

The Clarion News

"Clarion County's Best LOCAL News and Information Source Since 1840"



Academics

Union School District joins 'Weather Bug' network

[General News](#)

[Living Section](#)

[Academics Section](#)

[Sports](#)

[Opinions](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[The Weather](#)

[About Clarion Co.](#)

[About Us](#)

[The Derrick Online!](#)

SLIGO - Weather Bug, the leading provider of live, local weather information, announced that Union School District has joined the WeatherBug Schools Program.

The school will install a new WeatherBug Tracking Station and will be able to provide weather data for meteorological team at KDKA to broadcast online and on-air. The Tracking Station will also be used to enhance the school's curriculum using the WeatherBug Achieve Program.

"Meteorology is both exciting and everywhere. This tracking station and software from WeatherBug will allow all students of the Union School District the opportunity to further their knowledge about weather and climate by using current technology tools. Interdisciplinary experiences and mixed-grade level opportunities can also be designed," said Mr. Alan Pryor, a science teacher at Union Jr. / Sr. High School .

Jake Weckerly, 3rd grade science teacher at Sligo Elementary School and Wendy Ferguson, 6th grade science teacher at Rimersburg Elementary School will be implementing the WeatherBug curriculum materials with their elementary science curriculum.

"This is an exciting program for our school district. The WeatherBug program and curriculum will only enhance our students' learning experience and together with Science: It's Elementary, Union Elementary Schools will be providing the best and most comprehensive science program in the state of Pa. ," said Jean McCleary, elementary principal.

In addition to the WeatherBug, elementary students can look forward to a new Chinese/World Language Program.

The Rimersburg Elementary School , will be offering a Chinese Language class that is paid for through a portion of the Accountability Block Grant for World Languages Programs.

A total of 23 students, grades 4 through 6, will be participating in a web-based classroom learning the Chinese language.

Every other day, the students log on to an internet/web-based classroom for live instruction. The students are equipped with headsets (with earphones and microphones) so they can hear and speak to the instructor.

The instructor will be visible to each student via-web-cam, so students can see word annunciation and hand movements if necessary. Rimersburg teachers, David Louder and Tom Minick, will be monitors for the classroom to assist with any technical problems that may occur, but mainly, to communicate and assist the language instructor and oversee the class.

"This was a pilot program for our students for the 2007-08 school year. The program is affiliated with Seton Hill University and the Center for Advancing Partnerships for Educators (CAPE). The students have learned a lot about the Modern Standard Mandarin Chinese Language, Pinyin system, character writing, and Chinese culture, and have really enjoyed the experience," said McCleary.

"It has benefited our students in so many ways. I believe the improved PSSA scores for our students taking the course is one of the factors for their academic success."

Students are challenged, but the challenge has been met

with excitement and enthusiasm by the Rimersburg Elementary Students.

"It also proves although our district is small and rural, we can still provide academic opportunities to our students via technology. Our district has taken the initiative and has proven we can provide the same opportunities as much larger and wealthier districts. Mr. Bornak, our superintendent, has a vision for our students. He is providing the opportunities to make our students competitive in the world," said McCleary.

In addition, students will have the opportunity to participate and learn through an elementary art program.

The elementary art program was removed fifteen years ago and never reinstated.

Some teachers were reassigned teaching assignments for the 2008-09 school year and this left a window of opportunity to place certified art instructor in an art classroom for grades K through 6.

"I believe the students will benefit in a variety of ways from having an elementary art program. The research clearly indicates there are parts of the brain that are positively affected from having experiences with the arts," said McCleary.

"I feel fortunate to provide this opportunity to our students at the elementary level. Living in a small, rural area does not provide our students with a great deal of culture and appreciation for the arts. Providing a structured art curriculum will enhance the students' mindset, creativity, and academic levels."

Elementary students will also have the opportunity to participate in the newly established garden club.

Activities will encompass horticulture, science, and art.

Elementary students will meet regularly, year round and will maintain the newly established flower gardens at Rimersburg Elementary School .

"Students will be learning by doing and seeing the fruits of their efforts displayed each and every day as they enter their schools," said McCleary.

During the winter months students will enjoy working with their container plants indoors.

The core group of students at Rimersburg Elementary got a taste of the 'green thumb' this past school year as they completed the Artist in Residence program with Kathe Umlauf, the resident artist through the Erie Arts Council.

Umlauf, the guest artist, instructed students on creating stepping stones.

Mrs. Sue Dougherty, 5th grade teacher and coordinator, completed the project by creating three flower gardens in the front of the school building.

"What was old shrubs is now replaced with a butterfly garden, perennial garden, and bird garden, complete with a bird bath, and the student's stepping stones," said McCleary.

"The students from the summer recreation and summer school program completed the planting and now the front of the building is aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Mrs. Dougherty and her students should be very proud of their efforts."

In addition, the Rimersburg Elementary Computer Lab has been updated with 28 new PC computers.

This will aid with the issues of connectivity. The new computers in addition to the WAN will help with speed, as well as connectivity for the students and staff.

A new program titled, "Too Good for Drugs" has also been provided by the Clarion County Drug and Alcohol Agency.

The program delivers an anti-drug message for primary

The program delivers an anti-drug message for primary aged students and is instructed by the staff at Clarion County Drug and Alcohol. This allows for in-class instruction on the benefits of leading a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

The Union Elementary Schools will also be partnering with the RIU 6 for implementing the behavior component of the Response To Intervention (RTI) during the 2008-09 school year and will continue for the upcoming year with the FIG Reading program.

The behavior component will include the implementation of a School-Wide Behavior Model.

The School-Wide Behavior Model will ensure less discipline referrals which will permit more classroom instructional time.

At the Sligo Elementary School, Read Naturally will also be implemented as part of the literacy instruction for second grade students to improve their reading fluency levels.

The program will allow students to monitor their progress with quick reads and fluency assessments.

The program will be led by Stacy Best, 2nd grade reading teacher.

Changes to policies and rules have been made to the student handbook as well.

A new policy has been included involving parties and the snacks that can be provided.

Snacks are to be limited to healthier foods and beverages. Parents will be limited to three food items for parties with sugar not being the number one ingredient. Cookies, cupcakes, and sugary beverages are not permitted.

As for student registration, there have been no new changes to the guidelines. Students entering kindergarten must be five years old by July 2nd, and first grade students must be six years old by Sept. 1.

"At Union Elementary Schools, we specifically strive for academic excellence. This means that a great deal of time is spent in setting high standards, working continuously to improve instruction, and regularly evaluating the quality of our efforts," said McCleary.

"Creating a positive learning environment is a high priority at Union Elementary Schools. Students are guided by specific attributes that promote respect, cooperation, courtesy, and acceptance of others. We are proud of our schools, and will continue to work together to make Union Elementary Schools an even better place to learn."

At the Union High School, students can look forward to several new courses including a Chinese language class, show choir, and PSSA math class.

A new mentoring program has also been created to give students a faculty member to help guide them through their junior and senior high careers.

This program includes students and their mentor meeting on a regular basis to discuss all aspects of their high school career such as grades, homework, and social life.

A new seventh grade orientation program has also been created.

The orientation is closely tied with the new mentoring program in that students will meet with their mentors in addition to becoming familiar with the new school to help ease the transition.

New policies and rules have been changed in the student handbook.

In an effort to deter students from using drugs or alcohol, a new drug testing policy has been added to prevent participants in co-curricular programs and students with driving privileges from using drugs and alcohol as well as to protect the health and safety of the students.

This policy allows the testing of students and athletes who may be suspected of using drugs or alcohol.

Students may be subject to random testing, reasonable-suspension testing, return-to-activity testing and follow-up testing.

Students seeking a parking permit may be required to submit to an alcohol or controlled substance test before receiving the permit.

Stephen Shutters is the high school principal, with Jean McCleary as the elementary principal; Larry Bornak as superintendent.

John Corsini is the district's business manager. Guidance counselors for the district are Judy Rupp and Melissa Anderson.

The district's website is www.unionsd.net.

News Published with [Active News Manager](#), Hosting by [USAChoice](#).
Copyright 2001



[Click Here to Submit a Classified Ad Online.](#)