

**Massena Central School Board of Education Update
September 8, 2017**

Welcome Back Students

This week, we welcomed back our students for the 2017-18 school year. There was a lot of excitement as students settled into their new classes and surroundings, some for the first time. Our first day enrollment was 2,717 students, down 11 from last year's count of 2,728. See table below.

School	2016 Opening Day Enrollment	2017 Opening Day Enrollment	Difference
Massena High School	870	873	+3
JW Leary Junior High School	436	411	-25
Jefferson Elementary School	468	475	+7
Madison Elementary School	452	470	+18
Nightengale Elementary School	462	437	-25
Out of District Special Education	40	51	+11

The administration, teachers and support staff are to be commended for their excellent job in preparing the schools for the opening. It was a smooth start. The only major hiccup was that the St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES experienced a water problem at the Seaway Tech Center and the Madison Elementary public address system had mechanical failure. Our Seaway Tech students were delayed only two days as the water issue was resolved. The PA system at Madison is currently awaiting new parts.

This year, we have much to accomplish based on our Strategic Plan and District Goals. Here are our key priorities:

- Strategic Plan Targets ie. graduation rates, student attendance etc..
- Community Schools Model
- School Consolidation Study
- iReady Benchmark Assessments
- Grade 5-9 Math Curriculum Alignment
- Cultural Diversity
- Instructional Technology
- Special Education Goals

NYS Commissioner of Labor Visits Massena Central

On Tuesday, Nick Brouillette and I met with NYS Commissioner of Labor Roberta Reardon to discuss how Massena Central can enhance its partnership with the

Department of Labor to prepare our students for the jobs available in the current marketplace. Commissioner Reardon was in town for the Labor Day parade and met with several local officials during her visit. It was a great conversation about our current program of preparing students in the skills trades and what can be done to increase their career opportunities. I appreciate the Commissioner's interest in Massena and the future of our students.

Governor Announces Initiative to Address Underage Drinking

The following information is from NYS Board of Regents counsel Hinman Straub:

On Wednesday, Gov. Cuomo [announced](#) that the State Liquor Authority and the state Department of Motor Vehicles, in conjunction with local law enforcement, will conduct sweeps of locations holding liquor licenses, including bars, restaurants, liquor stores and grocery stores, looking for fake IDs and illegal sales to minors.

Gov. Cuomo said:

“State and local law enforcement are taking proactive measures to deter underage drinking and hopefully prevent the dangerous and potentially life-altering consequences that can come with it. As the new college semester begins, this crackdown will help put an end to underage drinking and hold accountable those who enable it.”

He also noted that any person under 21 who is caught using a fake ID to purchase alcohol can be arrested and have their driver's license revoked for up to a year. Businesses charged with selling alcohol to minors face civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation.

History of Massena Mascot

As you know, last year some of our students opened a community discussion on the Massena Central School mascot when they presented to the Board of Education in June. Since that time, I have been doing some research on the subject and wanted to share a few interesting pieces of information.

An Ogdensburg Journal article dated 9/11/34 entitled, “Red Raiders Have Skull Drill in Gym” states, “The Red Raiders of the North Country, the name by which the Massena High School team has been dubbed this season due to their adoption of complete scarlet suits including pants, sweaters, stockings and helmets, will settle down to a hard week's work this week.” The article was referring to the high school football team coached by Jerry Donnelly. Below is a link to the article. No other references to “Red Raiders” was found prior to this date using the on-line NYS Historical Newspapers which contains the regional newspapers going back to the 1800s. It appears that the team was referred to as

the “Red & Blue” prior to 1934 based on the color of their uniforms. Interestingly, OFA was referenced as the “Blue and White” likely for the same reason.

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031165/1934-09-11/ed-1/seq-6/>

It is unclear where the Plains Indian Chief head came from but it did not appear in the 1934 yearbook on the uniforms of the football team. It does come up on the 1937 football team uniforms in the yearbook. The yearbooks in the intervening years of 1935 and 1936 were either not produced or missing. Neither the school, public library, or museum have these yearbooks. If anyone from the community has them tucked away in the attic it would be great to include them in the collection. They may or may not provide some information on the adoption of the Indian Chief mascot. I have been told that the mascot may have come from Coach Donnelly who reportedly attended Colgate, a school which had also been dubbed the Red Raiders and had a similar Indian Chief on their uniforms.

Another important piece of information is that in 2001 the NYS Commissioner of Education Richard Mills requested that all schools with Native American mascot names remove them from use. At the time, the Massena CSD formed a committee and decided to remove the Indian Chief logo but retained Red Raider. Eventually, a block M that had been used for letter awards to athletes replaced the Chief logo. Part of our current issue is that some people continue to use this mascot despite the District’s removal of the symbol over a decade ago. This is one area of concern which should be addressed given the NYS Education Department’s expectations and previous District decision.

Unfortunately, there is no definitive research on the origins of the name and mascot for the Massena CSD. If there are members of the Massena and Akwasasne communities who have pertinent information to share in this regard, I would ask that they contact me via phone or e-mail. I believe the history of the name and symbol have importance to our current discussions.

9/11 Observance

On Monday, we will join the rest of our fellow Americans in commemorating the events of September 11, 2001. This tragedy united a nation to fight against those forces which would take our freedom and way of life. Our hearts go out to those who were directly impacted by the injuries and loss of life which occurred on that fateful day.

District Upcoming Events

9/12—Facilities Committee Meeting—5:00 pm—CAB

9/15—Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony—5:30 pm—HS Cafeteria

9/16—Hall of Fame Football Game—1:30 pm—Mike Nicholas Field

9/20—Consolidation Study Advisory Committee Meeting—6:30 pm—HS Room 314

9/21—BOE Meeting—6:30—HS Room 314