

FINGER LAKES

SUNDAY TIMES

MARCH 6, 2011

SU GIVES DEPAUL A DRUBBING

— Sports, Page 3B



Mynderse boys net 2nd straight title

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WEATHER

High: 36

Low: 14

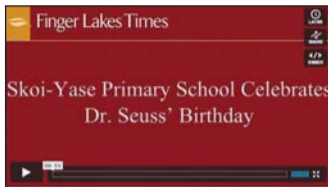


115th Year

Geneva, N.Y. — Serving Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates Counties www.fltimes.com

\$1.50

ONLINE EXTRA



Watch students and staff at Skoi-Yase Primary School celebrate the birthday of Dr. Seuss this week.

www.fltimes.com

Also inside today ...

Gambling targeted

The Council on Alcoholism and Addictions of the Finger Lakes is trying to educate the public on the issue during National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, which starts today and runs through March 12.

— Page 3A

And they're off

Waterloo Mayor Theodore Young and his challenger John O'Connor are going door to door on the campaign trail with mailers, fliers and other advertising as the March 15 election nears.

— Page 5A

Directory on Web

Finger Lakes Marketplace — a directory of 9,000 local businesses, churches, organizations, governments and community groups — is up and running on the *Finger Lakes Times*' new website.

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IN MONDAY'S EDITION

A Conversation With ...



Joanne Davis, residential services leader, Hillside Children Center, Varick campus

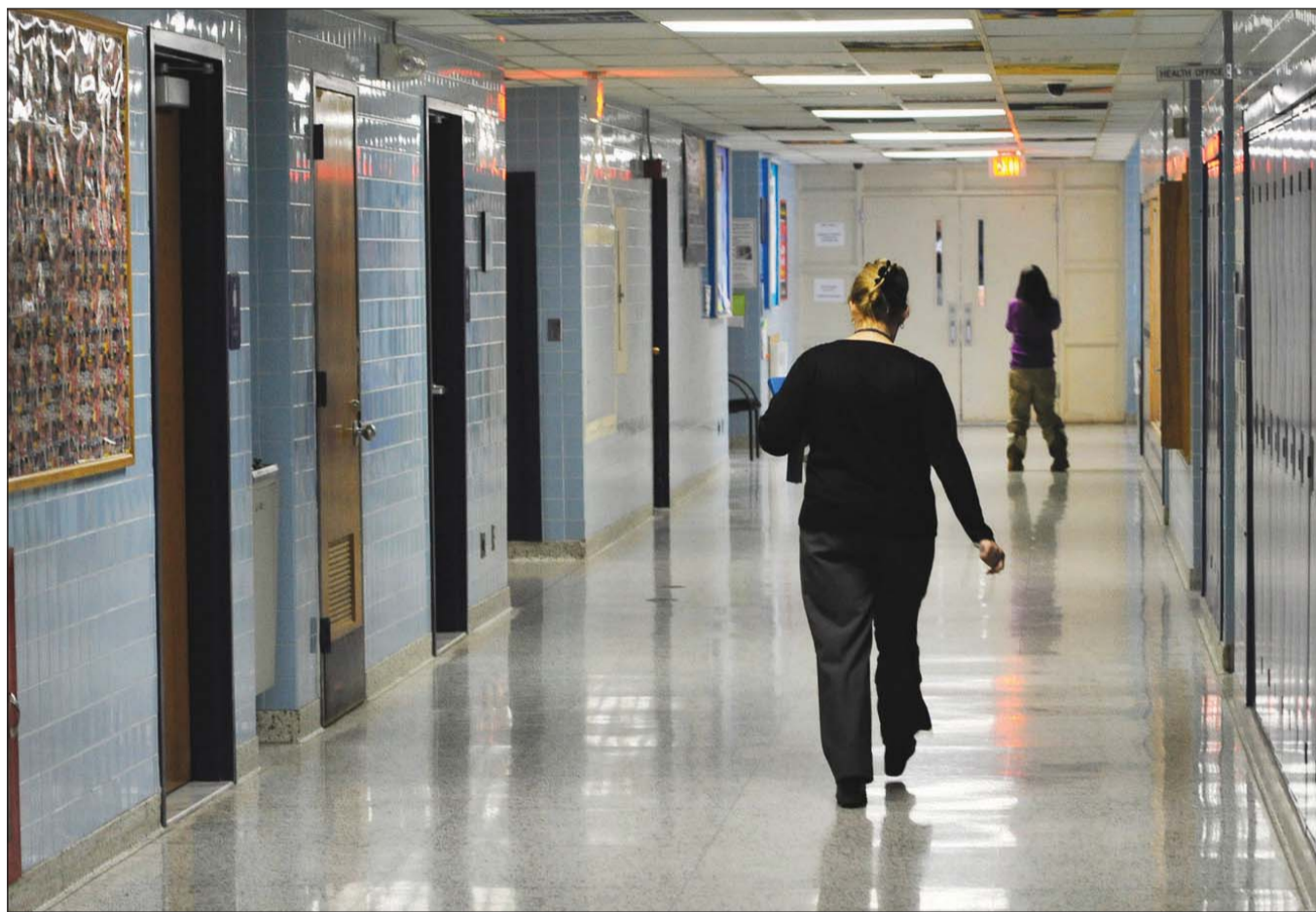
Check out our new website at www.fltimes.com and sign up for an account today!

TIMES POLL

CMAC has begun announcing its summer concert schedule. Which 2011 Grammy-winning artist would you most like to see at CMAC?

Go to www.fltimes.com and scroll down to answer. A new poll runs each week with the answers the following Monday.

IN A BIND OVER BUDGETS



Michelle Bixby photos / *Finger Lakes Times*

A teacher walks the halls of Seneca Falls Middle School last week. Officials at most area school districts are looking at cutting expenses in the face of reduced aid from the state.

Cuomo plan to cut aid to schools would hit area districts harder than others in state

By **HEATHER SWANSON**

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo's proposed state budget would cost schools in the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES district just over \$38 million in state aid.

Most area districts would be hit harder than others around the state. The average loss around the state is 7.3 percent per district, but the average loss for the 25 districts in the Wayne-Finger Lakes area is 10.62 percent.

Bloomfield stands to lose the highest percentage of aid at 16.11 percent or about \$1.6 million. Losing the least in the region is Dundee, at 2.11 percent or \$184,645.

Sharon Sweeney is executive director of the Four County School Boards Association, which encompasses Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates counties. She said there are inequities in the formula that determines state aid distribution.

At a recent press conference that drew dozens of school officials from western New York, superintendents confessed they cannot account for all the inequities in state aid, though they suggested it may be, at least in part, a question of politics.

"The districts in our area are all below average in wealth," said Sweeney, adding that although the governor says state aid adjustments will take economic standing into consideration, the reality is very different.

A combined wealth ratio — or CWR — based on property assessment and income is used to assess district wealth. While the state average is 1.0, the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES average is 0.560 without a single district reaching 1.0. Clyde-Savannah is the poorest area district with a CWR of 0.372; wealthiest is Penn Yan at 0.965.

Because they are more dependent on state aid than wealthier districts, they naturally feel the impact of cuts more than other schools. While wealthier districts may be debating cutting AP courses or elementary school foreign



Sweeney

■ See **STATE AID** on Page 6A



Geneva school board President Mitch Wilber addresses concerned parents and community members during a public input meeting regarding the 2011-12 school budget at the Geneva Community Center Thursday.

About this series

Each Sunday for the next two and a half months, the *Times* will be publishing an in-depth look at the budget crisis local school districts are facing.

Our first installment today looks at just how dire the budget situation is, what's expected in terms of state aid cuts and what local districts could lose.

Capsules detailing where each district currently stands in its budgeting process can be found on Page 7A, and we'll be updating those figures periodically throughout the next few weeks right up until budgets are voted on in May.

We've also asked district superintendents throughout the area to contribute essays detailing the specific chal-



WHAT'S AT STAKE

lenges faced by their districts.

Other stories in the series will include topics such as how the state aid formula really works, the issue of administrative salaries, the problem of declining enrollment, how your school taxes are spent, the role of the teacher's union and more. We'll also explore what it's like to be a teacher — and a student — in a time of cuts.

Next week: Downstate vs. upstate funding

Exempt entities unable to weigh in on plan yet

By **JIM MILLER**

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GENEVA — Officials from several of the city's largest tax-exempt entities say they need more information before weighing in a proposal to raise revenue from them through a fee based on road frontage.



Einstein

The City Council discussed the idea, dubbed a Benefits Assessment District, at a Feb. 23 work session. Officials at the tax-exempt entities say the story in the next day's newspaper was the first they heard about it.

"We really know almost nothing about this proposal," said Tom Burr, director of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. "What I know about it is what I read in the *Finger Lakes Times*. It's a bit difficult to comment right now."

The Council has not discussed the assessment district since Feb. 23. But

■ See **EXEMPT** on Page 4A

Heart screens reassure young athletes

By **DAVID L. SHAW**

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GENEVA — After nearly four hours of heart screening Saturday at the Geneva Community Center, not one high school athlete had to be told he or she should not play sports this spring.

Instead, all of those screened to that point, and their parents, went away reassured that they can compete without risk of cardiac arrest-related death.

That was the point of the day-long screening, sponsored by Finger Lakes Health and Geneva General Cardiology Associates: To identify a potential problem in advance or provide peace of mind to compete in athletics without fear.

■ See **HEART** on Page 4A



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