

Senior Citizen Concert & Luncheon Postponed

After talking with county Health Department officials and area nursing homes, Tamarac High School has decided to unfortunately postpone the Senior Citizen Concert and Luncheon scheduled for Nov. 13 due to flu concerns.

The event, which features a concert and free luncheon organized by students, will be held in the spring. A new date has not yet been set but an announcement will be made once it has been rescheduled.

"We certainly understand that seniors in our community will be disappointed but we believe this is in the best interest of our community, given how quickly the flu has been spreading," said Ann Kolakowski, a music teacher and Key Club Advisor at Tamarac. "The students were just as disappointed as they look forward to putting this on for our community each year."

Tamarac Schools See Cases of Students with Flu-Like Symptoms Decrease Slightly

In the past week, Tamarac schools have seen their numbers of students absent with flu-like symptoms decrease to approximately 3 to 5 percent of the total student population.

We continue to monitor the situation carefully and will alert parents to any significant changes as Health officials inform us the H1N1 flu virus is still circulating in area communities. We also would like to thank parents for following recommended practices such as keeping children home when they're sick.

Please visit the school website, www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us, for updates and recommendations from the Rensselaer County Health Department.

Mark Your Calendars

- Nov. 5 - BEST Assembly, 9:15 a.m.
- Nov. 5 - Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 6 - Emergency Release Drill
- Nov. 9 - Booster Club Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 11 - Veterans Day, No School
- Nov. 13 - Elementary Parent Conferences
- Nov. 13&20 - Elementary 11:40 a.m. Dismissal
- Nov. 16-17 - NYS Grade 5 Social Studies Test
- Nov. 18 - PTSA Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 19 - Gr. 6 - 8 Parent Conferences
- Nov. 19 - Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 20 - Elementary Parent Conferences
- Nov. 23 - Gr. 9 - 12 Parent Conferences
- Nov. 24 - Elementary Parent Conferences
- Nov. 26-27 - Thanksgiving Recess, No School

Third Graders Learn About Butterfly Development

After spending weeks watching the four stages of butterfly development, Tamarac third graders said goodbye to their butterflies recently as they released them in the wild.



Third grade teacher Linda Riley explained that students learn about butterfly metamorphosis in their science unit. The butterflies arrive as larvae and students are able to watch them grow, form chrysalises, become adults and then lay eggs.

"This unit in science is a favorite one for students and teachers," Riley said. "By the end of the science unit, they have observed all four stages."

Students examined the tiny eggs with magnifying glasses before heading outside to release the adult butterflies. Excited students gathered around to get a drop of honey on their fingers, which the butterflies lapped up before taking flight.

After caring for the butterflies for weeks, the students clearly grew attached to the insects as some named their butterflies and chased after them as they flew off.

"The students also learn to care for and feed butterflies and they practice humane treatment of animals," added Riley.



To see more photos, visit the Elementary School webpage.

Parent/Teacher Conferences This Month

Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for the following dates this month. For further information, please visit your child's school's webpage from the district website, www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us.

Tamarac Elementary

- **Nov. 13** – 11:40 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- **Nov. 20** – 11:40 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- **Nov. 24** – 3:30 – 7 p.m.

Grades 6 – 8

- **Nov. 19** – 4:30 to 7 p.m.

Grades 9 – 12

- **Nov. 23** – 4:30 to 7 p.m.

Parents Can Now Deposit Money in Cafeteria Accounts Online

A new cafeteria computer system is now in place at Tamarac schools, allowing parents to put money in their children's cafeteria accounts online.

To use the new system, please visit the school website, www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us, and click on "Cafeteria / Menus" on the left side of the screen to visit the Food Services webpage.

On the Food Services webpage, parents will find a letter explaining the new service, a reference guide to set up accounts and a hyperlink to the online system.

Parents who would prefer to continue to pay by check like they have been can continue to do so.

Students Learn Gas Laws with Hot Air Balloons

Tamarac High School students recently put their knowledge of gas laws to the test by sending hot air balloons they built into the sky.

While the windy conditions prevented the balloons from getting too far, science teacher Theresa Flood noted the activity helped emphasize the lessons that students learned in Chemistry class.

"The students constructed the balloons as a group, using tissue paper and gluing them together," Flood explained. "They then got to see the effect of Charles' Law in person."

As part of a unit on gas laws, sophomores and juniors learned that Charles' Law states that the volume of a gas will increase as its temperature increases when kept at a constant pressure.

Since the law explains why hot air balloons can float, Flood and fellow science teacher Kerry O'Sullivan used the activity as a way to engage their Chemistry students.

But Flood quickly noted the activity wasn't their idea. It was started by Ron Geuther, a long-time science teacher at Tamarac who retired two years ago. Geuther was popular with students and faculty for his use of such activities that made learning fun for students.

"It's one of his traditions we're carrying on," Flood said.



2010-11 District Priorities Discussed

Faculty, staff, parents, students, community members and Board of Education members recently came together on a Saturday to discuss the school district's priorities for next year.

The annual District Planning Priorities Day was held Saturday, October 24 at Tamarac Secondary School, where 47 participants talked about what the school district's priorities should be for the 2010-11 school year. The same process was followed last year, resulting in this year's district priorities, available on the district website, www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us.

Superintendent Lou McIntosh explained that with the school district having limited resources, district priorities help school officials build the annual budget around what school and community representatives believe is most important.

"We're seeking input from all stakeholders about what's best for our children from an educational standpoint," McIntosh said. "I was particularly pleased to see students volunteer their time and offer suggestions since it's their education we're ultimately discussing."

The Board of Education is expected to approve the District Priorities for 2010-11 later this month. Once they're approved, they will be made available on the school website.

High School Students to Attend Classes During January Regents Exams

Tamarac High School has decided to hold classes during this year's January 26-29 Regents Exams week.

In previous years, students in grades 9-12 did not have to come to school during these days. But with less than 40 students expected to take Regents Exams in January, the District decided to hold classes this year. Students taking exams will be able to do so in a designated area.

"We decided to make this change to increase the number of instructional days for students," said Principal Richard Pogue. "But since some families may plan vacations around this time, we wanted to let parents know well in advance."

If you have any questions, please contact Principal Pogue at 279-4600 ext. 2402.

Middle School Students Help Alum Help Troops

On October 30, Tamarac students in grades 6 – 8 participated in a walkathon to help raise money for Mike Abrams, a 1998 Tamarac alum and Afghanistan war veteran who himself is raising money for wounded soldiers and their families.

Abrams ran in the NYC Marathon on Nov. 2 as a member of Team Hope for the Warriors. The organization helps wounded soldiers and their families with the cost of health care.

Tamarac students raised money through the walkathon and by purchasing doughnuts, apples and drinks at the event. Faculty and staff also joined in the walkathon to help raise money.

To learn more about Mike Abrams and his efforts, visit the Middle School webpage on the school website, www.brittonkill.k12.ny.us, where a story has a link to a *Times Union* story with information about donations.

Tamarac Key Club Organizes Blood Drive

The American Red Cross received much needed blood donations on Wednesday, Nov. 4 thanks to the Tamarac Key Club which held a blood drive in the multi-purpose gym.

Key Club President Elissa Prout and Secretary Kayla Mulqueen explained the club organizes two blood drives a year.

"It's typically students who donate but we get some teachers and community members too," Elissa said. "We had 39 people sign up and one walk in so far."



Elissa and Kayla noted that the blood drives fit perfectly with the Key Club's mission of improving communities through volunteer work. Key Club is sponsored by the Kiwanis.