

November Superintendent's Column – Kimberle A. Ward

Where has the time gone, it is November already! I love this time of the year for so many reasons...the changing of the seasons, the beautiful colors, the crisp cool temperatures, the holidays, and more! This season is even more special as I have welcomed a new baby granddaughter into the family, born late in October. Misha Elle is her name, and a gift to remember just in time for the holidays. Frankie Victoria, my first-born granddaughter is 15 months old already...and not just walking but RUNNING! I have so much to be thankful for and one of which is the Gates Chili Central School District. We have amazing students with supportive families and dedicated staff committed to helping every child find their potential for success. Our focus throughout the district is on Relationships and exploring cultural responsiveness.

The district has received State and National recognition for two important programs. The first is our Digital Conversion Implementation and Technology Integration initiative. Troy Olin, Director of Technology, and I presented the District's work at the Annual New York State School Board's Association (NYSSBA) in NYC October 27, 2018. In addition, we have been fully engaged, for the third year of our partnership with the Rochester Broadway Theatre League (RBTL), with the introduction of the Broadway Musical *Les Misérables*. In November, we will be working with students in preparation for *Fiddler on the Roof, Miss Saigon, and Hamilton*. Many of our students and families are experiencing the theater for the first time. We continue to hear from the public how well behaved and fully engaged our students have been once the music begins, the lights go off, and the curtain opens! This program and our partnership with RBTL are just the beginning of our full Arts Integration initiative district wide. Holly Valentine, TOSA, and I will be presenting this initiative at the National School Board's Association (NSBA) in Philadelphia late in March.

Our fourth (5th) Annual Coat Drive is underway; donations are being accepted in drop boxes located throughout the communities of Gates and Chili. Thank you to all who have donated new and slightly used winter clothing items. This is truly a partnership between the School District and Community. The support of our community volunteers, businesses, and organizations is greatly appreciated. Our day of shopping will be on Thursday, November 1, 2018 during our Community Health and Wellness Fair. Please plan to join us for an evening full of information and access to local resources to promote health and wellness throughout the community. The event will be in the Field House at the High School. Our hope is that each needy child/adult will walk away with a coat, boots, hat, mittens, and/or scarf to keep them warm through our chilly winter months.

Our fall athletes have completed a successful fall season, and our winter athletes are preparing for the upcoming season. Be sure to check out the athletic schedules on our website. 'Tis' the season for our Music Department to perform holiday concerts throughout the district during the months of November and December. We hope that you will join us in celebrating the holidays, and most importantly the many talents of our vocal and instrumental music students.

In honor of all the men and women who have served our great country, the district will be closed for the official Veterans Day Holiday on Monday, November 12, 2018. In addition, our elementary level teaching staff will be conducting parent teacher conferences on Monday, December 10, 2018. There will be no school for P-5 in the district, however our 6-12 students will be in attendance. Additional parent teacher conferences will be scheduled for Friday, December 21, 2018. Our elementary students will attend school for ½ day, and our secondary students will be in attendance for the full day. We are excited to share with our parents their child's progress. School will close officially for the Thanksgiving holiday at the end of the day on Tuesday, November 20, 2018. We will reopen on Monday, November 26, 2018. Please be sure to listen for any weather-related delays or closings...it has been forecasted to be a very cold and snowy winter!

November is the month we officially begin developing the 2019-2020 School District budget. We welcomed Lauren Poehlman, Assistant Superintendent for Business, on October 1, 2018. Lauren will work closely with our Board of Education Facility/Finance Committee to facilitate and guide the Board of Education through the process of building a budget that stays within the Property Tax Cap Levy Limit while maintaining/sustaining educational programs throughout the district. We are always ready and willing to hear your thoughts regarding the budget. Please do not hesitate to call the Superintendent's office with ideas, suggestions, and/or questions.

Our Capital Improvement Project is coming along nicely. Our Owner Architect Construction Manager (OACM) meetings are on campus each Thursday to ensure that the project remains on budget, and on time. The High School Track and Turf Field Project has gone very well, and will soon wrap up construction for the winter, and get back at it this spring. We anticipate full use of the track and turf in time for the 2019-2020 school year. Bids have been awarded for Florence Brassier and Paul Road with construction beginning as the calendar year closes. We anticipate both schools having all improvements complete for the opening of school in September of 2019. The Middle School renovations have been submitted to NYSED, along with the High School Auditorium. We are hopeful that both will be under construction in the summer of 2019. User Groups at Neil Armstrong and Walt Disney Elementary Schools have been reviewing the designs for improvement in preparation for submittal to NYSED on December 31, 2018.

Thank you, again, for your support. I continue to be filled with gratitude and optimism for the Gates Chili Central School District. Our challenges are many but know that the **Spartan Way** guides all that we do...*Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, and Hard Work*. Happy Thanksgiving!