



## Back to School on September 8!

Tamarac students will return for the 2010-11 school year on Wednesday, September 8, as the district continues to focus on student achievement and offering student support through programs such as Pre-K and the middle school mentoring program.

Superintendent Lou McIntosh noted the upcoming school year will offer many changes for school districts throughout the state, including higher proficiency standards for state exams and uncertainty about state education aid.

However, McIntosh stressed the district will keep the community informed of the impact of any upcoming changes. He encouraged community members to contact the district whenever they have a question or concern.

"We'll work together to get through any challenges that lie ahead," Mr. McIntosh said. "But no matter what, we'll continue to provide our students the outstanding education our community expects while being mindful of our taxpayers, particularly in these difficult economic times."

Class offerings largely will be the same as last year with class sizes remaining similar as well: approximately 18 students in K-1, 23 students in grades 2-5 and 21-24 students in grades 6-12.

Tamarac Elementary School will switch from four marking periods to three in an effort to provide better measurements of student progress, explained Principal Karen Lederman.

Parent conferences will be held after the Thanksgiving recess and Meet the Teachers Night will be held the day before school starts for parents and their children. "We hope this change will help students be more ready to return to school," Mrs. Lederman said.

Tamarac Middle School continues its Reaching Academic and Personal Potential (RAPP) program to support students who need additional help by pairing them with mentors along with academic support. Susan Grimmick also joins the Counseling Center after years as Tamarac Elementary's Guidance Counselor.

Principal Rich Pogue said the High School will also explore a credit recovery program that will offer students who have worked hard in a class but struggled an opportunity to remain on grade level without repeating the class. "This should help students who truly are showing effort in a class to remain on track to graduate on time," Mr. Pogue said.



## Congratulations Class of 2010!

The Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD community celebrated the achievements of its newest class of alumni on June 25 as the district held its 51st Annual High School Commencement Ceremony.

The Class of 2010 includes 111 graduates, with nearly 90 percent earning a Regents diploma.

"You have been part of our Tamarac family for the past 13 years and we know that you are ready to make your mark on the world," Superintendent Lou McIntosh told the Class of 2010. "We are very proud of each of you and your achievements. We wish you the very best as you begin the next phase of your life."

The Class of 2010 is going on to such colleges as Cornell University, Clarkson University, Siena College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Rochester Institute of Technology.

To see a list of graduates and more information about the Class of 2010, visit the school website, [www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us](http://www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us).

Congratulations to our newest alumni!

# NYS Releases Math and ELA Test Scores

As expected, school districts across New York including Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD saw their scores on the Grades 3-8 Math and English Language Arts exams dip when they were released on July 28 due to a change in the way the State Education Department measures proficiency.

Tamarac students, who took the exams in April and May, continued to exceed the state average for proficiency on the exams.

However, based on the new State Education Department measure of proficiency, the percentage of Tamarac students who were measured as proficient dipped like other school districts across the state.

“We commend the State Education Department’s efforts to increase educational standards because we also

believe students need to be challenged,” said Superintendent Lou McIntosh. “The ‘cut score’ for each exam was raised requiring students to score higher than they did the previous year to achieve a proficient score.”

Test results indicated 69% of Tamarac students in Grades 3-8 scored proficient in Math, compared to a statewide average of 61%. 62% of Tamarac students in Grades 3-8 scored proficient in English Language Arts, compared to a statewide average of 53%. Under the measure of proficiency used last year, 92% of students scored proficient in Math and 86% scored proficient in English Language Arts.

“We will continue to challenge our students to ensure they are well prepared when they graduate from Tamarac schools,” Mr. McIntosh said.

In their press release announcing the test scores, State Education Department officials also noted the reason for the change was to better prepare students.

“These newly defined cut scores do not mean that students who were previously scoring at the proficient standards and are now labeled basic have learned less,” stated Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Education John King in the press release. “Rather, the lower numbers of students meeting the proficient standard reflects that we are setting the bar higher and we expect students, teachers and parents to reach even higher to achieve these new targets.”

More information about state test scores are available on the school website, [www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us](http://www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us).

## District Planning Process

Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District invites community members to participate in the fourth annual District Planning Process on Saturday, October 16 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Community members who attend will have an opportunity to sit down with faculty and staff to discuss what the community values in education. The results of the discussions will be shared with the Board of Education to help them set goals and district priorities for 2011-12. Lunch will be provided to attendees.

Given the fiscal difficulties facing the state and the uncertainty about future state aid levels, Superintendent Lou McIntosh said the District Planning Process is particularly important this year to help the Board of Education determine how to best utilize current resources.

“This process has provided us great insight into what the community expects from their schools. With all the uncertainty facing schools, this year’s District Planning Process is more important than ever,” Mr. McIntosh said.

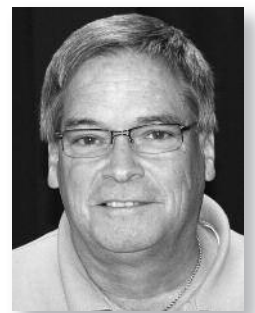
If you are interested in participating or would like additional details, please e-mail Maria Lewis at [mlewis@brittonkill.k12.ny.us](mailto:mlewis@brittonkill.k12.ny.us) or call 279-4600 ext. 2602.

## Daley Named BOE President

Paul Daley was reelected President of the Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD Board of Education at the Board’s July 8 Organizational Meeting. Christine Fox was elected the Board’s Vice President.

The Board also welcomed new members Kyle Christiansen, Craig Gilbert and Nancy Rheeman, who were elected by the community on May 18. Board member Karen Zagursky was also sworn in for another term after being reelected on May 18.

For upcoming meeting dates and other information about the BOE, visit the school website, [www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us](http://www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us).



## Van Zandt Returns as Athletic Director



**D**onna Van Zandt will return as Athletic Director for the Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District for the new school year.

Ms. Van Zandt was

appointed by the Board of Education at its August 10 meeting. She previously worked for the district for 21 years, including serving 13 years as Athletic Director. She also worked as a Physical Education Teacher and Director of Physical Education for the district.

Ms. Van Zandt retired in 2006 but has substitute taught at Tamarac schools since then. She explained her love of working with children persuaded her to return as Athletic Director, a part-time position.

"This is something I've always loved doing," Ms. Van Zandt said. "It's rewarding to help children succeed, and not just in athletics."

Ms. Van Zandt has a bachelor's degree in physical education from SUNY Cortland and completed her graduate work at Ithaca College.

Ms. Van Zandt encouraged parents to contact her at 279-4600 ext. 2411 whenever they have a question. "I'm here for their children and if parents have any questions or concerns, they're welcome to call me at school," she said.

## Tax Levy Set for 2010-11

**T**he Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD Board of Education set the tax levy for the 2010-11 school year at its August 10 meeting at \$10,588,887.

The projected tax rates per \$1,000 of assessed value for each town in the district are: Brunswick: \$66.66; Grafton: \$201.97; Pittstown: \$27.42, Poestenkill: \$68.14, and Schaghticoke: \$71.76.

While the District's tax levy increased by 2.92 percent with the school budget that voters approved on May 18, tax rates for individual towns could increase or decrease due

to factors outside the school district's control including assessments and equalization rates.

For example, the State Office of Real Property Services sets equalization rates for the five towns in the District. If the agency determines that property values have risen more in one town than another in the past year, the tax rate in that town may be somewhat higher than another town. The school district plays no role in determining what portion of the tax burden is placed on any one town or property owner.

## Website Earns National Award



**T**he Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD's website was honored with an award this year from the National School Public Relations Association in a competition that featured hundreds of entries from across the country.

The school district's website received an Honorable Mention award in the association's annual Publications and Electronic Media Contest. The nationwide competition drew more than 800 entries

and recognized schools for outstanding newsletters, websites and other communication tools.

In September 2009, Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD launched a redesigned school website that made it easier for the community to find information about its schools, including individual webpages for the Elementary, Grade 6-8, Grades 9-12 and the district. The website provides timely information about upcoming events, student success stories and challenges facing the school district.

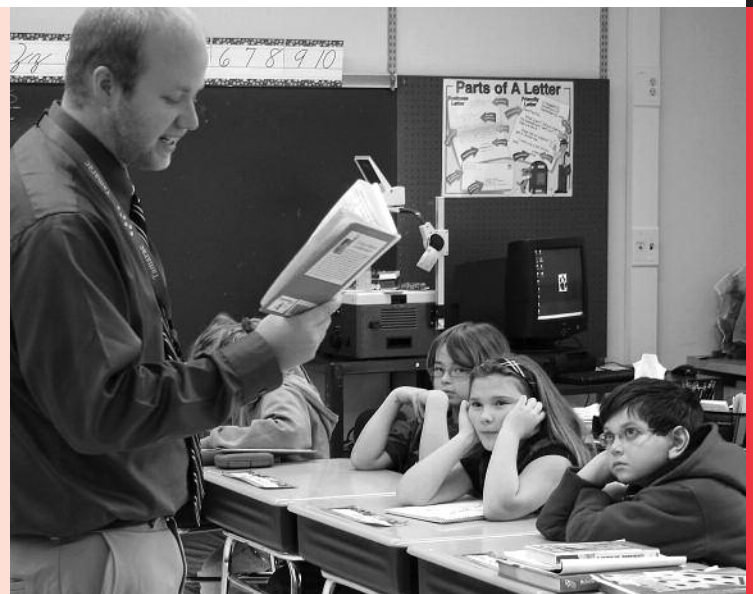
In October 2009, Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD was honored by the New York School Public Relations Association with a second place award in the Newsletter category. The district's newsletter was redesigned for the 2008-09 school year.

## Continuing Education Ideas Sought

**B**runswick (Brittonkill) Central School District is looking to expand its Continuing Education program to offer more programs and activities that our community would be interested in.

The district currently offers programs such as Zumba Fitness and Beginner's Clogging but would like to offer more opportunities for our district residents. Continuing Education classes are self-supporting and have no impact on the district's tax rate.

If you have a course or program that you would like to see offered at Tamarac schools please let us know by calling Rose Craft at 279-4600 ext. 2802 or visiting the school website, [www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us](http://www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us).



# Changes to Cafeteria Program

This school year, Brunswick (Brittonkill) CSD is making some changes to its food services program, including encouraging more students to take advantage of the breakfast program.

The price of breakfast will be reduced for all students from \$1.25 to \$1.00. The changes are an effort to increase the number of students participating in the school's breakfast program

which is down to 5%, significantly lower than the state's 17% average.

Parents who return a completed Free and Reduced Price Lunch application to the district by Sept. 30 will also receive a free breakfast for their student.

Prices for lunch, however, will increase \$0.25 for the first time in four years as a result of increased food and labor costs. Elementary School lunches

will cost \$1.75. Secondary School lunches will cost \$2.00.

Parents who prepay for their student's breakfast and lunches will receive a free lunch for their student for every \$40 they prepay. Parents can prepay by check or use the online payment system available on the school's Food Services webpage, available on the school website, [www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us](http://www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us).



## Opportunities for Parents

From open houses to parent-teacher conferences, Tamarac schools offer opportunities for parents to meet with teachers about their children's education in the first few months of school.

Here is a list of upcoming events. For a full list of events, including parent group meetings such as the PTSA, visit the school website, [www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us](http://www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us), or call your child's school.

### Tamarac Elementary School

- Sept. 7 . . . . . Meet the Teachers Night, 4-5:30 p.m.
- Sept. 15 . . . . . BEST Welcome Back Parent Picnic, 5-7 p.m.
- Dec. 2, 3, 10 . . . . . Parent Conferences

### Tamarac Secondary School

- Sept. 23 . . . . . Meet the Teachers Night, Grades 6-8, 5:30-6:45 p.m.
- Sept. 23 . . . . . Meet the Teachers Night, Grades 9-12, 7-8:15 p.m.
- Nov. 17 . . . . . Parent Teacher Conferences, Grades 9-12, 4:30-7 p.m.
- Nov. 18 . . . . . Parent Teacher Conferences, Grades 6-8, 4:30-7 p.m.

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