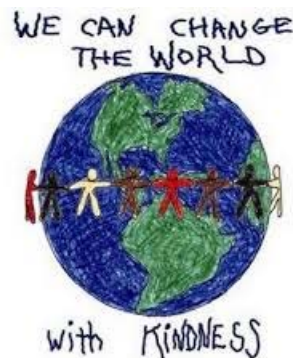


All the news from Birchwood Elementary for the week!

# **BIRCHWOOD ELEMENTARY**

## **Weekly Bulletin -- January 16, 2014**



### **From the Principal's Desk...**

Birchwood has recently begun a student initiated and student run compliments board in the front foyer of the school. This was started when Mrs. Santandrea's third grade class wrote persuasive letters to the principal explaining that they used an "I'm Proud Board" in their classroom and wanted to expand it to the whole school. The letters were quite convincing and we've decided to move forward with the plan. As of January 6th students have been on the lookout for positive happenings in our school. Check out our cafeteria doors for compliments written by students about students.

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From Birchwood's PTO Presidents...

### **Summary of Interactive Facilities Utilization Forum and Last Board of Education Meeting**

On January 7, community members were invited to participate in a forum (small group Q&A) with Board of Education members and district administration to discuss the 3 school configuration options advanced by the Facility Utilization Advisory Committee (FUAC). There was at least one Birchwood parent in each group. The option of consolidation to (4) K-5 buildings with no change to the middle school received very few comments. It was stated that redistricting would only occur at the elementary level. The option of creating (4) K-4 buildings, (1) 5-6 school at VA, and (1) 7-8 school at Iroquois

received the most attention. District and FUAC facilitators of this discussion stated that this scenario would maintain acceleration programs, would have savings due to teachers not traveling at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level, and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade would have a modified curriculum (although curriculum and mode of delivery have yet to be defined) while the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum would stay the same. One forum grouping witnessed a large contingent of Rosendale parents challenge the option of creating a Middle School Campus at Rosendale-Iroquois, resulting in (4) K-5 buildings and closure of VA. It was mentioned that creation of the Middle School Campus results in the most savings due to closure of an elementary building and resulting shared services (no teachers or staff traveling across district for grades 6-8) and that it allows for the most growth potential after several years. Band, orchestra, and chorus could possibly be done on the campus and this scenario would likely result in one principal for all students or possibly 1 administrator in each building. Questions related to costs associated with retrofitting Rosendale for 6<sup>th</sup> grade were also asked and it was stated that expenses related to retrofitting Rosendale would not make that option cost prohibitive.

Following conclusion of the forum, the Board met for their regular meeting. During their discussion of utilization and configuration, they spoke about the need to further explore actual costs and savings as they relate to specific configuration scenarios, physical space available for future growth, redistricting, impact of increasing the number of transitions for students (would occur with creation of 5-6 building), and community impact. The Board may not be able to make a decision public at the next meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

We **strongly** encourage you to attend upcoming Board of Education meetings – Strategic Planning session on January 21<sup>st</sup> (no anticipated opportunity for public comment, but will help provide insight to direction of the district) and Board of Ed meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

It's important that you are involved in the process now. Meantime, please contact Board members and the superintendent with your thoughts and questions on the configuration options. At the Birchwood PTO meeting on January 8, a parent-driven grassroots movement started to help ensure that our children receive the educational experience that they deserve. If you would like to join the dedicated parents, please contact the

[Birchwood PTO](#)

THE TIME TO BE HEARD IS NOW!

**Last Week's Birchwood Bulletin listed the next Board of Education meeting date as January 21st. After "publication," the Board rescheduled that meeting to January 28th. Instead, they will hold a Strategic Planning Session (public can observe only) on January 21, 2014, from 6-9pm in the District Office Board Room (VA).**

For more background on these topics, please visit our [PTO District News](#) page or the district's website at <http://www.niskayunaschools.org/>.

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**Registration for Birchwood's After School Enrichment Program has begun!** All children were sent home with the [Winter ASEP Booklet](#). Please take a peek and sign your children up for classes. Don't delay! **Registration ends Thursday, January 23rd. If you have any questions please contact [Pam Ober](#).**

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**Birchwood received a check for a whopping \$359 as part of our ongoing Box Tops and Labels for Education fundraiser!** That's a nice return for a low-key fundraiser. Let's keep going! Our school will receive the next check in April. For more Box Tops info and tons of different and fun collection sheets, visit [Birchwood's PTO Website!](#)

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**We are looking for parent volunteers to help out at the Birchwood Concert!** The music faculty needs some extra help before each concert in the warm-up rooms and during the transition to the stage. We are also looking for a few folks who can help usher and serve refreshments. Volunteers should arrive at the high school at approximately 6:15 p.m. Volunteer duties should not interfere with parents seeing their child's performance.

If you can assist with this important effort, please contact [FOM](#) President, Diane Hartig, at [diane.hartig@gmail.com](mailto:diane.hartig@gmail.com) or 810-7966 by Friday, January 17.

Birchwood Elementary School's concert starts at 7:00 pm at the High School and is on Tuesday, Jan 28 (with a snow date of Thursday, Jan 30).

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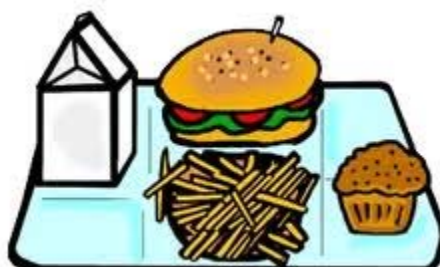
**Tired of cooking? Would you like someone else to cook for you?** Coming January 28th, Birchwood's Chef Ryan will be there for you. You will be able to order and pick up your Tuesday dinners right here!!!! WATCH YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK FOR A FLYER WITH ALL THE DETAILS.

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## Mark Your Calendar

- January 20: No School -- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- January 21: BOE Strategic Planning Session (VA, 6-9pm)
- January 24: Kindergarten Registration
- January 24: Popcorn Friday & [School Banking](#)
- [January 28: Board of Education Meeting](#) (VA, 7pm)
- January 28: [Birchwood Concert](#) at High School (7pm)

January's Menu is posted [HERE](#).



### Winter Fun!

Niskayuna School District's [Continuing Education Winter Program](#) has been posted!

Have fun on the ice at [The Schenectady Country Recreation Facility](#)!



### Missing a Book?

There are a lot of books in the library that do not belong to Birchwood.

Do they belong to you?

Check it out!

Check out winter recreation offerings from the great Town of Niskayuna [HERE!](#)

Take a peek at [Kids Out and About](#) for a whole lot of local fun!



### Kindergarten Registration is Approaching!

If you have an incoming kindergartner, you should have received a letter regarding kindergarten registration. If you did not, please contact Barb San Angelo.

Also, if you know of someone who has not received the letter (and has an appropriate-aged child), please let them know to contact the school.

Registration begins on January 24th.



### WE LOVE SNOW DAYS!

But how will you know if it *is* a snow day? Cancellations, delays, and early releases will always be posted at the [District Website](#), on local TV and radio stations, and on the district's [FaceBook](#) page.

Closing information can also be sent directly to your email account via the district's School News Notifier (SNN) system if you have signed up for the closings and delays notification option.

It will also be sent directly to your cell phone via text message if you have signed up for text message alerts. Sign up for School News Notifier (SNN) [HERE](#).

Feedback? [Click here](#)

Add/update an email address? [Click here](#)

*The Birchwood Bulletin is produced by the PTO Communications Committee in cooperation with the Birchwood principal and staff.*

To submit information for the weekly bulletin, please email [Birchwood@niskyPTO.org](mailto: Birchwood@niskyPTO.org) by Sunday night of the week you want it to appear.

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