

Pataki's budget slices \$1 million in S-G state aid as students are forced to meet higher standards...

Turning back progress

Gov. George Pataki's proposed 2003-04 budget would reduce state aid to Scotia-Glenville by \$1 million and to schools statewide by \$1.2 billion.

Such a setback is a blow to schools that are struggling to meet higher state and federal mandates.

The progress made in the past several years would be reversed by the state cuts.

By itself, the state aid cut at Scotia-Glenville would lead to a 6% increase in school taxes or the possible elimination of 10 or more teaching positions. Coupled with the cost of maintaining current programs, Scotia-Glenville property owners

would face a double-digit tax increase next year.

Wiping out progress

"While we understand that we all have to work together during these tough times, a cut this large will wipe out the educational progress that has been made in recent years," said Superintendent Michael J. Marcelle.

He was scheduled to present the 2003-04 preliminary budget to the Board of Education Feb. 24.

"Why level this large a burden on the backs of our taxpayers and, eventually, shortchange our children?"

Historically, the governor

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Grade 6 students **Kayla Mehigan**, left, and **Elishia Morocco** play Jewish women seeking refuge in France while **Nick DeScipio** is Pierre, a stranger who agrees to help them after they fled Germany. Students in **Jennine Dowdle's** class performed in "History Alive" before classmates and parents. The 10-minute skits focused on ancient Egypt, the medieval period, westward expansion and the gold rush, the civil war and World War II. The skits were written and produced by the students.

Pre-First gives children the "gift of time"

Study shows that most children read at grade level, need fewer services and have better social adjustment later.

Valerie Eagan calls it the "gift of time."

As Scotia-Glenville's Pre-First grade teacher for the past five years, she has seen 49 children go through her program and be given that extra "gift."

That extra year of small-group instruction has paid

SEE "PRE-FIRST PAYS DIVIDENDS FOR CHILDREN," PAGE 4

State budget spells disaster for schools statewide

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

has proposed education budgets that were increased by state legislators. This year, however, with a national economic downturn, there are only two

“We hope the community will help us through this problem or face schools that are worse off than they have been since 1992.”

Superintendent
Michael J. Marcelle

ways of dealing with the issue: cut student programs and/or hike local taxes.

Cannot ‘trickle down’ entire bill to taxpayers

“Scotia-Glenville has prided itself on asking our taxpayers for modest tax increases compared with other schools,” said Marcelle. “How can we do the same this year?”

Since 1998, S-G school tax increases have averaged 2.8% a year.

“This is really just a ‘trickle down’ to local taxpayers,” said Marcelle. “County and town taxes have skyrocketed, and now the governor’s proposal would have school taxpayers take the next hit.”

Schools, however, face a

statewide vote on their budgets in May. If the budget is defeated twice, the state caps (this year, the cap is 1.92 percent) the amount that spending may be increased.

The community could not bear the full cost of the state cuts, said Marcelle.

The district will be forced to make cuts in services and programs to students but

taxpayers will also have to face tax increases.

“Program cuts spell fewer opportunities for our students and for their futures,” said Marcelle. Reducing staff eliminates or reduces a program.

In the past few years, S-G has added programs such as Transitional Kindergarten, alternative education, expanded gifted and talented education, expanded middle school and high school offerings and services, provided extended remedial help for struggling students and made a host of other improvements to comply with state mandates or recommendations.

He said he hopes the legislature restores the proposed cuts.

“We hope the community will help us through this problem or face schools that are worse off than they have been since 1992,” he said.

1992 cutbacks lasted for years

The last time Scotia-Glenville faced the prospect of large cutbacks was in 1992, again because of state aid reductions. The district faced \$1 million in cuts.

That led to the elimination or reduction in time for 40 teaching and non-teaching positions affecting elementary gifted and talented, instrumental music, special education teaching assistants, elementary libraries, pre-first

grade, departmental coordinators, field trips, intramural sports, supplies, elective high school courses and after-school programs.

Despite those efforts, that budget was defeated by the community. The adopted contingency budget sliced \$330,000 more in spending.

“It took years to restore those cuts,” said Marcelle. “It doesn’t make sense to gut a program that has taken years to build.”

Budget sessions with the Board of Education

Feb. 24: budget presentation

March 3, 10 and 17: budget review

March 24: Community Forum on the Budget, 7 p.m., MS

March 31, April 7 and 14: budget discussions, 7 p.m., MS

May 7: Formal public hearing; Meet the Candidates’ Night, 7 p.m., MS

May 20: Community Budget Vote

Contact your legislators

Scotia-Glenville residents concerned with the direction being taken by the state may contact their local legislators at these addresses:

- ▶ Assemblyman **James Tedisco**, Room 402 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248. Telephone: 455-5811 Email: tediscj@assembly.state.ny.us
- ▶ Senator **Hugh Farley**, Room 412 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12247. Telephone: 455-2181 Email: farley@senate.state.ny.us
- ▶ Governor **George Pataki**, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224 Email the Office of the Governor at: 161.11.3.75

Learning beyond the books every day at Scotia-Glenville



*Upper left, social studies teacher **Lou Schiavone** discusses a project with **Liz Rowell**, grade 11. Students in his AP US History course made projects that detailed American science, transportation, architecture, music and entertainment throughout US history.*

*At left, historic interpreter **Nola DalGallo**, from the Crailo Historic Site in Rensselaer, ties a colonial tie around **Nico Vecchiarelli**, a grade 4 student in **Marcia Smith's** class at Glen-Worden. The program discussed colonial dress and culture, including dance.*

*Center left, grade 5 students at Sacandaga show off some of the "fruits" and "vegetables" they made in **Margaret Zarnofsky's** art class. It was part of a healthy foods and lifestyles program going on at Sacandaga. The students,*

*from left, are **Erin McDaniel, Leanne Rosen, Michael Dohert, Tanner Lagace** and **Lindsey Decorah**. They are students in **Mark Mortensen's** class.*

*Lower left, **Dean Fleming**, left, a math teacher at the Moriah Central School District, talks programs, strategies and curriculum with S-G Middle School math teacher **Richard Putorti** during a visit to the district by a number of Moriah educators. It is part of an informational/educational exchange program S-G has with several northern New York districts.*

*Below, Glen-Worden parent **Michelle Kraines** works with **Chloe Matern**, a grade 4 student in **Chris DeCarlo's** class, as they make a quilt. Academic Enrichment teacher **Nancy Rad** organized the program to make a quilt for the opening of the new women's and children's shelter at the City Mission.*



Pre-first pays dividends for children, FROM PAGE 1

handsome dividends for most of those children.

Children attend the pre-first program based on their kindergarten teacher's recommendation and parent's approval.

It is an optional program for students who are not quite ready to advance to grade 1. While housed at Glen-Worden, it includes three to four students from each elementary school.

"For those who are not developmentally ready, this step between kindergarten and first grade can be a giant one," Eagan told the Board of Education. "With the new state standards, first grade has become very demanding, and some children are not quite ready for those demands."

The "gift of time" works

At a maximum of 15

students per class, pre-first grade can cater closely to the needs of these children.

"If we need to spend more time on math, we can do that; we do not move on until everyone understands and is ready," she said.

Scotia-Glenville is one of a handful of area districts that offers a pre-first program.

"Pre-First accepts children where they are now, not where we want them to be just because they are old enough for first grade," she said.

Assessing success

Eagan compared the success of 49 students who attended the program to 11 students who were offered pre-first but didn't attend.

She collected data on each student's current reading level using the elementary reading scale. The scale is

used with every child in kindergarten through grade 3. It is included twice a year in report cards and assesses reading ability in eight categories.

To determine the social adjustment benefits of the program, Eagan contacted the current teachers of her former students and teachers of students recommended for the program who didn't attend.

Teachers were asked to assess each student's social adjustment to their current grade. A score of 5 represents a positive self-image.

"We know that our educational programs are working for children, but it is always comforting to see the proof," said Superintendent Michael J. Marcelle. "It is often difficult to gauge the success of a program or initiative in this way." ❖

Board of Ed. OKs contract for aides and monitors

The Scotia-Glenville Board of Education has approved a three-year contract with a new labor union for teacher aides and monitors.

The contract covers the 29 monitors and 54 teacher aides. It is effective July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2005.

"These employees are on the front line; they work alongside teachers and administrators with our children every day and perform important work," said Superintendent Michael J. Marcelle.

Salary ranges this school year are \$7.30 to \$8.15 per hour, rising to \$7.59 to \$8.48 and to \$7.89 to \$8.82 per year in 2004-05. Starting salaries rise by 4 percent each year. In addition, employees with 10 or more years receive longevity pay of 15 to 35 cents per hour.

Employees continue to be eligible for health insurance coverage, dental insurance and state retirement benefits. The pact also provides some paid holidays, paid snow days, five days of sick leave and up to five days for bereavement leave. ❖

Pre-First: Success by the Numbers

Pre-First Grade teacher Valerie Eagan analyzed the performance of 60 children now in grades 1-4. Of the 60, 49 had gone through the Pre-First program and 11 had the option but decided against it. Here are the results:

<i>Category of child's development</i>	<i>49 former pre-first students</i>	<i>11 eligible children who chose not to attend program</i>
Reading at grade level today	73%	0.9%
Receiving services today	26%	91%
Scoring 3 or higher on social adjustment	88%	18%

A Board of Education goal for the year...

The need to improve reading and writing in every area

You don't have to be an Ernest Hemingway, or even read Ernest Hemingway, to know that reading and writing is the foundation for everything we do.

Without those skills, it is difficult to do everything from completing a job or college application to assembling a child's toy or programming a VCR.

"We cannot just sit here and say that we are doing everything well; we need to do better."

Superintendent
Michael J. Marcelle

Reading and writing well are lifelong skills. They are not something we are born with; they take learning, practice and feedback.

"We cannot just sit here and say that we are doing everything well," Superintendent Michael J. Marcelle told a group of 25 Board of Education members, teachers and parents. "We need to do better. How do we get there from here?"

Last year, 77.9% of grade 4 students and 47.8% of

grade 8 students scored within levels 3 and 4, meaning they met state language arts standards.

One of the Board of Education's goals for this year is to improve reading and writing *across* the curriculum. That means in *all subjects*, not just language arts, said Marcelle.

A child's grammar, punctuation and language arts skills are important when they write a social studies paper. Or take notes for a science lab. Or solve an algebraic word problem.

Board members expressed concern about whether students are learning the mechanics of writing and getting feedback from teachers in all subjects.

Practice makes perfect

"Kids become good writers by writing and good readers by reading," said high school Principal Lynda Castronovo.

The group agreed that students need that repetition and reinforcement, at school and at home. They came up with suggestions and will continue working on this topic through faculty and department meetings.



AJ Schnore, grade 6, and **Jessica Hohenstein**, grade 5 at Glendaal, will represent Scotia-Glenville at the Regional Spelling Bee at 6:30 p.m. on March 10 at the Egg in Albany. These students were winners in their school bees and competed in the District Spelling Bee:

Glendaal School: **Jessica Hohenstein**, grade 5; **Kyle Conroy**, grade 5; and **Nicholas Lesson**, grade 5
Glen-Worden School: **Emily Griffith**, grade 4; **Camber Stuart**, grade 5; and **Scott DeBiase**, grade 5
Lincoln School: **Shawn Ingalls**, grade 4; **Kyle Coombs**, grade 5; and **Charles Smeaton**, grade 5
Sacandaga School: **Katie Barner**, grade 4; **Deanna Kremzier**, grade 4; and **Nick Hlat**, grade 5
Middle School: **A.J. Schnore**, grade 6; **Peter Rowell**, grade 8; and **James Kehoe**, grade 8
Hundreds of other students in grades 4-8 also participated in class and building spelling bees.

Among the ideas:

- ▶ Stress more writing mechanics and make reading and writing "come alive" and enjoyable
- ▶ Grading of spelling and grammar versus content
- ▶ Summer reading lists to keep students in the practice of reading and incentive programs to encourage reading
- ▶ An "exit checklist" that each child would have upon leaving a grade to indicate his or her academic strengths and weaknesses
- ▶ Increase interest of parents and caregivers so they will encourage more reading and writing outside of school
- ▶ Writing labs to help students concentrate on writing and, if needed, to rewrite papers that fail to meet basic language arts guidelines
- ▶ Train teachers to do a better job of identifying students' errors and mistakes in writing

High School Fitness Center opens to the community

If you're in the mood to get in shape, beat cabin fever or want to get ready for that swimming suit, the answer may be as close as Scotia-Glenville High School.

"This is a great opportunity to improve one's personal fitness; there's something for everybody," said Athletic Director Thomas Bried. "We have many programs, from strength training to cardio/respiratory equipment."

About \$53,000 in equipment was purchased after a fund-raising campaign over the past year or so. That included selling

plaques in the new gym entrance (\$22,000), a state grant from Sen. Hugh Farley (\$25,000) and a fundraiser sponsored by the First National Bank of Scotia (\$6,000).

Students and staff have been using the facility for a couple of months and there is a center supervisor.

Everyone using the fitness center

must undergo a 45-minute training session.

Members must be Scotia-Glenville residents or current or retired staff members.

Call 382-1237 for more information. ☎

What should I know about the new Fitness Center?

Location

Scotia-Glenville High School, Sacandaga Road. The door to the left of the new gym entrance goes to the Fitness Center.

Membership dues

\$100 for an individual and \$150 for a couple/family. Staff are \$75 for individuals and \$100 for a couple.

Students in grades 7-12 may join for free.

Hours

5 to 8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday and 8 to 11:30 a.m. Saturdays. The center is closed during vacations. During the summer, the hours are 5-8:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

Community Orientations

March 3, 4 and 6 from 7:30 to 8:15 p.m. and every Monday, same times, until the end of April. Every member must attend an orientation and have a membership card.



Josh Palma, a grade 10 student in Kris Kastberg's Materials Processing class puts the finishing touch on a gingerbread house that the students made for the annual Holiday on the Avenue program on Mohawk Avenue. The class made three of the houses, which were used to keep Santa and others warm on the blustery day.

Dozens of students create winning entries in annual Fire Prevention Poster contest

These students placed first in their respective grades and were recognized by their local fire departments in the annual fire prevention poster contest:

Glendaal School: kindergarten: Benjamin Estes, Shelby Bekkering and Ryon Bellamy; grade 1: Bobby Rowledge and Kevin Bekkering; grade 2: Eric Junquera, Cassandra Fraley and Sara Haddon; grade 3: Ashley Pixley and Makenna Smith; grade 4: Kevin Pietrow, Scott Chrysler and Christopher Paul; grade 5: Deanna Moran, William Clune and Kelly Kapusta. *Glendaal grand prize winner: Avery Francois, gr. 4*

Glen-Worden School: grade 1: Andrew Smith; grade 2: Katie VanDenburgh; grade 3: Samantha Boulant; grade 4: Hannah Valachovic; and grade 5: Ashleigh Thomas

Lincoln School: grade 1: Kristen Roddy and grade 5: Makala Gatta

Sacandaga School: grade 2: Kristen Bode

The full list of winners is on www.sgcd.neric.org. ☎

S-G Recognitions

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



These senior high school students were recognized as Student of the Quarter for the first quarter of the year:

<i>Alternative Education</i>	Jenn Smith
<i>Art</i>	Andrea Clark
<i>Business Education</i>	Maria DiJohn
<i>English</i>	Haley Conde
<i>Family and Consumer Sciences</i>	April Ames
<i>Foreign Language</i>	David Scotland
<i>Health</i>	Greg Stilan
<i>Mathematics</i>	Steve Houst
<i>Music</i>	Julie Shatley
<i>Physical Education</i>	Darren Dehimer
<i>Science</i>	Trevor Williams
<i>Social Studies</i>	Elise Hearn
<i>Technology</i>	Jon Champ
<i>Vocational Technology</i>	Gabrielle Carpenter



The more than 100 students who participated in the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser at the Sacandaga School raised a record \$6,940.60 during the jump. That is \$900 more than last year, also a record year.

The top fund-raising students were: Allie Caruso, grade 4; Emily Peterson, grade 3; Danielle Schimpf, grade 3; Markus Diederich, grade 4; and Rebecca Celorio, grade 3.

Since the program began at Sacandaga in 1987, students have raised \$51,088.65 for the American Heart Association. The money is used to fund programs and for research into heart disease and stroke.



The Sacandaga PTA sponsored the Puppet People and Bully Busters program. The unique puppet show teaches children character building, anger management and crisis intervention. The theme of the show was to teach children to: *Stand UP for Yourself* (SUFY), *Stand Up for Others* (SUFO)

and when to *Tell a Grownup* (TAGU). They've also performed at other district schools.



Janice Rice, music teacher at Lincoln and the middle school, was recently named WTEN's Educator of the Week by the Albany television station.



The nearly 80 students in grade 2 at Sacandaga recently participated in a 2003 minute read-a-thon.

All the students read books in the library. Their teachers are: Arlene Camp, Marjorie Marmuscak, Katie May and Marie Montone. In addition, each class joined the Scholastic Book Readathon. Each class had to read 100 books. Once they read them all, Scholastic will donate 100 books to needy children.



The annual Hoops for Hearts program at the middle school raised \$4,769 for the American Heart Association. 75 students participated. Several

parents volunteered for the program: **James Brown, Joe Ferrari, Michelle Merritt, P.J. Mocny, Beth Puglisi, Michael Schermerhorn, Lisa Snyder, Karen Wentworth and Rob Zak.**



Martin Ziac, a high school social studies teacher, was published in the Eastern European Quarterly. The article was titled: "Professors and Politics: The role of Paul Robert Magocsi in the Modern Carpatho-Rusyn Revival."



Seven middle school students have earned a seat in the Suburban Council Music Festival. They are: *orchestra*, Megan Adams, Anne Marsh, Megan Comins, Elisabeth Preisinger and Alex Atchley; *chorus*, Tabitha Bandy; *band*, Hannah Carroll. They will perform with 350 other middle school students from 11 districts in a free concert at 4 p.m. on March 1 at the Empire State Plaza.



Joe Ann Hinrichs left her mark, "she will be missed"

When Joe Ann Hinrichs began teaching in 1980 in Illinois, times were simpler. "Teachers have always had a difficult task," said Hinrichs, who retired at the end of January after 23 years in education and three years as director of curriculum and instruction at Scotia-Glenville.

"Now, we spend a lot of time pressuring the students and pressuring the teachers," said Hinrichs. "The standards are good but the tests are not."

She said relying on the skills of the teachers would still work wonders.

"We used to measure what students know by their work in class and by their written work, their portfolios," she said. "We work with these children every day and watch them grow. Back then (when she began teaching), we didn't need standardized tests to tell us about our students."

Standardized tests have been given in the state since the mid-1980s as a way of comparing schools districts with each other. It also gives the state a way to measure schools.

"Joe Ann's love of children and her love for learning made her an effective advocate for Scotia-Glenville and she will be missed," said Superintendent Michael J. Marcelle.

The district received 26 applications for the position, which will pay in the \$88,000 to \$98,000 range. The Board of Education was expected to select a finalist in February. In

Scotia-Glenville's Calendar of Events

- ▶ **Monday, February 24**
Special Board of Ed. meeting, Glen-Worden
Presentation of preliminary 2003-04 budget.
- ▶ **Monday, March 3**
Special Board of Ed. meeting, Middle School
Budget review
- ▶ **Monday, March 10**
Regular Board of Ed. meeting, Middle School
Budget review
- ▶ **Monday, March 17**
Special Board of Ed. meeting, Glendaal
Budget review
- ▶ **Friday, March 21**
Superintendent's Conference Day -
NO SCHOOL for students
- ▶ **Monday, March 24**
Special Board of Ed. meeting, Middle School
Community Forum/
Preliminary Budget Hearing

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.

the interim, Carol Hodgins, former S-G director of pupil personnel services, will serve in that post.

Hinrichs was instrumental in getting the middle school off the ground, coordinating the annual update of the Long Range Plan (which details where educators would like the district to go over the next several years) and launching the use of the Terra Nova tests for children in grades 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9. Those replaced the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Terra Novas are similar to the state exams and, she said, provides students with the kind of practice that they need to achieve success on the state exams .

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Scotia-Glenville

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