



Giving our children the helping hand they need

Special education services provide the 'glue' to help children learn

Teachers know that all children learn at different paces and in different ways. No two are alike.

To think that all children learn in the same way is as silly as to think that every child can jump high or carry a tune or bat a baseball.

While all children may be *capable* of learning to do those things, it will take more work and patience with some than with others to get them there.

All children can learn

That is the message of special education: all children can learn. Some just need more help than others because they learn in different ways.

"Special education is the glue that makes learning happen for many children," Anthony Albanese, director of pupil personnel services, said of the array of services that he oversees for Scotia-Glenville.

SEE "SPECIAL EDUCATION KEEPING KIDS CONNECTED," PAGE 4

Above, from left, grade 5 students **Becky Celorio** from Sacandaga and **Ashley Forshey** from Glendaal carefully add plaster strips to a mask they made as part of the Scotia Scholars enrichment program. The 12 grade 5 students made mythical or animal masks and held a potlatch, a ceremonial feast held by the Native Americans in the Northwest.

Marcelle to accept S. Colonie school superintendent post

S-G superintendent leaves in April; interim to be hired during search

Superintendent Michael J. Marcelle, who has served as Scotia-Glenville's superintendent of schools since 1996, will leave April 22 to become the new superintendent at the South Colonie School District.

SEE "MARCELLE NAMED TO SOUTH COLONIE POST," PAGE 2

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**PLEASE SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH US ON THE ENCLOSED
SCOTIA-GLENVILLE COMMUNITY SURVEY**

S-G students cast election ballots

Except for the presidential and village of Scotia elections, students at the Senior High School were on the money when they cast ballots in mock local, state and national elections.

Students voted during social studies classes, said Peter Sheridan, academic head for social studies. Only students living in the village of Scotia cast ballots in that race, he added.

Following are the major party vote totals. Winners are marked with an *:

US PRESIDENT

Kerry/Edwards, 376
Bush/Cheney, 362*
Nader/Pierce, 36
Other, 17

US SENATE

Schumer, 488*
Mills, 161
O'Grady, 39
Other, 43

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

McNulty, 514*
Redlich, 168

NYS SENATE

Farley, Unopposed*

NYS ASSEMBLY

Tedisco, 513*
Ratcliffe, 234

SCHENECTADY COUNTY JUDGE

Drago, 380*
Mueller, 312

GLENVILLE TOWN BOARD

Denney, 344*
DuBois, 300

SCOTIA VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (2 EACH)

Seyse, 313
Rizzo, 248
Carpenter, 209*
Benny, 163*

At Glendaal, 57% of parents voted: more than any other school in the county

Glenville Town Supervisor Clarence Mosher presented Glendaal students an award from the League of Women voters for having the highest percentage of students' parents vote from any school in Schenectady County.

The league said 57 percent of Glendaal parents voted. The League sponsored a program called "Take Me to Vote." Each parent that voted with their child was asked to drop a slip in a bag. 🗳️

Marcelle named to South Colonie post, from page 1

"This is a professional opportunity and challenge for me," said Marcelle, 53. "South Colonie is an outstanding and well-respected school district that has been an educational leader for years."

The South Colonie Board of Education named Marcelle as its new superintendent Jan. 4. Marcelle signed a three-year contract with an annual salary of \$147,000.



Superintendent
Michael J. Marcelle

The S-G Board of Education has hired the Capital Region BOCES to conduct a search for a new superintendent. That process will take until summer or later.

An interim superintendent will be named to handle day-to-day activities after Marcelle leaves April 22.

At S-G, Marcelle championed programs such as distance learning, transitional kindergarten, technology initiatives and the 1999 expansion of all six school buildings.

South Colonie has 5,800 students at eight schools with a budget of \$69 million. Scotia-Glenville has 3,000 students at six schools with a budget of \$37 million. 🗳️

Want to run for a seat on the Scotia-Glenville Board of Education?

If you've thought about giving your time and dedication to Scotia-Glenville, this is your chance.

Three seats, each serving three-year terms, are up for election in districtwide voting May 17. Board members are not paid.

Interested candidates need to collect 55 signatures from district residents by 5 p.m. April 18 in order to be on the May 17 ballot. For more information and the petitions, call the business office at 382-1222. 🗳️

Scotia-Glenville students reach out to help others every day.



Upper left, From left, Glendaal students **Liam Brady**, grade 1; **Luke Mancini**, grade 3; **Joie Prentice**, grade 1; and **Claire Schmitz**, grade 3, pose with a few of the eight shopping carts filled with food donations from students and staff. The food and a \$200 cash donation were made to the Scotia Food Pantry.



Upper right, grade 6 student **Katie Barner** takes her best shot during the Hoops for Heart fundraiser at the middle school.

Last year, students raised \$6,193 during the fundraiser for the American Heart Association. That was \$1,100 more than in 2002.



Lower left, **Erik Tomlinson**, a grade 1 student in **Marcia Powers'** class, maneuvers around the library during the Heart Health and Wellness Day at Sacandaga. The event included activities in the library, a dietician from Bellevue Women's Hospital and the annual Jump Rope for Heart program. Jump Rope for Heart raised \$6,025 this year and a total of \$65,075 since 1987. Several local businesses also contributed on behalf of the event. See those on page 7.

Lower right, Middle school Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) pose with the Tree of Life – a six-foot blue spruce – that they planted in front of the school.



From left, first row, are **Jessica Catalfamo**, **Andrea McConchie**, **Deanna Kremzier**, **Mariah Senecal** and **Sarah Zenobio**. In the second row, from left, are **Kayla Mehigan**, **Erin Dolen** and **Zachary Dodd**. The planting of the Tree of Life capped off Red Ribbon week at the school. The tree, along with a week of drug and alcohol awareness activities, reminded students of the hazards involved with alcohol and drug abuse and to lead alcohol and drug-free lives.

The Middle School SADD Co-Advisors are **Taryn LoCascio** and **David Sammons**. GIVE co-advisors are **Allen Calhoun** and **Kathy Cootware**.

Special education keeping kids connected, from page 1

While children with special needs are just like the children in your house or living down the street, they learn in a different way.

They may be unable to learn, read or write in the same way as others; they may not have complete control of their behavior without help; they may have speech problems that make them misunderstood; or they may struggle with medical issues.

Modifications needed

Once a concept is taught in a different or “modified” way, he or she is usually better able to understand.

“Their education learning styles are such that they need modifications in the curriculum,” Albanese said of students with special needs.

He gave a perfect example: parents work for days, sometimes weeks, to help a young child learn to tie their shoes. A child with special needs may need *months* of practice.

In the meantime, shoes with Velcro ties serve the same purpose and allow the child to be independent and to function without getting frustrated because he or she cannot tie the laces.

Federal involvement

Realizing that many states were not meeting the needs of these children, the federal government stepped into the fray in the 1960s. The government used its funding power to force states to provide services for these children.

New York schools, being more progressive, have tended to provide more than the federal minimum.

Identifying a child with needs

A child whom teachers, psychologists and others feel is in need of special services is referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for psychological, social/emotional and speech/language evaluations.

The CSE, made up of the same professionals as well as the child’s

parents, studies the case and determines whether the child should have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

An IEP will show what services are needed by the child and what modifications will be made to the child’s learning environment. That may include an aide to help the child read; variations on standard classroom tests; or other ways to help the child learn with as few obstacles as possible.

The Board of Education reviews the CSE’s education plans for the child.

If a child is less than age 5, he or she may be referred to the similar Committee on Pre-School Education if there is a need for services.

Numbers and costs rising

Albanese said the number of pre-school children coming to Scotia-Glenville with identified issues has increased in recent years.

He said parents are more aware of issues to look for along with a greater outreach to parents by physicians.

Rising numbers of school-aged and

Special education needs at S-G

As of Dec. 1, 485 students at Scotia-Glenville were identified with special needs in these categories:

- *Learning disabled* (38 percent of the 485 students);
- *Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder* (23 percent);
- *Speech and language impairment* (21 percent);
- *Emotional disturbances* (7.6 percent);
- *Multiple disabilities* (4.3 percent);
- *Autism* (2.5 percent);
- *Mental retardation* (1 percent); and
- *Deafness, hearing impaired, visual impairment, orthopedic impairment; or traumatic brain injury* (each less than 1 percent).

pre-school age children with special needs has increased budgets. To send a child to a private or BOCES special education program can cost \$25,000 to \$35,000 per year or more.

Children receive special education services in a number of ways: in a special class, through a consultant teacher, in a resource room or through speech/language or occupational/physical therapy. Each has a mandatory maximum number of students who can be served at the same time.

In the past two years, the district has established its own classes for learning disabled children. Keeping children here for their education has helped control rising costs.

S-G now has a Primary Skills Program (PSP) for grades 2-3; Elementary Skills Program (ESP) for grades 4-5; Middle School Skills Program (MSP) for grade 6; Life Skills Program for high school students with multiple disabilities, resource room support and high school skills classes that help students achieve an IEP, Scotia-Glenville diploma or General Education Diploma (GED). ❄️

A parent's experience...

Raising and educating a child with special needs

Family is pleased with the MSP program at the Middle School

Wanda Topka could see that her newly adopted daughter from Korea was a little different.

Laura, born three months premature, was a very quiet and cautious child.

She was hesitant – even afraid – to take simple risks like walking down a ramp or walking on a floor that was unfamiliar to her. She feared water and wouldn't put anything in her mouth.

It took longer for her to learn to talk and walk.

Laura had her own pace, which was a bit slower and more reserved than other children.

She attended preschool at New Meadow and struggled through her first few years at Glendaal.

"When you would talk to her, she was just like every other child," said Wanda. "She knew her numbers and letters, so that told me she could learn. She would be able to learn the same material, just in a different way."

When Laura faced new material, it would take her longer to remember it and she would need a lot more repetition to learn it.

At the end of grade 3, Scotia-Glenville recommended a learning disabled program through BOCES as the best way of helping Laura tackle the increasingly difficult schoolwork.

Wanda, after checking out the BOCES program, didn't want to send Laura there and opted instead to home-school her daughter.

ESP established by Scotia-Glenville

Then, the Elementary Skills Program (ESP) program was begun by Scotia-Glenville as a way of providing services to children while allowing them to stay in their own school district and with their own friends.

Children in this program, as well as other similar programs begun in the past two years by Scotia-



Scotia-Glenville High School senior **Jen Gallagher**, right, stuffs heart-shaped pillows with senior **Martha Forst** through the school's GIVE service learning program. The pillow project was a collaborative effort by students at S-G, Albany, Troy and Schodack to provide 500 pillows for heart surgery patients at Albany Med.

Glenville, typically learn the main subjects in a self-contained classroom with no more than 10 students and are mainstreamed with other students for art, music and physical education.

Laura began attending the ESP program in grade 5.

"She loved ESP and loves the MSP (Middle School Skills Program, grade 6) program now," said Wanda. "She is more challenged and can move along at her own pace."

Most children in special education programs have some type of modifications. Those are ways that the program can make learning easier for them without overwhelming them.

Laura struggles in math, but the MSP program provides math charts and rulers to help her with basic computations so she can concentrate on learning algebra.

A teacher aide reads questions on a test to her so that she can concentrate on answering the questions without getting bogged down with the intricacies of reading the words.

She does homework herself. She sounds out words and writes them phonetically (as they sound).

"She is always reading the books and loves to do it; she just doesn't always understand what she is reading," said Wanda.

One of Laura's goals is to learn to read for understanding, her mother said. Her long-term goal is to be a cosmetologist "and she knows you need to read to do that," said Wanda.

Wanda and her husband, Roy, also have a son, Michael, who is a senior at S-G. 🍷

Students at Sacandaga practice mass evacuation drill

On Nov. 10, Sacandaga custodian Gregg Petricca “found” a suspicious package in the hallway leading to the rear parking lot.

Any discovery like that would set off a chain reaction of events similar to this:

- After the unknown package was found, the school moved to a level one alert. During level one, all students remained in their classrooms, attendance was taken and staff surveyed the building, hallways and playground for other packages.

During the level one alert at Sacandaga, the nearby middle school and high school were also on a level one alert. Thorough searches would be done at both schools to ensure there are no suspicious packages.

- 15 minutes later, a level two alert was announced. All 370 students as well as staff were evacuated to and released from the nearby middle school auditorium.

Drill was part of a federal grant

The emergency drill was part of a \$386,000 US Department of Education grant designed to ensure that counties and localities are ready to move in case of an emergency.

"This is an opportunity for all of the emergency responders - fire, police and other emergency agencies - to prepare for a threat," said John Tobiassen, principal at Sacandaga and fire chief of the Plotterkill Fire Department in Princetown.

"The only way to know what works and what does not or how we can be best prepared in case of an emergency is to try it out," he added.

The Capital Region BOCES Risk Management Service coordinated the drill. Scotia-Glennville's mobile emergency vehicle served as the command center.

During the drill, local media were alerted. "During any emergency, we have a need to get information out to our parents and community; the press can help us do that," he said. 🌟



Lincoln students, from left, **Michael Dwyer**, **Brandon Rickson** and **Kayla Tenace** take a close look at the gingerbread house replica of the school that **Peggy Gillen's** grade 2 class displayed at Holiday on the Avenue in Scotia. Lincoln as well as students from Glendaal, who also made a gingerbread version of their school, tied for first place in the judging. At Glendaal, students in **Brooke Keith's** primary special education class, aide **Liz Newport** and librarian **Erin Jankowski** worked on the project.

Glendaal's Ann Peluso to retire

S-G's longest-tenured principal to retire in June, capping a 34-year educational career

Ann M. Peluso, principal at Glendaal since 1989, has announced that she will retire June 30.

In a December 14 letter to her staff and families, Peluso wrote that everyone in the building has “always united around the common goal of doing our best for our children. I could not be more grateful for having had the opportunity to lead such a wonderful group of people.”

Her career began in 1971 as a grade 6 team leader at Shenendehowa. She served several positions at Shen, including as an elementary math specialist and acting principal at Chango, before becoming principal at the Boulevard Elementary School in Gloversville in 1986.

She plans to travel and spend time with friends and family.

The search for her replacement has begun. Parent and staff groups will conduct interviews in the coming weeks. 🌟



Ann M. Peluso

S-G Recognitions

A small sampling of the many wonderful things happening among the students and staff in your school district.



These students were named to the first quarter Students of the Quarter at the High School for 2004-05:

GOAL.....	Desiree Slater.....	2008
Art	Ali Payette	2007
Business Education	Mike Tamul	2005
English.....	Hilary Turner.....	2005
Family and Consumer Sciences .	Amanda Palmer	2005
Foreign languages .	Sarah Gardinier	2006
Health	J. David Hutchinson ..	2007
Mathematics	Horace Lai.....	2005
Music	Julie DeBrita	2005
Physical Education.	Scott Tomlinson	2005
Science	Brendan Swider.....	2005
Social Studies	Melanie Shank	2008
Technology	Eric Landry	2008
Vocational Tech....	Derrick Urbanski	2006



Social studies teacher **Louis Schiavone** was recognized by the Schenectady Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution as their "Outstanding Teacher of American History" for 2004.

Also, senior **Dave Scotland** was awarded an "Outstanding Citizen" Designation by the DAR for his community and volunteer work.



Inneke Carmola, a senior at S-G, was featured in a television station Channel 13 news segment on GIVE's Key Calls program as was **Grace Fisher**, a resident who has received key calls from GIVE students for many years.



The band program at the high school, under the direction of **Allison Atchely**, has received the Mr. **Holland's Opus Foundation award**. The program will receive a saxophone.

Transportation director **David VanSchaick** has been notified by the state Department of Transportation that 97.7% of the district's buses – representing 86 out of 88 inspections – passed during 2003-04.

That corresponds to a figure called the Out Of Service (OOS) rate of 2.3%. The statewide OOS rate was 11.4%. A letter from DOT states that Scotia-Glenville's low OOS rate "places your maintenance program among the best."



These local businesses helped support the Heart Health and Wellness Day at Sacandaga Elementary this year by contributing to the American Heart Association:

Arrowhead Marina, Bekkering-Ellis Funeral Home, First National Bank of Scotia, Frank & Sons' Body Works, Gabriel's Super Market, Dr. Richard Hoskinson, McGivern, Shaw, O'Connor & Burke and Scotia-Glenville Dental Center



Above, **Irene Trudell's** grade 5 class at Sacandaga Elementary School poses next to a Scotia Fire Department truck. **Corey McKenna**, a student in the class, had just ridden to school in the truck with his brother, **Bailey**, a third-grader in **Debbie Kitchen-Sears'** class, and his other brother, **Cameron**, a first-grader in **Becky DiCaprio's** class. Corey was the schoolwide winner in the fire prevention poster contest through the village fire department. Hundreds of students participated in the fire poster contests and each school had winners. The full listing is on the district's website, ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org.

Board of Education limits what can be sent home

New policy will regulate what comes home in backpacks

In a move designed to limit the number of flyers being sent home with students, the Board of Education has adopted a new policy, #1511.

“We had a situation in which schools were sending home flyers that were not approved by my office and had been dropped off by a group wanting to distribute them,” said Superintendent Michael J. Marcelle.

“We now have a more uniform policy that limits what types of materials are carried home by students.”

The new policy states that “school facilities and staff shall not be used to advertise or otherwise promote any commercial or political activity.”

As in the past, all flyers must be approved by the superintendent before they are allowed to go out.

Those flyers’ content is now limited to an “activity, event, program or opportunity...conducted or sponsored by an agency of federal, state or local government; by a not-for-profit corporation; or by an unincorporated association not organized or operating for commercial gain.”

Also, as in the past, the agency or group seeking to distribute the flyers must copy enough for every child. The copying is not to be done at the schools.

Marcelle noted that most other districts limit – and some prohibit – flyers from being sent home with students. ☺

Scotia-Glenville’s Calendar of Events

- ▶ **Monday, Feb. 14**
Regular Board of Ed. meeting, Glen Worden
- ▶ **Monday-Friday, Feb. 21-25**
President’s Day recess - **NO SCHOOL**
- ▶ **Monday, Feb. 28**
Special Board of Ed. meeting, Middle School
- ▶ **Monday, March 7**
Special Board of Education meeting, Middle School
- ▶ **Monday, March 14**
Regular Board of Education meeting, Middle School
- ▶ **Friday, March 18**
Superintendent’s Conference Day - **NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS**
- ▶ **Monday, March 21**
Special Board of Education meeting, Middle School
- ▶ **Friday, March 25**
Good Friday - **NO SCHOOL**
- ▶ **Monday, March 28**
Special Board of Education meeting, Middle School
- ▶ **Friday, April 1**
Report Card preparation - **HALF DAY OF SCHOOL, K-5**
- ▶ **Monday, April 4**
Special Board of Education meeting, Middle School
- ▶ **Monday, April 11**
Regular Board of Education meeting, Middle School
- ▶ **Monday-Friday, April 18-22**
SPRING RECESS - NO SCHOOL

All Board of Education meetings begin at 7 p.m. and are held at the District Office unless otherwise noted. The District Office is located at the end of Lark Street in the village of Scotia. Please call 382-1215 if you have any questions about time or locations.

A couple of reminders about taxes:

- **WHEN COMPLETING YOUR NYS TAX FORMS, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT SCOTIA-GLENVILLE IS #576.**
- **MARCH 1 IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING INFORMATION RELATING TO THE ENHANCED STAR SCHOOL TAX EXEMPTION WITH THE TOWN ASSESSOR.**

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Scotia-Glenville

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