



# Eagle Eye

BOLTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## THIS MONTH

### BOLTON'S RANKING

Discover how BCS compares to 85 other schools in the state.

### RAISING THE BAR FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Learn what a change in cut scores means.

### REGENTS SCORES

See how BCS students fared on the Regents exams this past June.

### NEW RECYCLING EFFORT

Learn how BCS can make money with its recycling program.

### ACTIVITY PERIOD

Find out how more time has been added to the school day.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Can you answer this issue's question?

### JOINT CONCERT

Warrensburg & Bolton chorus members will perform together in November.

### COMMUNITY SPELLING BEE

Hone your spelling skills and enter the Bee.

### I AM BOLTON

Remarks from three randomly selected BCS students.

## Something for All to Celebrate

**Bolton Central School was ranked ninth out of 85 school districts in the greater 11-county Capital Region, according to *The Business Review's* Schools Report.**

Upon closer investigation, one discovers that BCS is ranked as the number one district in Warren County, and is one of two districts in the top 10 of the 31 school districts in the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex Board of Cooperative Educational Services (WSWHE BOCES) region.

Business Review editor Carolyn Jones explained that they compiled data from the New York State Education Department and packaged it in a reader-friendly format. They also looked at topics such as spending per pupil, superintendent compensation, tax data, and graduation rates. For an enhanced online version of the Schools Report with a description of their methodology and more detailed charts and graphs, Ms. Jones suggests going to [albany.bizjournals.com](http://albany.bizjournals.com).

As the publication states, there are many factors that contribute to best-performing area schools, such as parental support, small-town advantage, great teachers, strong academic programs, small class size, and low dropout rate.

Bolton PK-12 Principal Damian Switzer commented, "We wouldn't be on that list if it weren't for the talent of our staff. Our curriculum initiatives and staff development efforts have led to greater student achievement. We're into our third year of collaboratively planning standards-based curriculum on a district level to achieve a more cohesive educational plan. We call it curriculum mapping. Research shows schools that have clearly defined curriculum have the greatest student achievement. Curriculum and instruction ensure what's being taught is in alignment with the New York State Learning Standards."

"Not only teachers, but staff development for everyone has been a priority," added



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Superintendent Ray Ciccarelli.

In addition to curriculum mapping, Mr. Switzer said this year the teachers are using two new initiatives to enhance assessment and instruction.

The first one, Aim's web or AIMSweb, is an assessment tool along with a strategic and progress monitoring system. Mr. Switzer added that they will roll out this tool gradually. The students' assessments are reported to students, parents, teachers and administrators via a web-based data management and reporting system. The results of those assessments are used to determine how best to assist the student. For a more in-depth description, see the information in the green box below.

"The second initiative," Mr. Switzer said, "is a framework for delivering instruction called Learning-Focused. It's a new, research-based methodology that pulls together all the different learning strategies that we've been using." For more information, see the description on the next page.

Superintendent Ray Ciccarelli said, "We're very proud of our student achievement and teacher performance. Their efforts along with the work of management have enabled us to achieve this ranking."

## Where Did Bolton Rank in Additional Categories Compared to 85 Other School Districts?

- **1st for Graduation Results**

When it comes to graduation results, Bolton rose to the top of the list that was compiled by ranking high schools with the highest three-year percentage of graduates planning to go to two- and four-year colleges. For example, the 2008-09 school year, there were 22 graduates with zero dropouts, zero heading off to work, nine students moving on to a four-year college, and 11 to a two-year college.

- **3rd for Taxes and Spending**

Bolton placed third – down from first last year – in the financial ranking category that combined taxes and spending. Bolton spent \$31,030 per pupil for the 2009-10 school year. Expenditures for 2009-10 were \$8,287,560. Taxes on a \$300,000 house in 2009 was \$1,261.

- **35th for Teacher Data**

Teacher data calculated by using 2008-09 median salary landed Bolton in 35th position – down from 16th place last year. The data states that the 35 teachers in Bolton's pre-kindergarten through grade 12 school earn a median salary of \$53,991. There is a six percent turnover rate, 11% of the faculty has less than three years of experience, and 6% have advanced degrees.

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## AIMSweb

According to the AIMSweb website, it is a reading, language and math assessment and web-based data management system that measures progress and expands teachers' assessment time. This program is based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment. The new system's results are reported to students, parents, teachers and administrators via a web-based data management and reporting system. The results are used to determine how to respond to the student's needs.

PK-12 Principal Damian Switzer said that this type of assessment will be required by schools in the next two years. It works on a three-tier approach. The tiers are:

1. **Benchmark** – Assess all students three times per year for universal screening (early identification), general education progress monitoring, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability.
2. **Strategic Monitor** – Monitor at-risk students monthly and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional changes.
3. **Progress Monitor** – Write individualized annual goals and monitor more frequently for those who need intensive instructional services.

## How Did Bolton Students Do on the Regents Exams Last Year?

A summary of the results for the June 2010 Regents exams, based on a 65% as passing, is listed below.

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### June 2010 Regents Exams Results

COURSE	PERCENTAGE PASSED
MATH	
INTEGRATED ALGEBRA	96%
GEOMETRY	86%
ALGEBRA 2 TRIGONOMETRY	100%
SOCIAL STUDIES	
GLOBAL HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY	93%
US HISTORY & GOVERNMENT	90%
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
SPANISH	93%
FRENCH	100%
ENGLISH	
COMPREHENSIVE ELA	100%
SCIENCE	
EARTH SCIENCE	88%
LIVING ENVIRONMENT (BIOLOGY)	100%
CHEMISTRY	91%
PHYSICS	100%

### Learning-Focused

The Learning-Focused website states that the Learning-Focused Schools Model was developed by Dr. Max Thompson in response to national, state, and local efforts to increase achievement for all students and to reduce achievement gaps.

The Model provides comprehensive school reform strategies and solutions for K-12 schools based on exemplary practices and research-based strategies.

These practices and strategies focus on five areas:

- Planning
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- School Organization

The Learning-Focused Schools Model has provided state-of-the-art professional development and innovative instructional resources, products, and technology to more than 2,000 schools, districts, and educational agencies across the nation.

### I am Bolton Central School

#### ALEXIS WHITFORD IS A 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADER IN MRS. ANDERSEN'S CLASS

I like seeing my friends in school. My favorite subject is math because I like learning facts. I'd like to be a vet (veterinarian) when I grow up. I like animals. When I'm not in school, my favorite activity is eating. Honey mustard pretzels are my favorite. I also play Dress Up games on the computer. I like "iCarly" on TV. I have an older sister, Kaitlyn. I like to read. My favorite is The Magic Tree House series. My favorite movie is "Lord of the Rings." "Tick Tock" by Kesha is the song I play most on my iPod. The person I'd most like to meet is Justin Bieber.



# Raising the Bar for Student Performance

The New York State Board of Regents increased the “cut scores” on grades 3-8 math and English language arts (ELA) assessments.

That means that the “cut scores” or the score (number) that distinguishes the four levels used in grading the state assessments to determine proficiency has changed. The number has been raised requiring the students to achieve a higher score.

Bolton PK-12 Principal Damian Switzer explained that even though school districts knew a change was coming in the future, it was not until after students had completed the exams last year that school districts were informed about what these increased “cut scores” would actually be. The timing of these events has caused many to express frustration with the state while others are simply pleased to see an increased standard of proficiency.”

Superintendent Ray Ciccarelli said, “The students are really doing the same, but when you change the rules mid-stream, it suddenly looks like our students are doing poorly.”

According to the Board of Regents, the rationale for change is to embark “on a new era of reform to improve student achievement.” The Board of Regents wants “proficiency levels” to be a more accurate reflection of what is required of students to be successful in high school and college.

Research conducted by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) revealed that the “proficiency levels” used in prior years did not align with success on Regents exams, success in college, or the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam. As a result, the State has decided to raise the bar for the 2010 Math and ELA Proficiency (Level 3). Standard scores will be changed from 650 where they have been set in the past. The new cut scores for scoring a level 3 are listed in the chart to the left.

**“We’re doing what we need to do**

**to prepare for these changes**

**and help our students be more successful.”**

- PK-12 Principal Damian Switzer

Grade	Math	ELA
8	673	658
7	670	664
6	674	662
5	674	666
4	676	668
3	684	666

Levels 3 and 4 will continue to denote that a student is “proficient” or “exceeds proficiency,” but the score needed by students to reach these levels will be raised. The result of increasing cut scores has been that more students are falling below the proficiency level than in the past across the state. This will in turn increase the number of students eligible for Academic Intervention Services (AIS). In short, more students may require additional services to meet proficiency level.

The most recent information from NYSED revealed that 61 percent of students across the state meet or exceed the new proficiency standard for math in grades 3-8, while 53 percent of these students meet or exceed the new proficiency standard for ELA. Acknowledging the decline, it’s important to note

that students did about the same on the assessments as they have done in the past. The decline in proficiency rates can be attributed to the change in cut scores rather than a decline in student performance.

Changes to cut scores are not the only changes planned in the years ahead for education in New York. Additional reforms to the assessment system will make exams less predictable, test more areas, make the tests longer, create more challenging curriculum, require better training for teachers and principals, and implement a more comprehensive data system.

Bolton’s guidance counselors added that not only will the tests be longer, but they will cover more of the curriculum.

“We’re doing what we need to do to prepare for these changes and help our students be more successful,” said Mr. Switzer. We are being proactive in addressing this change by prioritizing curriculum and using a framework for delivering that curriculum. We’ve added researched-based instructional strategies through Learning-Focused (see page 3) to more actively engage learners.”

# Have You Seen Our New Blue Waste Baskets?

They really are just for waste. Usable waste.

Every Bolton Central School classroom and office now has a blue recycling bin, thanks to Green Fiber, a company that offers a community paper-recycling program.

Moving forward in its "Going Green" effort, BCS staff will now collect usable waste, such as newspapers, phone books, office paper, and cardboard in those blue bins, which will then be emptied into the Green Fiber dumpster.

When the dumpster is full, Green Fiber, the largest producer of cellulose insulation in North America, will pick up the waste, which will be manufactured into blow-in natural fiber insulation.

"Not only will Green Fiber pick up the usable waste we've collected, they'll pay us \$25 per ton for it," said Building and Grounds Supervisor Charles Morel.

Business Manager Kathleen Dennin described the new recycling effort as a win-win situation. She said, "This effort will reduce waste disposal costs while helping to conserve natural resources and raise funds."

In the fall of 2008, BCS began its green effort by using natural napkins in the cafeteria.

"We've gone past green to natural," said School Superintendent Ray Ciccarelli. "We hope to use natural copy paper and exam paper in the future. The natural-colored paper has not undergone the bleaching process. We're also examining all paper products that we purchase making sure they are post-consumer waste paper products."

Earlier this year, we began printing the *Eagle Eye* on recycled paper and using soy-based ink.

Another green effort instituted this year has to do with printing and mailing Bolton's monthly newsletter. Mr. Ciccarelli said, "The October issue will be the last issue mailed. From now on the monthly newsletter will be available electronically on our website or will be sent home on an as-needed basis."



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## I am Bolton Central School

### MARCUS BAKER IS A 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADER

I've lived in Bolton my whole life and have attended Bolton Central School since kindergarten. Computers and technology are what I like best about school. My favorite subject is programming. I would like to pursue a career in programming, probably for the mobile platform. I'm an Apple computer fan, so I'd like to work on a Mac. Yes, I have an iPhone, a MacBook and an iPad. The iPad is awesome.

I like to be outdoors and go camping. I'm in the Outing Club. I love to travel. I've been to Australia through the People to People International program that was started by President Eisenhower in 1956 and to France and Italy with the school. The last book I read for pleasure was "The Art of Racing in the Rain." I also have an iPod. The song I listen to most is "We Didn't Start the Fire." The person I most admire is Steve Jobs and he'd be the person I would most like to meet, too.



# Bolton In Concert With Warrensburg

For the first time, Warrensburg's grades 9-12 chorus will join Bolton's chorus for a portion of a November concert and vice versa.

This joint effort is a way for small schools to give students a more complete experience, as well as complementing the school's chorus with students in vocal ranges from a different school.

Bolton's Choral Director Jim Miller said, "This opportunity enhances a student's education and gives them exposure to an audience they don't usually perform for and in a different venue."

Bolton students will join Warrensburg's concert on Wednesday, Nov. 3, and Warrensburg's students will sing with Bolton's students at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 17.

Mr. Miller said it's new for Bolton to hold one of its holiday concerts in November instead of December. It's a trend across the nation due to logistics during the holidays. Our high school band and jazz band will still hold its middle grades and high school holiday concert in December. It's scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 16.



## Adding More to the School Day

You really can squeeze more hours in a day or at least that's what it seems like with the new Activity Periods that have been added to the grades 6-12 school day.

"Modifying the bell schedule by 14 minutes and with the cooperation of the Teachers Association," explained grades PK-12 principal Damian Switzer, "we've tweaked the school day slightly and woven in a block of time

where students can get extra time and support from teachers during the school day. Also, class meetings and student council meetings will be held during this time eliminating any missed class time for students."

School now starts one minute earlier at 8:05 a.m. and ends 13 minutes later at 3 p.m.

"So far it seems to be working. The students are using it," commented Michelle Borgh, grades K-7 guidance counselor. "The juniors have used it for SAT prep work; the seniors for college searches."

Periods 6 and 7 have been designated as Activity Periods.

Ninth grader Kevin Wholey commented, "I think it's a great deal of help. I can catch up on my homework. I haven't needed any teacher assistance, but I've noticed other students getting help."

Another ninth grader, Molly Schoder said, "I think it's pretty helpful, especially if you're in sports. It allows me to get my work done during the school day before sports. Although I think it's a little short. I haven't gotten any help from the teachers yet, but I will in the future."



6 Front to back: Ninth graders Molly Schoder, Nick Emanuele and Kevin Wholey work on homework during Activity Period.

# Did You Know?

Trivia Questions About Education and Bolton Central School

**What's one thing that New York State requires Bolton Central School to do every five years?**

For the answer to this question and more questions, look under the community button on the top navigation of the Bolton Web site at <http://www.boltoncsd.org> for a page entitled, "Did You Know."

I am **Bolton**  
Central School

## DAN MALONE IS A 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADER



Seeing my friends is what I like best about school. My favorite subject is English because we have really nice teachers and we're starting to write stories. When I grow up, I'd like to work in CSI (Crime Scene Investigation). I play baseball and soccer when I'm not in school. I'm learning to play the piano from my mom, but I mostly play percussion in the school band. When the band marches, I play the quads (four drums), which weigh about 25 pounds. I don't really know what my favorite food is. I like most everything. Hamburgers would be close to the top of the list. I have one older and one younger brother and a younger sister. The last book I read for pleasure was "Holes." My favorite movie is "Hot Rod." I listen to all kinds of different music on my iPod. I'd most like to meet Superman. Oh, he's not real? Does the person have to be alive? Then, I'd like to meet Abraham Lincoln.

**Bolton Central School District**  
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# First Annual Community Spelling Bee

**Bolton Free Library is having a spelling bee fund raiser to benefit the library at 1 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 14, in the Bolton Central School gym.**

**Bolton Free Library librarian Megan Baker said the spelling bee will be played with teams of 3 to 5 spellers with one person chosen as the speaker. Each team will be assigned a student coach.**

In addition to students, residents and business owners are encouraged to participate.

There is a \$40 entry fee for teams.

Prizes will be given to the winning team as well as to the most creative speller, team costumes and best team mascot.

Jeff Strief, Happy Jacks owner, will be the judge.



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