



# PIONEER



School District

## NEWSLETTER

### THIS JUST IN:

The Delevan Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) will host its annual holiday gala on Friday, Dec. 3, at the school from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The event features music, crafts, refreshments, and prizes. Storytime with librarian Mrs. Marcia Tyrrell will end the evening.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be in the auditorium to pose with kids for a donation of \$1.00. Proceeds will be given to the Delevan Food Pantry. All other events are free.

"This is a fun event for families," said PTA president Trista Reisdorf. "We have made some changes this year and are very excited to see how people react. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend."

Anyone who is interested in volunteering at this event is urged to call chairperson Darlene Pinckney at 716 492-5222. Also, for information about joining Delevan PTA, call 716 492-9300 ext. 5090.

## Student-teachers enhance learning opportunities, gain experience



Laurie Gurley, student-teacher in the Arcade Elementary classroom of Mark Kehl, poses next to some of the items from her recent unit on Africa.

**A** key part of preparing to become a teacher is student-teaching or practicum, which allows collegians to apply what they have studied while determining if education is the right career choice for them.

Pioneer School District currently has 25 student-teachers in grades K-8 who typically:

- stay half the school year
- are completing work on an undergraduate degree
- attend an area college or university such as Houghton, SUNY Geneseo, Buffalo, or

St. Bonaventure.

Supervising college professors contact Pioneer building principals if they wish to place student-teachers. Principals then contact classroom teachers to see if they are willing to host a student-teacher.

This fall, in the 2nd grade classroom of Arcade Elementary teacher Mark Kehl, students have benefited from the skills of student-teacher Laurie Gurley. Miss Gurley is an elementary education major completing her studies at Houghton College.

Miss Gurley's recent unit on

Africa included an imaginary trip to the Dark Continent, traveling each day to a new country. While there, the students learned about the country's location on the map, its geological features and culture. The students were able to see many pictures and handle many artifacts from several countries.

"Students 'visited' the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Egypt, Tanzania, and South Africa," said Mr. Kehl. "During the students'

Continued on Page 2

travels, they recorded what they learned in a passport. To get their passports stamped to show that they visited the country, they placed key words from that nation in their passports and drew a picture to represent the word."

The students learned that, while Africa is a continent made up of many different

countries, there are still some commonalities that can be identified. Other topics included animals and the folk tales associated with them, as well as such geological features as rainforests, volcanoes, deserts and the savannah.

Miss Gurley used resources from Arcade's library media

center, and obtained artifacts from friends and relatives, to be able to offer the Africa unit.

"Student teachers give us a mutually beneficial source of educational vitality," said Pioneer superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Bowen. "We benefit from their instructional help and teamwork, and strength-

ened school-university connections. They benefit from being mentored, encountering the real challenges of teaching, and from earning a degree and licensure. It is likely that many of our K-12 students aspire to teaching as a career because our student teachers provide inspiring role models for them."

## Middle School planning committee weighs common start/end times

Pioneer Middle School's planning committee has begun the process of reviewing the start and end times of the day at the middle school.

An equal number of parents and staff members have participated in the committee process. Approximately 20 committee members have regularly attended planning committee meetings.

"Planning committee members are working together to make a recommendation that best serves middle school students," said principal

Ravo Root.

Pioneer Middle School has always operated on an early schedule for grades 7 and 8, with grades 5 and 6 starting and ending the day an hour later. A proposed common start time could offer social, transportation and academic advantages, but officials want to ensure that parents, students, and teachers are comfortable with such a change.

Members began the planning process by creating and agreeing to follow a set of protocols. The committee then

brainstormed advantages and disadvantages for a common start and end time.

"These advantages and disadvantages were voted on by all committee members to prioritize them by importance," said Mr. Root. "Once this step was completed, the committee began working together to make a recommendation to Dr. Bowen."

Committee members are currently working in small, mixed groups to collect factual information that will detail and explain the advantages

and disadvantages for having a common start and end time to the day. The process will culminate with the committee making recommendations to the superintendent.

In January, the planning committee will begin holding additional meetings on the common start/end time, with membership expanded to include elementary and high school parents and staff. For more information, please contact Ravo Root at 716 492-9375.

## *Committees eye facilities, safety, planning*

The middle school planning committee is only one part of a continual process of improvement. Parents in the Pioneer School District have several more opportunities to help map the future:

- A facilities development committee will convene to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding the maintenance of facilities, grounds, and pupil transportation system. Recently completed building condition surveys will be used to develop long-

range facility development plans, including possible capital projects.

- A health and safety committee is required by state Project SAVE legislation and has begun monthly meetings. The panel consists of a school board member, administrators, a secretary, nurse, head custodian, cook manager, teacher aide, school resource officer, parent, and student. Objectives will include annual review of the district's existing safety plan, handling complaints with regard to health and

safety, representation at an annual visual inspection, and participation in post-construction inspections.

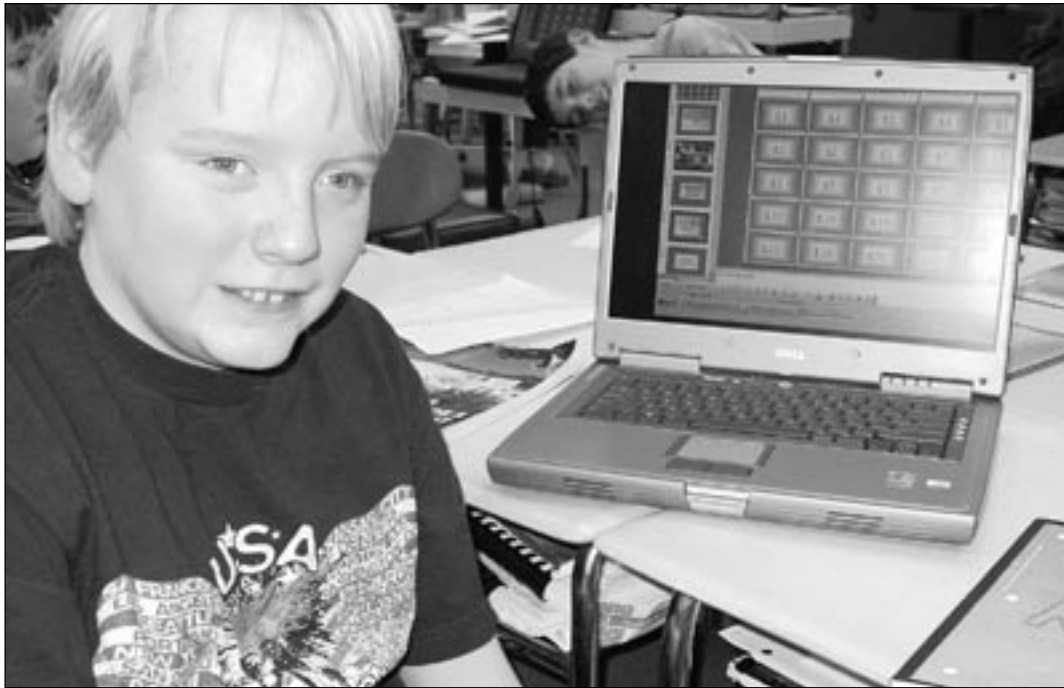
- Pioneer's CDEP (comprehensive district education plan) will be reviewed and expanded with various groups — including the schools' shared decision-making committees — very much involved. CDEP is a data-driven means of identifying means to improve student performance. In 2001, the committee of citizens and educators established objectives of lowering special education identification

rates, increasing rates of student attendances, and boosting scores on state standardized tests.

For information about serving on the CDEP committee, contact Dr. Jeff Bowen at 716-492-9304.

- The Key Communicators Group is a panel of stakeholders who will be called upon to give opinions, disseminate news, and report community trends, all with regard to education. The group is still in its formative stage.

# Innovations help fulfill middle school student's learning vision



Pioneer Middle School 5th grader Dakota Coon takes a break from lessons in the classroom of Mrs. Mary Jane Forsyth. His laptop screen duplicates what is shown and written on a large panel by his teacher, allowing him to learn at the same pace as classmates.

Pioneer School District has always taken pride in its ability to identify, procure, and utilize the new technologies that will have positive impacts on student achievement. In many cases, the right tool is all that's needed to yield a story of student success.

In the Pioneer Middle School 5th grade classroom of Mary Jane Forsyth, an experiment has been underway since the start of school. All indications are that this experiment is having a dramatic effect on the learning program of not only student Dakota Coon, but on his peers as well.

Dakota, who has partial eyesight and is legally blind, recently started using a laptop computer with software that can enlarge what he sees on the screen. However, it's what he is able to see on the screen that is causing all of the excitement.

Mrs. Forsyth writes on a large white panel known as a SmartBoard. The SmartBoard has the ability to not only act as a large computer monitor but

convert what is written on it so it can be displayed on desktop computer monitors. Once the material is on a desktop computer, it can be viewed, printed, converted to text, or e-mailed.

Pioneer is believed to be the first school in Western New York to use this particular combination of technologies to help a student extend his abilities.

It all started last spring, when Dakota's case was referred for a technology evaluation at the University of Buffalo's Center for Assistive Technology. Pioneer director of computer operations Jill Holbrook attended along with Dakota's parents, teachers and aides.

"We discussed ideas that could really make a difference in his learning. One of these was being able to see math problems."

Mrs. Holbrook suggested a SmartBoard, along with Synchron-Eyes software that allows the problems which are written on the SmartBoard to automatically appear on his laptop screen. The computer has software built in that enlarges

material on the screen.

Jennifer Izzo, teacher of the blind and partially sighted, said this represents a big improvement over what had previously been done.

"Without being able to send what's being written on the

board to Dakota's laptop, an aide would have had to be sitting next to him taking notes. That delay can cause a student to fall behind.

"But now Dakota can follow along without missing a beat," Mrs. Izzo continued. "He picked it up so quickly. It is really awesome."

Mrs. Forsyth said she would love to have the SmartBoard/laptop combination in her classroom all the time.

"It's as if the chalkboard is on his desk," she said. "Especially in math, if I write an example, that's something he's able to see right away that he couldn't before."

Mrs. Forsyth said the rest of her class also benefits.

"It's like having a huge computer monitor up front. It makes the kids eager to participate. And if someone is absent and needs yesterday's notes, I can provide a copy of the notes for them."

Dakota, a son of Ronald and Heather Coon of Delevan, was also similarly enthusiastic about his new learning tools.

"I like it. I'm glad that they could come up with this. Between the board and my new laptop, I'm able to keep up better."



Pioneer 5th grade teacher Mary Jane Forsyth uses a SmartBoard in her class to review for the Nov. 17-18 state exam in Social Studies.

# The TREK

Technology Resources Enhancing Knowledge  
Pioneer Central Schools



With a new school year well under way it is apparent that our teachers and students alike are renewing their efforts to incorporate technology into their curricula and into their everyday classroom lives. Here are just a few of the ways that the district is taking advantage of the technology available to our staff, students, and community.

## Enhanced School-to-Home Communication

Last month Pioneer Central hosted a display booth at the New York State School Boards Association convention at the Buffalo Convention Center. The display [available for viewing at <http://snipurl.com/nyssb>] highlighted our ParentCONNECT database that allows parents to go online to check up-to-date information on their children's attendance, discipline, and daily grades. (There are currently 1,600 parents using this communication tool.) As expected, the convention attendees were quite impressed with this service. However, they were equally impressed with the other communication tool that

was showcased: Classroom web pages that teachers have created and posted on the Pioneer website. There are currently more than 90 teacher web pages on our website. Visitors to these sites can find information and news from the classroom, as well as links for downloading current homework assignments!



*Using one of the new digital cameras*

## Digital Cameras

With the recent passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act, Pioneer has begun to place special emphasis on certain recommendations outlined in the legislation for the minimum technology competencies expected of students. Specifically, NCLB suggests that all students should be able to use a digital camera before leaving elementary school! To help our students attain this goal, the district purchased

additional digital cameras for each building. These extra cameras help to ensure that the technology is available whenever a teacher has a need for their use in the classroom. For example, students in Mrs. Clester's Delevan Elementary classroom have been using digital cameras to enhance a lesson that entails writing

a description of a certain spot on the school grounds, drawing a sketch of the area, and then taking digital photographs of the spot at regular intervals to document the changes brought about by the passage of time.

## Excel Spreadsheets

NCLB also requires that students become

proficient in the use of spreadsheets, and our staff has also been addressing that need. In the elementary buildings, students might use an Excel spreadsheet to graph the frequency of each color in a bag of M&Ms. But in the Middle School, technology teacher Ken Wieczorek found a novel way to incorporate spreadsheets into the curriculum. Mr. Wieczorek traditionally teaches a lesson on Archimedes' Principle, where students create metal trays of varying dimensions and then check their buoyancy. This year, however, the students first created Excel spreadsheets, including formulas that used the tray dimensions to pre-determine whether or not the trays would float. A great way to integrate technology into a lesson!



*Mr. Wieczorek's class works on their Excel spreadsheets*

# Grant, visit yield free books for Delevan students

The Sallie Mae Fund supports programs that foster improved academic performance and help ensure that students are prepared to enroll in college. One of these programs is Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), which combines the fund's financial support with the volunteer efforts of Sallie Mae employees.

Sallie Mae's Leaders in Education Volunteer Program provides paid time off for full-time Sallie Mae employees to volunteer for K-12 education initiatives in their community. During a recent visit to Delevan Elementary School, Sallie Mae employees of Pioneer Credit Recovery read and distributed books through RIF. This is the second year the visits have taken place, with 20 PCR employees and 28 classrooms taking part.

RIF's National Book Program motivates children, families, and community members to read together through a triad of principles basic to the entire RIF organization: book ownership, motivational activities, and family involvement in children's reading.

This year's donation of \$3,000 will allow each of Delevan's 460 students to receive free books during three visits by PCR employees.



Pioneer Credit Recovery employee John Schiener shares a book with Delevan Elementary School students. PCR is a subsidiary of Sallie Mae, which provides funding to Reading is Fundamental (RIF), a family literacy program that provides free books to 5 million children a year.

## *Red Ribbon Week stressed service, citizenship*

Delevan Elementary School celebrated Red Ribbon Week Oct. 25 to 29, in ways that honored acts of good citizenship at school, in the community, at home, and in our nation.

Students in the 3rd grade classrooms of Miss Erica Wilson and Mr. Tom Herman showed their commitment to the environment by holding a clean-up walk around the neighborhood to collect garbage.

As part of 2nd grade activities, teachers presented a lesson on bulbs and planting, after which students were able to plant bulbs outside the Delevan building. Their hard work will pay off in the spring.

Kindergarten and 1st grade students created a citizenship quilt, with each child designing their own patch to be used in a quilt for display.

Fourth grade students were heard during morning announcements offering words of wisdom for the day.

Librarian Mrs. Marcia Tyrrell assembled materials in the library and made these available to staff. The materials covered ways to discuss and encourage

citizenship among students.

In other Red Ribbon Week events:

- At Arcade Elementary, students were asked to wear red on Wednesday to prompt awareness of drug and alcohol abuse. All students were asked to sign a pledge to care about themselves and others, and to make healthy choices. Red ribbons were given out to all those students who signed the pledge. Strong character traits are also encouraged throughout the year via Arcade's Student of the Week program.

- Pioneer Middle School held prize drawings in which students earned chances by participating in a daily theme. Prizes included T-shirts, water bottles, stuffed bears, and other goodies.

- Pioneer High School started the week by distributing "drug-free" wristbands to all students during homeroom, along with a specially wrapped Twizzler candy. The wristbands were to be worn all week, and a slogan on both the wristband and candy wrapper reinforced one of the school's themes this year, respect. Also, daily announcements gave local statistics on good decision-making among youth in our communities.

Red Ribbon Week began in 1985 at Calexico High School in California as a way to honor slain U.S. Drug Enforcement Agent Enrique Camarena, a Calexico graduate. One hundred students signed the original pledge, which is quite similar to those signed by today's students:

*"We, the undersigned students of Calexico High School, pledge in the honor of Enrique Camarena, and all others risking their lives, to stop the flow of drugs, to say no to drugs, to encourage my friends to say no to drugs, to provide support to others who use drugs to help them learn to say no to drugs, to become educated on the dangers of drugs, and provide this information to my community."*

Since then, the Red Ribbon movement to raise substance abuse awareness has been celebrated by millions of students and teachers, along with community organizations, service clubs, businesses, faith communities, and law enforcement agencies. Today, Red Ribbon Week is held in thousands of schools and communities all across America.



# Middle school lists monthly musicians of note

*The following students were named October's musicians of the month at Pioneer Middle School.*

## Zach Hyman

Zach has been chosen by Mr. Burch because of his dedication to the band. Zach is a clarinet player. He shows leadership within his section, and is progressing in his instrument at an outstanding rate. Zach will be auditioning for All-County band in January playing a level III solo.



## Jared Benkelman

Jared has been chosen as student of the month by Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Brouse. Jared is involved in many areas of the middle school music department. He is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade chorus and is a percussionist in the band. He is also in general music this semester, and is very helpful and attentive during class. Jared is a dedicated musician, and you will definitely see him in the years to come on all of the Pioneer stages



in one capacity or another!

## Jaclyn Ely

Jaclyn has been chosen as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade student of the month by Mrs. Bailey. She plays violin in the orchestra, as well as sings in the 7/8 chorus. Jaclyn was chosen because she is a natural section leader, and shows initiative by practicing regularly. Jaclyn has progressed quite steadily in her instrument over the years she has been playing.



## Katelyn Howell

Katelyn was chosen by Mrs. Woolley due to her playing ability, and leadership within the 7/8 band. Katelyn plays flute and piccolo in the band, as well as helps younger flute students during their band rehearsals. Katelyn will be auditioning for Jr. High All-county band in January on a level V solo. Good luck Katelyn!



## Holiday Concert Schedule

- Wednesday, Dec. 8: Arcade Elementary choral concert, 7pm
- Thursday, Dec. 9: Middle school choral concert, 7pm
- Wednesday, Dec. 22: High school band concert, 7:30pm
- Thursday, Jan. 13: High school choral & orchestra winter concert, 7pm



## Five Sent to Area All-State

The Pioneer High School music department is proud to announce that several students have been selected to participate in this year's Zone I Area All-State Senior High Music Festival. Paige Anderson, Taylor Griffith and Jeffrey Cannon were chosen to perform in the chorus, while Adam Slocum was chosen as a choral alternate. Michelle Keem will play bassoon in the band. Students were selected for this honor through teacher recommendation and their outstanding scores on individual solos prepared and performed at competition last spring. Pioneer students rehearsed and performed at SUNY Fredonia November 19 and 20, in King Concert Hall. Pictured are Michelle Keem, left, Adam Slocum, Paige Anderson, Taylor Griffith, and Jeffrey Cannon.



# PIONEER WINTER SPORTS SCHEDULE 2004-2005



Girls JV/Varsity Basketball			Boys JV/Varsity Basketball			JV/Varsity Wrestling			Indoor Track		
Date	Opponent	H/A Time	Date	Opponent	H/A Time	Date	Opponent	H/A Time	Date	Site	Time
12/1 & 6	@ Hutch Tech Tournament	A 6/7:30	12/3	Pion Motorsport	H 5/4:30	12/8	Starpoint	H 6:00	12/11	Lancaster HS	12:00
12/07	Lake Shore	A 6/7:30	12/5	Motorsport Tour	H 6/7:30	12/16	Ambert	A 6:00	12/18	Fredonia State	9:00
12/9	West Seneca E	A 6/7:30	12/4	Cons/Champ	H 6/7:30	12/22	Iroquois	H 6:00	12/29	Fredonia State	9:00
12/10	Holland (UV)	A 5:30	12/7	Maryvale	H 6/7:30	1/5	Akron	H 6:00	1/14	Buffalo State	4:30
12/14	Hamburg	H 6/7:30	12/14	Grover Cleve	A 5:30/5	1/12	Willi South	A 6:00	1/15	Fredonia State	9:00
12/15	Hutch Tech	A 4/5:30	12/17	Lake Shore	H 6/7:30	1/14	Cheektowaga	H 6:00	1/22	Lancaster HS	12:00
12/17	Ambert	A 6/7:30	12/21	West Seneca E	H 6/7:30	1/19	Lakeshore	A 6:00	2/5	Fredonia State	9:00
12/20	W Seneca W	A 6/7:30	12/28 & 30	@ Holland Tournament	A 6/7:30	1/26	Willi East	A 6:00	2/12	Fredonia State	9:00
12/27	WM Tourny	H 5:00/5	1/04	Hamburg	A 6/7:30	2/2	West Sen East	H 6:00	2/19	Lancaster HS	12:00
12/27	WasteMngment	H 5/6:30	1/6	Ambert	H 6/7:30	12/4	Tonawanda Tourny	A 6:00	2/26	Fredonia State	9:00
12/28	WM Tourny	H 5:00/5	1/8	Lake Shore	A 12/1:30	12/10 & 11	Attica Tournament	A 6:00	State Championships		9:00
12/28	WM Tourny	H 5/6:30	1/11	Willi East	A 6/7:30	12/29	Olean Big 30 Tourny	A 6:00	3/6	Syracuse Univ	9:00
1/04	Willi East	H 6/7:30	1/14	Iroquois	A 5/6:30	1/21 & 22	East Aurora Tourny	A 6:00	Bowling		
1/07	Iroquois	H 6/7:30	1/28	West Seneca E	A 6/7:30	1/28 & 29	Sweet Home Tourny	A 6:00	Cheektowaga		
1/10	Lancaster	H 6/7:30	1/29	Franklinville	H 2/5:30	Mod Wrestling	Cheektowaga	A 5:30	Cheektowaga		
1/18	Lake Shore	H 6/7:30	1/31	Hamburg	H 6/7:30	12/13	Willi East (TMS) A	5:30	12/13	Depew	3-4:5
1/19	West Valley (UV)	H 5:30	2/5	Ambert	A 6/7:30	12/16	Cheektowaga	A 4-4:5	12/16	Willi South	H 4:00
1/21	Hamburg	A 6/7:30	2/5	East Aurora	A 6/7:30	12/20	Pioneer	H 4-4:5	12/21	Maryvale	A 4:00
1/29	Franklinville	H 11/12:30	2/8	Willi East	H 6/7:30	1/6	Alden	A 4-4:5	01/04	Clarence	H 4:00
2/1	Ambert	H 6/7:30	2/11	Iroquois	H 6/7:30	1/15	East Aurora	A 4-4:5	01/05	Cheektowaga	H 4:00
2/4	Willi East	A 6/7:30	Boys Modified Basketball			1/20	Ambert	H 4-4:5	01/10	Willi South	A 4:00
2/7	West Seneca E	H 6/7:30	Cheektowaga			1/22	TBA	A 9:00	01/11	Depew	A 4:00
2/10	Iroquois	A 5/6:30	12/13	Ambert	A 5:00	1/27	Starpoint	A 5:30	01/18	Tonawanda	A 4:00
Girls Modified Basketball			12/15	Cheektowaga	H 5:00	2/10	Holland	A 4-4:5	01/20	Tonawanda	H 4:00
Cheektowaga			12/20	Maryvale	H 5:00	2/17	Willi East (TMS) A	4-4:5	02/02	Maryvale	H 4:00
12/13	Starpoint	H 4:30	1/05	Starpoint	H 5:00	Boys Swimming	Cheektowaga	A 4:00	02/07	Cheektowaga	A 4:00
12/15	Iroquois	A 5:00	1/10	Springville	H 4:30	12/7	West Seneca E	A 4:30	2/14	Girls Roll Offs Thruway	
12/20	Maryvale	A 5:00	1/12	Tonawanda	H 4:30	12/10	Cleveland Hill	H 4:30	2/15	Boys Roll Offs Thruway	
1/6	Ambert	H 5:00	1/19	Ambert	H 5:00	12/15	Eden	H 5:00	2/17	Girls Sectionals	
1/10	Depew	A 4:30	1/21	Depew	A 5:00	12/17	Alden	A 5:00	2/18	Boys Sectionals	
1/12	Cheektowaga	A 5:00	1/24	Cheektowaga	A 5:00	1/7	East Aurora	H 4:30	See the Pioneer website for		
1/15	Springville	A 10:00	1/26	Maryvale	A 5:00	1/11	Tonawanda	A 5:00	Directions and game results		
1/18	Starpoint	A 5:30	1/29	Starpoint	A 5:00	1/14	Depew	H 4:30	www.pioneerwinters.org		
1/24	Iroquois	H 4:30	2/02	Springville	A 5:00	1/18	Maryvale	A 5:00	Jun Graczyk Athletic Director		
1/26	Maryvale	H 5:00	2/07	Tonawanda	A 5:00	1/21	Springville	A 4:00	492-9351		
1/31	Ambert	A 5:00	2/09	Depew	H 4:30	1/25	Cheektowaga	H 4:30	Jen Tatko Athletic Secretary		
2/2	Depew	H 4:30	All Boys and Girls Modified			1/28	Willi South	A 5:00	492-9061		
2/7	Cheektowaga	H 5:00	Basketball Home Games are at			2/1	Starpoint	A 5:00	Athletic Hotline		
2/10	Springville	H 4:30	Delaware Elementary			2/3	Franklinville	H 5:00	492-9066		

# Proposals usher in Golden Age of Wireless carts

Throughout the 2004-2005 school year, Pioneer Central School teachers will be using state-of-the-art technology to turn their classrooms into full-fledged computer labs.

The combination of wireless networking and mobile carts stocked with laptop computers has prompted teachers to come up with fun and innovative ways to incorporate the technology into their lessons, according to Pioneer director of computer operations Jill Holbrook.

"We want to concentrate this technology in the hands of teachers who are committed to using it to support a rich vision for learning. We plan to follow up with these staff members to evaluate the usage of wireless technology in order to determine its value to our district in the future."

Each lab has 24 of the newest laptop computers, providing access to the Internet as well as any software that is currently on the Pioneer server.

Teachers were asked by the Instructional Technology Services Department to develop proposals for use of the wireless carts in a way that supports curriculum. Examples of this include how technology is used in the workplace or as

a problem-solving tool. Proposals could also illustrate the role of technology in transforming a learning experience, or how students develop and master specific computer skills and competencies.

Teachers who submitted wireless lab proposals were asked to show how their units met district and state learning standards.

Some of the wireless cart proposals are listed below:

- Pioneer Middle School health education teacher Debi Lutz has used the carts to help 8th grade students use the Internet to access a nutrition website to analyze diet and nutrition issues. Among the areas being investigated are fast food choices.

In another 8th grade unit, students visited sites to gather drug information to develop a drug resistance public relations campaign. The students then became advocates for a drug-free lifestyle.

Mrs. Lutz also used the wireless labs with her grade 5 and 6 students to visit a life insurance website to estimate their potential longevity based on current health practices.

- Students of middle school social

studies teachers Jim Woolley and Maura Birdd used the wireless labs to study and compile information on immigration. They researched various websites regarding culture and lifestyles of people in the 1920s, and focused part of their study on Western New York history with the Pan-American Exposition of 1901.

- Pioneer High School teacher Dave Reling is utilizing the wireless labs in conjunction with a distance learning unit on meteorology. Students use real-time weather data and computer models from the Internet to produce weather forecasts, comparing the various products that are available. Using and contrasting the forecasting tools also builds an understanding of the physics behind these models and how the atmosphere works.

- High school photography teacher Renee Weber is instructing students in the use of Adobe Photoshop software on the wireless laptops to create digital compositions. Students are gaining additional knowledge in scanning, digital camera use, and research, yielding a visual record of creativity through technology.

## *School Support Program empowers students, families*

Pioneer High School's School Support Project was recently recognized as a model program in New York State.

Members of the project had the opportunity to share their experiences and best practices at the School Support and School-Based Mental Health Programs Training Event, held Nov. 16 in Albany.. It was sponsored by the state Department of Education, the Office of Mental Health, the Department of Health, and Families Together in New York State.

The School Support Project is a collaborative effort between the Cattaraugus County Department of Community Services and the Pioneer School District. The partnership was formed in 2003 following the tragic loss of students to suicides in 2002.

"The purpose of the program is to offer school-based mental health and support services to students who may have barriers to learning," said Sharon Huff, assistant principal.

Barriers to learning include depression, anxiety, relationship problems, emotional disorders, aggression toward or from others, grief/loss, violence or

safety concerns and learning related difficulties. The data suggests that this program has proven to reduce barriers to learning, and has resulted in improved learning outcomes for students including increased attendance rates, reduction in individual discipline referrals and increased graduation rates.

The success of this program has resulted from the partnership with Cattaraugus County and other service providers, including the Children's Mental Health Coalition and Families Together in New York State. Each agency is structured to provide for the individual needs of students and families.

Mrs. Huff said the program offers an array of services and supports, including individual counseling, family counseling and support, consultation with school staff, crisis intervention, lethality assessment, and referral for psychiatric consultation. To date, over 78 individual students and their families have received services.

"This program differs from many others in that services to students are able to be provided directly in the

school," she continued. "This alone has been instrumental in increasing the availability of services to students."

In addition to improved access to services, supports are integrated within existing school resources to better coordinate and provide for the academic, social and emotional needs of students, to improve learning outcomes for students.

The School Support Program is intended to be a collaborative effort that integrates the provision of services with other programs within Pioneer, including A-OK, Character Education, guidance counseling, the School Resource Team and the Student Support Team, in order to provide a continuum of support and services to students.

"Together we strive to meet the needs of our students, families, staff and community," said Mrs. Huff.

Please contact Jim Breen, Social Worker, at 716 492-9341, or Suzanne Pettie, Family Support Worker, at 716 492-9329, if you have specific questions with regards to services for you or your family.