

Raymond Resident
Raymond, Maine 04071

'Good Schools' – according to Windham Grade 1 students

Good schools help kids learn to play together.

- Diane

Good schools need teachers who are good at teaching kids lots of stuff.

- Christopher

Good schools have lots of crayons, even the glitter ones.

- Sydney

Good schools have teachers who are good to kids. And they're smart.

- Rosemary

Good schools have good teachers who know a lot and they're wicked nice.

- Lyden

Good schools have perfect water fountains, big playgrounds, and nice great teachers.

- Chase

Good schools are organized and the adults don't try to find bad things about the kids.

- Meghan

Good schools teach kids math, even the kind with pennies and nickels. And sometimes quarters and those little ones, too.

- Madys

Keeping track



Global positioning systems have been installed in all Regional School Unit 14 school buses and in several passenger vans. The devices track the vehicles, giving location data, arrival and departure times, and also provide quality control in the district's delivery of services. The installation of GPS devices is part of the district's movement to overhaul its video and audio equipment in the transportation department.



Winter 2010

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE COMMUNITY OF REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT 14

WINDHAM RAYMOND SCHOOL

Curtailments challenge current, new budgets

Regional School Unit 14, facing a \$926,400 decrease in state funding for this year's budget, has moved quickly to deal with the impact.

Already in place are a freeze on spending and an adjustment to the school calendar. By making the schedule changes, the district will save on heat at all schools. Among the changes: Friday, Feb. 12, right before the winter vacation, will be a no-school day. Friday, March 26, will now be a student day, a change from the previously scheduled in-service day for teachers. Two days have been added to the school calendar in June because of the two extra days in December 2009 for Christmas break. The last day of school is now June 16, though snow days will still be added if necessary.

In addition, the administrative team has volunteered to take a non-student furlough day – a

day without pay – prior to June 30. And the district will not reimburse staff for courses and conference requests in this fiscal year, instead allocating money in the new budget to pay based on approval date (first in) until funds are exhausted.

"We are struggling to make these reductions without reducing our highly regarded and valuable staff members," said Superintendent Sandy Prince. "We are, of course, trying to bring in reductions that have the least amount of impact on our students and teachers – in other words, farthest from the classroom as possible."

And looking ahead to the 2010-2011 budget, the state is projecting further reductions in school funding of at least \$36 million and is also moving to reduce spending by an additional \$30 million as part of a streamlining initiative being directed by the Appropriations Committee.

Anticipating these events, all Windham-Raymond administrators already have agreed not to seek a

Curtailments, continued on page 3

From the Superintendent... Sandy Prince

Our initiatives range from new grants to new strategic plan

Welcome to our Windham Raymond Regional School District (RSU 14) January 2010 Link newsletter.

As you read through this edition, you will see we continue to have staff successfully obtain grants that enhance our revenues during these tough economic times. Windham and Raymond are often recognized for the large amount of money that comes from our teachers' writing innovative grants.

Other initiatives that will spark your interest include continued safety improvement for our students through GPS devices installed in our buses. The phenomenal fall sports season is also noted, along with a story and photo on World Food Day.

I would also like to update you on our Strategic Plan initiative. As a newly formed district, we have been busy with our planning initiatives and I am very pleased with our progress to date.

The word "strategy" is most commonly heard in school systems in the context of strategic planning, an exercise districts go through every five or so years. This fall, we had the good fortune to have 60 participants in a day-and-a-half conference with the intent to begin a new Strategic Plan for our newly formed RSU. A diverse cross representation from our communities included business people, senior citizens, high school students, parents, clergy, teachers, administrators and School Board members.

Moving forward from the Strategic Planning Conference, we have a committee to develop goals and the strategies that will be used to achieve those goals. Our Strategic Plan will be completed this spring and will go before the Board of Directors for approval. This committee is working hard to put together a clear picture of how our people, our activities and our resources can work effectively to accomplish a collective purpose.

I want to wish you all a Happy New Year. The Windham Raymond School District values your support, and we will continue to keep not only our immediate school community informed, but also the residents without children in the school system – about 80 percent of the population. All are stakeholders in the educational future of our children.

Lunch and learn



In recognition of World Food Day, these students in Lee LeRoy's Foods and Wellness classes at Windham High School hosted an "Empty Bowl Project" fundraiser in October. For \$4, teachers and staff were invited to the classroom for lunch, including a bowl of homemade soup, biscuits and dessert, all prepared by the students. Students researched and learned about the issue of hunger and decided to raise awareness of the problem in America. They made posters and information sheets to spread the word around the high school. Letters were printed in local newspapers. The "empty bowls" at the luncheon were a reminder that there are always empty bowls in the world. Empty Bowl Projects are held all over the country to recognize World Food Day in October. All the proceeds were donated to the Windham Food Pantry.

The future of RSU 14 from Raymond Grade 1 Students

In 10 years, I wish we had a swimming pool because I swim for good exercise. I hope we have gym every day. It is fun and we would be healthier. Our brains would solve problems better.

- Makenna

In 10 years I hope that school is as fun as it is now. We should have more computers in the classrooms for the kids to use. Don't you know how important computers are in the world?

- Alec

In school in 10 years from now, I hope that we have a slide-out swimming pool. It would slide open from the floor. It would be frozen in the winter and we could skate.

- Boden

I hope there are more teachers because they would help us learn more if we had more teachers. We could read better and do more math. We could solve problems because that is important. There are a lot of problems out there.

- Dominick

In school, 10 years from now I think there will be more work for me. I think there will be a lot of work for me. I will like the work. My brain will need to solve a lot of problems and that takes work. I will be better at it then. And I am good at it now, so wow!

- Declan

In 10 years there will be more teachers! We will have Wii. We will have more TV. We will have more gym, too.

- John

In 10 years I want more gym, more music, more teachers, more numbers, more jewelry, more working, more maps, more words, more library, more art, more computer. I guess we will have to be at school longer, too. That would be okay.

- Brooklyn

I like the gym that we are having 10 years from now. It is so fun and we have it every day. We have a stage out at recess and we can do plays. I love school now and I love school then. In 10 years you can go to school every single day if you want to and I want to.

- Jordan



Sports teams excel in fall

For the second straight fall season, all Windham High School varsity teams earned a tournament spot, including field hockey, girls soccer, boys soccer and football.

The football team, in its 11th year of existence, won the Class A State Championship with a 35-21 victory over Bangor. Senior running back/defensive back Jack Mallis was named 2009-2010 Gatorade Maine Football Player of the Year, and also won the statewide Fitzpatrick Trophy. In its 25th year, the Gatorade Player of the Year award honors one top high school student-athlete in 12 varsity sports in each of the 50 states.

The boys soccer team advanced to the Western Maine final before losing to eventual state champion Scarborough.

The golf team and cross-country teams also had successful seasons that included individuals qualifying for state competition. Female runners Erin Flatley and Talia McKay qualified to run at the New England Cross Country Meet.

Windham Football Coach Matt Perkins and Windham Boys Soccer Coach Paul Baber were each voted 2009 Southern Maine Activities Association Coach of the Year in their respective sport by their peers. The voting is done by conference coaches at the conclusion of the fall season.

New Web site features Raymond students' music

The Raymond Elementary School music program now has its own Web site: <http://sites.google.com/site/raymondelementarymusic>.

The site features the school music calendar, kindergarten-Grade 4 music units, kid-friendly music education site links, and lists of composers with links to Web sites for more information.

The most exciting features are samples of the music that Patti Gordan, music teacher, is using in music classes, mostly performed by the students themselves.

Gordan, a veteran music teacher, has 27 years of experience in Raymond. She has been the choral conductor and manager at the District II Elementary Music Festivals. This year she is the orchestra manager at the festival. She was selected as a Portland Pirates Unum Starting 6 Educator of the Year in 2008. On Dec. 19, her third- and fourth-grade chorus of 58 students performed the National Anthem at the Portland Pirates home game at the Cumberland County Civic Center.

Flu vaccine clinics deemed successful

More than 50 percent of the Windham Raymond School District students received H1N1 flu vaccines in the week prior to Thanksgiving vacation.

The district's team of school nurses, in collaboration with the Visiting Nurses Association Home Health and Hospice of South Portland, together vaccinated a total of 1,939 students with H1N1 and 546 students with seasonal flu vaccine.

Attendance surveillance the week following Thanksgiving vacation showed a drop in absences, returning to the usual low percentage.

This effort to mitigate the spread of H1N1 combined stressing personal hygiene practices and environmental cleaning with vaccinating 57.4 percent of the student population.

Parents of students also helped limit the spread by keeping children home when they were sick, communicating important information to the school attendance staff and school nurses and supporting the effort to get students vaccinated.

REAL School teacher wins national award



Milken Award winner Richard Meserve "incorporates superhuman patience and unconditional love into his work with students," according to Education Commissioner Susan Gendron.

Richard Meserve, described as "the voice of support for students who have burned nearly every bridge," has received a national teaching award.

Maine Department of Education Commissioner Susan Gendron presented the REAL School teacher with a Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, plus a check for \$25,000.

The Milken Educator Awards, conceived by Milken Family Foundation chairman and cofounder Lowell Milken to attract, retain and motivate outstanding talent in the teaching profession, has grown to become the nation's largest teacher recognition program.

Since 1987, more than \$60 million has been awarded to 2,400-plus educators.

Gendron said the prestigious award is a way of recognizing classroom teachers, whose work often goes unnoticed, but is always appreciated.

"Mr. Meserve is the quiet, but resolute, voice of support for students who have burned nearly every bridge," said Gendron. "His willingness to always go the extra mile for students who challenge and push most people to their limits is a constant source of inspiration to everyone who works with him. He incorporates superhuman patience and unconditional love into his work with students; many of his colleagues refer to him as the 'kid whisperer.'"

Meserve received his bachelor's degree in secondary education from the University of Massachusetts in 2004, and is enrolled in master's level courses in special education and special education administration at the University of Southern Maine. He lives in Falmouth with his wife, Jennifer, and his daughters, Shannon, Katrina and Hannah.

At Primary School, many positive signs

The Windham Primary School staff's Go Green-Technology for Scholars team has raised about \$5,000 – enough to buy an interactive whiteboard called a Smartboard, which allows for the integration of technology into the classrooms. Any teacher can sign up to use the Smartboard. The team continues to raise money to purchase more technology for classrooms

The Positive Behavior Support program continues to demonstrate effective results. A proactive, school-wide approach to addressing student behavior, the program gives teachers and students a common language and approach to demonstrating positive school behavior. All behavior incidents are reported within a student database

system so the positive-behavior team and administrators can make further changes to the program based on the information. In November, the rate was 1.6 incidents a day for things such as physical aggression, threats and harassment. The previous November, the rate was 3.1.

The language arts support provided by the classroom instruction, Title 1 interventions and special education also continues to produce results. Currently, in Grade 1, 97 percent of students are demonstrating proper early literacy skills in the areas of letter recognition and phonics. More than 80 percent of students in Grade 2 are demonstrating the early literacy skills to be an effective reader in the areas of fluency and phonics.

District 'report cards' available online

The school district reports data to the public each year on everything from budget to student achievement results. In an effort to connect all the pieces and provide community members with greater access to their schools, a District Achievement Report has been developed and posted on the Windham Raymond Schools Web site.

The report contains updated information, student demographics, school budget resources and spending data, district improvement plans, building improvement plans, school staffing, teacher quality data and historical student achievement data.

Also posted is the annual NCLB report card. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 brought many changes to the landscape of schools and school districts across America. The act included

several overarching goals for education. The first goal was to improve the achievement of all students regardless of race, academic ability and economic standing. The second goal was to increase the quality and preparation of teachers and paraprofessionals who work with students. To assure the public that these goals are being met, the act requires that all states, school districts, and schools provide annual report cards to parents and communities. Each report card contains data about state assessments, attendance and graduation rates, status of adequate yearly progress (AYP), and information about "highly qualified" teachers.

All the data for Windham and Raymond schools can be accessed at www.windhamraymondschools.org/NCLBreportcard.

Work is nonstop to implement wellness grant

After being awarded one of 76 federal Physical Education Program (PEP) grants, major awards given to schools to improve physical education and nutrition programming, Windham's PEP Grant Leadership Team has been working since the summer to improve the district's physical education programming.

The grant, from the U.S. Department of Education, is offered to schools that want to implement programming to increase the time students are engaged in moderate to vigorous activity, which can be correlated to improved student health. The three-year, \$1 million grant will fund programming for the targeted audience of sixth- to 12th-graders.

The grant is called "Healthy Kids Now for a Healthier Community Tomorrow." Programming has been broken down into Wellness Centers: the middle school is the Center for Motivational Wellness and the high school/REAL School is the Center for Lifelong Wellness. The DARE to Adventure Program and the town's Parks and Recreation Program comprise the Center for Community Wellness. There is also the Center for Nutritional Wellness.

The Grant Leadership Team has been working with Bill Hansen, Director of Facilities; Donn Davis, Assistant Superintendent; Robert Hickey, District Technology Coordinator; Stephanie Joyce, School Health Coordinator; and Chris Howell, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, to effectively implement the first year of PEP grant programming.

Many of the Grant Leadership Team attended the Maine Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance conference in Rockport in the fall, a professional development opportunity funded by the grant. In the spring, three physical education/health teachers will go to the national conference, also funded by the grant.

The Center for Motivational Wellness, Windham's middle school, is working to implement its auxiliary gymnasium "Fitness Arcade." At the high school, the Center for Lifelong Wellness is seeking qualified professionals to volunteer to assist in renovating a re-allocated space to turn it into a state-of-the-art weight room. A committee is meeting

regularly to design a digital wellness portfolio, which, when finished, will be a technological tool to help students set health and physical education goals, track nutrition choices, and much more. The high school's adventure programming is moving forward, as well. The high school Outing Club is in the process of hiring six more assistants to get kids active by offering more outings a year. Three major rock-climbing wall additions are in the works, with the hope to have them built by late March.

The Center for Nutritional Wellness has a committee that is implementing the Guiding Stars Nutritional Program, run by Hannaford, at some of the district schools. This year the program will pilot at the high school.

To educate the student body on what is moderate to vigorous exercise, the Leadership Team is branding the idea with the government's i225 logo – 225 representing the number of minutes the federal government would like to see all kids active at a moderate to vigorous level each week. The students in the Windham Middle School, the REAL School and Windham High School will take three surveys a year to provide data that will show the increase in the number of minutes that each student exercised weekly. Data from these surveys will be compiled yearly by Marc Alterio, PEP grant evaluator.

Be looking for May's PEP Grant Wellness Fair, which will highlight the new and innovative programs that the grant is supporting.

The Pep Grant Leadership Team includes:

Center for Motivational Wellness: Stacy Hood, Windham Middle School.

Center for Community Wellness: Matt Cyr, Windham DARE to Adventure; Brian Ross, Windham Parks and Recreation.

Center for Lifelong Wellness: Rod Nadeau, REAL School; Wayne Martin, Digital Wellness Computer Lab coordinator; Melissa Dubois, Cardiovascular Fitness Room coordinator; Matt Perkins, weight room coordinator; Jeff Riddle, PEP grant project director and WHS Adventure Programming/Summer Expeditions coordinator; Kim Bartholomew, PEP grant coordinator, Digital Wellness Portfolio coordinator and Center for Nutritional Wellness coordinator.

Curtailments continued

pay raise for the 2010-2011 school year.

"Our school board and administrative team have reached out to our town managers, town councilors and selectmen to discuss the issues at hand with the curtailment and the challenges for next year's budget," said Prince. "As we accelerate efforts on short-term budgeting challenges, we are also starting critical long-term planning with our Strategic Planning

Committee. The outcome will be a five-year Strategic Plan that will be instrumental in driving our important work in teaching and learning.

"Along with this," Prince said, "our Facilities Committee is also meeting to look at starting critical long-term planning, demographics and enrollment data, current school building uses and grade configurations."

More grants to district

Windham Middle School's Green Team will be starting a small vegetable garden at the school, thanks to a \$200 grant from Communities Promoting Health Coalition of PROP – People's Regional Opportunity Program. Most of the money will go to buy seeds and equipment to start seedlings indoors in the spring. The Green Team is a group of students who are interested in making the Middle School more green. According to seventh-grade teacher Helen Hurgin, the students volunteered at the garden at St. Joseph's College this fall and thought starting their own garden might be a good educational experience.

Windham Middle School's \$750 grant from KIDS Consortium has allowed the Colby team to plan a service learning project centered on a year-long project of making WMS a greener school.

A Youth Mini Grant from PROP's Communities Promoting Health Coalition resulted in 30 pedometers for Donna Morton's class at Manchester School. The class kept track of their "steps" every day and mascot Marco the Moose "traveled" around Maine based on the students' daily steps. They planned 10-15 minutes of activities every day, including walking the track and doing active games.

Training day for parents focuses on teen issues

A day of training for those interested in the Parent Meet-Ups and the Parent Effectiveness in Resolving Conflict with Your Teenager program (PERC) was scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 4, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at the University of Southern Maine Gorham campus, Room 113 in Upper Class Hall.

The combination training prepares participants to be effective facilitators and also gives them information and resources to feel competent in the area of substance abuse prevention. After the training, staff continues to work with participants to set up Parent Meet-ups in the community and also offers ongoing support, resources and guidance.

Parent Meet-Ups provide a comfortable opportunity for parents to communicate openly with each other about underage drinking and how to prevent it. Parents learn the facts about alcohol and gain tools for keeping their children – and their community – safe.

The Parent Effectiveness in Resolving Conflict with Your Teenager program (PERC) is a seven-week series that offers parents the opportunity to learn about adolescent development and ways for parents to improve their relationship with their teen.