

School Notebook

Middle School, Music, and Mars Mission Control

by Glenn Bollin, *Principal,*
Ellenville Middle School

The *Ellenville Middle School* has 606 students currently enrolled in grades 5-8. The school is organized into six teams of students, each with a team of core-subject teachers. Students loop with the same team of students and teachers for two years (grades 5-6 and grades 7-8). Students are heterogeneously grouped within each subject, with the exception of accelerated classes and self-contained special education classes. The majority of special education students are included in regular education classes.

The school day begins for some students as early as 7:15 AM, and continues until after 4 PM. The early-risers enjoy the use of the Middle School Media Center, gymnasium, and computer labs. After-school programs include: academic enrichment classes, sports, theater, dance, music, arts & crafts, video production, solar energy exploration, Science and Math Olympiads, chess club, ski club, guitar, African drumming, Homework Help, and others. Many of these programs are funded through the *21st Century Learning Grant*.

The eighth-grade students have just completed the New York State English Language Arts Assessment. This test was administered over two days and involves students displaying competency in reading, writing, and listening skills. An exit survey given to the students indicates that they thought the test was not too difficult and they felt they did well on it. The eighth-grade science performance tests were to be administered during the last week of January. Mr. Bollin and Mr. Krebs attended the January *P.T.O.* meeting and presented an overview of the State assessments and plans to increase academic achievement.

The Middle School musical, "Schoolhouse Rock Live," was performed January 24th and 25th in the High School Auditorium. Under the direction of Mr. Haener, this student production featured some of our very talented Middle School students. The students worked very hard to put this production together,



from creating sets, to the publicity, to refreshments.

The *Ellenville Middle School Jazz Ensemble* will be performing during the "Music in our Schools" concerts in Albany during March. It is quite an honor for this group, under the direction of Mr. Placencia, to perform and receive recognition from the State Legislature. This is the second year in a row that we have been selected to participate. Bravo!

Students from the *Middle School Student Council* will be volunteering at the New York Special Olympics Winter Games February 21st and 22nd at the *Nevele Grande Hotel*. They will be assisting other volunteers in what has become an Ellenville tradition.

February will see the completion of the Mars Red Rover Project. Mr. Rabeno and Mr. Rubin have been working with a team of Middle School student scientists designing and building a robot rover. The rover is equipped with a digital camera, interfaced with a computer, which will allow the students to control the rover from remote locations.

Students in California, and NASA scientists from Houston, will be attempting to remotely drive our rover and complete a course on a simulated Martian terrain that our students have constructed (*see photo above*). The students have been meeting with NASA via video conferencing to discuss this project. Our student scientists are: Josh Avery, Devon Craft, Chalen Ford, Jack Gillette, Erica Green, Daniel Miller, Adam Roda, and Sam Rosario. Mission Command to Houston, over and out!

For more information, call the *Ellenville Middle School* at 845-647-0126, or visit the district website at: www.ecs.k12.ny.us

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