

# Heuvelton Central School District

Box 375, 87 Washington Street

Heuvelton, New York 13654

Phone (315) 344-2414

Fax (315) 344-2349

www.heuvelton.schoolfusion.us

Towns of Oswegatchie, DePeyster, Macomb, DeKalb, Lisbon, and Canton

February 18, 2011

## Board of Education:

Dr. John Zeh  
President

Andrew Martin  
Vice President

Michael Davis

Dennis Durant

Timothy Johnson

Richard Moore

Thomas Nichols

## Administration:

Susan E. Todd  
Superintendent  
stodd@heuvelton.k12.ny.us

Michael W. Warden  
MS/High School  
Principal  
mwarden@heuvelton.k12.ny.us

Cynthia L. Belleau,  
Elementary Principal  
CSE Chairperson  
cbelleau@heuvelton.k12.ny.us

Jeff Swanson  
Business Manager  
jswanson@slboces.org

Dear Parents, Teachers, Staff, Students and Residents of Heuvelton Community,

I am writing to share with you highlights of the feedback we received from residents of Heuvelton in November and December. Over 200 residents – including parents of children attending the school district and residents who do not have children in our school – were kind enough to take the time to complete a survey on their perceptions and experiences with the Heuvelton Central School District. Now it is my turn to share with you what we learned.

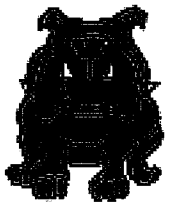
First, I want to thank everyone who participated in this survey. The 202 responses represent roughly 16 % of the households in Heuvelton. This is a better-than-average response compared to surveys of community members conducted by other school districts. Completing a survey takes time from your busy schedules and I understand why many may skip them. However, I hope you will appreciate the fact that we have decided to conduct only two surveys of parents and community members in any given year. As you will see, your feedback is an important part of our strategy to embrace continuous improvement.

If you are a parent with children in Heuvelton Central School and were unable to participate in this survey, you will have another chance this spring to express your views about the district. I urge you to share your thoughts with us. I assure you that every response is important; every viewpoint is considered and informs us about how to become better. I promise to quickly turn around and share what we learn from you – everything as it is, the good news and the areas where you want us to improve. I believe our community expects this level of transparency and deserves this kind of collaborative decision making on the critical issues surrounding how we educate our children.

I am particularly gratified to note that 94% of respondents indicated that strong schools are important to them. This is even more encouraging when you consider that 74% of respondents presently do not have a child attending our school. Further, 80% of respondents assigned the district an overall grade of an A or a B. Just under 80% of respondents understand the role of the School Board and the Superintendent in how this school district operates and is managed. This understanding is important because we are here to serve this community and are accountable to you, the residents of this community.

A small fraction of respondents indicated they had an opportunity in the recent past to interact with a Board member, the Superintendent or the Principals of Heuvelton Central. (Of the 202 respondents 37 people had spoken to a Board member, 16 had interacted with the Elementary Principal, 28 with the Middle/High School Principal and 21 with me as Superintendent.) Our Elementary Principal received high scores for the overall experience of those who contacted her with a range of 86--93% favorable interactions. The Middle/High School Principal and Board members had slightly lower scores but still over 80% favorable. My scores were in the 63--79 % range of responding with favorable interactions. These scores regarding contact with the Superintendent are

**Respectful**



**Responsible**



**Safe**

above the national average of 46--65% but since the scores were lower than I would like I promise to continue to reflect on how this area might be improved. I assure you that it is my intention to make sure that when anyone contacts my office, their needs and concerns are met with courtesy and the highest standards of professionalism.

A few other issues concerned me, particularly with respect to the community understanding the budget issues our district faces. Clearly, these have been difficult years for the nation's economy and residents of Heuvelton have had their share of hardship. State aid is a primary source of funding for our schools and it has been frozen for the past two years. It is clear that funding will not improve for the next school year and I anticipate it may get even worse in the future. The district has been called to "do more with less" over the past few years and we have risen to the challenge. Through cuts that involved teamwork, innovative thinking and sacrifices, the teachers and staff of this district have strived to minimize any adverse impact of budget cuts on the quality of instruction in our classrooms. The survey showed that a majority of respondents are not very familiar with the magnitude of our budgetary challenges. I emphasize this fact because the future of our district belongs to us all and only when we are properly informed about the challenges that lie before us can we collectively rise to meet them. I embrace this as another opportunity to do a better job of communicating with our community.

Nearly 87% of respondents indicated they feel welcome to attend school activities and I wish to thank our principals and teachers for maintaining such a positive environment at HCS. Community members are an extremely important part of the Heuvelton Central School family and I hope that you will take advantage of opportunities to visit the school and to become actively involved in our district.

These are some of the highlights. I will be making the report available in its entirety on the District Website at: [heuvelton.schoolfusion.us](http://heuvelton.schoolfusion.us). If you wish to receive a paper copy, please contact Mrs. Herron, District Clerk at 344-2414, ext. 3501.

Through this improved two-way dialog and by providing you greater transparency as to the results, I hope to accelerate the pace of improvement at Heuvelton Central School. I welcome a higher level of participation in our next survey and invite you to reach out to your neighbors and friends to join this conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan E. Todd".

Susan E. Todd, Superintendent