

Dear Parents/Guardians/Community Friends,

Following in the tradition established a few years ago, Mr. Czadzeck, Building Principal at St. Regis Falls, has declared this the Year of Possibilities. Certainly the members of the Boards of Education of both the Brushton Moira Central School and the St. Regis Falls Central School Districts are looking to the staff, students, communities, administration, and each other for continuing ideas and suggestions for sharing opportunities that have the potential for enhancing student class offerings, increased operational efficiencies, and cost-savings strategies that can be passed onto the taxpayers. We welcome dialogue from interested others as we assess our early efforts and continue to explore/implement new opportunities during the 2011-2012 school year.

The summer of 2011 has been very busy at Brushton-Moira with the main focus being the capital project. This ambitious effort has involved numerous parts of the main building, the bus garage, and site work on some of our athletic fields. Many stages of the project are nearing completion as the month of August unfolds. We are hopeful that the modifications to our school entrances, the cafeteria, and infrastructure enhancements will also move smoothly and quickly toward closure for opening day. The addition to the bus garage is slated for finish later this fall. My thanks to Mr. Grenville, H. S. Principal and formerly Interim Superintendent, and Mr. Durant, Clerk of the Works, for helping me get up-to-speed quickly on this project.

BMC clerical and administrative staff have focused on preparation for the re-opening of school which this year included training on the entering of student demographic data and routine use of our new School Tools System. I must say I am very impressed with what I have seen in my early introduction to this product. It appears to be incredibly useful and user-friendly. Thanks, Ms. Greeno for your role in setting up this training and working with your colleagues in taking the training forward during the two Superintendent's Staff Development Days, September 1st and 2nd. I expect others will be impressed with the capabilities of School Tools once they become familiar with it.

At St. Regis Falls this summer, we were pleased to have hosted the Extended School Year Program for students with special needs from Brushton-Moira, Malone, and St. Regis Falls. The experience has been very positive for the students, the staff (BOCES and St. Regis Falls), and our community as we also invited local students to participate in the free summer lunch program for which our district qualified.

With the help of the Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDM), SRF administration was able to review and update numerous district handbooks which are used regularly throughout the school year. These recommended modifications in the handbooks will now go to the Board of Education for their approval. Thank you to the SDM Committee for your fine efforts in completing this important task.

Representatives from both districts (BMC and SRF) have also attended a variety of sessions across three BOCES areas (FEH, SLL, and CVS) on one of the latest state initiatives called APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review). This initiative has two major parts. One focuses on the evaluation of teachers and the other focuses on evaluation of principals. Training for principals to conduct the evaluations of teachers, using the selected rubrics and processes outlined by SED, will be attended by administrators from both BMC and SRF next Monday and Tuesday (8/22 and 8/23). This training will be provided by the FEH BOCES Network Team in Malone. Both BMC and SRF are among the districts that are expected to have, at least a tentative plan in place by September 1, 2011; however, final work on the template will continue

throughout this next school year with teachers and administrators working together to refine the template as appropriate. Initially, as I understand the first phase, the new APPR evaluations will involve teachers of ELA and Math in specific grades. In future years this evaluation process will apply to teachers of other grades and subject areas.

As we launch this Year of Possibilities, I want to extend my hand and my desire to get to know members of both school communities better. To that end, I have begun inviting BMC Board Members in to meet with me individually. This invitation will be offered to a variety of BMC staff, students, parents, and community members over the next couple of months. This is something I did in SRF last year. I found it most helpful for getting to know people, but also for hearing their/your perspectives, concerns, and dreams for the children of this district. If you have a strong desire to be among those that I meet with individually, please call my BMC secretary, Christina Dufrane, at 529-8948 X 1104. I am interested in hearing from a diverse range of individuals who are willing to speak freely, be that positive or negative.

During the course of this year, I will be looking to combine appropriate tasks that can generate time-saving routines, but one thing I already know is that there is no short-cut, no effective substitute for genuine personal contact. I will do my utmost to attend a variety of student activities (concerts, plays, athletic, and other), but please know I will be attempting to do the same in two districts. Please be patient as I work to balance the activity schedule for two districts. My tentative calendar for the month of September is on the reverse side of this letter. You will note that I plan to be in both districts daily with the exception of meetings and other appointments that may take me away from both districts on occasion. When known in advance those events will be so marked on my monthly calendar.

Please know that I am intrigued by the brave adventure on which we are now embarking: Shared Food Service, Shared Transportation Supervisor/Mechanic, Shared CSE/CPSE Chairperson Knowledge and Experience, and Shared Superintendent. Thanks to Mrs. Devins for her patience during our delay in defining her shared role in special education. I would also like to publicly thank our key Business Personnel, Mrs. DeBeer and Mrs. Perkins, who continue to crunch the numbers as we explore each new step in the name of sharing.

It is exciting to be part of such a bold step when the POSSIBILITIES looming before us may confirm changes that can benefit students, school organizations, and taxpayers and all at a time when small communities are struggling to maintain their individual identity when the resources to do so are withering around us. After all, we recognize that the soul of small rural communities is their local school district. Residents of both Brushton-Moira and St. Regis Falls Central Schools, please share this adventure with us and give us your valued feed back as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Bevly L. Ouderkirk Shared Superintendent Brushton-Moira
and St. Regis Falls Central School Districts