

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Annual Report, 2009-10

The 2009-10 school year was one of both change and progress in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

During the summer of 2009, the District received the results of an independent analysis of opportunities to consolidate with our neighboring districts. The study was put together by MGT of America, having been commissioned through the South Berkshire Educational Collaborative at the request of our District, Berkshire Hills Regional School District, and Lee-Tyringham School District. The report offered several suggestions for consolidation of effort for our three districts. Our School Committee formed a Collaboration Subcommittee to enter discussions with the other Districts. However, as of this writing, we are awaiting reciprocation from the other two Districts before any progress can be anticipated.

Also, during the summer of 2009, the District contracted with Nature & Culture, Inc., a local Web design firm to completely overhaul our Web site. In early September, we unveiled our new attractive, up-to-date, and user friendly Web site at www.sbrsd.org.

Early in the fall of 2009, the District made some changes in the administrative team. Sandi Hubbard, long time speech therapist in the District, was appointed to the position of Director of Student Services when Pam Kenyon became Elementary Principal. We also welcomed back Tom Nadolny to the administrative team when he returned as Assistant Elementary Principal.

As a sign of the tough economic times, we learned in July that our state funding would be cut by \$130,000. Fortunately, we were able to make up that deficit when the hiring of new staff members came in under budget. News from the state government continued on a bleak note. In December, we were informed of a very severe cut in transportation aid, which fortunately, the Governor later mostly retracted. In the end, the cuts in District transportation were "only" \$80,000. Other cuts in our state aid were also forthcoming. Although the cuts were partially made up through federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, it is clear that funding will continue to be a challenge for our District and for all schools in Massachusetts and in the nation over the next several years.

With the economy fully in recession, District administrators worked with the School Committee to develop a very conservative budget for FY'11, which was actually 2.27% less overall than the FY'10 budget. The drop was due, in part, to the nearing of the pay-off of the bond for the Sheffield campus. Final payment of the "new" school will be made in FY'11, freeing up future capital monies for the upkeep and repair of all of our buildings. A Long-Range Capital Planning Advisory Committee, consisting of administrators, town officials, community and School Committee members, was established and has met to begin to set priorities in that regard.

Throughout the fall and winter months, the H1N1 virus threatened the health of our students, staff, and citizens. At the peak of the outbreak, the District recorded 187 students absent in one day. By vote of the School Committee, the District's buildings were offered as inoculation sites. As soon as vaccine became available, our Safety Team, led by Mt. Everett Principal Glenn Devoti, worked with Fairview Hospital, local health departments, and community volunteers to host three flu clinics. Over 800 students, staff, and citizens were vaccinated, preventing the outbreak from becoming much worse.

Our nation's First Lady helped to bring the issue of healthy food choices for children to the forefront, and I am happy to report that in our District, the student gardens grew very well – both figuratively and literally – this year. At New Marlborough Central School, the students, under the direction of Ms. Erna Lampman, continued a tradition of planting vegetables in the spring to harvest when they return each fall. A major renovation was undertaken this year to expand and fence the area, which was originally constructed in 1997. The renovation was funded by the New Marlborough-Monterey PTA, and the work was done by parent volunteers. A variety of plants and flowers are grown in the garden to complement curriculum areas of science, literature, math and social studies. Many of the plants are grown specifically for the annual all-school Harvest Supper, which occurs in mid-September. Other plants are harvested for seeds, snacks, and a variety of science experiments.

At the Sheffield campus, Susan Weinstein and Peggy Henden-Wilson continued the expansion of the community garden begun in 2008-09. Named the U & ME Garden, the project involves all ages of students, from the Southern Berkshire Child Care Toddler Program all the way up through high school seniors. Many volunteers from our local businesses and farms have also lent a hand with the project that is ever expanding, helping to teach our youngsters about healthy eating and the satisfaction of growing their own produce.

Our elementary schools also offer the Healthy Snack Program, which began at New Marlborough Central School in 2008-09 in the Kindergarten and 1st grade, with the assistance of a volunteer parent/nutritionist. In 2009-2010 the program expanded to include grades K through 4 and the volunteer parent was provided a stipend by a grant from the Janet-Eagle Fund and the PTA. The healthy snacks served are from whole sources: whole grains, dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables. The Healthy Snack initiative is committed to serving children morning snack foods free of partially hydrogenated trans-fats, high-fructose corn syrup, and food dyes/coloring and artificial sweeteners. The goal of the program is to help our students grow into healthy adults by teaching them the benefits good nutrition. The program will expand to Undermountain grades K-1 in the fall of 2010.

Interest in agriculture also grew among our high school students this year. Work progressed on the Future Farmers of America barn by the Mt. Everett building structures class. The biology classes and the FFA group continued to move toward their goal of building a productive farm on campus, producing wool, milk, and other products that can be used in the culinary arts classes or sold at area farmers' markets. At the end of the

school year the announcement was made that Mt. Everett biology teacher and Future Farmers of America advisor Cassie Uricchio was named Teacher of the Year by the MA Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Additionally, Ms. Uricchio was offered a scholarship for graduate study at the University of North Carolina for the 2010-11 school year, and the School Committee granted her request for a leave of absence to complete her studies. We all look forward to her return in 2011-12.

With the District's interim Agreement for funding set to expire after 2009-10, representatives of each of our five member town select boards began to meet to try to work out a new District Agreement to serve our children and taxpayers for the foreseeable future. The group put forth a Re-stated Regional Agreement for the consideration of the voters of the District. As of this writing, it has been approved in all five of our member towns, and it is the sincere hope of the School Committee that the Re-stated Agreement will enable the District to move forward without the animosity that has so often hampered budget discussions since the Education Reform Act of 1993 was passed.

Through the generosity of Alford, Monterey, and Sheffield, who sponsored the District's application, we were awarded an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) for \$308,733 to upgrade the heating and ventilation system at the Sheffield campus. The upgrade will allow the temperature in each room to be set individually, providing not only comfort, but significant savings in oil and electricity. It is estimated that the District will save over 3,000 gallons of oil and over 35,000 kWh of electricity each year. Additionally, through the efforts of Alford, Monterey, and Mt. Washington, the District has received a Clean Energy Choice Community Matching Grant for the installation of photovoltaic array to provide lighting outside of the main entrance to the campus. An educational component displaying the minute-by-minute energy gain provided by the panels will be included, as well as a display explaining how photovoltaic panels work. We are very grateful to our towns for their sponsorship and support in these efforts.

Staff Transitions:

The District welcomed the following staff members in 2009-10:

Annie Christensen, Grades 9-12 English Teacher, Mt. Everett

Mary Jo Erickson Connor, PK-5 School Nurse, Undermountain

Kathleen Dennison, Dishmachine Operator, Undermountain/Mt. Everett

Stephanie Duquette, Special Education Support Professional, Undermountain

Danielle Forest, Grade 4 Teacher, Undermountain

Flor Gordon, Night Custodian, Undermountain/Mt. Everett

Bonnie Groeber, Education Support Professional, South Egremont

Joanna (Paino) Hartson, Grade 4 Teacher, Undermountain

Julia Heenan, Grade 5 Teacher, Undermountain

Elissa MacDowell, Speech Therapist Asst., Undermountain/Mt. Everett

Claudine Mallory, Grade 6 Teacher, Undermountain

Evan Miner, Special Education Support Professional, Undermountain

Thomas Nadolny, Assistant Elementary Principal, District

Nadia Rix, Grade 4 Teacher, Undermountain

Sandra Tinker, Special Education Support Professional, Undermountain

We are grateful for the services of the staff members who left our employ during 2009-10, and we wish them all the best in their new pursuits:

- Amanda Silk, Special Education Support Professional, Undermountain
- Laurie Hils, Special Education Support Professional, Mt. Everett
- Mary Jo Erickson Connor, PK-5 School Nurse, Undermountain
- Stephanie Duquette, Special Education Support Professional, Undermountain
- Nam Le, Grades 7-12 Special Education Math Teacher, Mt. Everett
- John Martin, Curriculum and Professional Development Coordinator, District
- Evan Miner, Special Education Support Professional, Undermountain
- Kimberly Moon, Elementary Language Lab, Undermountain
- Mohamedou Moustapha, Grades 7-12 French Teacher, Mt. Everett
- Nadia Rix, Grade 4, Undermountain
- Julia Suor, Reading Specialist, Mt. Everett
- Claudette Webster, Special Education English Language Arts, Mt. Everett
- Christine Regan, Business Administrator
- Gary Burkle, PK Teacher, Undermountain
- Susan Andersen, Kindergarten Teacher, Monterey
- Paul O'Brien, Technology Coordinator, District
- Joanne Pavoni, Grade 2 Teacher, Undermountain
- Marsha Pottle, Grades 3-4 Teacher, New Marlborough Central
- Martha Thomson, Grades 9-12 Art, Mt. Everett

We offer a special note of thanks to Christine Regan, who served the District very well as Business Administrator for the past 5 years. And, an extra special thank you goes out to our retirees: Gary Burkle (32 years), Susan Andersen (32 years), Joanne Pavoni, (35 years), Paul O'Brien (34 years), Marsha Pottle (27years), and Martha Thomson (34 years). They will all be sorely missed, as they have each touched and enriched countless young lives over the years. We wish them all many long, happy, and healthy years ahead.

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Members of the 2009-10 School Committee

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| Alford: | Linda Silvestri, <i>Vice Chair</i> |
| Egremont: | Charles B. Flynn
Stephen P. Willig |
| Monterey: | Deborah Mielke |
| New Marlborough: | Herb Abelow, <i>Chair</i>
Charles McSpirtt |
| Sheffield: | Andy Fetterhoff
Catherine B. Miller
H. Dennis Sears
Vito Valentini |

Mt. Everett Regional School
Class of 2010

Michelle Pasqualena Ackerman	Shauna Marie Maynard
Ephrem Ginger John Aragi	Lukus Tyler McDonnell
Tracey Lynn Bassett	Kassel Logan Nightt **
Josh W. Bernstein	Rupert M. Norris
Jessica Susan Bradley	Alyssa Christine O'Connor
Ryan Patrick Brown	Charles Ormsbee
Ashley Catherine Button	Gabrielle Osborne
Mariah Sidney Cook	Justin Brian Palmer
Nicholas R. Crane	Sarah Ann Peppe
Emily Elizabeth Monica Crawford **	Maxwell Thomas Petrucci *
Lauren Nicole Crawford	Kyle Robert Pezzano
Leah B. Crine	Alexandra Camille Pivero
Thomson Nathaniel Danz	Jacob William Raifstanger
Sterling Nicole Drake *	Shamar R. Ringgold
Mohamed Abdelkhalek Elbetity	Tate Russel Riva
Hannah Elizabeth Germain	Michael Brian Robitaille
Amy Golden	Jonathan Wyatt Ronan
Sean Joseph Guy	Carlota Sagnier Eckert
Jessica Anne Hampton	Hanna Elisabeth Sirois **
Jocelyn Cathleen Hastings *	Bryan Gregory Siter
Tyler Joseph Hils	Savannah Rebecca Stalker
Kimberlee Humes	Samya Rose Stumo *
Juli-Anne Iemolini	Jennifer Rose Sullivan **
Andrew P. Ignace	Kodi Michael Sullivan
Alyssa Marie Jakacky	Stacy Ann Marie Sullivan
Olivia Mae Jenssen	Elizabeth Jayne Tomich *
Jhori Lynn Jurgenson	Keith William Torrico
Katina Rose Kergaravat	Andrew James Turnbough
Eric James Kuhn	Justin Michael Ward
Ashley Victoria Larkin	Ryan Christopher Ward
Stephanie Elizabeth MacLeay **	Jena Marie Whalen
Anna Marie Mathieu	

* Denotes National Honor Society

** Denotes Cum Laude and National Honor Society

Southern Berkshire Regional School District

STUDENTS TO BE CHARGED TO TOWNS - OFFICIAL COUNTS 10/1/2010

	Alford		Egremont		Monterey		New Marlborough		Sheffield	
	In-District	Choice Out	In-District	Choice Out	In-District	Choice Out	In-District	Choice Out	In-District	Choice Out
Kdg.	3	4	12	1	9	0	9	0	45	1
PK	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	5	0
1	1	2	6	3	9	1	12	0	25	1
2	0	1	5	0	2	3	13	1	27	0
3	1	2	5	0	5	3	9	0	29	1
4	0	2	5	2	0	2	16	3	31	0
5	0	1	2	1	2	2	9	2	30	3
6	4	0	7	4	5	10	13	2	20	3
7	1	0	5	0	4	1	9	1	41	1
8	1	3	9	1	2	3	7	3	43	5
9	0	1	4	2	3	1	9	2	41	4
10	2	1	4	3	1	1	12	2	26	3
11	2	4	5	1	3	5	10	4	40	6
12	0	1	7	4	1	5.5	9	2	21	6.5
UG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15	22	77	22	47	37.5	138	22	424	34.5
Total Students 10/1/10	37		99		84.5		160		458.5	

Enrollment by School and Town As of October 1, 2010

School: <u>Town</u>	UME	NMC	Egremont	Monterey	Mt. Everett	Totals
Alford	7	0	3	0	6	16
Egremont	37	0	6	0	34	77
Monterey	12	9	1	6	14	42
New Marlborough	46	38	0	0	56	140
Sheffield	196	13	4	0	213	426
Total In-District:	298	60	14	6	323	701
Mt. Washington	6	0	1	0	6	13
PK Tuition	5	7	0	0	0	12
Choice-In	64	8	3	5	58	138
Tuition-In					2	2
Foreign						
Exch.					2	2
Total All Students	373	75	18	11	391	868