



Superintendent's Bulletin

Triton Regional School District

December 18, 2006

Sandra J. Halloran, Superintendent of Schools

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Greetings:

Once again the holiday season is here. Although with the warm weather and lack of snow, it feels more like April than December!

On behalf of the Triton Regional School District School Committee and Administration, I extend warm wishes to all of you for a very happy and healthy holiday season. The holiday season offers us plenty of reasons to be grateful for the friends and family surrounding us. I hope you are able to take some time to relax and enjoy the traditions and festivities that abound at this time of year.

I also want to wish you the best in the new year.

Welcome, 2007

DO YOU KNOW???

- Triton Regional High School has 12 Advanced Placement Classes with a total enrollment of 141 students.
- Over 70 Newbury Elementary School students participated in the production of "A Not So Normal Christmas" written and directed by Stacey Fix.
- The district has formed a District Communications Committee comprised of one representative from each of the boards of selectmen, finance/warrant advisory committees, school committee, and the Superintendent.

Selectmen:

Jen Wright – Newbury, Lane Bourn – Rowley, Don Beaulieu – Salisbury

Finance Warrant Advisory:

Frank Remley – Newbury, Jack DiMento – Rowley, Jim Dondero – Salisbury

School Committee:

Dina Sullivan – Newbury, Mary Murphy – Rowley, Susan Fish – Salisbury

Academics:

On November 13, 2006, Triton High School Principal Robert Manseau was notified by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEAS&C) Commission on Public Secondary Schools that the high school's accreditation was placed on warning status. The commission identified problem areas within two of the eight categories (standards) reviewed in the process of re-accreditation. The two standards of concern are Curriculum and Community Resources for Learning. The reason there are problems in these categories is because there is a lack of adequate funding for the school budget. Put simply, positions and programs that were in place two years ago when the high school was reviewed by NEAS&C are no longer supported by local budget funds. The fundraising that has been accomplished through the efforts of the Triton Heroes has allowed some sports and activities to continue but NEAS&C expects the school budget to provide full funding for all positions and programs necessary in an exemplary comprehensive high school.

The concerns about the Curriculum standard are broader than what we typically think of when we think about curriculum. In this report, the interpretation of curriculum goes beyond what content the students are learning. It also includes the structures and programs that support classroom learning.

Don't forget to check out the district website, located at <http://www.trsd.net> for all the latest happenings. Be sure to sign up for the TritonNews List Serve so you are notified of all important events.

Contact Us

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Upcoming Events

- December 25th through January 1st: No School; Winter Holiday Vacation – Happy Holidays!
- Tues., January 2nd: Return to School from Winter Holiday Vacation
- Tues., January 2nd: School Committee Policy Subcommittee Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Superintendent's Office Conference Room
- Thurs., January 4th: District Communications Committee Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Superintendent's Office Conference Room
- Sat., January 6th: District Budget Forum; 10:00 a.m. Triton Regional High School Library
- Wed., January 10th: Staff Budget Forums; 2:30 p.m. MS/HS - High School Library 3:30 p.m. Elementary - High School Library
- Wed., January 10th: School Committee Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Triton Regional High School Library
- Mon., January 15th: No School – Martin Luther King Day
- Wed., January 24th: Budget Presentation - School Committee Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Triton Regional High School Library
- Mon., January 29th: No School - Teacher Professional Development Day

Academics: (continued)

Concerns are as follows:

- increased class size
- higher student to staffing ratios
- the elimination of district funding for after-school athletics, performing arts programs, and activities
- the use of the library/media center for directed study (taking away space and time for use of the library/media center as it was intended)
- the continued practice of combining honors and advanced placement classes in the foreign language department
- increased user fees for co-curricular activities
- the restructuring of the athletic director's position

As was previously mentioned, a lack of adequate funding for the school budget is the reason for the changes that have taken place at the high school. The concern about the Community Resources standard by NEAS&C addresses this issue and notes these fiscal reductions and their impact significantly compromise students' equitable access to programs and services at the high school. These co-curricular activities are a vital component of many students' educational experiences and their access is significantly compromised due to user fees.

Our communities support education to the best of their abilities, but in order to restore positions and programs to the high school, adequate funding of the school's budget will be necessary. It is important for all community members to ask questions and be involved in the budget process. We will do our best to get to you the information you need to be informed and current when making future decisions.

Administrative Retirements:

The retirements of High School Principal, Robert Manseau and Middle School Principal, Peter Gadd were announced at the December 13, 2006 School Committee meeting.

Bob Manseau has been a dedicated employee of the Triton Regional School District since he started as a teacher at the High School in September, 1977. Bob has served as program coordinator and director of the Visual and Performing Arts department. He became principal of the High School four years ago. As principal, Bob has seen the student population of the High School steadily increase. Bob has accomplished much in a few short years. He has encouraged staff to work cooperatively to improve student learning. Bob has focused on common assessment practices, data driven decision making, and on-going professional development. Bob is a master at staff observation and evaluation and implemented classroom walk-through practices that he taught to other district administrators. Bob has also focused on school climate and has made respect a primary goal. Bob is a true educator and is leaving our High School poised to continue to move in a forward direction. We will surely miss Mr. Manseau and wish him all the best in his retirement.

Peter Gadd will retire from the Triton Regional School District this summer after having served for six years as the Middle School Principal. Prior to his tenure at the Middle School, Peter was the assistant principal at Newbury Elementary School for three years. Peter had been a middle school teacher and administrator before coming to Triton. Peter brought a vast knowledge of middle school philosophy and practices to Triton. He also has a thorough understanding of the dynamics that exist within a middle school setting. Peter worked tirelessly to change the culture of the middle school to reflect its current status of tolerance, respect, caring, and openness. Peter has been a staunch advocate for the Middle School. He is to be commended for his involvement with parents, staff and, most importantly, students. Mr. Gadd will be truly missed by the Triton Regional School District. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

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Middle/High School Principal Search Timeline:

December 13, 2006	Public Announcement (Retirement)
January 3, 2007 – January 17, 2007	Post/Advertise Positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Boston Sunday Globe • Education Week • TRSD website • MASCD website • MASS website
January 16, 2007 – January 19, 2007	Focus Group Letters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper • TRSD website • Superintendent's Bulletin (January edition)
January 26, 2007	Applications Due
January 29, 2007	Select Interview Committee Chair
January 29, 2007 – February 9, 2007	Application Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent • Assistant Superintendent • Administrator of Pupil Services • School Business Administrator • Interview Committee Chairperson Focus Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty • Students • Parents/Community
February 9, 2007	Select Interview Committee
February 12, 2007 – February 16, 2007	Schedule Interviews
February 27, 2007 – March 1, 2007	Interviews (MS/HS)
March 8, 2007	Administrative Interviews (MS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent • Assistant Superintendent • Interview Committee Chairperson
March 12, 2007	Administrative Interviews (HS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent • Assistant Superintendent • Interview Committee Chairperson
March 19, 2007 – March 30, 2007	Site Visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent • Assistant Superintendent • Interview Committee Chairpersons
April 11, 2007	Announcements at School Committee Meeting

Middle School Update:

The Triton Regional Middle School Council, who develops the School Improvement Plan, identified a goal to implement heterogeneous grouping for the 2007 – 2008 school year. It has become apparent that a great deal of communication and planning needs to occur prior to any changes taking place. Therefore, a Middle School Task Force will be convened after the holidays. Further information will be forwarded to you in January. Please contact my office should you have questions.

Budget:

Current 2006-2007 (FY07) Status:

As you know, the district faced many challenges for the 2006-2007 school year. Several classroom teachers were cut across the district. Among these was one position at each grade level at all the elementary schools (a sixth grade teacher at each elementary school was reinstated before the beginning of the school year due to increased revenues from state aid), an entire team of five teachers at the Middle School and three classroom teachers at the High School. Resulting class sizes are currently as large as 30 at the elementary level, 28 at the Middle School and 32 at the High School. In addition, we lost two physical education teachers, a district instrumental music teacher and funding for after school activities. Although the district elementary instrumental music teacher funding was removed from the budget, the program has continued with parents paying a fee of \$280 per student for the year.

Beyond the classroom, all funding for Performing Arts and Athletics was cut and the programs were set up to be fully supported by user fees. This resulted in very high fees for all sports and activities. Thanks to the efforts of the Triton Heroes, over \$121,000 has been raised to date which has reduced all user fees for athletics and performing arts.

As a result of the current challenges in the district, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of students leaving the district on School Choice. Our numbers for the 2006/2007 school year were at 186 students. This year we have 252 students out on choice, an increase of 66 students. With each student leaving costing up to \$5,000, this has had a substantially negative impact on our budget.

Priorities for the FY08 Budget:

The Triton Regional School Committee and Administration has been meeting regularly with town officials from our member communities. Through extensive discussion, we have worked together towards a common understanding of the challenges we face. This dialogue has allowed us to share what the district needs and the towns to clarify what they are able to support in their operating budgets. All three towns have indicated to us that they will need an over-ride to support an operating budget for the district that makes any progress towards restoration of last year's cuts. With this in mind, we are committed to working with all district stakeholders to present a budget that can be supported in all three towns and moves the district forward in its educational goals for all students.

The following have been established as priorities for the FY08 Operating Budget:

- **Reduce Class Size:** We anticipate reinstating nine teachers at the elementary level across all three elementary schools. Teachers would be placed according to the most need, i.e. the largest class sizes with a focus on the primary grade level.
Three teachers would be placed at the High School to address class size and New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEAS&C) recommendations.
- **Reduce User Fees:** After surveying the Cape Ann League, we have found that there is a broad range of what schools are charging as user fees for participation in athletics and activities. The lowest amount contributed by a district is 25% of the cost with the highest being a district that covers 100% of the cost. We have set a goal for next year of splitting the cost of athletics/activities 50/50 with a minimum fee of \$50.00. The fees would be assessed by individual sport/activity, reflecting the true cost of each sport/activity. Any funds raised by the Triton Heroes would offset the individual user fees; it would not reduce the amount the district would fund.
- **Update Technology and Institute Refresh Plan:** The district's computers, applications, and network infrastructure are in dire need of upgrades. We are currently meeting with different technology firms to discuss next steps; the goal is to both address the reliability of our network (including email, accessibility of files and web access) as well as institute a leasing plan that would "refresh" the districts technology on a rotating basis every four years.
- **Purchase Needed Curriculum:** There are several curriculum products that are needed to continue our current programming. These include Social Studies books in grades three and four, mathematics programs for grade five, Literature for grades seven through twelve and Foreign Language in the High School.

In order to address these goals along with set costs such as transportation, insurance, and supplies/textbooks rising at a consistent rate, we are aware that all three towns will most likely require an over-ride to support theFY08 budget. We understand the impact of proposing a budget that requires an over-ride but feel we must do so given district circumstances. It is important that we have the support of the community. We are more than willing to answer and clarify any questions regarding the budget process. Please do not hesitate to contact us using the links to the left. In addition, the following meetings have been scheduled:

Budget Timelines:

- **Saturday, January 6, 2007**
District Budget Forum
10:00 a.m.- Triton Regional High School Library
- **Wednesday January 10, 2007**
Staff Budget Forums
2:30 p.m. MS/HS – High School Library
3:30 p.m. Elementary – High School Library
7:00 p.m. School Committee Meeting - Triton Regional High School Library
- **Wednesday, January 24, 2007**
Budget Presentation
7:00 p.m. School Committee Meeting - Triton Regional High School Library
- **Wednesday, February 7, 2007**
Budget Presentation
Vote – Tentative Budget
7:00 p.m. School Committee Meeting - Triton Regional High School Library
- **Wednesday, March 7, 2007**
Budget Public Hearing
7:00 p.m. School Committee Meeting - Triton Regional High School Library
- **Wednesday, March 14, 2007**
Vote – Final Budget
7:00 p.m. School Committee Meeting - Triton Regional High School Library

Regional Agreement Update:

I am pleased to announce that the Triton Regional School District Amended Regional Agreement has been approved by all three communities. I again want to thank the town officials, community members, and school committee members who committed an extraordinary amount of time to seeing this document finalized and approved. Your team efforts yielded a Regional Agreement that reflects the tenor of the district. The agreement can be viewed on the district website under “About Triton.”

Pupil Services:

ACE Program

The goal of the special education **ACE Programs (Alternative Community Environment)** located at **Salisbury Elementary School, Triton Regional Middle School, and Triton Regional High School** is to provide a safe environment so students can experience success in academic and emotional challenges, and build self-esteem and competency, with the goal of becoming responsible members of their school community.

Program Objectives:

- *The students will experience a learning environment where it is safe to succeed, fail, and take academic and*

personal risks.

- *The students will understand their learning style and use compensatory skills when operating outside their style.*
- *The students will receive opportunities for academic remediation in areas of weakness.*
- *The students will complete expected grade level academics based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.*
- *The students will increase their emotional growth and self-knowledge through counseling, processing, feedback in groups and interpersonal skills.*
- *The students will develop their capacity to accept responsibility for their choices and behaviors as well as consequences.*
- *The students will be able to use conflict resolution concepts and skills to work through issues.*
- *The students will learn to modulate their emotions and develop strategies to cope during stressful situations.*
- *The students will be able to tolerate feedback from peers and view it as a useful tool.*
- *The students will feel empowered to advocate for their needs in a respectful manner.*

While we value students equally, some identified special education students require more intensive services to benefit educationally from their environment. The philosophy of ACE is to provide an alternative environment where a student learns to accept responsibility for his/her behavior and choices and accept logical consequences. With this knowledge, the student is empowered and develops a stronger sense of competency and skills to work toward success. Components of this program include academics, remediation, socialization, family work, counseling, anger management, conflict resolution, community service, outdoor education, and a variety of hands on activities. The program consists of one special education teacher, an instructional assistant(s), and a part time social worker. Additionally, students have access to art therapy.

Based on the recommendation of the IEP team, students are provided with options to be educated in the least restrictive environment. Academic instruction within the ACE Program consists of small group instruction addressing the curriculum frameworks. Students in the ACE Program have full access to all offerings at their school.

Counseling is an opportunity for self-expression and helps students identify underlying conflicts interfering with success. Counseling, as well as risk taking in academics and outdoor education, helps students acknowledge their strengths and confront their weaknesses with support from peers and staff.

Communication includes daily or weekly contacts with parents or agencies involved with students or families. This strong link between school, home, and community services surround the student with a tight network of support. Additional communication is maintained through report cards, social/emotional reports, open house, phone calls, and email.

Students must meet criteria items listed or the teacher may advocate for placement by offering supporting data not specifically mentioned in the criteria and they must be IEP eligible:

- 1. documented history of school difficulties**
- 2. academics impeded by social/emotional issues**
- 3. inability to conform to school rules despite administrative consequences**
- 4. unusual need for emotional contact or frequent checking in with classroom teacher/administration due to behavioral issues**
- 5. needed as a transition back into the school community due to psychiatric hospitalization or similar circumstance**

The IEP Team will meet to evaluate the student's ability to be integrated into the traditional school community when:

- The student has demonstrated success in meeting his/her IEP goals specifically in the area of social, emotional and behavioral needs.
- Exit criteria from the ACE Program will include: the student's ability to utilize social skills, modulate affect, demonstrate anger management, confront and accept responsibility for choices. Exit recommendation will be determined by the IEP Team.