



TRITON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWBURY • ROWLEY • SALISBURY

From the office of Dr. Sandra J. Halloran

News of the Week **January 8, 2010**

An Important Message from the Superintendent

Budget Update: As you are most likely aware from reading the local newspapers, the cuts that were made to Regional Transportation in November were restored by Governor Patrick this past week. While the figures for the actual reimbursement remain fluid, the restoration of funds equals approximately \$305,000.

During school committee meetings, it was outlined that we needed to cut \$395,000 due to the \$305,000 reduction in transportation reimbursement and \$90,000 because of unforeseen increases in special education transportation. At this point, the cuts for the special education transportation still need to be made as those increased costs still exist. For the restored regional transportation reimbursement, \$175,000 will be used to reinstate the four professional development ½day furlough days that the teachers agreed to take. This leaves \$130,000 in reduced expenditures.

I will be recommending to the school committee on Wednesday, January 13, 2010 that the cuts recently made stand as they are. The reason for this is that while we now have \$130,000 in reduced expenditures, we anticipate that other revenues will be behind our initial projections. In particular, Medicaid reimbursements, received for related services provided to special education students, are expected to be lower as the program is being revamped nationally. We also expect that our Food Services program, which is normally self supporting, to need assistance from the local budget to offset specific costs. These costs include food items that were previously provided through the government commodity program now being unavailable; which means we need to incur the cost of purchasing these products. Therefore, between the expected decrease of Medicaid revenue and the increased expenses for the Food Services program, it will be my

recommendation that we leave the \$130,000 in restored revenue untouched to offset these changes.

Although we were not able to restore all positions there is some good news. The following staff have either been reassigned, have found other positions or have retired. Due to a retirement and a resignation of two instructional assistants across the district, the Middle School clerk has been re-assigned to Salisbury Elementary School and one of the special education clerks has been re-assigned to the High School. The clerk at the High School has already found new employment and the Central Office clerk who was to be laid off has chosen to retire. We are working on ensuring that services for our talented and gifted students continue. I will provide an update on the status of these services as soon as I have information for you.

Moving into the 2010/2011 school year, we will mostly likely face an uphill battle in regards to our state funding and what the towns will be able to support given their similar struggle. We will be discussing the budget at school committee meetings on January 27th, February 3rd, February 10th, March 3rd, and March 10th. I encourage you to participate as we make decisions during this challenging time.

Celebrate Savings: Each week, I am going to highlight some of the efforts that we have made over the past several years to offset costs. Unfortunately, given the nature of inflation and the way things perpetually cost more, we rarely spend time talking about the ways we have saved money through the efforts of Triton employees.

To kick off this new series, I would like to start with student transportation. We have used Salter Transportation for many years to provide our regular day transportation. What you may not know, is that contracts of this size are governed in Massachusetts by Mass General Law 30B. This requires that any purchase or contract exceeding \$25,000 be publicly bid through a very strict process. By doing so, all competing members are given a fair and equitable chance to be the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. For many years, Salter Transportation was the winning bidder for these contracts and thus provided our transportation services.

On Friday, December 4, 2009, the bidding process was concluded by our School Business Administrator, Brian Forget. Upon the opening of all bids, North Reading Transportation, which

is currently providing our special education transportation, emerged as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. With this development, the cost of providing regular day busing will decrease by close to \$80,000 compared to the current rates for the 2009/2010 school year.

In addition, through some adjustments in the bid specifications, we have a more solid requirement that all bus drivers will be trained and required to provide CPR, First Aid, and EpiPens. While the previous language was quite solid on CPR and First Aid, the newer developments with various allergies required some changing to the language which holds the drivers accountable for administration of EpiPens. We will have brand new 2010 buses, and depending on what individual drivers decide, many faces will likely remain as the drivers on average tend to keep the same routes but will drive for North Reading Transportation.

While this is indeed all good news for Triton, I want to send a heartfelt thank you to John Salter, Steven Gadd, Lee Lamkin, and all the drivers from Salter Transportation who have served us so well over the past years. As I stated earlier, there is a strictly regulated process for bidding contracts. This was about a bottom line dollar figure, and not about our dissatisfaction with their service.

[TRSD School Committee Meeting: January 13, 7PM, Triton Library](#)

[Our TMS 21st Century Math League](#) has been moved up two levels this year because they were “swamping” the competition. In this, only our third year and at the higher level, **[we are in first place!!](#)** Rockport is four points behind us... **[GO TMS MATH LEAGUE!](#)**

[Announcing Elementary Math Leagues!](#) We are very happy to announce that we will be adding sixth grade elementary math leagues at PGS, NES and SES. They will practice and compete a few times a year within the district. These “Mathletes” will be ready for our 21st Century TMS Math League next year! Watch out world- here we come!

Registrations for student participation will be available in the elementary school offices soon.

A Letter From a Parent

Dear Ms. Halloran (Sandy),

I am writing to commend the Triton High School teachers for the quality education that they gave my son, T.J. Howard. He has just finished his first semester at the University of Vermont majoring in Biology. While he hasn't received his final grades yet, he is quite sure that we will be more than pleased with his grade point average. Being a biology major, his schedule was blocked out for him before registration. He was required to take Biology with a lab, Chemistry with a lab, Calculus, and was then allowed one elective of his choice. The comments I heard from him throughout the semester spoke volumes as to his preparedness for the rigor of these courses. He said things like, "I can't imagine how some of these kids are going to pass this Chemistry course if they don't have a strong Chemistry background like I have. My AP Chemistry course at Triton really put me in a good place. I can't believe how easy this calculus course is. It's a lot of work, but I'm so prepared for it. I am so thankful for the math teachers I had when I went to Triton. They went above and beyond and it's really paying off. Wow! I didn't think I was that strong in biology, but I got a 96% on my final. Mr. Parsons' really was a good teacher. I learned a lot."

His comments are echoed by several of my friends' children who are attending different colleges along the east coast. They are all majoring in courses that require excellent math and science skills and knowledge. So I would like to say kudos to the Triton High School math and science teachers for preparing our children for the challenges they are now facing.

If you could please forward this to the school committee and to the appropriate teachers involved, I would be most appreciative.

Sincerely,

Michelle Howard

The sixth graders at NES recently finished their study of the continent of Africa. Last week Chomba Kaluba, a Bates College senior and native of Mpika, Zambia came in to speak to our sixth graders. He talked to the students about his childhood education, his life-changing friendship with a Peace Corp volunteer, and his experiences here in the United States.

[Many thanks to NES 5th and 6th grade parents](#) for their generosity of all the contributions to the United States Marines' Toys for Tots drive. Staff & students had so much fun looking at all the great gifts and students were so pleased to deliver their toys. It was very exciting! They had bags and bags to deliver and students have helped to make the magic of this season happen for many, many children.

[TMS was able to collect and deliver](#) to the Pettengill House, over 1500 food items and 75 winter coats. These were delivered the Friday before the holiday break. The food filled Mr MacRae's truck including inside the cab!

[Triton Alum, Andrew White](#), is back in town during the month of January to shoot an [original short film](#) entitled "Cold and Dark." Filming will take place in Newburyport and surrounding towns over a five day period starting January 14th.

White's film focuses on a young man trapped in a dead-end world who finds hope from an unexpected source. It will star Joseph Berardi of Georgetown, who, like White, is a 2005 graduate of Triton High School. The 15-minute film has a cast of six and a crew of 15 which includes '09 Triton Grad Craig White and current Triton Junior Danielle Doucot. It should be ready for its debut in late spring or early summer.

A past member of Triton's Media Productions class, White received a bachelor's degree in film and television production in May from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. After graduation he and a few of his classmates formed the production company 20/20 pictures LLC. The film, White said, "is a return to what we did in high school, only now we're coming back to do it for real."

For more information about Andrew and his upcoming film visit his website at: www.2020pictures.com.

[SES Reading specialist, Bethany Marshall](#), will be hosting another Parent Literacy Workshop for Grades K-3 on Jan. 11th. Please contact Bethany at bmarshall@trsd.net for more information.

[The first annual TMS 21st Century Community Spelling Bee](#) will be held at TMS on Friday, January 15, 6:00 in the Triton auditorium. We will host contestants from Newburyport, Pentucket & Georgetown. **Please come and support our team. GO TMS!**

[The 3rd Coffee Time with Ms. Maher and Mr. M.](#) will be held Wednesday, January 20th at 3:15-4:15 in the SES Library...it is a chance to chat friendly and informally about SES.

[In grade six at NES](#), students are participating in our annual Restaurant Simulation. They have created menus and discount coupons. Students have the roles of "server" "dinner party customer" or "host/hostess." They act out the process of dining in a restaurant while applying their knowledge of decimals and percents in figuring the cost of the meal with tax, tip, and discounts.

[TMS Foreign Language Students Recognized:](#) Last March, TMS eighth grade foreign language students participated in the [Massachusetts Foreign Language Association poster and essay contests](#). Each year a theme is selected by the board members and the students' posters and essays must encompass the required topic. The theme for 2009-2010 school year was "Foreign Language ABC's: About Better Communication."

In December, TMS was notified that students from our school were published in the [MAFLA annual calendar](#). TMS principal, Jared Fulgoni, is pleased to announce that [Kayla Cox's poster](#) was selected for the month of December 2010 and [Emily White](#) had a quote extracted from her [essay to close out the calendar](#). Congratulations to these very talented young ladies and their very excellent teachers!

[Ms. Babendreier's 7th](#) grade students have created full-sized statues of biographical characters, and they are more amazing than ever. They are displaying an enormous Shaquille O'Neal (over 7 feet!), Albert Einstein, Hannibal (complete with a bloodshot eye), and President Obama, to name a few. They are truly wonderful this year and all are welcome come see them!

[Congratulations to the Newbury Elementary School Second Grade Online Math League Team!](#) The 37 students competed against teams from across the country and tied for first place with a perfect team score. To compete in the Online Math League, students take individual tests

and the top four individual scores are combined to create the team score. NES was one of seven schools that earned top honors with a perfect team score! NES students who achieved perfect scores are Mikey Codair, Griffin Fogarty, Emily Howe, Maddie MacDonald, and Brayden Toth. Way to go!

[PGS & NES](#) are introducing new Parent & Child Book clubs this month for students in grades 4-6. For more information please contact lvalentine@trsd.net at NES and amavragis@trsd.net at PGS.

[Mrs. Mann's TMS science classes](#) are designing and running their own procedures in lab to prove the answer the problem "What Color Absorbs the Most Light?" Although their procedures must be safe and be done in one class time, students can be very creative in devising their own experiments. Science students in Mrs. Mann's class are also working on their 2nd quarter project: [How to move a raw egg using three distinct methods of movement across a course in seven minutes](#). The egg, representing sediment, must move from the Weathering Zone, through the Erosion Zone, and into a Deposition Zone. Students are studying the effects and nature of rivers, sediments and landforms and sedimentary rocks that form from the processes of weathering, erosion and deposition.

[NES would like to thank the PTA](#) for their continued financial support of our Camp Historic Newbury Days. In November children in grades 1-6 learned about and experienced colonial life while teachers worked to develop 6+1 writing lessons on word choice and voice. Additionally staff learned about and used the Scantron Achievement Series and netTrekker, two valuable tools to enhance instruction.

Colonial Newbury:

Grade 1

Colonial Thanksgiving: How did the colonists celebrate, and how does it compare with today's celebration?

Games and Toys: Experience the games and playthings that colonial children used for fun.

Music and Dance: Sing and dance to colonial music.

Tea Party: Decorate "pretend" cookies and set the table for an authentic 18th century tea party.

Turkey Tales: Students make a table decoration for the Thanksgiving holiday while learning about turkeys.

Grade 2

Tri-corner hats and Mopcaps: Students get in the colonial mood by making their own caps and tri-corn hats.

Samplers : Skill with a needle and thread was a prized possession, and students learn how this was done by making a non-sewn sampler of their own.

Horn Books: Before there were textbooks there were hornbooks, and students make their own, complete with insert to memorize.

Music/Dance: Students learn the early poem by Lydia Marie Child about Thanksgiving while setting it to music.

Spinning: Demonstrates how fleece from sheep was changed into yarn for clothing

Grade 3

Limner Painting: Travelling artists paint portraits of farm families with backgrounds already filled in. Students learn this method, and paint each other's portraits.

Weaving: Using small hand looms, students combine warp and weft to make cloth

Stencilled Floorcloth: Using old-fashioned stencils students design and paint a "floorcloth" for their classroom.

Sign Maker: Colonial signs had to describe with symbols for a relatively illiterate populace. Using real signs as models, students create their own trade signs.

Grade 4

How Do We Know?: Artifacts tell the story of colonial homes and trades. Students see, touch and analyze tools from this era to determine how they were used and by whom.

Apothecary: Medicine made from locally grown plants into teas, poultices and pills are explored in this class.

School Days/Spelling Bee: Students experience a colonial school day and a spelling bee.

Clerk/Calligraphy: Using quill pens and ink students learn how early colonists became clerks and scribes.

Grades 5 and 6

Fifth and sixth grades experience the many trades that were practiced in colonial America, while learning to appreciate how relations with Britain affected everything they did.

Liberty and Loyalty: Role play a colonial farmer or tradesman, and decide whether declaring your independence from Britain will help or hurt your business and livelihood.

Trade Game: Barter was the main economy for much of rural New England in the early colonial period. Learn first-hand how to get what you want while giving a little.

Shoemaker: Making shoes required a skill with leather, shears and needle. Explore this while fashioning a small pocket of leather.

Plasterer: 18th century homes were beautifully decorated with Greek and Roman motifs, often fashioned in plaster. Students learn how plaster motifs were cast and assembled to create these themed rooms.

Printer/Broadsides: The colonists got all of their news from Broadsides that were printed in small shops. Learn how printers plied their trade, and make a Broadside for the classroom.

Merchant: Barter and trade, shipping and farming and news from the outer world came together under the roof of this most important townsman. Learn how he kept his accounts and the special type of “ciphering” used to add up the totals.

Town Meeting: Students assume the roles of townspeople in various trades and professions to discuss and vote on a warrant actually presented in March, 1770 regarding the decision to boycott British goods.

[Congratulations to Erika McKenna, Special Education Liaison \(9th Grade\).](#) She became engaged over the holidays to Wes Barry. Wes is the Assistant Vice President of Retail Banking for our very own Institution for Savings.

[THS Smoking Update:](#) The following actions have been taken by the high school to address the ongoing concerns regarding students smoking in the bathrooms at the high school. The Student Council has met with Principal McLaughlin and suggested that the hallway doors to the bathrooms be removed and that privacy partition be installed. This remedy has been in place in one of the student bathrooms for some time and the students believe that the removal of the doors has been a deterrent to students smoking. Therefore, the hallway doors for the remaining bathrooms have been removed and privacy partitions installed. A second action that has taken place is the re-assignment of staff. Teachers will now have hallway duty so coverage will be provided on an average of four out of six periods every day. A primary focus will be bathroom coverage and teachers have been issued walkie-talkies so they can access administrative staff if necessary. Both of these actions occurred over the holiday break and are now in place. The high school is hopeful that the student smoking situation will improve so that all students and staff are able to learn and work in a smoke-free environment.

