

# NEWS from Port Jervis

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Elementary schools earn high ranking

**Port Jervis schools are improving and the State Education Department is taking note.**

For the second consecutive year, Nial A. Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary School was recognized as one of New York State's high performing/gap closing public schools.

Hamilton Bicentennial earned the high ranking by achieving adequate yearly progress for all students - regardless of their subgroup classification - for two school years.

Anna S. Kuhl Elementary School (ASK) was honored for the first time as a rapidly improving/gap closing school.

Both elementary schools qualified for the recognitions by meeting all state standards for English and mathematics during the 2005-2006 school year.

"Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary School reaches every academic bar that's set by the state - demonstrating high performance, year after year," says Assistant Superintendent for Instruction John Bell.

Prior to 2004, ASK Elementary School students did not make adequate yearly progress in one or more subject areas on the annual state tests.

Over the past three years, however, Bell says tests scores have improved steadily. He notes that the school is now at the point where students at each grade level are showing a marked improvement in all subjects.

Bell attributes the turnaround to a

combination of educational initiatives and the dedicated teaching staff "who go above and beyond to help our students succeed."

### Educational Initiatives

- **Curriculum mapping:** Improved planning process is enabling teachers to review and revise curriculum and core skills to ensure alignment of content between grade levels and to identify opportunities for improvement.

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*Hands-on projects such as this third grade science experiment engage elementary students in activities designed to provide them with the skills needed to meet the New York State learning standards.*

- 2 Students scoring higher on ELA & Math tests
- 3 Congratulations to the Class of 2007
- 4 Summer renovations address needed repairs

Visit Port Jervis schools on the Web:  
[www.pjschools.org](http://www.pjschools.org)

## Calendar of EVENTS

### September

- 4 Superintendent's Conference Day  
School Board meeting PJHS cafeteria, 7 p.m.
- 5 FIRST DAY OF CLASSES
- 12 EARLY DISMISSAL  
County-wide Emergency Drill  
MS Open House, 7-9 p.m.
- 13 ASK Open House  
Grades 1-3, 6:30 p.m.
- 18 School Board meeting  
PJHS cafeteria, 7 p.m.
- 19 HBE Open House  
Grades K-3, 6:30 p.m.
- 20 ASK Open House  
Grades 4-6, 6:30 p.m.
- 25 HBE Open House  
Grades 4-6, 6:30 p.m.
- 26 Staff Development/  
Half Day for students  
Dismissals:  
MS/HS, 10:30 a.m.  
Elementary, 11:30 a.m.
- 27 PJHS Open House  
6:30 p.m.

**In short...**

**Technology Advancements for 2007-08 School Year**

**Computer labs** in all four schools received new computers.

**Each elementary classroom** is now equipped with a total of four new computers.

**All Middle School/High School classrooms** received a new computer.

**Other technology enhancements** include the addition of six new computers at the Middle School Library, approximately 10 Smartboards in each school, and 45 laptops in the High School and Middle School.

- **Data driven improvement:** Schools are using data from state assessments to improve student achievement. A thorough analysis of the annual exams provide school staff with a clear picture of their students' academic strengths and weaknesses, and reveals gaps in student learning. This information is then used by teachers to tailor instruction to meet each students' learning needs.
- **New math curriculum:** In 2005, teachers and administrators rewrote the math curriculum to comply with the revised NY State math curriculum. To ensure alignment to the state standards, the district purchased new math textbooks for the 2007-08 school year for grades K - 6 and grade 9.
- **Technology advances:** One of the district's priorities is to integrate technology across grade levels and the curriculum. This fall, students will have unprecedented access to web-based educational programs, laptops, classroom computers, upgraded computer labs, Smartboards and other technology.



*Interactive technology such as the Classroom Performance System gives every student in the classroom the opportunity to answer the teacher's questions electronically using a hand-held clicker.*

## A plan for greater improvement

Port Jervis is one of 56 districts in New York that has developed an educational enhancement plan, known as a Contract for Excellence, with the State Education Department to use additional state aid to improve student achievement. Beginning this year, the district will implement educational initiatives in the five targeted areas:

- class-size reduction
- time-on-task
- teacher and principal quality initiatives
- middle/high school reform
- full-day kindergarten/pre-kindergarten

To read more about the plan, please visit the district web site.

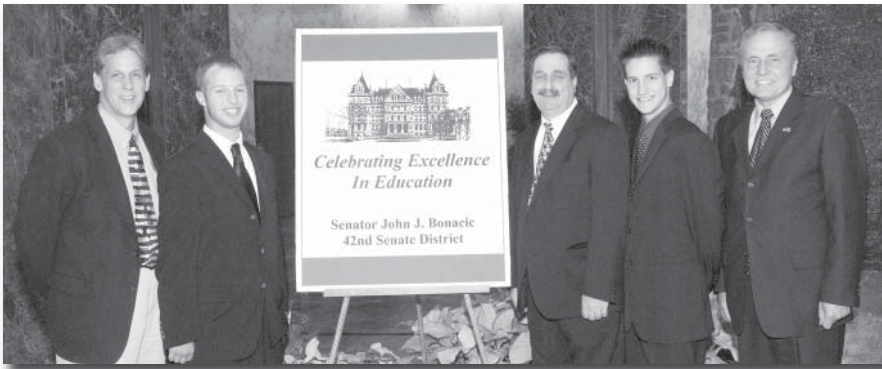
### English/Language Arts (Percent Passing)

GRADE	2006	2007	CHANGE
ASK Grade 3	60	70	+10
HBE Grade 3	62	71	+ 9
ASK Grade 4	47	67	+20
HBE Grade 4	59	69	+10
ASK Grade 5	55	62	+ 7
HBE Grade 5	62	60	- 2
ASK Grade 6	46	55	+ 9
HBE Grade 6	62	69	+ 7
MS Grade 7	41	50	+ 9
MS Grade 8	43	47	+ 4

### Mathematics (Percent Passing)

GRADE	2006	2007	CHANGE
ASK Grade 3	74	91	+17
HBE Grade 3	80	93	+13
ASK Grade 4	49	65	+16
HBE Grade 4	69	76	+ 7
ASK Grade 5	52	64	+ 12
HBE Grade 5	64	69	+ 5
ASK Grade 6	21	54	+ 33
HBE Grade 6	54	77	+ 23
MS Grade 7	48	60	+ 12
MS Grade 8	47	47	0

# Top graduates bring distinction to Port Jervis



New York State Senator John Bonacic (right) held a special event at the state capital building in Albany to honor Port Jervis High School Class of 2007 valedictorian Lucas Behnke and salutatorian Adam Derkacz. Pictured at the Celebration of Excellence along with Sen. Bonacic are (from left) Superintendent John Xanthis, Behnke, High School Principal Tony DiMarco, and Derkacz.

Port Jervis High School Class of 2007 valedictorian Lucas Behnke and salutatorian Adam Derkacz were honored by New York State Senator John Bonacic in June at the Celebration of Excellence in Education Program at the state capital building in Albany.

The event is held annually by Sen. Bonacic to recognize the 42nd Senatorial District's top-ranked high school seniors and their families.

Prior to graduation, Behnke and Derkacz were also recognized by Orange-Ulster BOCES and area businesses, along with the top-ranked seniors from school districts throughout the region,

at the 12th Annual Outstanding Students Recognition Dinner at the Inn at Central Valley.

Behnke achieved this honor by maintaining an overall grade point average of 98.23. A well-rounded student, Behnke participated in a variety of school activities, including the National Honor Society, Student Council, Youth in Government, Peer Leadership, and the Varsity Club. Other activities included varsity football, basketball, and baseball; and the High School Concert Band.

This fall, Behnke will attend Syracuse University where he will major in English and Textual

Studies with a minor in Sports Journalism. Lucas is the son of Larry and Toni Behnke.

Derkacz qualified for his honor by maintaining an impressive grade point average of 96.86. Actively involved in many school programs, Derkacz was a member of the varsity cross country and tennis teams, Student Council, Advanced Peer Leadership, Mock Trial, French Club, and Varsity Club.

This fall, Adam plans to attend Elizabethtown College where he will major in Environmental Science. Adam is the son of Gary and Beth Derkacz.

## In short...

**PJHS Class of 2007 graduates will attend the following prestigious colleges this fall**

- Syracuse University
- Albany University
- Stony Brook University
- Geneseo State Univ.
- College of St. Rose
- Rutgers University
- Marist College
- Penn State University
- Art Institute of Philadelphia
- Oneonta State Univ.
- Oswego State Univ.
- Elizabethtown College
- Hartwick College
- Mount St. Mary
- Johnson & Wales
- Adelphi College
- Nyack College
- Cazenovia College



## Congratulations to the Class of 2007!

Chase Field was filled with family, friends, and other well-wishers cheering the Class of 2007 during Port Jervis High School's graduation on June 22. Dressed in black and red robes - and bright smiles, 221 graduates walked across the stage to collect their diplomas following an evening of memories, music, inspiration and tradition.

Speeches by Class President Nadelly Cabrera, Valedictorian Lucas Behnke, and classmates Kyle Smith and Karuss Williams were the highlight of the commencement pro-

gram. Among those honored at the ceremony were the top 10 graduates: Lucas Behnke, Adam Derkacz, Dana Lovelace, Cameron Tidd, McCallion Campbell, Dana Conroy, Melanie Decker, Karuss Williams, Anna Tison and Andrew Smith.

The complete list of graduates is listed on the school district web site, [www.pjschools.org](http://www.pjschools.org). Many of the graduates will continue their education this fall at the colleges and universities listed in the right-hand column of this page. Congratulations and best wishes to all!

**In short...  
Homeowners must  
apply for new  
STAR rebate**

Middle Class homeowners will receive a rebate check from the state this year in addition to their STAR exemption. The rebate is not automatic - you must apply. The state is mailing rebate applications to Orange & Sullivan County residents in September. For more information, visit: [www.tax.state.ny.us/star/2007/](http://www.tax.state.ny.us/star/2007/).

# Summer renovations addressing needed repairs

## Positive changes are taking place throughout the district this summer.

Work is continuing on the first phase of the district's \$14.6 million capital construction project. Contractors are nearly finished replacing worn carpeting and flooring, deteriorating roofs, and aging heating and air conditioning units at Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary School.

Due to the extensive nature of the construction work, HBE is temporarily closed for the summer. With all facets of the HBE projects on schedule, the building will open Sept. 5 - ready to welcome students for the first day of school.

At Anna S. Kuhl Elementary School, one of the main summer projects is the restoration of the library. Wall-to-wall carpeting was installed in the expanded library and adjoining computer lab. Planned technology enhancements will provide students with wireless internet access.

Other facility enhancement projects completed this summer include refurbishing the Middle School lockers, resurfacing the High School tennis courts, and the installation of new blinds in High School classrooms.

Several other building renovation projects planned for the summer have been on hold pending the recent approval from the New York State Education Department.

All of the projects are part of the Port Jervis City School District's \$14.6 million capital construction project approved by voters in December 2006. State Building Aid and the state's EXCEL (Expanding our Children's Education and Learning) Aid program are funding the costs of all projects.

For the latest information on the capital project, visit the Port Jervis School District web site, [www.pjschools.org](http://www.pjschools.org).



(Left) Port Jervis Middle School lockers receive a new bright coat of red paint. (Above) Construction crews have worked all summer to replace the roof and make other needed repairs at Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary School.



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*Produced in cooperation with Capital  
Region BOCES Communications Service*

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