

**Raymond School District
Monthly Message from the Superintendent
December, 2011**



Good Today, Better Tomorrow, Successful Forever

2012-13 Budget - The Raymond School Board has presented its proposed school district budget for 2012-13 to the Budget Committee. The public hearing will be held on January 3 at 7:00 PM at Raymond High School.

The School Board budget is \$87,299 less than the current year's operating budget. This would translate into a 2¢ less per \$1,000 assessed property valuation on the tax bill. Two staffing positions at Raymond High School have been reduced and the budget was built around our current enrollment of 1439.

The School Board was very fiscally conservative with this budget's development and continued to meet its budget goals. The Board reduced district-wide expenditures while incorporating increases required New Hampshire Retirement costs, transportation, student special education tuitions, and oil costs.

The Board goals were to maintain appropriate student/teacher ratios, meet State of New Hampshire required minimum standards, and consistently focus on improving instruction.

Reminder – the District's Deliberative Session is set for 10:00 AM on Saturday, February 4th. This year, two board seats are up for election. Expiring in March 2012 are John Harmon's and Diane Naoum's seats. Both have served the Board well as Chair and Vice Chair and both are deciding whether they will run for re-election. Two School Board positions will be open for re-election. The filing period is January 25 – February 3, 2012.

This school year, the teacher's collective bargaining group is involved in contract negotiations. The teachers declared impasse in negotiations on November 10th. On January 3, 2012, mediation will take place. A tentative agreement must be reached no later than January 10th to be placed on the March ballot.

Seacoast School of Technology was formed in 1980 as our regional vocational center. It has transformed over this time period to a highly recognized Career and Technical Center. 64 Raymond students attend daily, enrolled in one of the 12 different programs. This experience for our high school students is second to none in our State.

Standards Based Grading - The District is in the process of reconfiguring how we grade and report to parents and students. The main outcome of our work this year will be the production of standards-based report cards. To accomplish this, the Standards-Based Grading Committee, led by Jon Hall, has devoted many hours to the examination and integration of standards-based grading practices, and to the examination of many and varied standards-based report cards from other school districts. Their work has been fruitful and they, with teachers, have reached agreement on many practices and models pertaining to this project. Several design drafts of report card are being reviewed. Hopefully, the Committee will be ready to institute standards-based report cards as early as 2012-2013. Many teachers are joining in this effort to more clearly communicate student achievement to parents.

What standards-based grading and reporting will do is to provide a much more detailed grade that is matched to the reporting learned standards that we have agreed on. What this will look like, generally, is a report card that has multiple grades for each subject, rather than the traditional single grade. Each of the multiple grades will be based on a particular reporting standard (also known as a competency at the high school level). The level of information afforded by this form of reporting will make it clear where the student needs the most support and where the student is excelling within each subject.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of standards-based grading and reporting is the separation of academics from behaviors on the report card. Parents certainly need to know how their child is behaving in class, but the behaviors should not be part of the calculation of the academic grade. The grade is based on mastery of academic standards, while the behaviors are reported in a separate section. This provides a better measure of academic proficiency, while also providing direct communication about the behaviors that parents are most concerned about. Parents' advice and input on which behaviors they are most interested in hearing about will be gladly taken.

Please contact Jon Hall with any questions that you have about standards-based grading/reporting. Email: j.hall@sau33com

21st Century Enrichment and Tutorial Program – Registrations are being accepted for Session III, starting January 3. The 21st Century Enrichment Program has started in Raymond! Thanks to a very generous grant, and in partnership with Raymond Coalition for Youth and YMCA, Raymond School District is now able to offer after school programming at all three schools. Our offerings at Raymond High School include Baking, Money Smarts, Zumba, Jujitsu, and Nutrition Awareness. Our students at Iber Holmes Gove Middle School have been busy making Healthy Snacks, learning about Money Skills, creating Raymond Monopoly, and many other great activities. At Lamprey River Elementary School our students have been working on their own Comic Book Creations, Clay Sculptures, Paintings and more! We also provide tutorial time for students to work on their homework or have some academic subject tutoring with a certified teacher. Currently, 80 students are participating. If parents are unable to pick up the children before the end of the program, we offer a late bus every night!

Our offerings are divided into sessions. Our next session starts on January 3rd. We are constantly looking for community members, both residential and business, that are willing to volunteer or make donations for our program. Our volunteer's responsibility can range from anyone who would like to share a skill or talent they have in the form of an enrichment class to someone who would just like to be there to be an extra role model for our students. If you would like to volunteer or donate supplies for any one of our programs (or 2 or 3!), please call or email Pat Arsenault at 895-3117 x3120 or at p.arsenault@sau33.com.

Dr. Jean R. Richards,
Superintendent of Schools