

Bow School District News and Views

DEB MCCANN, CHAIR
DR. STEVE ELGERT, V. CHAIR
ANNE BAUER
PANSY BLOOMFIELD
WARREN PARCO

2008-2009 School Board Goals

To increase the quality and amount of two-way communication between the Bow School Board and the larger Bow community.

The "Bow School District News and Views" will be mailed to every household 2 to 3 times a year. This newsletter will give updates from each of the three schools as well as from the School Board and the Superintendent's office.

The Board will also be holding several informal "coffee chats" at the Baker Free Library, where community members can drop by and chat with Board members. The first of these was held on October 23 (stay tuned for future dates). Press releases to the Bow Times and Concord Monitor will be sent when there is news of interest and the Board will continue to hold joint meetings with the Board of Selectmen.

To effect a comprehensive review of the Bow High School Program of Studies.

The Board has created an ad hoc committee made up of six community members, five staff members, BHS Principal John House-Myers and Superintendent Dean Cascadden. The committee is charged to perform an independent, unbiased review of the programs at Bow High School. The review will

be data driven and any recommendations will be advisory to the Board. Committee members will gather data and information by using such resources as reports, interviewing or surveying staff, students, parents and community members, examining assessment score trends, reviewing exit surveys and collecting other pertinent data. The advisory committee will report findings at the June 2009 school board meeting.

To continue to develop, implement and assess a needed pre-k through 12th grade curriculum.

A district wide CIA (Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment) committee has been formed to better coordinate curriculum throughout the district. The CIA committee will hold monthly open meetings for the purpose of communication, sharing and collaboration.

To develop a fiscally conservative budget for the 2009-2010 school year.

The Bow School Board welcomes input from the community at large. Regular monthly meetings are held at Bow High School, on the first Thursday of the month, at 7:00 PM and are open to the public. Information is regularly updated on the Bow School District website, where you may find information about each school as well as the School Board's activities. Please visit www.bownet.org.

Bow Memorial School

Testing, Testing, Testing.....

NWEA, NECAP, My Voice: What's it all about?

The State Board of Education has begun an initiative called "Follow the Child." This initiative calls for local school districts to educate each and every child appropriately. In order to achieve this goal, the middle school is participating in a district wide effort to move instruction and learning from the traditional whole group experience to a more personalized approach. The first step is to make every effort to ascertain what each student knows and what he or she needs to learn. Teachers have always been able to assess the performance of their students on subject matter that they teach. Teachers have always known that there are students in their classes who have already mastered some material before it's taught. How do we discretely determine what our students know?

A forward thinking group of educators in the Northwest United States decided to tackle that problem. The result of their

effort is the NWEA MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) test. Given at least twice annually, these tests provide teachers with detailed information on each student's strengths and weaknesses in math, language arts, and reading. This readily available data includes very specific information. Armed with the knowledge of their students' starting point and their own classroom observations, teachers can begin to plan lessons that differentiate instruction based on data that identifies a student's individual needs. In short, the transition becomes teaching the students in the class rather than teaching the class.

Last year, using NWEA data, students at BMS wrote their own academic goals for the school year. Giving students the opportunity to establish some of their own academic goals will promote a sense of ownership in the learning process.

The NECAP test also provides us with data on individual student performance. Although not as detailed or timely as NWEA, it is a useful tool and gives us

another data point to use in conjunction with the NWEA.

The My Voice Survey is in its second year at BMS. This questionnaire, given to both staff and students is designed to measure the school climate and culture, measuring attitudes and perceptions about Bow Memorial both academically and socially. If we truly want to teach students instead of classes and provide instruction that addresses the differences in students as learners, we must invest the time and resources to analyze individual student profiles. While taking the time to test is frustrating for both teachers and students, the information gleaned provides an essential foundation for moving toward an informed, personalized learning environment.

The scope of this change is huge in magnitude and when viewed as a whole seems overwhelming at times! We are making this journey one planned step at a time, and we will continue to assess the results of our efforts in a variety of ways.

We believe that this is the best process to provide a quality education for every student.

-----Kirk Spofford, Principal BMS
-----Donna Girard, Asst. Principal

Bow Elementary School

New and returning students, faculty and staff were excited for the opening of school on August 27th. Thanks to the hard work of our Building and Grounds crew over the summer, the school looks great inside and out, including new siding on the upper level and new paint in the cafeteria. We welcomed parents and community members to three Open House nights (September 4th, 10th, 11th) which included presentations about our new trimester, standards-based report card. As we look ahead to the coming months, our faculty and staff will be focused on three major areas in our important work with students.

Assessment and Differentiated Instruction

Assessment and differentiation are the essential and interconnected prongs of effective instruction. The NH state testing, known as NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) is administered once yearly and gives overall information about student progress and the effectiveness of instruction at the whole school level. Assessment results are also used in the allocation of resources and support services throughout the school.

Differentiated instruction is the process of designing and implementing instruction that meets the diverse learning needs of students in a classroom. Assessment data is used to guide teachers in their planning for targeting their instruction to more effectively and efficiently teach every student.

An Early Intervention Focus

Some students benefit from targeted supplemental instruction to help them meet grade level benchmarks and goals. The delivery for these services is organized in a Three Tiered

Budgets and Taxes -

Some thoughts from the School Board

How does "No Child Left Behind" really impact our expenses?

While there is no mandated cost to school districts, "No Child Left Behind" has certain requirements that, while beneficial, do have an impact on the cost of education.

A. HO Staff It requires that subject matter teachers (all teachers above the elementary level - including middle school teachers) must be "highly qualified" (HQ) - in other words, have a specialty of study in the field they are teaching. For example, a middle school math teacher must be trained and certified to teach mathematics. At BMS, we straddle grades 5-8, including both "elementary" level students (through grade 6) and "junior high" level (gr. 7&8). In the past, we would have been able to use teachers who were certified for grades K-8 general teaching without a specialty in math. Now, we must have teachers who are trained and certified specifically for math. It does create some challenges at the BMS. When we have fluctuations in population, we were, in the past, able to switch teaching assignments to cover classes. We now have the restriction of needing HQ staff to cover those classes.

The same kind of difficulty arises at the BHS. In the past, we might have been able to ask a science teacher to cover a math class, or vice versa. That is no longer true today, unless the teachers are cross-trained - and can be highly qualified in

Model - a pyramid framework representing levels of instruction and support that best meet individual needs. In a three tiered model, tier one represents core instruction to all students in the classroom and higher tiers represent instruction and intervention that increases in the frequency and intensity. Supplemental targeted instruction and intervention may be delivered by members of the Reading Department, special education, speech and language department and/or occupational therapy. An important goal of early intervention is the prevention of more complex academic and/or behavioral needs.

Collaboration and Home/School Partnerships

At Bow Elementary School we are committed to working collaboratively in teams to better meet the needs of every learner. Research repeatedly confirms that student achievement increases when parents and families are involved in children's education. Our parent volunteer program is a vital component to our excellent programs and frequent communication between home and school provide enhanced opportunities for meeting student needs.

This year BES launches a new standards-based report card. Standards are end-of-the-year grade level goals. Our new report card, sent home three times yearly, will give detailed information to parents and students about student progress meeting each important standard at a grade level. Working together offers the best opportunity for the success of every student.

-----Dr. Deb Gibbens, Principal BES
-----Jane Morrill Winter, Asst. Principal

both. As you can imagine, teachers who have majored in more than one specialty are hard to find. Most people only "major" in one subject area in college.

This makes staffing a difficult juggling game - to make sure that we have enough HQ staff to cover all of the courses we offer in the schools.

B. Testing. "NCLB" has a requirement of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all students. Each student must show a certain amount of growth each year. However, the expectations are such that, for certain populations of students, such as children with educational, economic, or cultural disadvantages, additional help may be needed to be attain that measure of growth. Yet, if a school fails to meet AYP, there are sanctions to face that could have indirect cost implications: for example, time for staff to develop improvement plans as well as additional personnel to implement them. There is also the possibility that schools will lose federal funding opportunities. Indirect costs include additional personnel to ensure that ALL students improve enough for the schools to meet AYP.

While this discussion only describes a very small portion of NCLB, both of the issues above impact the "teacher student" ratio at our schools. To simply count the number of adult teaching bodies and compare this to the number of students doesn't quite tell the whole story of "class size." That said, the School Board, together with administrative staff, is taking a hard look at class sizes to determine whether we are making the best use of our staffing structure.

(more on \$\$ on back)

Bow High School

Fall 2008

The dedication to teaching and learning, and commitment to ongoing improvement, have ensured that Bow High School students consistently achieve at the highest levels in academies, the arts, and athletics. During the 2008-2009 school year, we will focus on a variety of initiatives, three of which have been described below.

Competencies and Assessments

For the last two years, faculty members have been developing competencies for each course offered at Bow High School, which align with both State Standards and Grade Level Equivalents (to align with NECAP). This comprehensive school wide focus has given us the opportunity to articulate the essential components of each course, and define precisely what it is we want students to know, and how they will demonstrate that they know it. Formative and summative assessments, as well as scoring rubrics are being developed that accompany each competency, and are intended to measure levels of proficiency.

Chinese Language and Student Exchange Program

This school year marks the second year that we have offered Chinese language instruction to our high school students. The funding for our Chinese guest teacher has been provided through an Advanced Placement College Board grant that we received, which will provide funding for our guest teacher for three years total. We are now in the process of exploring other grant-funded options in order to continue the Chinese language program.

We have also established a Chinese Student Exchange Program with Bohai #1 Petroleum High School in Tianjin, China. In the spring of 2008, eight Bow High School students and two chaperones spent one week attending Bohai HS while living with student host families, and then trav-

A District Report Card

The Bow School District is working at developing a data based District Report Card that would pull many statistics and reports into a single document. Some of the areas that will be covered include:

- Enrollment with school size projections,
- Student participation rates in Free and Reduced Lunch, Special Education and 504 plans,
- Drop out rates and post high school plans by graduates,
- Teacher education levels, experience levels and salaries as compared with state averages,
- Budget considerations including class size, teacher to student ratios and cost per student,
- Assessment data including SAT scores, Advance Placement participation and results, NECAP state assessment results.

The goal is to give a snapshot of district results in a single

eled for the second week to visit many of China's historic sites. This fall, Bohai students and two chaperones visited Bow High School for one week, and stayed with host families while attending classes and visiting sites throughout the New England area. Their second week was also spent traveling on the eastern seaboard, visiting famous historic sites in the United States before leaving for home from Dulles Airport in Washington, DC. We are now in the process of planning our second student exchange trip to China, in April 2009.

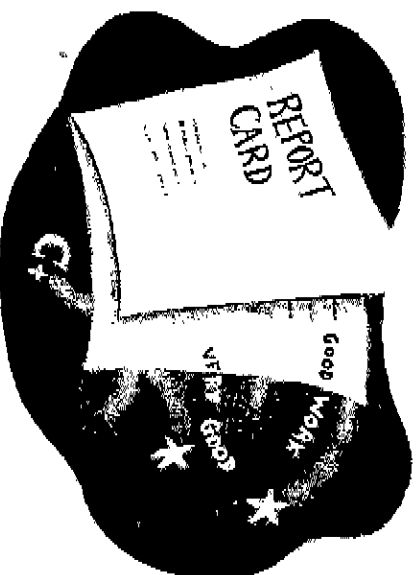
Outdoor Trail System and Adventure Education

There have been some dynamic improvements and upgrades that have taken place throughout our BHS outdoor campus funded by private donations in kind and volunteer efforts. These include:

- Nordic Ski and Cross Country students, coaches, and parents have been working on widening, improving and connecting trail sections that will allow us to host skiing and running events in the future.
- Several new ropes course elements were added to our existing Adventure Education area after a winter storm took out one of the upper ropes course elements. Last year one of our seniors installed a 'zip line' as part of his senior project, which has been very popular among staff and students.
- With funding provided by NH Council on the Arts, we have also begun to discuss a variety of landscaping and sculptural projects that will be located on our outdoor campus. All of the outdoor initiatives are part of a long term plan designed to improve our outdoor campus and provide greater accessibility for all.

As we enter the 2008-2009 school year, we are excited about what lies ahead and look forward to collaborating with the community to explore and review Bow High School.

-----John House-Myers, Principal BHS
-----Gay Longnecker, Asst. Principal



document, and the challenge is to make the data available in a user friendly and easy to understand format. The Superintendent has prepared a number of graphs that the school board and administrative team have critically reviewed. The data will also be part of a "State of the Schools" address that the Superintendent will deliver to all staff on the District's half-day professional development time on November 26th. Feedback from that process will help develop the final product, which will be published for the school and town community in early 2009. Once this resource is created, it will be updated as more data becomes available.

-----Dr. Dean Cascadden, Superintendent

What does our end of year unexpended balance really represent?

Hmmm.....Is our end of year unexpended balance a representation of overambitious budgeting, good management, capricious events, or a combination of all three?

The school district typically hopes to experience an end of year unexpended balance, with good budget management, of between 1% and 3% to return to the town at the end of the year. This is a reasonable expectation for a business entity that is required by law NOT to have a loss or deficit for the year. While there is no sanction per se for having a deficit other than making up the difference in the following year's

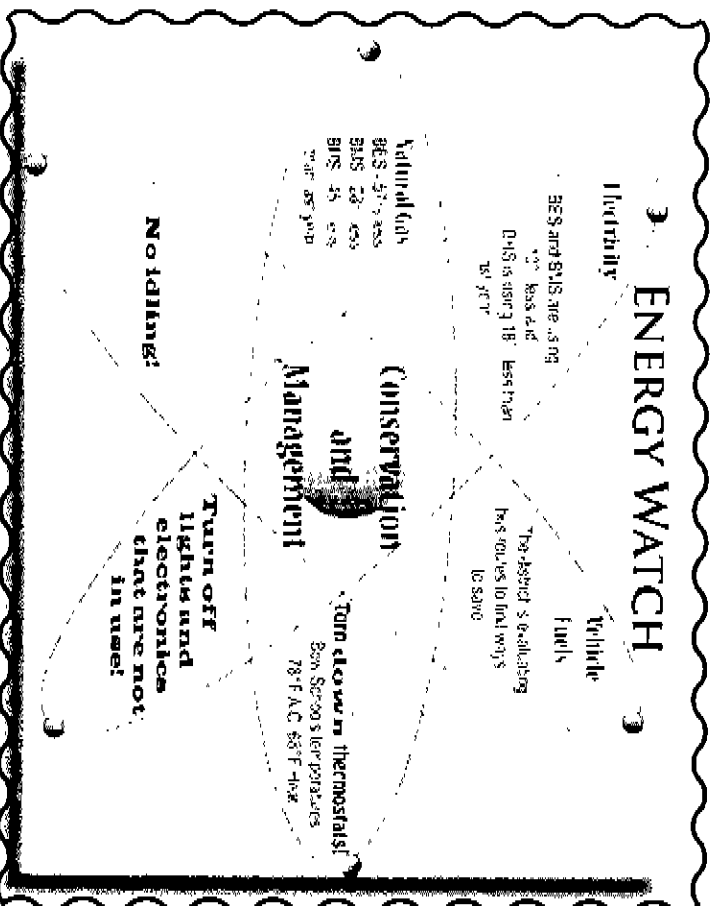
budget, it is nevertheless good practice to avoid a deficit.

The end of year balance is made up of budget funds that were well managed and not spent; also revenues such as bank interest, staff contributions to health insurance, Medicaid reimbursements for some student services, Catastrophic Aid to help with some Special Education costs. Other unexpended events help make up the balance. There are 19 different revenue accounts that could contribute to this amount.

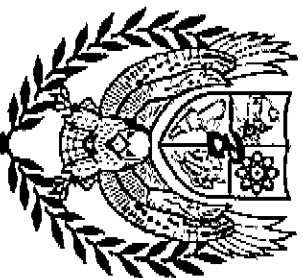
The 2006-7 funds returned to the town to reduce the tax rate totaled \$903,506. The amount resulting from unexpended budget dollars was \$671,009. This was about 3% of the approved expenditures. The largest single contributor to that amount was an unexpectedly low health insurance premium increase. Because insurance rates are not set until long after the Annual Meeting, we must prepare our budget proposal based on a "not to exceed" figure given to us by the insurance

company. In that year, because the actual rate increase was low compared to the estimate, the amount not expended on health insurance was \$428,337. That means only \$242,672 or 1.1% of the unexpended amount was due to budgeting/management efforts, well within our expectations. The rest of the amount returned, \$232,495, was due to unexpected revenues such as those listed above. These amounts are very difficult to estimate before they are received, and are budgeted conservatively (meaning we estimate low, then anything we do receive goes directly to reduce the tax rate).

The 2007-8 amount returned to the tax rate on the current tax bill was \$508,755. This represents a budgeting/management savings of \$218,432 or 0.93% of the total approved expenditures budget, and a revenue excess of \$291,323.



Bow School District
32 White Rock Hill Road
Bow, NH 03304



ECRWSS
Current Resident
Bow, NH 03304

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Concord, NH
03304
Permit No. 52