



**BRUSHING UP ON TEETH CLEANING** — University at Buffalo dental student Carrie Wanamaker introduces healthy snacks and proper teeth care to Windermere Boulevard Elementary first-graders

Tanzeem Mahwood and Vincent Lee. The students enjoyed snacks and received toothbrushes.

Photo by John Rusac  
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## Williamsville district's preliminary 2007-08 budget totals \$145 million

### Calendar has more snow days

by JESSICA L. FINCH  
Associate Editor

Modified football for each middle school, keyboarding courses and additional personnel make up, in part, the increase in the preliminary \$145.4 million 2007-08 Williamsville Central School District budget.

The district's spending is up 4.59 percent — approximately \$600,000 — from this year.

"This was the first presentation of the total budget," Superintendent Howard S. Smith said about the Feb. 13 board meeting. "The board will review the preliminary budget and report if it is too big, too small or just right."

The nine-member board will offer comments and concerns at the 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 13 meeting.

"Generally speaking, the preliminary budget usually changes a half a percent, not much more than that," Smith said about working toward the final figures.

He said he feels the budget is right where it should be, considering the cost of living has increased 3.5 percent and the district has decided to include five program enhancements in the preliminary budget.

Those enhancements, if adopted in the final budget and passed by the public in May, would include two full-time business teacher positions for keyboarding in the middle schools; a school counselor to serve Mill Middle and North High schools; an English as a second language (ESL) teacher for

the district; a school psychologist for special education and pre-school special education students; and a fourth modified football coaching position, which would put a team at each middle school.

One proposal not included in the preliminary budget was funding for security cameras on school buses. Smith said because there weren't significant problems on the district buses the program was not included at this time. He also cited improving technology and the expense of the pilot program as reasons for not including the proposal.

How this budget increase will affect taxes is unknown at this time, Smith said, because final assessments for properties within the district are not available.

The district does not know at what percentage assessments will be based since the Town of Amherst abandoned its 100 percent assessment program, a change that will affect taxes.

In another matter, the board adopted the 2007-08 school calendar. Smith said 186 possible attendance days are planned — 182 school days and four superintendent days. The district has six emergency days that can be used before taking away from vacations.

In 2006-07 there were 185 scheduled days.

Due to an early Easter in 2008, the district will have a four-day weekend around the holiday, March 21-24, and then the spring recess from April 11 to 18.

The first day of school is Sept. 5. Winter recess will be from Dec. 24 to Jan. 1. The mid-winter recess is Feb. 18-22. A Memorial Day recess has also been scheduled from May 23 to 26. Students' last day of school is June 26.

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## Amherst High students lauded

Several Amherst Central High School students will attend state and regional competitions in the near future after placing high in regional competition on Feb. 10.

Amherst High's Science Olympiad team placed second at the Science Olympiad Regional Competition and has qualified for state competition on March 9-10 at West Point Military Academy.

Members of the team were officially scored in 18 different events, in which 27 other teams competed. The team's overall performance included 17 top-10 finishes, 12 of which earned

Amherst students medals by placing within the top five, and four first-place finishers.

Team members are Brett Bush, Alejandro Carbonara, Julie Halm, Syed Haseeb, Amanda Kapus, Junghyun Kim, Sam Koury, Ian Kraus, Dave Molik, Jared Reisweber, Jerry Ren, Nick Reynolds, Justin Sein, Susan Song, Andrew Wong, and Kai Zhong.

Also advancing to state competition the same day were members of the school's Future Business Leaders of America. Corrin Zaccagnino (first place, decision making), Amanda Shisler (third place, job inter-

view; first place, marketing), Maria Manunta (first place, public speaking), Harrison Singer (first place, public speaking II), Matt Krajna (first place, accounting) and Alex Zaccagnino (second place, introduction to business) excelled at regional competition.

The school's mock trial team also won its case with St. Francis "B" on Feb. 10 and should ensure the team moves on to the third round on March 3. The attorneys were DiAndrea Lewis, Jon Schutrum and Ken Schmidt. The witnesses were Austin Borek, Jen Burke and Molly Roach.

## Sweet Home Redistricting Task Force urges changes during five-year span

by DAVID F. SHERMAN  
Managing Editor

The Sweet Home Board of Education is expected to vote by May 15 on two proposals for redistricting its four elementary schools.

A 19-member Task Force made its recommendations at the board's Feb. 13 meeting.

Recommendation 1 calls for realignment of English as a second language for pupils at Glendale to include pupils from Willow Ridge as well. It also proposes that ESL pupils from Maplemere join ESL pupils already enrolled at Heritage Heights.

Recommendation 2 proposes redistricting the northern end of the district, affecting Glendale, Willow Ridge and Heritage Heights, through reassigning streets.

The proposal includes a phase-in period of five years, allowing pupils to remain at their current school or enroll at the new one.

The board is expected to vote on the two proposals as a "package deal," according to Craig Allwes, assistant superintendent for human resources and planning.

"We are looking to stabilize the elementary schools and keep each at a similar enrollment. It's tough because we know after five years our numbers will probably change," he said.

Key issues faced by the Task Force included the lack of a neighborhood school at the densely-populated north end of the district, future population trends, and the most effective pupil population at the four schools.

Under the scenario adopted by the Task Force, pupils living on Admirals Walk, Windsor Court and Summerset Lane West would be assigned to Glendale. Those pupils are now assigned to Heritage Heights.

Pupils living on North French Road between Sundridge and Sweet Home, now assigned to Heritage Heights, would be assigned to Willow Ridge. Pupils from Hennepin, Irwin Place and Wayne Avenue, now assigned to Glendale, would also be relocated to Willow Ridge.

Heritage Heights would add pupils from Hitching Post and Glenhaven, from Vine Lane to Sweet Home Road, who are now assigned to Glendale.

The Task Force met five times during the past 11 months. It was assisted by students and professors from the Department of Geography and Engineering at the University at Buffalo.

"The Task Force has decided upon recommending a plan that maintains the neighborhood attendance zones surrounding the four elementary schools and that redistricts pieces of the northern end to more equitably balance school sizes," wrote Superintendent Geoffrey Hicks in a column published by The Bee on Jan. 10.

He said elementary enrollment in the district has been declining and is expected to continue in that direction in the near future. The northern end of the district has continued to be densely populated with school-age children, whereas many other neighborhoods have seen a drop in this category, he added.

Hicks also pointed out that the northern end of the district was the last to be residentially developed and the last to be assigned attendance zones. Today, it is possible for a family that lives on one block to be assigned to one elementary school while a family that lives on a neighboring block to be assigned to a different school.

The board has been asked by Hicks to vote on the recommendations by the May meeting.

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## Residents can receive help with winter bills

The Erie County Home Energy Assistance application specialists will be offering their services to the 14th district, represented by Legislator Thomas Loughran.

The Outreach Team will begin at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 22 at the Harlem Road Community Center, 4255 Harlem Road, Amherst.

Eighty applications will be able to be processed from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Citizens are seen in the order they are signed up. Appointments take approximately 20 minutes.

All necessary documents must be with the applicant:

- One form of identification for each member in the household — birth certificate, social security card or license is acceptable.
- A utility bill.
- Proof of monthly income for all household members received in the last 30 days. Pay stubs, social security or pension award letters are acceptable.
- Current checking and savings account bank statements.
- Proof of other resources such as stocks, bonds, IRAs and 401ks are necessary.
- All shut-off or disconnect notices.

The Home Energy Assistance Program is a federal grant program offered in the Northeast to help low-income families meet winter energy costs. For more information, call 858-7870.