



Carrie Ann Grippo  
Principal Timothy Young poses with some Florence Brasser students; Molly Hong, Ryan Henry, Michael Firnstein, Jacob Antinelli and Azizi Sarkis.

## Brasser principal attributes success to parents, students and staff

By Jessica Spies, staff writer

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Chili, N.Y. —

Neatly tied on a tree right in front of Florence Brasser Elementary School is a proud blue ribbon in recognition of the school being named a 2010 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. The school is one of 17 schools in the state that have received the same recognition. Building principal Timothy Young attributes the honor to the dedication of students, staff members and families. “We have responsibility, we have respect and we work hard every day,” Young said. “When people walk through our doors, there’s that feeling of success.” Fifth grade teacher Jeff Curran, who’s been at the school for 13 years, said the community support is part of the reason the school received the award. Small class sizes also contributes. The current students have worked hard, but so have previous students, he said. And all contributed to the award. “I’m proud of them,” he said.

The school opened as a one-room schoolhouse in 1854. It was named in 1955 after beloved teacher Florence Brasser, who taught students within its walls for 33 years. In October 2004, the school celebrated its 150th anniversary with school tours, displays of memorabilia and a presentation of the time capsule to be opened in 2029. Last October, the school got a call from the state Education Department's Chief State School Officer encouraging them to apply. In February, the school sent out its application, with 11 essays, and waited for the 2009-10 assessment grades to come through. A hurdle was the changes



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Third grade teacher Gina Hinkley works with her student Brandon Poindexter as he reads out loud from the book "Plantzilla" by Jerdine Nolen.

in proficiency cut scores in English and math assessments for third through eighth grades per the Board of Regents in August. But even with the new guidelines, Brasser students were proficient in both subjects.

"There's very caring and very individualized education for all students," Young said. And the teachers has as much as enthusiasm as the teachers. "I'm excited to be here. I love it," said third grade teacher Jaimie Sacheli, who's in her fourth year at the school. "It's parents, teachers and

students working together as a team," she said. The some 260 students have high attendance: There has been 97 percent attendance for both students and teachers over the past few years. "These families put children first," Young said. Curran and Young will travel to Washington, D.C., from Nov. 15 to 16 for the national recognition events. Young said the school plans to announce future blue ribbon celebrations throughout the year.

## About the Blue Ribbon award

The Blue Ribbon program, which began in 1983, honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement. Blue Ribbon schools are selected based on one of the following two criteria: (1) High performing schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state tests or in the case of private schools in the top 10 percent of the nation or nationally-normed



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Victoria Donahue and Nicholas Crocker, both fifth graders in Brian Romeo's class, discuss the five different types of weather during an Earth Science class.

tests; or, (2) Improving schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests. Until 1997, no Monroe County elementary schools received the award; since 1997, three Monroe County elementary schools have won the award. Eight Monroe Schools have received the award over the years. Brasser is the fourth Monroe County elementary school.



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Fifth grade teacher Brian Romeo discusses weather during an Earth Science class.

## What they're saying

“Florence Brasser is nationally recognized for academic achievement as one of the most successful schools in the United States. As a district, we are proud of this accomplishment.”

— Dr. Mark Davey, Gates Chili Superintendent

“This honor acknowledges the hard work and dedication of our students, staff members and families.”

— Building principal Timothy Young

“It’s parents, teachers and students working together as a team.”

— Teacher Jaimie Sacheli

“I am so happy that my kids were lucky enough to be able to attend a school like Florence Brasser. All the teachers, administration and support staff work together to focus on the students and their needs; to allow them to have educational success and become well rounded young people. Winning the blue ribbon award is just proof of what a great school Brasser is.”

— Family Association president Tara Velente

“There is a great deal of pride being a parent of a Florence Brasser student. The blue ribbon award speaks to the level of passion each teacher and administrator has. They are dedicated to each child’s success and making a difference in my daughter’s life. Kudos Brasser family!”

— Parent Colleen Schwab



Carrie Ann Grippo  
Thomas Augello and his fellow fifth grader David DeGroat look up answers on the computer regarding Continental Drift, during the Computer Lab led by teacher Jeff Curran.



Carrie Ann Grippo  
Second grader Kenna Daddey swings during recess.