

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

by Scott E. Payne, Superintendent

Spring is upon us which means that we enter that annual season related to State Education Department Testing. Of course, this topic can raise the level of concern for everyone in the school community. But let's take a few moments to reflect on this and see if we can make some sense. Let's go back in time a bit...

Do you know when standardized testing started? Go on take a guess, you might be surprised. History tells us that the Father of Modern Education, Horace Mann, began discussing standardized testing back in 1845. Wow! Here are some more historical facts:

- The college Board began looking for a standardized test in 1900 to determine those students that might be more successful in college.
- We didn't have the first standardized test until Alfred Binet created the first intelligence test in 1905
- But the test that really started the movement was Fredrick Kelly's Kansas Silent Reading test in 1914.
- Scholastic Aptitude Tests (the SAT) were based on Fredrick Kelly's test and were first administered in 1926
- In 1933 the SAT was followed by the Progressive Achievement Test which eventually became the California Achievement Tests
- The first automatic test scanning machine was invented in 1936.
- The American College Test or ACT was developed in 1959 to compete with the SAT

But real change didn't come until 1964 with the Great Society Program which began the first Federal Government reach into education. This Great Society Program created the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and initiated the war on poverty through the Federal Title programs. The era of other reforms continued with the *Regent's Action Plan* (1981), the *Compact for Learning* (1990), *Goals 2000* (1994) and finally *No Child Left Behind*. Each reform looked to strengthen standards and assessments and finally culminated with increased accountability.

What is most interesting is that standardized testing administration continues. We took CAT Tests, Iowa Tests, and in the 1990's we would shut down schools for a week at a time to administer Terranova Testing. But until NCLB came along, there was less accountability. The tests were used diagnostically to look at a year's worth of growth and progress with individuals and groups of students. The tests informed instruction by setting benchmarks. We certainly have gotten far afield from that. Up until the 2016 SED Assessments, the tests had become a measuring stick for teacher, principal and school performance as well as a lightning rod for many educators and parents.

We need to share some additional information at this point. Perhaps the first thing to note is that NYS Commissioner of Education, Mary Ellen Elia, has decoupled the NYS Assessments from Teacher Evaluations. And we are back to looking at the tests as an opportunity to see benchmarked growth for our students. The tests themselves have changed. They are untimed. They measure important real-world skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and writing. The 2016 tests require students to explain their answers and describe as well as defend their reasoning. This is good! And you know what else? The tests are based on the skills in the standards giving parents and educators an academic "checkup" to make certain our students are on track for the skills that come next in the curriculum. The State Education Department has also worked with teachers in the field from across the state (including Pine Valley) to create questions and mandated fewer of them. This year our teachers will be able to see more of the questions after the testing which were never available during the NCLB years. This will help teachers design teaching and learning experiences to match and meet expectations.

The State Education Department has made substantial efforts to minimize concerns over these annual assessments. They have more information on the tests available at www.NYSED.gov and www.EngageNY.gov. In Pine Valley, we hope to help our students and families in the same way. Should you have questions or a need for more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's principal or me directly.

As we move into Spring, it is a pleasure to congratulate the following students for their achievements in academics, the arts and athletics!

- Congratulations to the following 8th grade students who were inducted into the Jr. High National Honor Society on March 16th: Kaylee Astry, Calais Bennett, Sarah Crouse, Madisyn Herman, Makayla McGinty, Madison Meabon, Haley Pillard
- Congratulations to the Pine Valley girls basketball team (93.151) and boys basketball team (92.524) on being recognized as Section VI Scholar Athlete Teams for the winter 2016-17 season. (Varsity teams who earn a 90.0% or higher average during their sport season qualify for the NYSPHSAA award.)
- Congratulations to Heidi Moss who placed second out of 13 speakers at the District FFA Prepared Public Speaking competition qualifying her to participate in the FFA Sub-States competition.
- Congratulations to the cast, crew, director and staff/community members/parent volunteers who helped to make the January 20th elementary musical *Go West!* a huge success!
- Congratulations to Zachary Fadale (junior) who received a Level 6 (most difficult) score of 100 at the CCMTA solo festival on February 4th and participated in the CCMTA All County Percussion Ensemble for the CCMTA Winter Fest on February 11th at Chautauqua Lake High School and to Mr. Roger Chagnon III who was chairperson for the Percussion Ensemble.
- Congratulations to the following students for their selection and participation in the CCMTA Winter Fest held at Chautauqua Lake High School on February 11th and to Mrs. Kelley Pickreign who was co- chairperson for the Treble Chorus:

Vocal Jazz

Soprano 2: Megan Stefanik

Treble Chorus

Soprano 1: Destiny Gullo, Zoe Nelson

Soprano 2: Sierra Brown, Hailey Rivera, Anna Sendelbach

Alto: Kahlen Green, Morgan Sandy, Jocelyn Tyma

- Congratulations to Gilberto Ortiz who was named a First Team New York State All Star at linebacker in Class C – the first Pine Valley football player since 1995 to receive First Team All State recognition!
- Congratulations to CCAA East II Winter Sports All Stars:

Boys' Basketball

First Team	Dylan Chase
Second Team	Zach Mansfield
Honorable Mention	Gilberto Ortiz

Girls' Basketball

First Team	Zoe Nelson
Second Team	Kayla Hohl and Emily Raiport
Honorable Mention	Kelley Andrews and Kaylee Crisanti
Sportsmanship Award	Kahlen Green
PV Girls received the League Co-Sportsmanship award	

- Congratulations to Dylan Chase and Zoe Nelson for being named Scholar Athletes for Section VI in basketball and to Austin Butcher for receiving honorable mention.
- Congratulations to the Pine Valley Swim Club who placed second in their division at the Niagara Swim League competition held March 3-4.