthand about how local government works, which for many high school students is the only time they're exposed to this before they graduate," said former Pioneer intern teacher liaison Jeff Mason.

The program is a cooperative service, or CoSer, offered through Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES. In the fall, students travel to Little Valley to work with the Cattaraugus County Legislature, and in the spring, the scene shifts to the Allegany County government center in Belmont.

Unfortunately, two years of inactivity meant that demand for the internships died among students. This fall, only one student from



Senior Aaron Norton is the lone representative of Pioneer High School to the County Legislative Intern program, which has returned after a two-year absence.

Pioneer, senior Aaron Norton, is among the dozen or so young people from across the BOCES district who is making the Wednesday trek to Little Valley.

"When my teacher, [current liaison] Mrs. [Joanne] Haskell, talked about it in class at the start of the year, it seemed interesting to me," said Aaron. "I got the information, thought it was a good idea, and decided to sign up."

Aaron said his day in Little Valley begins with some group discussion among his fellow student-interns, then they recap the previous week with some journal entries. That is followed by a preview of the current day's schedule, which can include having guest speakers, attending a court trial, or debating the issues. Lunch affords an opportunity for students for more discussion and to get to know their fellow interns better.

"My favorite part has been meeting people and seeing first-hand

how government works," said Aaron. "We attend legislative sessions every other week, and we're paired up with legislators. Mine is Bill Sprague, who represents the Yorkshire area."

Aaron said he is not concerned that he is the lone Pioneer representative in the program. "We're generally not sectioned off by school, and no one seems to think that way. We're there to learn."

"Before doing this, I really didn't have an idea of all that is involved in running the government," he continued. "Now I know there's a lot more to it than meets the eye. Anything you want to accomplish requires a lot of advance planning, the cooperation of others, and of course, money."

The semester traditionally ends with a mock legislature session run by the interns.

Aaron, who will begin a five-year hitch in the U.S. Army next July, said politics does not suit him, but is not ruling out

a career in government service.

As for the internship program, Aaron is trying to promote it among Pioneer students so that it doesn't fade away again.

"I know a lot of them think I just do it to get out of school each week, but it really is a challenge. You have to make up the work you miss in school, yet it has been worth it. My teacher and counselor wouldn't have approached me with the idea if they didn't think I could handle it. And I would highly recommend it."

Pioneer Central School is in compliance with the U.S. Civil Services Rights Act of 1964 and the Title IX Education Amendments of 1972, Part 86. The District provides equal employment opportunity to all individuals and does not discriminate on the basis of color, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age or handicapping condition. The 504 compliance officer can be reached at 716 492-9435. The Title IX compliance officer can be reached at 716 492-9304.