



# Community Newsletter

Rush-Henrietta Central School District

Winter 2005

## Grants Help R-H Enhance Learning Experience

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The Rush-Henrietta Central School District recently received three grants aimed at improving student achievement and health.

The federal government, through its Carol M. White Physical Education Program, awarded the district a \$481,419 grant, the largest given to any school system in New York state. The grant, to be used toward fitness equipment, is designed to assist local education agencies and non-profit, community-based organizations to initiate, expand, or improve physical education programs, including after-school programs, for students in one or more grades from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The overarching goal is to help students make progress toward meeting state standards for physical education.

In addition, Rush-Henrietta received two grants aimed at enhancing student achievement. The first, a \$50,000 Learning Technology Grant from the New York State Education Department, will support district priorities to increase student achievement through standards-based, data-driven instruction; technology integration; professional development; and parent involvement.

The project is designed for the district's middle school population, specifically for students receiving special education services.

The other award, a \$1,900 Finger Lakes Service Learning Grant, will support science instruction for first and second graders at Winslow Elementary School.

Teaming up with the Winslow PTO and Tinker Homestead, the school will use the grant to help students study weather, organisms, soils, and composting at Tinker. They will classify, sort, organize, and record their findings, providing an educational experience that includes both science and English Language Arts.

"We are excited about the expanded opportunities these grants will make possible for students," says Deborah Ryan Johnson, assistant superintendent for instruction. "Students and teachers alike will benefit – students from the enriched learning opportunities the technology integration and hands-on experiences will provide, and teachers from the professional development that allows them to reflect on and refine their practice."



## *Classroom Web Pages Strengthen Communication*

*W*ith an emphasis on encouraging and strengthening communication throughout the Rush-Henrietta school community, many teachers are developing classroom Web pages to help keep parents and children better informed.

These pages are an extension of the learning environment and a centralized place for parents to access classroom information around the clock. The pages provide teachers with the ability to communicate and involve parents outside of the regular school day. Also known as teacher pages, they are available on the district Web site at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org).

Today, parents and students routinely shop, communicate, conduct job searches, and read the news online. They expect the sites they visit to be updated and interactive and classroom pages are no exception. Each page provides convenient access to the

classroom and a convenient link to Rush-Henrietta schools for parents who are interested in keeping informed.

Teachers who create a classroom Web page can add a room-specific calendar, a homework center, picture galleries, and links to useful information for students and parents. This is a new resource for teachers and many are in the process of developing pages. Although teachers are encouraged to develop them and more are doing so, the initiative is not mandatory and the content of the pages may vary between classes.

Classroom Web pages can be accessed at [www.rhnet.org/classroompages.cfm](http://www.rhnet.org/classroompages.cfm), by visiting [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) and searching the Quick Links menu, or from school-specific pages. The classroom Web page initiative will continue to expand, so please keep checking for newly created teacher pages.

## *Space Committee Report Available for Review*

*D*r. Ken Hilton, Rush-Henrietta's executive director of research and evaluation, recently presented the 2005 Instructional Space Committee Report to the Board of Education.

Each year, the Space Committee examines the district's instructional facilities and future student enrollment data. After a careful study of both, the committee makes recommendations it believes are necessary to meet future instructional space needs.

The recommendations are made to the superintendent of schools and the Board of Education to help them

anticipate and plan appropriate and adequate space for the future.

The work of the committee, including findings, recommendations, and its summary and conclusion, is available on the district Web site for your convenience. To view the report, please visit [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org). Click on District, then Districtwide Committees, and select Space Committee.

For more information, please call the office of research and evaluation at 359-5018.



## Volunteers Boost ELA Classes

Helping elementary students refine their reading and writing skills, members of the Rush-Henrietta Rotary Club are partnering with the school district to make a big difference at Fyle Elementary School.

Rush-Henrietta continually seeks ways to help its students meet increasingly challenging state educational standards. One way is the Volunteer Rotary Program, which has helped hundreds of children strengthen their literacy skills for the past eight years.

From 9 to 10:30 a.m. each Tuesday, Rotary volunteers visit children in grades 1-4 during the English Language Arts block. Most volunteers divide their time between two classrooms, helping with reading, writing, comprehension, and fluency. "They meet with the kids and they might read them a book or have the child read a book to them," says Jeffrey Pollard, teacher on special assignment at Fyle. "This gives the students another opportunity to build experiences through reading and writing. It allows them to take risks in their learning because they know the volunteer will be there for support, and provides them a chance to practice their literacy skills with someone in a small-group setting."

The volunteers work with the same group of two to four students each time they visit the school and this helps form a strong bond. "The volunteers like to work with the same kids so they can support them academically and also build a positive adult connection," Pollard says. "At the end of the year, the pupils will write volunteers a letter to express thanks, share what they learned, and explain what they enjoyed about the program."



Ed Crosby, of the Rush-Henrietta Rotary Club, offers spelling advice to a young writer.

The Rush-Henrietta Rotary Club has participated in school-related activities for many years. For example, members of the club have delivered new dictionaries to young students throughout the five elementary schools.

"They like to be positive role models and make a positive connection with these kids," Pollard says. "It's working."

### *R-H Information is a Click Away!*

Visit the district's redesigned Web site for comprehensive information about Rush-Henrietta schools. Also, consider subscribing to one of the district's latest services, E-News, which provides brief e-mail notifications, announcements, and reminders about important meetings, activities, and issues. Visit [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) today!





## *New Program Helps Teach Writing Skills*

To support its English Language Arts Balanced Literacy Program, teachers at Fyle Elementary School are piloting “6+1 Traits of Writing,” a tool that helps them talk and think about writing using a common language across grade levels.

Young writers who learn the traits through classroom instruction — and who use them in revising their work — find their writing is stronger, increasingly focused, and more effective. Each trait has a scoring guide, called a rubric, which teachers and students use to discuss and assess writing of all kinds and forms. It provides the basis for the conferencing that occurs between the children and his or her teacher to strengthen and revise their writing.

The traits of good writing include ideas, a clear point, message, theme, or storyline backed by important, carefully chosen details and supporting information; organization, how a piece of writing is structured and ordered; a voice, the fingerprints of the writer on the page, a personal style clearly evident through his or her words; and word choice, the language, phrasing, and knack of selecting the right words to express the message. Good writing also includes conventions, which take into account proper spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

In January, Ruth Culham, the author of “6+1 Traits of Writing,” visited Fyle to work with teachers and review samples of student work. Principals and reading teachers from other Rush-Henrietta elementary schools also took part, getting the chance to learn more about the new resource.



Thanks to a new teaching tool, pupils are strengthening their writing skills.

This spring, teams of teachers will attend additional training through Monroe No. 1 BOCES and Hilton Central School District’s staff development programs. They hope Culham will visit Rush-Henrietta again to work with teachers who are using this exciting new teaching tool.

### *Board of Education Candidate Petitions Available*

There is one seat on the Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education up for election on May 17, 2005.

The seat is for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2005, and ending June 30, 2008. To qualify, candidates must be at least 18, and must have been a resident [but need not be a taxpayer] of the district for a continuous and uninterrupted period of at least one year.

Petitions for interested candidates are available in the office of the district clerk, 2034 Lehigh Station Road. For more information, please contact Elizabeth Bevan, district clerk, at 359-5010.



## College Board Honors Rush-Henrietta Students

More than 60 students from Rush-Henrietta Senior High School earned special honors from the College Board in recognition of exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement program exams.

The Advanced Placement [AP] program allows students to take challenging, college-level courses while in high school and to receive college credit, advanced placement, or both for successful performance on the AP exams. Only 17 percent of the more than 1 million high school students in almost 15,000 secondary schools worldwide who took AP exams merited special recognition. Sixty-three of those students are from Rush-Henrietta.

Students took AP exams in May 2004, and they were scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 3 or higher generally accepted as college-level achievement. The College Board recognized several levels of achievement. For example, in Rush-Henrietta, 36 students qualified as AP Scholars for receiving a score of at least 3 on three tests. Eight students qualified as AP Scholars with Honor for earning an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on at least four of these exams. In addition, 19 students qualified as AP Scholars with Distinction for earning an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on at least five exams.



Andrew J. Varble  
National AP Scholar

One local student, Andrew J. Varble, qualified as a National AP Scholar for earning an average score of at least 4 on all AP exams taken and grades of 4 or higher on eight or more exams.

Varble is now a freshman studying biotechnology at Rochester Institute of Technology. "R-H made me want to go on to pursue further education because I had enjoyed myself so much in high school," he says. He credits all of his teachers and cites the late Dan McMurray as an example of the impact they have. "He taught so much more than music," Varble says. "He showed a passion for everything he did."

At Rush-Henrietta Senior High School, students can choose from 15 Advanced Placement courses, including English literature and composition; English language and composition; U.S. history; economics [macro and micro]; U.S. government and politics; calculus; chemistry; biology; physics; art history; and studio art.

Rush-Henrietta is quite proud of the students who take AP courses, as well as the teachers who lead the classes, says Dr. Ken Hilton, the district's executive director of research and evaluation. "The large number of our students taking and succeeding in AP classes has resulted in our school twice in the past five years being honored by *Newsweek* magazine as one of America's top 500 high schools," he says.

Last year, almost 250 students – 27 percent of the entire junior and senior class enrollment – from Rush-Henrietta were enrolled in AP courses and took the associated exams, with 71 percent scoring at least a 3. The district continues to encourage more students to challenge themselves by taking AP courses. The Board of Education has set the ambitious goal of having 35 percent of juniors and seniors take such courses, with 80 percent of them scoring at least a 3 on a grading scale of 1 to 5.

Although there is room for improvement, Hilton is enthusiastic about the possibilities. "When we reach the board's AP achievement goals – and we will – Rush-Henrietta will have the best AP results in Western New York."

### Students Recognized at Regional Scholastic Art Exhibition

Thirty-three students from Rush-Henrietta Senior High School participated in the 2005 Rochester-Finger Lakes Scholastic Art Exhibition, showing off a variety of exemplary and creative works.

The Scholastic Art Exhibit is the region's longest-running exhibition for visual arts students in grades 9–12 and includes Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties.

The exhibition encourages and rewards creativity in the nation's classrooms, and identifies and documents outstanding achievement of young artists by offering regional and national recognition for talented visual arts students.

Two Rush-Henrietta sophomores were recognized with the Silver Key Award, presented for distinguished achievement: Jakob Dickerson entered a computer graphic and Heather Gloede presented a pastel portrait titled "My Friend." Congratulations to all who took part!



## District Priorities: Mid-Year Report

To better educate and support Rush-Henrietta students, nine school improvement projects are being emphasized during the 2004-2005 school year. This is an update on those nine projects.

### Curriculum and Instruction

- **Standards-based, Data-driven Instruction:** Forty-one curriculum-mapping projects are complete. Thirteen additional projects will be completed by the end of the school year. These curriculum-mapping projects make explicit the content and skills that students are expected to learn for each course of study at each grade level. By making learning outcomes explicit, instruction can be better planned to ensure that every student achieves the expected level of mastery. Sample assessments, with scoring rubrics and exemplars, are being developed to help teachers monitor student progress and proficiency. This past fall, special attention was given to improving student achievement on state English Language Arts assessments. In September, students at grades 4 and 8 were given last year's state assessment as a pre-assessment. Student performance was analyzed and targeted instruction – including any necessary interventions – was planned. A similar data-driven process is being used to improve student achievement in math at grades 4 and 8.
- **Appropriate Class Size:** Class sizes have been reduced to an average of 15 students per class at kindergarten, first, and second grades. No K-2 class has more than 17 students. Smaller class sizes are allowing greater individualized instruction. Teachers report having more time to diagnose and support students, both those who are struggling and those who can benefit from enrichment.
- **Cohesive Instructional Support Services:** To improve student access to instructional support services, tenth graders now have access to the district's alternative education program at Vollmer. In the past, this program was only available to students in grades 11 and 12. Alternative education services are being planned for the Ninth Grade Academy next year. In addition, extended-day services have been added at Burger, Roth, and Winslow. Extended-day services are already in place at Fyle, Sherman, and the Ninth Grade Academy. To better integrate instructional support services and classroom

instruction, the roles of both classroom teachers and service providers have been more clearly articulated. These expectations emphasize the classroom teacher's role as a student's primary instructional support teacher. These expectations are now being communicated to school staff.

- **Technology Integration:** Computer lab upgrades have been completed at the Senior High School, Ninth Grade Academy, Burger Middle School, and Roth Middle School. In addition, 70 laptop computers and 20 computer projection units are ordered. Portable cameras that provide distance-learning capability have been ordered for each school. This equipment will help improve student and teacher access to computer software, Internet services, and distance-learning resources that support and enrich student learning. To ensure effective use of this technology, technology integration expectations have been added to curriculum maps.

### Student Management and Support

- **School Conduct and Safety:** To improve student conduct and safety, student dress code enforcement and anti-bullying efforts are being emphasized. The District Wellness Council is supporting these efforts through information sharing and the disbursement of Title IV funds for anti-bullying activities. Additionally, school resource officer services have been extended to all secondary schools. The officer assists with law-related education, student counseling, and law enforcement. This presence helps discourage, diffuse, and de-escalate situations that might otherwise elevate to levels requiring additional police assistance.
- **Student Asset Development:** Student asset-building activities are being carried out at each school. "Beads for Good Deeds," "Salute our Soldiers," "Care is Contagious," "Kindness Week," and "Get Connected Month" are examples of these asset-building programs. Last year, our certificated staff received six hours of crisis prevention training; this fall, 40 members of our support staff participated in the same training in an effort to improve their relationships with students. This training also helps staff strengthen skills for preventing and de-escalating confrontational situations with students.



## Human Resources Management

- **Professional Development:** District staff members actively participate in a variety of staff development programs that strengthen knowledge and skills that improve student learning. Examples of these programs are: balanced literacy instruction, reading strategies for students with special needs, math investigations, differentiated instruction, data-driven instructional planning, and technology integration. These staff development programs are taking the form of building-based initiatives, teacher study groups, and teacher center workshops. In addition, a Diversity Advisory Council has been established to improve districtwide understanding of human diversity and its impact on student learning. This advisory council will be making staff development recommendations in the spring.

## Home and Community Partnerships

- **School-Home Communication:** To encourage active parent involvement and support, improved school-home communication is being emphasized. To strengthen school-home communication, fall parent-teacher conferences were initiated at all secondary schools, proud-of-you message programs were implemented at all schools, and teachers at all schools are being encouraged to personally notify parents on a timely basis when they have concerns about a student's academic progress or conduct. Additionally, efforts are being made to make better use of the district's Web site [www.rhnet.org] for school-home communication. These efforts include redesigning the site to improve both appearance and navigation, adding special pop-up notifications to inform parents about special events such as emergency school closings, encouraging teachers to develop and maintain teacher home pages, and initiating a superintendent's E-News Listserv.
- **Community Relations:** To better inform our community about Rush-Henrietta student achievement, exemplary programs and services, and special events, the district continues to encourage TV and newsprint coverage of school events. Additionally, cable TV programs are produced and broadcast two times each month. The district's Web site has been improved [appearance and navigation] and an online newsroom feature has been added. As well, the district newsletter has been graphically redesigned and two new brochures highlighting exemplary programs and services are nearing completion.

## Senior High School Student a National Merit Finalist

James P. Kern, a member of the Rush-Henrietta Senior High School Class of 2005, has advanced to finalist standing in the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Of 1.3 million entrants, Kern is one of just 15,000 semi-finalists nationwide to advance this far and is being considered for a 2005 Merit Scholarship Award. "James is a shining example of academic excellence," says Senior High School Principal Beth Patton. "He has taken, and continues to take, rigorous academic classes, and he is very involved in our music program. His teachers praise him for his motivation and work ethic."

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarship that began in 1955. Students become eligible for the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which serves as an initial screen for program eligibility. Through mid-June, the National Merit Scholarship Program will notify approximately 8,200 finalists that they have been selected to receive one of three Merit Scholarship awards. Selectors will evaluate the finalist's academic record, information about the school's curricula and grading system, two sets of test scores, a school official's written recommendation, information about a student's activities and leadership, and an essay written by each finalist.

Everyone in Rush-Henrietta wishes James the best of luck in pursuing the National Merit Scholarship and congratulates three other Rush-Henrietta Senior High School students – Meghan Kelly, Philipp Rabovsky, and Charles Ruhland – who were recognized as Commended Students by the National Merit Scholarship Program.



## Middle School Projects Reach Iraq

Rush-Henrietta middle school students recently participated in projects that allowed them to continue building assets and become empowered. In doing so, they demonstrated their generosity, caring, and concern for others.

At Burger Middle School, the STAR [Students Taking Action and Responsibility] Club organized an activity in which each home base in the school voluntarily sponsored a package to be sent to troops in Iraq. U.S. Lt. Col. Joseph Southcott, a local soldier stationed in Iraq, created the program. Knowing how important it is for troops serving far from home to receive letters and packages, he launched Operation Package in an effort to get at least one package sent to each of his soldiers serving in the U.S. Army's 1st Battalion Mechanized 9th Infantry Regiment.

In addition to donating items not readily available to soldiers in the field, Burger students also raised the \$9 needed to mail each package. More than 20 packages containing cleaning supplies, magazines, and letters of encouragement were sent overseas by Burger Middle School students.

Students at Roth Middle School also put their hearts into a school activity, making Valentine's Day cards for soldiers stationed in Iraq. More than 1,000 cards were created and sent to Army Spec. Joel Mattison, a medic with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Calvary Division serving in Taji, Iraq. Mattison, a former student at Roth Middle School, received the oversized package — containing



Students at Roth Middle School sent heartfelt notes of thanks to soldiers overseas.

cards and candy — just in time for Valentine's Day. He distributed the heartwarming messages to soldiers stationed at the international base where he serves, about 20 miles north of Baghdad. The colorful, heart-shaped notes expressed student sentiments that let the soldiers know that the Rush-Henrietta community cares about them and appreciates their many sacrifices.

Both projects not only captured the hearts of students and staff members, but also the attention of the media, which shared the uplifting news — and the kindness, thoughtfulness, and creativity of Rush-Henrietta's middle school students — with the greater community through both newspaper and TV coverage.

## Community Notifications and Announcements

Those who have access to the Internet are encouraged to check the district Web site at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) for notifications and announcements, rather than call the schools or the main switchboard. As part of the district's ongoing efforts to enhance communication, several information alerts have been added to the site. These alerts will be activated at [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) to draw attention to announcements and/or emergency notifications on an as-needed basis. Depending on the situation, specific headings will be used to inform the community, in a timely manner, of circumstances such as a parent alert; event cancellation; snow day; school closing; and other special announcements. When activated, these special messages can be viewed by clicking on the headings that will appear above News Room on the right-hand side of the page.





## New District Video Touts 'Math for All'

A new video produced by the Rush-Henrietta Central School District explains the ins and outs of how students learn math in our schools. Featuring students, teachers, parents, and administrators engaged in math-related activities, the "Math for All" video is available to the community for viewing.

Rush-Henrietta continues to stress student achievement in mathematics, and its curriculum, instruction, and assessments are designed to encourage success.



A new video, "Math for All," is available to the community for viewing.

Each day, teachers and staff members work with students to ensure they move one step closer to a greater understanding of mathematics. As part of those efforts, students work with one another, as well as with their teachers and parents, to explore math concepts. That exploration includes talking to each other about their understanding of math and practicing what they are learning. Teachers work with students to guide and nurture their understanding

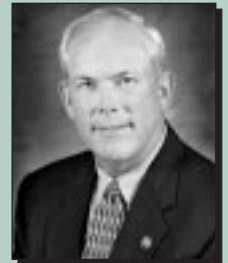
and they work with other teachers to examine student work and data, sharing the most effective teaching strategies with one another.

Teachers use standards-based curriculum maps, materials, and assessments so students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate that they have mastered essential concepts and skills. In addition to after-school math activities for children and their parents at our elementary schools, parents are invited to meet in the evenings with teachers and other parents to learn more about helping their children learn math. Parents can also participate in math courses and experience learning math in a way that encourages understanding.

The newly created "Math for All" video is available to help parents, too. The half-hour video was produced for inclusion in RHTV programming and is available for loan to parents and community residents. Please reserve a copy by calling the office of community relations at 359-5017.

## District Budget Taking Shape

Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Graham presented his proposed district budget for 2005-2006 during a community forum held in February. It calls for a modest 3.61 percent increase in district spending, which ranks among the lowest in Monroe County.



Dr. Kenneth Graham

That's a notable achievement in an era when health insurance and retirement system costs are rising at a much greater rate than is inflation. "We take a great deal of pride in presenting a budget each year that is educationally and fiscally responsible," said Graham, addressing those who attended the forum.

The proposed budget will allow the district to continue funding its priorities, which include a focus on standards-based learning; reducing elementary school class size; pursuing technology integration; enhancing staff development; and placing a greater emphasis on student conduct and safety. The proposal also allows for planned school improvement initiatives.

Using information available to date, the proposed \$89.4 million spending plan will result in a projected true value tax rate increase of 3.45 percent. Graham presented his final proposed budget to the Board of Education on March 8, and a public hearing will follow on March 22.

On April 12, the board will adopt a final proposed budget, which will be presented for voter approval on May 17.



## District Outlines Need for Burger Middle School Renovations

At the February 8, 2005, Rush-Henrietta Central School District Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Graham presented a preliminary report to the board for the renovation of Burger Middle School. The recommended plan is the first in a series of renovation projects to be considered by the Board of Education. Following the presentation, board members toured the school and gave unanimous approval for Dr. Graham to present the plan for public comment.

The Burger Middle School renovation proposal included the history of the building, concerns about the current facility, and recommendations for addressing concerns. The most recent renovations to the building took place in 1993 when Burger reopened as a middle school. Since that time, there have not been any significant renovations or additions.

During the past 12 years, new programs and services have created demands for more space at both Roth and Burger middle schools. At Burger, these new space demands have required the conversion of classroom space for different instructional purposes. Additionally, there are a number of safety issues that must be addressed. The preliminary plan addresses student, parent, and staff concerns that the Burger facility is inequitable when compared to the Roth facility. These inequities are often perceived as an inferior learning environment for Burger students.

The Burger Middle School renovation plan includes a new main entrance and auditorium, a music wing, additional physical education space, an expanded library, additional cafeteria space, additional classrooms, and a renovated home and careers area.

The projected cost for the Burger Middle School renovation is \$9.75 million. With approval from the Board of Education to proceed with public meetings, the Board of Education and Dr. Graham will present these recommendations to Burger Middle School staff and parents and the parents of Burger's two feeder schools, Fyle and Sherman elementary schools, in March and April.

The floor plans and site map are on display in the main foyer of the Transportation and Operations Center, located at 1133 Lehigh Station Road. Community residents are welcome to view the plans during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For details regarding the

Burger Middle School renovation project and related meeting dates, please visit [www.rhnet.org](http://www.rhnet.org) and click on Renovation Projects under the Quick Links menu or contact Stanley Polmateer, director of facilities, by calling 359-5385 or e-mailing [spolmateer@rhnet.org](mailto:spolmateer@rhnet.org).

Rush-Henrietta remains committed to providing the high-quality school facilities and educational resources that students deserve and require. Renovation projects ensure the district's long-term capacity to meet student, parent, and community needs as they continue to evolve and change in the 21st century.

### Renovation Plan at a Glance

There have been no significant renovations or additions to Burger Middle School since it reopened in 1993. Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Graham recently proposed that the school undergo needed renovations to enhance student learning and safety. Among his reasons:

- Teachers currently share classroom space, traveling between rooms with their supplies on a cart. Five rooms that once served as general education classrooms have been converted and are serving other instructional purposes.
- Rush-Henrietta received a nearly \$500,000 federal grant to install fitness equipment for students throughout the district, but space constraints mean there is no room for the equipment at Burger Middle School.
- Given the location of the current Burger Middle School main office, it is not possible for staff members to visually screen every parent, visitor, or vendor who enters the building.
- There is no auditorium space at Burger Middle School and library, music, and physical education facilities are inadequate, especially when compared to Roth Middle School.
- The town of Henrietta recently approved the construction of 650 new homes in West Henrietta during the next eight years.

Nearly 40,000 square feet of the 60,098 square feet outlined in the proposed \$9.75 million renovation plan would be newly created space; the remainder would be renovated space.



## Royal Comets Represent District, Selves Well

Rush-Henrietta student-athletes continue to compete in a manner that reflects well on themselves and our community.

In addition to being lauded for sportsmanship, many teams have received special recognition. For instance, the boys' and girls' varsity cross country and indoor track teams, as well as the girls' varsity soccer squad, each received the New York State Team Scholar Award, meaning the athletes on each team achieved a 90 or higher grade-point average.

The fall and winter seasons featured a number of outstanding team performances, including:

- The boys' varsity cross country team finished the season undefeated at 21-0 and won the Section V AA championship and the Section V Sportsmanship Award. Mike DeMay was named Coach of the Year in Section V AA.
- The girls' varsity gymnastics team won the Section V Team Sportsmanship Award.

- The girls' varsity bowling team captured its fourth consecutive Section V Class A bowling championship in February at Roseland Bowl in Hopewell. The team finished the season undefeated with a record of 16-0. Coach Brian Usselman described the title contest as "the epitome of a team effort."
- In March, the Rush-Henrietta girls' varsity basketball team won its second consecutive Section V AAA title by beating Fairport 66-51. The team then beat Greece Athena to qualify for the state tournament and had advanced to the semi-finals by press time.
- In February, the Rush-Henrietta boys' varsity basketball team advanced to the title game but lost a season-ending heartbreaker to East High School. The team's leader, Chris Reed, was named Section V AAA Coach of the Year.

Congratulations to all of Rush-Henrietta's student-athletes for their spirited play and continued sportsmanship.

## Students Hit the Books to Fix Awards 'Glitch'

Hundreds of students and their parents gathered at Crane Elementary School in March to kick off the 2005 Parents as Reading Partners [PARP] program. To introduce the program, teachers and staff – appearing in costume as characters such as Snow White and Cinderella – took part in the "Craneberry Awards," the school's ceremony touting the best in children's literature.

As fate – and a bit of crafty scripting – would have it, the envelope announcing the winner for the Most Anticipated Book of 2005 was lost as it was going to be opened. Fortunately, Crane students eagerly accepted an impromptu challenge! Four works were nominated for the Most Anticipated Book of 2005 and students will read each of them by the end of March. A popular vote will decide which book gets the coveted award.

PARP takes place at different times in Rush-Henrietta elementary schools. The goal is to get students more involved in reading, especially with their families. Parents are asked to read with their children for at least 15 minutes a day, five days a week for a month.



Young readers happily accepted an impromptu assignment.

## *Rush-Henrietta* **Rush-Henrietta Central School District**

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## ***R-H School District Receives Widespread Recognition***

The Rush-Henrietta Central School District is being lauded throughout the state and nation, receiving recognition for its student-enrichment programs and its facilities.

The Senior High School's Teenage Employment Partnership [TEP] Program was featured in the February 14 issue of *On Board*, a publication of the New York State School Boards Association. TEP makes connections that bring business and education together in support of student achievement, giving teens an opportunity to match the knowledge they acquire in school with the skills they will need when they enter the workforce. More than 100 local businesses are part of the program, partnering with the Senior High School to give students real-life experience in the workplace. The program doesn't take the place of school studies. In fact, the *On Board* story was titled, "Monroe Employers to Teens: Academics Come First."

In addition, the Transportation and Operations Center was featured in a recent issue of *School Bus Fleet* magazine. Photographs of the new building were displayed prominently in an article titled, "Ten Good Reasons to Build a New Transportation Facility." The story explained how "many school bus fleets have outgrown their facility and parking capacities." Thanks again to the Rush-Henrietta community for making the district's Transportation and Operations Center a reality.