



KENT CITY SCHOOLS

UPDATE

News for Kent parents from Superintendent Joe Giancola

February, 2011

Dear Kent Community Members,

Success of our students and staff members is one of the most important things that we celebrate in Kent Schools. In this month's "UPDATE," I would like to take this opportunity to compliment some outstanding students and staff members.

First, Roosevelt High School's Environmental Club has been selected as a "Top 10 Finalist" for the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Video Contest. The video that was submitted is posted on our district Web site, and you will see both **Chris Carman's** (Roosevelt science teacher) and **Tracy Foreman's** (Davey first-grade teacher) students studying science at Break Neck Creek. This project currently is in the running to win the Grand Prize of about \$150,000 worth of Samsung and Microsoft products, including a \$10,000 grant. These prizes would be used at both Roosevelt High School and Davey Elementary School.

Second, I acknowledge over 30 girls from kindergarten through fifth grade in **Troop #962** at Franklin Elementary School. Beginning in the Spring of 2010, the older girls started the lunch-time composting program. They educated other Franklin students about what can be composted and how to do it. Right now, the project is school-wide with over 50 additional students volunteering. Troop #962 also is earning money for Franklin For Our Planet (FFOP) by recycling.

Third, three Walls Elementary teachers have developed a new interdisciplinary course called CAM or Creative Arts and Movement. **Rita Ditsch** (art teacher), **Mandy Pansmith** (music teacher), and **Rich Satola** (physical education teacher) have combined their efforts to integrate the visual arts, music, and physical education into unique experiences for their students.

These three examples are just the proverbial "tip of the iceberg" of successes in Kent Schools. We congratulate these students and teachers, and we also give full credit to many more Kent students and teachers whose projects are equally as exciting and exemplary.

On a different note, before January ended, we had used two (2) snow days. As you probably have heard, Ohio House Bill (HB) 1 reduced the allowable number to three (3) days without making-up the days. Even though it is still possible to see the new Ohio legislature react and return the number to five (5) allowable snow days, we currently are living with the three-day maximum.

So, I have heard questions from many of you regarding the criteria for calling a snow day. We base our decisions on the simple premise of "safety first" for your children--our students. Three conditions fly in the face of that principle. First, when temperatures drop, we watch the wind chill factor dropping to low temperatures in double-digit negative degrees. Second, when heavy snows create unsafe conditions for driving, we travel the roads in the early morning hours and contact a variety of sources in order to make a final decision. Third, we look at the depth of snow or extent of ice on city sidewalks that can make it impossible for children to forge a path from home to school.

If these factors or any combination of them occur, I likely will call-off schools. As always, *I approve as an "excused absence" any parent's decision to keep a child at home* on days that schools remain open when a parent disagrees with my decision. Call me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joe Giancola
Superintendent