

SPENCER-VAN ETTEN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## Building Project Update



Middle School Solar Panels



High School Roof Project

### Website reminder!

Please take a moment to navigate through our district website: [www.svecsd.org](http://www.svecsd.org). On the website, you can access: daily announcements from each school, helpful links for your child's curriculum, up-to-date news, current pictures of your children/grandchildren from inside our schools, athletic schedules, cafeteria payment options, Community Information links, Board of Education minutes, links to our district Facebook page and Twitter feed and much, much more!



# SPENCER - VAN ETTEN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

November 2015

## A Note from the Superintendent

### Building Project Update

Phase 1 of the building project is nearly complete. Phase 1 of the project included replacing the entire roof at the high school and a partial replacement of the roof on the original section of the middle school. The bus garage roof over the lower bays was also replaced. The plans for replacing the high school roof included keeping the original insulation and adding additional tapered insulation to improve drainage and added insulation value. When the roofers began removing the old membrane on the high school roof, they discovered a significant amount of water penetration and soaked insulation. Many screws and disks that mechanically fastened the insulation and the membrane to the roof deck were found to be rusted through and the integrity of the system had deteriorated. It appears that the roof replacement project was done just at the right time. The new roofs have been installed and with the addition of the new insulation, we will realize additional energy savings and no leaks!

Our district-wide energy project has wrapped up and we are already experiencing reduced energy costs and more efficient buildings. Insulation was installed to reduce drafts and weather stripping was installed on all the doors. New high efficiency lighting was installed throughout the district along with LED lights in the parking lots. Solar panels are now installed on the middle school roof and are generating electricity that is tied into the electrical grid and are reducing our electricity costs.

Plans for Phase II of the Building Project are currently under review at the State Education Department. We anticipate approval from the State Education Department sometime in the spring of 2016 and expect work to begin in the late spring and early summer once the students leave for summer break. Phase II of the project includes science classroom upgrades at the high school, improvement of the music instructional space in the auditorium at the middle school and additional parking at the middle school. Also included in Phase II of the project is an upgrade in the security system throughout the district and storage space for district equipment. The kitchen at the high school will receive a redesign in Phase II and new serving lines and kitchen equipment will be replaced to improve efficiency and allow the staff to more effectively serve our students.

Respectfully,

Joe Morgan, Superintendent



## Elementary School News

The Elementary School is excited to introduce aligned Math and ELA curriculums across all of our grade levels. Curriculum alignment means that each class per grade level are teaching the same material with the same outcomes but each teacher still facilitates the learning in their own personal styles. The curriculums, which are based on NYS Common Core Learning Standards, are intentionally taught to prepare students for their next year. For example, ELA curriculum taught in 1<sup>st</sup> grade directly supports what the students will be learning in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade ELA. Our Elementary School curriculums are developed to give our students a strong basis of skills to ultimately prepare them for the Middle School. Our teachers continue to work collaboratively with each other and other resources like GST BOCES to develop and implement curriculum that is best suited for our youngest learners within the district.

The intention of these new curriculums is to expose children to rich literature and vocabulary, but also to create problem solvers who can explain what they are learning and why they are learning it. The methods used to solve problems in math and to read a story in ELA may look different than the historical approach to learning, but these new instructional methods are research driven and were developed for use in high poverty schools.

At the Elementary School, we always encourage parent participation with their children's academics. Please take time to communicate with your child's teacher to discuss what is happening at school. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Matt Stroup at the Elementary School Office at (607)589-7110.



## Middle School News

STEM education is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. In action, it is a curriculum based on discovery learning and problem solving. Our students at Spencer-Van Etten are being fully integrated into the new curriculum this year K-8 and in most high school science classrooms. We are working with GST BOCES to equip and train our teachers in the new philosophy.

Why STEM? One of the key reasons that school districts throughout the USA are going to this hybrid curriculum is that it stimulates innovation and creativity. Our goal is to give our students the flexibility and skill set to compete in a 21st century world. In that 21st century world many of our students will be in a market place with people from around the globe. They need the skills to compete.

The students and teachers of S-VE are embarking on this adventure together. It has been exciting to see students collect information, identify problems and work toward solutions. You won't find a room full of students copying the glossary terms at the end of the chapter. What you will find is students experimenting with all manner of tools, scientific apparatus and technology. You will see mini white boards with hypothesis and students collaborating to get the best outcome.

The students and teachers are starting to use a more science based vocabulary. They are consulting one another, hypothesizing and experimenting with all sorts of different materials. If they have issues, they revisit the data set that they originally compiled. The ability for our students to be wrong but to stay engaged and try again is a key component of this new approach to learning. It is building grit and determination that will help them as they enter higher and more difficult classes.

The key to the STEM program is the push to create 21st century skills. The rote knowledge is important but the skills that are developed by exploratory learning and problem solving are the real ticket to success in a 21st century global world.



## High School News

The curriculum at Spencer-Van Etten High School will come full circle next fall when classes in Agricultural Education are once again offered at the high school. S-VE had many farm families at one time but this Ag. Ed. is in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century mode to meet the needs of teens today. The Board of Education hired Kaylie Ackerley to build this new program from the ground up. She grew up taking Agricultural Education classes, majored in Ag. Ed. at Cornell, has extensive experience in Future Farmers of America (FFA) - all without ever living on a farm. Ackerley is the face of a generation not necessarily farming themselves, but very active and interested in careers that intersect with agriculture.

Ackerley comes to S-VE from Southern Cayuga High School where she taught Ag. Ed. Mechanics, small engine repair and animal science were some of her most popular classes. In S-VE, the district owns forested acreage on South Hill in Spencer. Woodlot management for timber and wildlife or growing trees as a "cash crop" are two classes she could offer. The district also owns another field to the west of the current three-tiered sports fields. This could be used for research by organizations wanting to test new seeds. Deer test plots are also in demand. Programs that can be implemented within current classroom space are things like composting cafeteria waste, vermiculture (raising worms in compost) and a school/community garden that would raise vegetables for the school lunch program.

Ackerley is based at the S-VE High School but is also busy making contacts in the local agricultural and business community for her future students to have practical internships in their areas of interest. This new program will be designed with classes aimed at a variety of students – from those wanting hands-on experiences to college-bound students wanting a rigorous academic component. Both are possible in Ag. Ed. and Ackerley is excited to be part of bringing them to S-VE.



### ***ANNUAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH SCREENINGS AVAILABLE TO ALL STUDENTS***

It is important to regularly check on your child's emotional health. A child who does not feel well emotionally can become physically sick and physical illness can affect emotional health. In any event, it is more difficult for a child who does not feel well to be interested in going to school or succeeding in school. When emotional health concerns are dealt with early, we can help young people get the most out of their education and lead happy, productive lives.

Checking on a child's emotional health on an annual basis is important, just as important as having their vision and hearing screened. Completing an emotional health screening is a simple effective way to look at a child's emotional development. The emotional health screening program is free, voluntary and confidential. It is offered to all students in Chemung County schools.

The Spencer-Van Etten School District asks all parents/guardians to consider participation in this screening program.

For additional information contact: Marilyn Cristofaro, Community Mental Health Program Coordinator, at Family Services of Chemung County, Inc. (607-733-5696). You can also access screening information on the district website by going to: [www.svecsd.org](http://www.svecsd.org).