

Dear Parents, Students, Faculty, Staff and Community Members,

It certainly has been a whirlwind since school began. Teachers have been implementing many of our summer initiatives since the first day of school. Our Thoughtful Education approach to teaching and learning continues to refine the craft of teaching while taking into account individual learning styles of students and using more strategies to engage them and have them take an active role in their own learning. Our teachers have met with Susan Morris, our teacher trainer during our staff development day, and they continue to focus on the importance of compare and contrast skills for students.

*Business First* released their rankings which we continue to be proud of as we maintain our ranking as one of the top 10 schools in Western New York. For years we have consistently ranked between 6 and 9. As the state education department changes the type and format of the information they release, it is difficult to determine which factors impact our ranking so we may isolate what improvement need to be made. In addition, after some controversy, while *Business First* does outline the various factors they use in determining the rankings, they will no longer release their formula for us to identify areas of strength and weakness. What we have learned this year is that *Business First* is using 4 years of data to average their weightings. We know that our ELA and Math scores, particularly at the middle level, have improved significantly. This should be evident next year.

*Business First* continues to rank Iroquois as one of the most cost-efficient school districts in Western New York, ranking 4th this year. We have always looked to be as cost conscious as possible while still providing our students with a top-notch education.

For our board of education, administrators and myself, the first seven weeks of school have focused on educating the public about our proposed capital project that took place October 14th. We have many needs related to health, safety, handicap accessibility and space constraints. Not to mention significant issues with heating, ventilation and electrical systems.

We conducted meetings with all our PTO's, were available at every open house and conducted two Town Meetings for the general public. None of us could anticipate the economic crisis we are experiencing in New York and in our country. There was some question as to whether we should even move forward with the vote. We felt strongly that it was our responsibility to do so. While we always hope for a positive outcome to our public referendums, a public vote gives the community (taxpayers) the right and opportunity to express their opinion. Without a vote, we would be left with rumor, supposition and actually take away our citizen's right to vote.

We did have one of the largest voter turn-outs in years. We are pleased to see so many voters and, while the results of the vote speak for themselves, together with the board of education we will soon conduct a survey of our taxpayers in order to obtain information that will help us make some decisions as we move forward. There is no doubt that we have a significant amount of necessary improvements to be made. I also believe that if we do not maximize the state aid available to our district, we are doing our tax payers an injustice.

Please know that we will continue to be responsive to our community, students and parents.

*"A bend in the road is not the end of the road... unless you fail to make the turn."*

*~Author Unknown*

In Education,

Neil A. Rochelle