

EDUCATION

NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Our faculty, staff and administration continue to teach to high expectations and our students thrive in this environment, excelling in every arena: academic, athletic and extracurricular. There are a number of events that capture the essence of last year.

We were fortunate to have grant funds to supplement our budget and help our schools move forward. We used the America's Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) grants very wisely to address immediate needs and to build capacity for the future. We wrote the grants to support professional development, training, and curriculum work where we could. We have invested heavily in supporting our math instruction for grades 5-9, reading instruction for grades K-5, and writing instruction grades K-12. Our emphasis has been and continues to be communication: be clear, be concise, and be focused on topic. This can be for the spoken as well as the written word. We have offered, and will continue to offer this spring, workshops for staff on writing across the curriculum so that kids can learn to communicate what they know, understand and are able to do in each content area. We have emphasized a few specific strategies and trained all staff in those strategies so that students are hearing the same vocabulary, seeing the same strategies and using the same schema whether it is in science, social studies, English or math. The program is called Six Traits. It is an approach for students to use to organize their thinking, content and personal style in the different genres of writing. We are very excited about this particular initiative.

In mathematics we provided training for our grade five through nine teachers in the area of "vertical acceleration." Based on the work by Mahesh Sharma, former President of Cambridge College, our teachers are working on their skills to teach students those elements of the math curriculum that will make the most difference for most kids to understand mathematics sooner and be able to "do it" with more success. The area most focused on is numeracy, where kids have to understand place value, operations and how numbers relate to one another. This training along with the district's adoption of the same K- 8 textbook series for mathematics provides us with greater consistency in vocabulary and instructional strategies in all of our schools.

This past summer we trained twenty teachers in Responsive Classroom, a focused approach for developing a community of learners. We have about 2/3 of our elementary staff already trained and we need to get everyone trained over time and keep them current in strategies that engage all learners, set the tone for the classroom and keep students connected with one another and the school.

Additionally, we have invested heavily in time and thinking to ensure a quality construction project in Stow (a new elementary school addition and renovation is occurring for a Pk-5 building). The Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Renovation/Addition of Center School, soon to house preK-5, was attended by all students and faculty, as well as some parents, community members, and state dignitaries. We are also looking at our space needs at the high school, especially outdoor space, and are awaiting a report on how we might be able to move forward to gain better use of existing fields and other spaces.

The employees of the District have been taking advantage of the Wellness Programs offered by MIIA (Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association). Last year, many participated in the Zumba classes, the Strength and Stretch Exercise Program, a Mediterranean cooking demo, a Food and Mood cooking demo and the Pedometer Walking Program! Through these programs, we kept moving and learned about new healthy food alternatives.

The fall of 2010 brought a ten-week Heart Matters Program where the Nashoba employees set an all-time attendance record for MIIA! 53 staff members and retirees signed up and had their blood levels, weight, and blood pressure checked as a baseline entering the sessions. They attended ten meetings after school and learned about healthy choices, nutrition, stress reduction, exercise and even had a healthy cooking demonstration. At every class, the participants were introduced to a new healthy snack and were given a binder of recipes and guidelines for making healthy choices.

Nashoba Regional High School has been ranked within the top 5% of public high schools across the nation for three years running. Nashoba students performed 37th in MCAS out of 342 school Districts in 2010. Students at Nashoba are offered a wide array of challenging courses and extra-curricular offerings in a fully inclusive setting, which helps us in our goal to have each student reach their full potential.

This past summer our *Best Buddies Program* at the high school was recognized as one of the top groups in the nation for their work supporting intellectually and physically challenged youngsters. Members of the group pair off with students with disabilities and help support them in everyday activities at the high school and the community.

Fifty-three (53) students at Nashoba Regional High School earned Advanced Placement Scholar Awards in recognition of their exceptional achievement on AP Exams. The College Board's Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) provides willing and academically prepared students with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school, and to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both for successful performance on the AP Exams. About 18 percent of the 1.8 million students worldwide who took AP Exams performed at a sufficiently high level to also earn an AP Scholar Award.

At Nashoba, sixteen (16) students qualified for the AP Scholar with Distinction Award by earning an average score of 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. An additional fifteen (15) students qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor Award by earning an average score of 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. Twenty-two (22) students qualified for the AP Scholar Award by earning by completing three or more AP Exams with scores of 3 or higher. Of this year's award recipients at Nashoba Regional High School, fifteen (15) took the tests as sophomores or juniors.

Eleven (11) students from our senior class have achieved Commended Students status in the National Merit Program. The National Merit Scholarship Program evaluates all of the PSAT scores from this graduating class's national cohort. Commended students are in the top 50,000 performers in the nation. When one considers that over 1.5 million students from the class of

2011 took the PSAT that highlights the magnitude of this achievement. Additionally, our students compete with their peers from Massachusetts, which ranks in the top of the nation for PSAT results.

It was another exciting year in 2010 for Nashoba sports teams. Participation was at an all-time high again with over 535 student-athletes participating in the high school sports program. Nashoba now offers 25 sports at the varsity level and fields a total of 42 teams on an annual basis.

The year was highlighted by Nashoba football team's Super Bowl appearance, which capped an amazing season by the Chieftains. The squad finished with an overall record of 10-3. The Chieftains won eight straight games before falling to Division I power St. John's 31-21 in the Super Bowl. Nashoba went undefeated in league play to capture the Central Mass. Division 1B regular season title.

The fall of 2010 was one of the most successful overall seasons for Nashoba sports teams in recent memory. Four teams were undefeated in the league, including football, girls' soccer, and boys' & girls' cross country. Those four combined for a 27-0 record against conference opponents in bringing home four titles to Nashoba. All qualified and had success in the post-season, including the boys' soccer team, which made the playoffs for the first time in five years. The boys' & girls' cross country teams advanced to the state finals and the girls' soccer team played in the MIAA District Semi-Finals.

Going back, the spring of 2010 also saw Nashoba teams succeed in the post-season. The boys' and girls' tennis teams combined for a regular season record of 25-7 and the girls' team advanced to the MIAA District Semi-Finals. The baseball (13-7), boys' lacrosse (9-9) and girls' lacrosse teams (9-7) also qualified for the MIAA playoffs.

There were numerous individual accomplishments during 2010 and several Nashoba student-athletes were recognized as some of the best in the state. Coby Horowitz (Stow) added to his long list of accomplishments by winning the 2-mile run in the All-State Indoor Meet in March, defeating all other competitors regardless of Division. For the first time in 30 years, the Nashoba-Clinton wrestling program had three student-athletes place in the MIAA Individual State Tournament: Josue Guerra (Clinton), Brad Lewis (Stow) and Andrew Holfinger (Clinton). Rachel Peabody (Stow), Kat Malley (Bolton) and Nick Bateman (Bolton) competed at the 2010 MIAA Alpine Ski State Championships. Peabody was the top performer for the Chieftains, and finished 22nd out of top 130 skiers in the state.

Jair Cruikshank (Lancaster), Peter Hagermoser (Lancaster) and Abby Hurd (Stow), captured individual district titles at the MIAA Central Massachusetts' District Spring Meet in May. Cruikshank set a school and meet record in the 400 meter hurdles, while Hurd won the two-mile run and Hagermoser won the shot put. Those three qualified for the State Finals in June along with Emily Clark (Stow), Casey Teska (Stow), Rachel Busch (Stow), John Ojukwu (Stow), Alex Schryver (Lancaster), and Horowitz.

Returning to fall sports, Hurd snagged her second District title of the year, winning the Girls' Division 1 District race and placing third in the state meet in November. The football team swept league MVP honors as Conor Wyand (Stow) was named league MVP, Will Hurley (Stow) was tabbed offensive MVP and Randy Patterson (Bolton) was the defensive MVP. Chelsea Roche (Bolton) and Mary Hilliger (Lancaster) were named Mid-Wach League Co-MVP's in girls' soccer and Roche went on to earn NSCAA All-Region honors.

A total of 57 Nashoba student-athletes were named to Mid-Wach League All-Star teams in 2010, but every one of our 500+ student-athletes that participated in sports deserves to be congratulated for their hard work and success. Additionally, the Nashoba Youth grade five boys' football team and girls' cheering squad won the state championships. At Hale Middle School the Girls' Cross Country team placed second in the state meet. All of our athletes worked extremely hard throughout the year and represented the school district well both on and off the fields.

At Hale Middle School its first-year robotics team placed second in its first competition against all high schools. The math team took second place at a regional event in Shrewsbury.

Nashoba works to promote authentic opportunities for writing and reading whenever possible. Ms. Grady's grade one class sent the U.S. Olympic Figure Skating Team a spirit poster. They were acknowledged by the team. Grades 1 and 5 and K and 5 have book buddy partnerships where older students read to younger students and work together on book response projects. Mrs. Sullivan's fifth grade classroom in Stow and Mrs. Gothie's fourth grade class in Bolton are pen pals. At the end of the year they will meet their pen pals via Skype. Ms. Grady, has participated in an author's celebration with Mrs. Winin and PC Penguin by reading their own books they wrote. All Grade one students at Pompositticut share their own books with parents on Author's Day at the end of the school year. Grade 5 students hosted a school museum with projects on the Maya, Aztec, and Inca. Some made videos, posters, 3-D models, and power point presentations. Two teachers from Switzerland visited Pompositticut and Center Schools to learn about American education, and share their cultural and professional practices. They spent 2 weeks in our classrooms on sabbatical.

Bringing in the community is an important part of learning for our students. The Stow Garden Club planted flowers for Memorial Day with Stow's grade one students. Our teachers on the district Early Childhood Committee are creating Lending Libraries where books and activities go home to preschool children in the community. Mrs. Plumb's second grade classroom partnered with Stow Senior Citizens to share hobbies, play games, and interview the seniors for a biography. Our schools continue to host teacher interns from various area colleges, especially Framingham State University, Boston University, Northeastern University and Clark University. We extended a hearty welcome to two teachers from Switzerland who visited Pompositticut and Center Schools to learn about American education, and share their cultural and professional practices. They spent two weeks in our classrooms on sabbatical. Our high school also sponsored several teachers from Germany along with students for a two week visit.

Our Kindergarten teachers in Stow guided by Mrs. Hass, a first grade teacher and administrative intern, prepared extensive portfolios showing evidence of required criteria from the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC) for the re-accreditation process.

Our report would not be complete without mention of the faculty and administration who retired. Ken Tucker, Florence Sawyer Principal, retired after thirty-four years with the system, the last 12 as principal. Suzanne Wintle and Miriam D'Angona, elementary teachers at Florence Sawyer; Barbara Carvalho, Florence Sawyer Librarian; Nancy Merritt, Kindergarten Aide at Pompositticut; Marlene Bergart, Speech and Language Clinician at Pompositticut; April Michaud, music and band instructor at Pompositticut and Center Schools; Gail Foote, School Interventionist at Hale; Arthur Stickler, Technology & Engineering Teacher at NRHS; Pam Storm, Speech and Language Clinician at Mary Rowlandson; and Cathy Haslett, Physical Education Teacher at NRHS, all retired and were recognized for their service at a May 2010 event.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wood, Superintendent of Schools
Brian Burke, NRSD Committee Chair

Maureen Busch, Committee Member
Lynn Colletti, Committee Member