



Capital Project Work to Begin This Spring

In the next few months, work to install a new generator, computer network equipment and other building improvements is expected to start, as the Capital Project that voters approved January 12 moves forward.

Superintendent Cheryl Nuciforo explained that plans for the first phase of building improvements have already been submitted to the State Education Department. Those improvements also include replacing the transformer at MED, and installing divider curtains for gymnasiums and distance learning technology.

“Once we hear back from the state, we’ll be able to move forward with these improvements,” Nuciforo said. “That work will be done this spring, paid for by federal stimulus money.”

Initially, the district submitted plans only for the first phase of the Capital Project to ensure those projects meet the deadline set by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This spring, the district will finish its plans for the second phase of Capital Project improvements and submit them to the state during the summer. Approval is expected in the fall.

The second phase of the Capital Project features other improvements such as replacing a walk-in food cooler, replacing a portion of the Middle School roof, upgrading science classrooms at the High School, installing energy efficient lights, and various upgrades required to meet the Americans with Disabili-



ties Act. (For a full list of projects, please visit the school website, www.chathamcentralschools.com.)

Once approved by the state, the project will go out to bid with construction expected to be completed by November 2011.

School Business Administrator Diane Malecki explained that most of the Capital Project improvements address needs in health and safety, energy efficiency, technology and access for individuals with disabilities.

“The Capital Project will address these needs at all three school buildings as well as the bus garage,” Malecki said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREAS DEWIMELBAUER

Grant to Pay for MED Solar Panels

The district recently learned it has been awarded a \$297,648 grant to install solar panels on the roof of the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School.

School Business Administrator Diane Malecki explained the district applied for grant funding for all three school buildings, but only a 49-kilowatt photovoltaic system for the MED was approved by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. Only 12 school districts in the region were awarded the funding announced in March.

“This system will result in energy savings for the district,” Malecki said.

The grant is funded through the federal stimulus or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act with the purpose of encouraging energy conservation projects. Plans for the photovoltaic system will be submitted to the State Education Department. Once approved, the project will have to be put out for bid.



Getting a Better Read on Student Needs

Children don't learn to read like they used to. If you were to poke your head into a first grade reading class at the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School, you may not be familiar with any of the lessons. The fact is, learning to read and write has changed dramatically.



Primary literacy at MED is taught using a Guided Reading/Balanced Literacy model. This flexible approach allows teachers to better address the individual needs of their students. Through careful selection of learning materials, a lesson can be custom tailored to fit each child's needs and skill level. This helps ensure that each student is always reading and writing within their ability. "Students working at the appropriate level is very important," says first grade teacher Sabrina Wadd. "It means the children will be able to do the work. That builds confidence and keeps their frustration level low."

Providing work for each student at his or her level takes planning and organization. Each student's progress is monitored regularly to be sure the materials and activities being used are the right match. For example, first graders have their own "book basket" filled with stories appropriate for their reading levels. Students keep them in class and get to choose what books they read from these baskets. "They love looking in their book baskets," says Meredith Rivet,

another first grade teacher at MED. "Giving students a choice gets them motivated and builds independence."

No two children have identical learning styles, so along with teacher-directed instruction, a variety of activities are provided to allow students to approach their reading and writing in different ways. Children can play computer games that teach word recognition, or they can form a word out of clay to help them visualize and remember it. Students may draw a picture about a story they are reading to help them make a personal connection with the words, or they might create their own book with text and illustrations. Playing word puzzles with friends helps students see how words relate to each other, while reading together in a group allows children to hear the words as they see them. It's all part of a balanced approach to learning.

"About 80 percent of what we do each day is related to reading and writing," says Mrs. Rivet. "Because we keep the lessons fun and on their level, students are happy and they learn faster."



ESL Spells Success at Chatham High

Chatham High School Senior Beatris Lezama just passed the English Regents Exam, and she couldn't be happier. "I felt so good when I learned I'd passed," she says with a smile. "I was so excited."

To fully understand why this is an accomplishment for Beatris, you must first go back to when she arrived in Chatham from her native Mexico four years ago. At that time she spoke only Spanish and she struggled with understanding her teachers and schoolwork. "It was hard," Beatris says. "I didn't know anybody, and I didn't know what people were saying."



success to the English as a Second Language (ESL) program the school district provides to students who speak limited English. ESL is a state mandated program where students learn English while they attend regular classes.

District ESL teacher Dawn Marie Blasl is proud of the progress Beatris has made, but she is not surprised. "Chatham High School is an amazing learning community for these kids. The administrators, counselors, and teachers have all pulled together to give them the support they need." Mrs. Blasl says this team approach helps her students be successful.

"Students make the honor role, receive many awards, and they graduate. I've had some that have gone on to college."

Along with Beatris, three other students from Mexico and one from India are taking ESL at the high school. Depending on how much help each student needs, they spend between one and three periods a day in Mrs. Blasl's classroom. The rest of their school day is spent attending regular classes.

The learning program encourages students to immerse themselves in the English language, whether it's by participating in extracurricular activities or by watching TV, reading books or renting movies in English after school.

For Beatris, what she likes most about school are her classes and the dedication of her teachers. What's next for Beatrice once she graduates? "I don't know," she says with a shy smile, "Maybe college?"

"Students make the honor role, receive many awards, and they graduate."

Four years later, she is on-track to graduate in June. She is recognized as an outstanding student in English, art, and character education, writes for the school newspaper, and is involved with the Character Education Committee and International Club. With the English exam now under her belt, Beatris has passed all her Regents except one, U.S. History, which she will take in June. "I'm not worried about that one," she says. "The English exam was the big one."

Aside from a lot of hard work on her part, Beatris owes her

CMS Named State School of Character

For today's students, success depends on many different factors, not just academic accomplishment. Students need to be responsible and fair, and need to be able to work as a part of a larger community. One program that helps develop these qualities in our students is our K-12 character education program. Character education in Chatham works to make positive connections between students, staff, and the community. Students who feel connected with their school and community are more likely to achieve academic success and are less likely to get into trouble.

Chatham Middle School has recently been recognized as having an exceptional character education program. The Academy for Character Education has announced that the middle school was selected as the 2010 New York State School of Character. The Middle School is the only school in New York State to receive this distinction, being recognized as the school that most demonstrates outstanding school climate and academic performance.



The school was recognized for its peer mediation program, tutoring, reading initiatives, and work with numerous charities. The school's mentoring program, which pairs students with volunteer adult mentors from the community, was also honored. "This is really a group effort," said Middle School Principal Gordon Fitting. "The building doesn't make the program, it's the people. Part of our success is possible because of the support of our community."

Schools across New York State were reviewed for this prestigious award, but only Chatham Middle School has been given the honor to compete at the national level as New York State's nominee for the National School of Character Award. Information about character education activities at the middle school is regularly posted on the District website at www.chathamcentralschools.com.

Building Teamwork and Much, Much More

Middle School students built medieval castles as part of a two-week class project focused on problem-solving and creativity.

The entire sixth grade was involved in the project, with each homeroom class responsible for creating their own castle. The students worked on the models during math class, where everything from walls and towers right down to tiny out-houses were built to scale, using a ratio of 1 centimeter = 1 foot.

“The project goes hand-in-hand with what they are learning in social studies,” said sixth grade teacher Irmentrud Amos, who oversees the program. “They are currently studying the Middle Ages.”

Building a scale model from scratch allowed students to blend mathematical



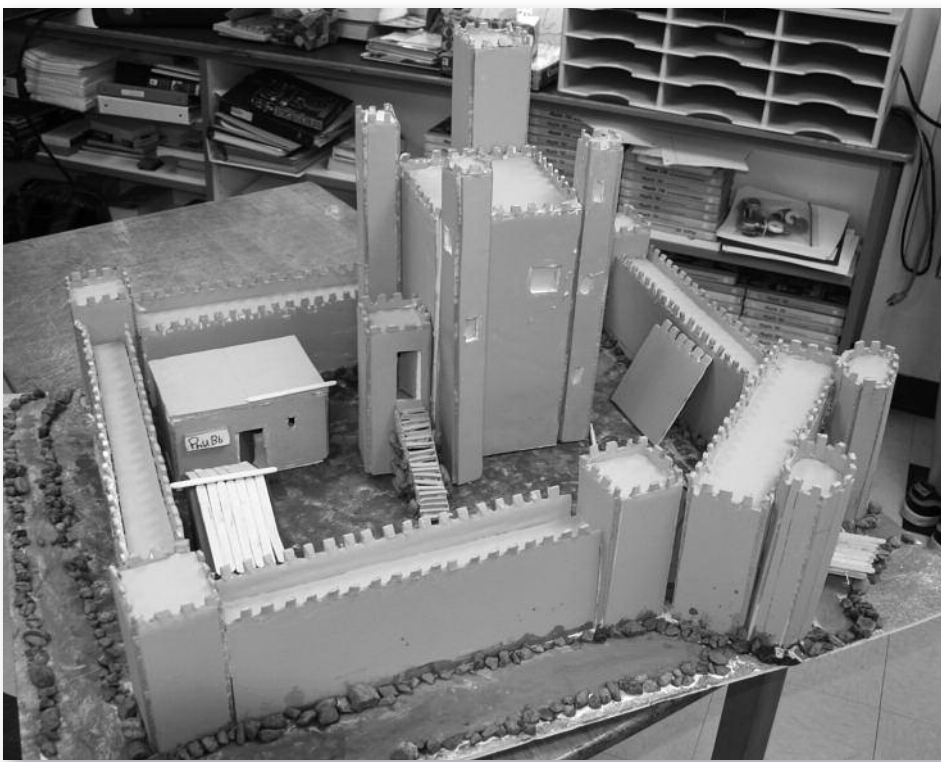
principles such as measurement and scale, with other disciplines like art, design, and history. Much like an architect, students first drafted a layout of each building. These drawings were then

transferred onto foam board, where a teacher helped the students cut out the pieces used to construct the castles.

The project challenged students to collaborate as a group to solve problems and overcome challenges. It was important that all the parts of the castle had the appropriate size and scale. Students needed to ask themselves, “Could a cart pass through that gate?” or “Could a person stand in this building?” The groups had to keep this in mind as they constructed windows, doors, and walkways. Structures like stairs could be particularly challenging when working with scale. Built too tall, a miniature king may strain his tiny legs climbing them.

After the buildings were constructed, they were painted and affixed to a landscaped base with paths and a moat. Once the models were completed they were displayed at the Middle School’s “What’s Happening” open house. Afterwards, students put their names into a hat and a drawing was held to determine who got to take the castles home.

“The kids really enjoy it,” said Mrs. Amos. “It’s one of the year’s highlights for them.”



UNSUNG HEROES: FOOD SERVICE STAFF

Research shows that nutrition and overall good health play a critical role in how well a child does in school. Chatham’s food service staff work hard behind-the-scenes to support students, providing the fuel for learning.

Chatham’s food service workers serve more than 900 meals a day at the district’s three schools. If they are serving pizza, that number will be even larger. “Pizza is the favorite,” says Barbara Fiero, who works in the Chatham Middle School cafeteria. “We sell a lot of meals on pizza days.” Barbara is one of 14 hard working food service staff that serves 115,000 meals each year.

“That many meals take a lot of planning,” says Food Service Supervisor Barbara Murray. “I am already working on next year’s menus.”

Barbara and her department make sure every meal is nutritionally balanced and full of healthy options. Items like fried foods are no longer served, sandwiches are now made from whole wheat bread, and skim milk is available but whole milk is not. With emphasis placed on students eating more fruits and vegetables, the food service staff have worked hard to make these foods more attractive to children. “We came up with a spicy chicken salad that has become a favorite with the kids,” says Jessica Westover, who works in the High School’s cafeteria. “It makes you feel pretty good when they like something you make.”

“This is a great group of people,” Barbara Murray says of her crew. “They really care about what they do and the kids they feed.”

Many of the staff have been on the roster for decades. Why? “We all love working with the kids,” says Mary Heibeler, head cook at the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School and a 31-year veteran. She has been at MED so long she now sees the children of her former students come through her lunch line. “You know you’ve been here awhile when you start seeing that,” she says with a laugh. “Some of the little ones think the school is named after me. ‘No’ I tell them, ‘I haven’t been here that long.’”

For all the hard work they do, and for the care they have shown over the years, the Chatham Central School District says “Thank You” to its food service workers.



FOOD SERVICE STAFF

Supervisor, Barbara Murray

MED	Chatham Middle School	Chatham High School	Substitute
Mary Heibeler	Barbara Fiero	Pam Edwards	Cheryl Brill
Peggy Myers	Terry Silliman	Jessica Westover	Courier
Shirley Davis	Vicky Landi	Betty Bemiss	Jeremy Van Ness
Sue Jackson	Cheryl Avens		

ADMINISTRATORS

Cheryl Nuciforo <i>Superintendent</i>	392-1501
Diane Malecki <i>School Business Administrator</i>	392-1503
Jean Scheriff <i>Director of Pupil Services</i>	392-2417
Kristen Reno <i>Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Principal</i>	392-2255
Gordon Fitting <i>Chatham Middle School Principal</i>	392-1560
Larry Burud <i>Chatham Middle School Assistant Principal</i>	392-1560
Ronald Davis <i>Chatham High School Co-Principal</i>	392-4142
John Thorsen <i>Chatham High School Co-Principal</i>	392-4142

BOARD MEMBERS *Term Expires*

John Wapner <i>President</i>	2012
Elizabeth Macfarlane <i>Vice President</i>	2011
Michael Clark	2012
Denise Dapice	2010
Fred Hutchinson	2013
Francis Iaconetti	2011
David O'Connor	2012
Melony Spock	2010
James Toteno	2011

District Prepares Budget

Work on the Chatham Central School District's 2010-2011 budget is well underway. The process is especially challenging during these difficult economic times, as we are working to address the impact of a \$617,027 cut in NYS Aid. As the District works to reduce expenses, our priority is to preserve Chatham's core educational program. Staffing will be adjusted to better reflect current and future student enrollment. Any staff reductions will be carried out through attrition whenever possible. We are working hard to build a budget that is sensitive to the current economic climate while keeping a focus on the long-term financial well-being of the district.

Budget presentations will be held at each of the regularly scheduled School Board meetings between now and the May 18th budget vote. We recognize that these regular meetings are more conveniently located for

Chatham residents than those in other areas of the District. In an effort to get accurate and up-to-date budget information to all community members, the District is scheduling additional Town Hall meetings in each of the townships. Also, if an organization is interested in scheduling an individual budget presentation, please contact the superintendent's office at 392-1501 to schedule a meeting. As the meeting schedule is developed it will be posted on the district website. Copies of the Board presentations and other information are posted on the site (www.chathamcentralschools.com) and will be updated regularly.

The 2010-2011 School Budget vote will be held on May 18, from 9 a.m.-9 p.m., at the MED Elementary School in Chatham.

< BUDGET VOTE >

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

MED Elementary School

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