



# TRITON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWBURY • ROWLEY • SALISBURY

*From the office of Dr. Sandra J. Halloran*

## News of the Week

December 18, 2009

[A Holiday Message:](#) Recently we have shared a very difficult few weeks. The holiday break will offer everyone the opportunity to rest and recharge as we get ready to greet a new year and return to school in January.

I wish you all peace, health and happiness in the coming year. I hope that you enjoy your time off with family and friends as you share good food, good times and make good memories.

### **Happy Holidays!**

[Pine Grove 6th grade chorus members, directed by Lois Freeman,](#) opened the school committee meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 9th. The Student Council, led by teacher Kathy Mackie, gave a report and student designed video presentation about their school beautification project. Art teacher Jen Dubis displayed the 6th graders' Claymation Projects.

Pine Grove's Winter Concert on Dec. 10th, at 7 p.m. featured the 4th grade chorus performing "Elfis Goes West with Lewis and Clark," along with the Advanced Band, the Triton District Stage Band, and the 5th & 6th grade chorus. The Concert Finale combined the Stage Band and both choruses in "Christmastime is Here." The vocal groups are directed by Lois Freeman, and the bands by Kevin Carubia.

[THS Student Daniel Norton Recognized for Excellence:](#) THS senior, Daniel Norton was presented with The Massachusetts Association of Superintendents Award for Academic Excellence at the school committee meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Daniel is ranked number one in his senior class and he has also been the student representative to the school committee for two years.

In addition, Daniel has been named the Moynihan Lumber Student-Athlete of the month for November. This award recognizes students for their academic and athletic achievements. Daniel has been also selected by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) as their “Student of the Month” for November 2009.

Among Daniel’s many accomplishments is a Rensselaer Scholarship medal for his achievements in science and math, and the rank of Triton’s Top Student 13 times over his high school career. Daniel has excelled in such classes as honors Spanish III, C++ Programming and Pre Calculus, as well as Discrete Mathematics at Tufts University this past summer. Daniel is a National Honor Society member and captain of Triton’s Robotic Team.

We congratulate Daniel on his many accomplishments, both in the classroom and on the athletic fields. His contributions to Triton have been many and we express our sincere gratitude for all that he has given his school, as well as wish him continued success in the future.

**[Triton Students’ Win National Attention!](#)** If you have not read the article in Wednesday’s Daily News entitled “Triton project gains national attention,” you can access it at [www.newburyportnews.com/archivesearch/local\\_story\\_349234005.html](http://www.newburyportnews.com/archivesearch/local_story_349234005.html). Madison Williams, Maddie Solomon, Carolyn Parks and Madeleine Winslow are now in the eighth grade at TMS. As sixth grade students at Newbury Elementary School, they created a geometry project that is going to be featured on the Web site for a new PBS TV show, SciGirls which is an innovative series in science, technology, engineering & math (STEM) for middle-school tweens. The girls give credit to their math teacher at NES, Ms Alicia Cuoco. **Congratulations to all – you make us very proud!**

**[NES and PGS will be starting Parent & Child Book Clubs in January.](#)** Please contact Carla Collins, [ccollins@trsd.net](mailto:ccollins@trsd.net) for more information.

**[Adventures in French with Ms Kydum:](#)** The students on team 7-3 are making great strides in French! They are discovering how it enhances their ability to read even in their own language. One student discovered several French sentences sprinkled throughout a novel, “Death by Denim” by Linda Gerber. She was able to understand almost every word!

[The THS Science Club, under the direction of Mr. Ferron](#), did very well in its December competition. The Aquarium Team tied for 4th, the Projectile Team tied for 2nd and the Rocks team earned a 1st placement to put Triton in 2nd place overall for the month. While these are team events, special efforts are to be recognized on the parts of Bill Ralston, Henry Brewster and Tom Kuczun in their prep work for the Projectiles challenge. The Rocks Team- Kim Puopolo, Bianca Corey, Deanna Latham, and Geoff Small noted that Geoff was remarkably ready for their competition and was a key to their success. Their preparation was also well-served by Ms. Mann and Mr. Whitley who provided personal and material assistance.

[PGS Student Council](#) is having back to back drives. This week, until Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>, they will be collecting letters and cards to send to the troops and will ship them over to Iraq for Christmas day delivery. They are also having a food drive for the Rowley Food Pantry next week and if students or staff donates a non perishable item or two, they can wear a hat on Friday.

[The SES PTA](#) generously donated three decorated wreaths to enhance the SES courtyard during the winter months.

[Kathy Murphy, District Early Childhood Coordinator](#), has been appointed to the Revenue Generating Committee for the Strategic Plan of the Andover Public Schools. The purpose of the committee is to conduct an assessment of the revenue generating opportunities, and develop both a mission and an action plan.

[TRMS Science Fair is underway!](#): More than 40 students in grades six, seven, and eight (and their parents) packed the Middle School library/media center to express interest in participating. Students and parents built towers out of straws, paper, and paper clips, munched cookies, and listened to Ms. Ribaud-Smith's PowerPoint presentation. The Science Fair will focus on inquiry-based projects based on a "testable" question. Mrs. Randall and Ms. Ribaud-Smith will be our Science Fair coaches. We look forward to some exciting projects!

**There will be an initial meeting for students next Tuesday after school at the Middle School.**

[THS teacher, Ms Farley](#), recently received a call from a former Triton student and teacher, Liz Glass who has been working in Antarctica for the past three or four years. She reports that the connection was amazing...“sounded like- it was from Rowley!”

NPR, a local radio station out of Boston, was doing an online interview with one of their journalists who is down there. Ms Farley logged on to the NPR website and read a few of the questions and answers during the interview. The scientists being interviewed were focusing on global warming and the effects it is having in Antarctica, among other things.

Students in the Natural Science class are in the process of doing animal presentations for the third graders at SES. Recently they took a Sulcata tortoise, a corn snake, a sugar glider, and of course, Pepper the monkey to the school. They will be going to Pine Grove and NES later in the year.

[The High School Spring Concert](#) was held on Thursday, December 17, at 7:00PM in the High School Auditorium. The entire department’s performing groups – Band, Jazz Band, Singers, Women’s Choir, and Jazz Choir performed a variety of music. The concert concluded with the traditional sing-along to Leroy Anderson’s A Christmas Festival. This tradition is over 30 years running, and any of our alumni that were home were welcomed to join us to play in the band or sing with the Singers. The concert is free and open to the public.”

[Congratulations and good luck](#) to SES. They have their FIRST Destination Imagination Team!!! It will be coached by Joanne Levesque.

[The THS Leaders Club](#), under the direction of Donna Anderson, went to the Boys’ and Girls’ Club of Lawrence on November 25th to serve them a Thanksgiving meal. This was Donna’s 16th year of bringing the Leader's Clubs to serve the boys and girls of Lawrence a Thanksgiving dinner. This is a very rewarding experience for our students, and is one which they look forward to each year.

[The students in Mrs. Causer’s THS Entrepreneurship](#) class have been busy working on a special project for the last month. They have filled our large 19 oz. Triton coffee mugs with different combinations of flavored coffees, teas, or hot chocolate, biscotti, Lindt chocolates,

candy canes and an ornament to sell in the store. The mugs are attractively wrapped and reasonably priced at \$9.25. They will be available through next Wednesday. The mugs make a great gift for a colleague, friend, or relative!! Come to the Viking Corner Store and see them along with all our other holiday merchandise and apparel. We have great gifts for siblings and stocking stuffers under \$5 too. The store will be open every day after school through Dec. 23rd plus we will be open before and after the Middle School Concert on Dec. 21.

**[Triton High School Jazz Choir Alum, Alex Koutsoukis](#)** is currently starring in the reality TV show "The Sing Off" airing nightly on NBC. Alex is a bass vocalist and the beatboxer for the "The Beelzebubs" from Tufts University. The final episode airs Monday night when America gets to vote for the winning group. If you have missed the previous three episodes, you can catch them on hulu.com. GO ALEX!!!!

**[Student Council News from NES:](#)** The Student Council at NES is heading toward the finish line in the "Coats for Kids" contest sponsored by Anton's Cleaners. This year more than ever there is a need for winter coats, hats, and mittens. The contest runs through to January 9th, 2010. If you have any of these items that are not needed any more, you can drop them off at NES or email Charlie LaBella, [clabella@trsd.net](mailto:clabella@trsd.net) and arrangements will be made to pick them up.

**[SES Student Council news:](#)** Capri Sun Brigade at SES has raised \$35.00 with 600 more sent in this week. Four boxes have been mailed off to Iraq and Afghanistan from SES. The Student Council raised \$442.00 for Santa's Helper with the American Girl and giant stocking raffle. Kayla Bastolla won the doll and Grace Chapman won the stocking. The Talent Show will be in March.

**[Triton Graduate to Receive the Honor of Eagle Scout:](#)** Triton graduate, Nathan Hunter, will receive the honor of Eagle Scout on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. The ceremony will be held at the Byfield Parish Church and Nathan has invited some of his former teachers to attend. We congratulate Nathan on this very important achievement.

**[The NES Grade 2 Online Math League](#)** scored 7th in the nation in the latest competition! Go NES grade 2 online Math League!!!

**Talented and Gifted News from Donna Church:** After a short 15 months in the district, it is time to bid a fond farewell to the faculty, staff, students, and families of the Triton Regional School District. During this time I have had the opportunity to help write and facilitate a grant to develop a Talented and Gifted Resource Center for the district and the state. We were able to run a TAG parent support group last spring under that grant as well as offer many staff development opportunities. I met all the identified students, their teachers, the administration and staff, and even many of the families. I had the opportunity to work with many of the teachers of the identified students as well as with many teachers who worked with gifted students who are not yet formally identified. The work to develop strategies, materials, and programming that supports gifted students is a work in progress.

I commend Triton for tackling this important challenge. Thank you to everyone for the opportunity to work with you and learn from you. This past year has been an experience I will always treasure.

Sincerely,

Donna Church

Talented and Gifted Specialist

[dchurch@trsd.net](mailto:dchurch@trsd.net)

### **Budget Update and Thank You to Triton Teachers**

On behalf of the Triton School Committee and Administration, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Triton Teachers' Association for their recent agreement of two furlough days. The results of their positive vote will avert the layoff of five teachers across the district.

**This 1.1% give back, is coupled with earlier salary concessions from other district staff including:**

- **3.0% Administrators**
- **3.0% Non- Union Professional staff**
- **3.0% Clerical**
- **2.7% Cafeteria workers**
- **2.0% Custodian/Head Custodians**

Even though this has had a significant impact on the local budget, there remains a need to further reduce staff to balance the budget as a result of the reduction in transportation reimbursement and rise in the cost of special education transportation. The following positions or portion of positions have been cut as of December 23, 2009:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Amount saved</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>New FTE</b>
Gifted/Talented Teacher	\$52,544	1.0	0.0
SPED Evaluation Team Chair	\$44,252	1.0	0.0
District Health Coordinator	\$27,451	0.8	0.4
District Clerk	\$29,071	1.0	0.0
SPED Clerk	\$25,707	2.0	0.0
District Office Clerk	\$29,071	1.0	0.0
High School Receptionist	\$19,356	1.0	0.0
Middle School Receptionist	\$19,549	1.0	0.0

[FY 10 Budget Questions and Answers](#)

**1. Are the administrators making any concessions?**

When the reality of the FY10 budget came to light early in the process in the spring of 2009, I requested that all employees consider salary concessions. At that time, district administrators agreed to give back their 3% raise for the 2009/2010 school year. This concession was reflected in the final budget voted on March 25, 2009. Following this administrative concession, clerical and non-union professional staff across the district conceded their 3% pay increase. Soon after this, the custodian, head custodian, and cafeteria associations agreed to salary concessions. For the head custodians and custodians, the negotiated agreement gave back 2% of their 3% raise, for an equivalent of a 1% increase. For the cafeteria workers, there was no change in their 3% raise, but the schedule of all workers was reduced by five days. This reduction in work days resulted in a net decrease in their raise of 2.7%, providing an actual payroll increase for cafeteria workers for the 2009/2010 school year of .3%.

Negotiations between the teachers' association and the Triton district failed to bring about salary concessions for the FY10 Budget at that time. The instructional assistants' association declined to open their contract for salary negotiations.

In addition to the salary concessions made by administrators, the following administrative positions were cut from the 2009/2010 budget.

<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Administrator of Pupil Services	1.0
Middle School Assistant Principal	.5
Math/Science Coordinator	.4
Health Coordinator	.4

## **2. What efforts have been made to cut utility costs?**

Over the past five school years, there have been many efforts made to conserve energy and associated costs. While we have actively explored alternative green energy sources, such as wind turbines on the Triton fields, and a massive solar array on the regional campus roof, these projects generally involve capital outlay that is currently unavailable. With that in mind, we have looked at low/no cost alternatives:

- Adjust thermostats to reasonable and OSHA approved levels
- Encourage staff to be vigilant about turning lights/equipment off when not in use
- Turn off computers overnight (currently researching low cost automated solution)
- Conduct formal and informal energy audits by National Grid
- Lower boiler plant operating temperatures when advisable to do so

On a larger scale, we have just recently finished a lighting retrofit at the regional middle/high school campus, which was 71% paid for by National Grid. This project will be paid for over the course of the next two years, at which time we are projected to save **\$65,000 or more annually**. This involves fixtures that use 40% less electricity and places motion sensors in all classrooms and the gymnasium. The incentive program through National Grid should continue into 2010, where we will look to complete both the Salisbury and Newbury Elementary Schools. Pine Grove School does not qualify at this time as their service is provided by the Rowley Municipal Light Department.

Beyond the conservation of energy, we have actively pursued contracted commodity costs for both electricity and natural gas. For natural gas, we have been part of the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative (GLEC) cooperative purchasing group. This pricing has changed over the years, but we have been consistently ahead of market pricing, and we are currently locked at

\$0.97/Therm through December, 2011. ***Annual*** savings across the district over the past five years have been in excess of **\$27,000** compared to the non-contracted rates through National Grid.

We have contracted directly with Constellation New Energy for the purchase of electricity. Just this month, we came to the end of our locked rate that has been \$0.073/kWh since December of 2004. The new rate increased to \$0.113/kWh effective this month. While this rate is indeed still competitive in the market, we continue to look at possible alternatives for further rate reductions. The ***annual*** savings across the district over the past five years have been in excess of **\$75,000** compared to the non-contracted rates through National Grid.

**3. Can we cut either the middle or high School principal and have one combined principal for the middle/high school campus?**

Leading a high school and leading a middle school are two separate and distinct positions predicated on two very different philosophies/models of education. The Triton district recognized those differences in 1997 and launched the Middle School Task Force to plan for the transition from a junior high/high school model to the model currently in place. This transition was based on research about best practices in the education field. The task force was made up of grades 7-12 teachers, administrators, parents, a school committee member, and an elementary principal. The Triton Regional School Committee endorsed the mission statement of the middle school on December 9, 1998. Eliminating one principal will dismantle a program of education that was designed to respond to the developmental needs of the student populations of both schools.

**4. What are the changes in class size at the Elementary Schools?**

School	Grade	Current Class Sizes	Proposed Class Sizes
Newbury Elementary	6	19, 19, 20, 20	26, 26, 26
Pine Grove School	3	18, 18, 18, 18	24, 24, 24
Salisbury Elementary	6	20, 21, 21, 21	27, 28, 28

## 5. Why don't we charge for busing?

To answer this question, an excerpt has been taken from *When Is A Promise Not A Promise?* This is a position paper co-written by Steve Hemman, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) and Brian P. Burke, Attorney and Chair of the Nashoba Regional School Committee.

*“Under Massachusetts law, regional school districts which bus students are “obliged to provide transportation for all school children in grades kindergarten through twelve.” G. L. c. 71, § 16C. The statute goes on to promise that, except for students living less than a mile and half from their schools, “the commonwealth shall reimburse [regional school districts] to the full extent of the amounts for such transportation.” It is fair for the state to take on the costs of busing these students because they attend non-local schools and those who live in rural and exurban communities travel much further distances from their homes than they would in municipal school systems. Typically, these communities do not have any sidewalks for children to use going to school. Moreover, unlike school children who reside in our Commonwealth’s big cities, students who live in regional school districts do not have ready access to public transportation to get them to and from their classes.”*

Furthermore:

*“G.L. c. 71, § 16C forbids regional school districts from assessing students’ families for any portion of the transportation costs that the Commonwealth is supposed to reimburse, even though non-regional school systems are free to levy these charges for their students in grades 7-12.”*

There is currently legislation being proposed by MARS that would allow for regional school districts to charge fees to collect money not appropriated through state funding.