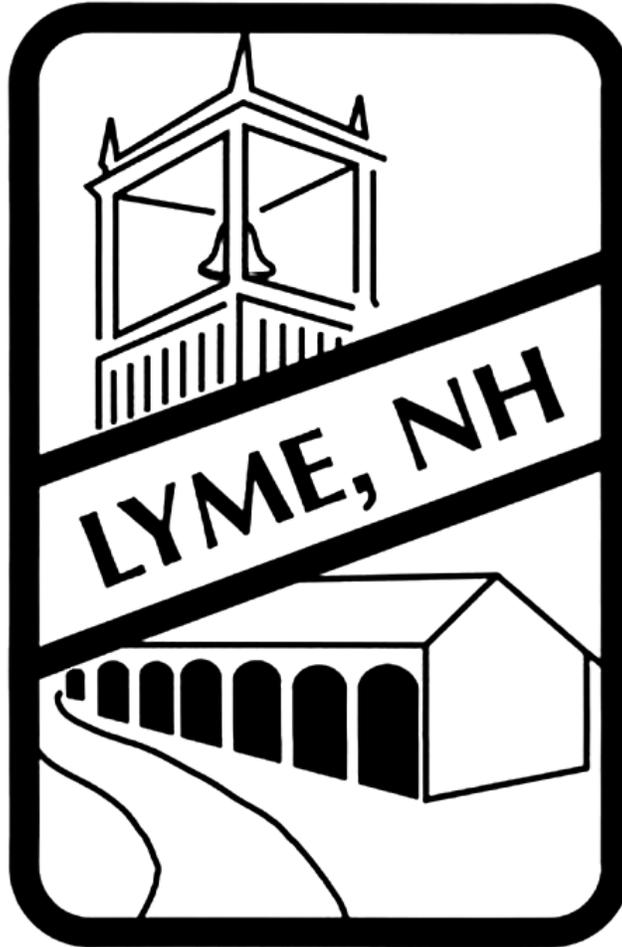


LYME SCHOOL DISTRICT



NARRATIVE REPORTS 2011

Lyme School District 2011 Report

The single biggest topic of conversation this past year for the Lyme School Board has been the number of students in our school, and the management of classes and class sizes. At this year's school district meeting we'll discuss both immediate needs we have identified, and plans for the near future. In most years, this in itself would present a significant challenge. The challenge is even greater as it comes in conjunction with the addition of some very large special education expenses, exacerbated by the continued downshifting of costs from the State level to individual school districts. Those special education expenses impacted our budget in 2011-2012 as it forced us to tap reserve funds to cover costs that exceeded our planned budget by nearly \$250,000. Those are recurring costs that will also impact the 2012-2013 budget and they loom large when we compare one year's proposed budget to the next.

On the enrollment front, Lyme's numbers and school aged population growth continues to defy regional trends. But local trends are clear. We've experienced slow growth in student population over the past decade with the rates accelerating in the past 5 years. If we cross-reference that with house sales since 2006, we see that if no more or less houses changed hands in a given year, we gained 7.32 students. If more houses sold than in the previous year, we gained an additional .87 students per house. That's a fancy way of saying that while a generation ago it seemed families were selling to retirees, now households without kids are selling to families. The end results point to a community that is growing younger and retaining vibrancy, but one that is also straining the physical plant of its school. In the school itself, we are growing younger as grade sizes are steadily larger in the lower grades than in the middle school. This alone will likely keep our school population high in the coming years.

In the past five years as our total student population pushed upwards to "record" levels, at the Lyme School closets have become offices, and offices have become teaching spaces. In turn those closet offices get split into more small offices. The larger former offices become teaching spaces for both "regular" and "special" education groups and individuals. Classrooms (and the art room, gym, and cafeteria) are booked nearly every moment of the day. When weather forces recess indoors, music and P.E. gets displaced. When the school play begins there is no longer space available for chorus. And so on . . .

More importantly when grades reach the thresholds at which we have traditionally split into smaller classes, we have no place for them to go. Whether or not we choose to divide grades, we need to have space options to accommodate both "soft" splits (break out groups), and "hard" splits (splitting a grade into two classrooms). We spent much of the past year investigating options from locations close at hand, and in "friendly" hands to locations where we'd propose to rent space from outside groups.

Yet at the same time we are constantly assessing what class size parameters are best for the kids and best for the town. We ask a lot of questions. In our larger grades do we have a cohort that works well together that would be more damaged than helped by a split? Would a split help students get more individual attention or would it cause the class to feel so small it would no longer provide enough peer interaction and diversity. Can we afford to split? Can we afford not to? Would people want to split if it required moving one or more grades out of the school? What are the social impacts of separating a grade from the rest of the school? What are the economic side effects? Are there parts of the educational program that could not be offered to a class at another location? Could we provide integrated academic support for kids who need it, or would they need to be separated from their cohort for significant parts of the day? The answers are rarely absolute, so we create and implement solutions, then we monitor, innovate, and adapt.

For 2012-2013 we know that to maintain our current educational program we need to have more options for space – at minimum one classroom. And we know that in a broad range of likely scenarios we'll need two classroom spaces. While we count and track every nose and potential nose that could walk through the front door in September, until that day we do not know exactly how many students we'll have, and even more importantly, which grades they will be in. To that end we have proposed two notable changes to the school plan and budget for year. First we have added an additional teacher position that will either provide break out support in multiple larger classes, or enable us to fully split a large grade. Second we have separately requested additional funds to support adding temporary classroom space. This will enable us to choose the most beneficial and economically feasible option among a range of possibilities that involve relocation of a class or subject and/or the lease or purchase of a temporary classroom trailer. This will provide a bridge to a more suitable solution for the town of Lyme's most significant public building and its student population.



The Lyme School is a place that is best seen to be truly appreciated. It is more than its success in academics. When you visit the school you will not see a fancy facility, you will see one that, despite its age (built 1906, 1958 and 1994) feels new because it is cared for by all that use it. You will see hallways filled with art and classrooms full of activity; curriculum which strives to meet the increasing demands of a complex and global economy; students working hard to learn the skills they'll need in this economy, surrounded by volunteers and teachers who sincerely care for them; and students who are learning to be considerate, inclusive and respectful of one another. Simply stated you will see a community committed to improve, learn and build upon whatever stage of growth they are currently experiencing. We encourage you to come by to see these things for yourself, as a guest or, if you have the inclination, as a volunteer. Until that time I would like to share some of the significant events and efforts of the past 12 months:

Enrollment Management: With success comes challenge. As the reputation of the town of Lyme spreads it draws more interest in the town; this is great if you are selling your house or applying for home equity loans, hard if you are working to manage class sizes and school budgets. As a result of this interest in the town of Lyme our school is experiencing a growing enrollment. New enrollment this year primarily effected the 1st and 3rd grades. The number of students per grade now averages 23, and our smallest grade of 18 students is poised to graduate next year (2012-2013).

Instructional Space & Staffing: When class sizes increase, we examine a variety of options to ensure that the size or makeup of the class does not negatively impact the educational environment. We are fortunate to have a very talented and flexible group of professionals that allows us to adapt the deployment of staff in different ways each year to meet the needs that exist in September. This is best reflected by our Differentiation Teacher, who has taken on co-teaching Math or Language Arts in 1st and 3rd grades; our Lower School Special Education Teacher who has taken on teaching a section of regular education reading despite an already full schedule, and of course our two classroom teachers who showed up in September with classes that had a combined 9 more students than they had the year before. Over the first four months we (parents, teachers and administration) have been actively monitoring the progress of these classes and I am pleased with how effectively we have worked together. Our staff is not the only aspect of the school that has shown adaptability, our building has as well. Over the last several years we have converted three storage areas into offices and small instructional spaces, re-tasked the conference room, special education room and cafeteria into instructional space and used the hallways for math fact volunteers to work with students in the lower school. Currently music, band, health, guidance, library/media literacy and language are programs which do not have classrooms; they are taught in various spaces including the cafeteria, art room or other classrooms at different times of the day. Our challenge is that we have no additional space for dividing a class into two smaller sections, nor do we have smaller spaces that allow us to conduct small group instruction for larger classes that we are unable to split.

Inquiry Based Science: Science is widely recognized as one of the areas of critical need in today's society. The response to this need is not simply more content, but a better understanding of the process of science, specifically developing the capacity to observe, interpret, analyze, and extrapolate significance. The inquiry-based science program aims to reward children's interest in discovery by encouraging students to use these skills to formulate questions through observation and pursue answers in the same manner. Our program takes this issue one step further, in that it is not only designed to benefit students, but also to build capacity within our teaching staff. Students are learning these critical skills, while teachers are observing, participating and being mentored in the instruction of these skills—in their classrooms, with their students, using materials designed by the best in science education. Through grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the LIFE Fund (a Lyme Foundation partner) we have established a partnership with the Montshire Museum to provide this experience for our students and their teachers.

Energy Conservation: This year we concluded a total energy audit that allows us to prioritize the most cost effective places to reduce energy use and recover costs. The audit is another stage of our effort over the last several years to reduce the facility's cost of operation. Recent installation of *high efficiency lights* will save us \$525 annually and \$6,830 over the life of the bulbs; the *solar panels* on the school roof produce 15,500 kWh of electricity for the school—saving approximately \$2500; *insulating the attic of the school* reduced oil consumption by 2,000 gallons, saving \$5,700 this year alone; replacement of *mercury/halogen lights in the gymnasium* with energy efficient fluorescent lights qualified us for a \$1,500 rebate from the power company; *ceiling fans* in the gymnasium have reduced the heating cost of that space; and the *dropped ceiling in the cafeteria* has reduced the volume of heated space. These cost-saving measures mean savings for us all and a healthier environment as well. In fact just the new lighting and solar panels reduced greenhouse gases (CO₂) by 22,410.5 lbs this past year alone.

However, the accomplishments we are most proud of are those meaningful, yet intangible, interactions between individuals. In stressful times this is particularly important. Sometimes knowing we are carefully and strategically preparing for our future, while being committed to our present, can make the difference. Come by or subscribe to our newsletter and see why you can take pride in the education you help provide our youngest citizens.

Respectfully Submitted,

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"What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children." —John Dewey

Report of the Head of School Thetford Academy 2012

Thetford Academy this year celebrates its 193rd year of service as a small, independent New England academy educating students in partnership with family and community. As ever, our academic, co-curricular, and outreach activities adhere to our five fundamental principles: *excellence, commitment, cooperation, caring, and diversity*. Our curriculum and professional practice embrace our core belief that learning shall be: *active and engaging, reflective and thoughtful, varied and adaptive, safe and supportive, structured and coherent, and motivating and inspiring*.

We are proud to be Vermont's oldest continuously run secondary school where we honor the traditions that are unique and special to us: our 30th Mountain Day this past September; two major cross country events, the Wood's Trail Run and the Vermont Cross Country Championship; and most important, Founder's Day each February. Established in 1944 after fire had devastated the Academy and the world was at war, Founder's Day is now in its seventh decade of celebrating Thetford Academy. In a festival of winter-carnival contests, music, art, theatre, an all-school banquet, and traditional candle-lighting ceremony, we revel together in appreciation and renew our bonds of community.

2011-12 is an immensely exciting school year. At this time the Head Transition Task Force and screening committees are in round two of their national search, working with the Board of Trustees to identify and hire our next Head of School. Until their work is complete, it is my privilege to serve Thetford Academy as interim Head. In partnership with Martha J. Rich, now Associate Head for Academics, we forge ahead in the second year of administrative team restructuring. One of our joint goals has been to establish regular supervision and evaluation as a strategy to attract, support, and retain a high-quality faculty. We believe that our faculty must be leaders who inspire each other and students to do their best work, taking a full measure of responsibility for the successful operation of the school.

Our hard work and diligent efforts were rewarded with congratulations and commendations from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Independent Schools last fall. And in accordance with our Strategic Plan, the Academy continues to move forward with our goal of expanding and improving technology resources. Our state of the art facilities and reliable, functional equipment and technology provide the foundation for high-quality teaching and learning. We have fully implemented our school-wide transition to Google docs; sent our first Web2School Grade Reports home last October; engaged faculty in professional development on the feasibility and potential of iPads in the classroom; and met the November 1st early- application deadline for electronically transmitting college materials submissions, through Naviance, for students in the Class of 2012.

This year we are pleased to be in the final phase of implementing our new graduation standards. On track with our Strategic Plan, the Class of 2013 will be the first to graduate having met all eight T.A. Graduation Standards (TAGS) in addition to the required 24 diploma credits, and the following year the Class of 2014 will meet TAGS and the new diploma requirement of 26 credits. To support the rigor of increased expectations and foster a culture of personal responsibility for achieving high standards of learning, students at the Academy have the support of our Advisory system, a Personal Learning Plan, and access to TAGS tutoring.

Steeped in tradition, the Academy is immersed in change and moving forward with confidence into the 21st century. Each semester we broaden and deepen our exploration and use of incredible new facilities made possible by the capital improvements of 2009-10. This fall our bright, spacious cafŽ began offering a "continental" breakfast approved by the Vermont Child Nutrition Program for free and/or reduced meals, as well as a la carte breakfast items for all TA students and faculty. The Thetford Academy Swell (Safety and Wellness) committee revised our menu, emphasizing healthy food choices and banning the sugary and fat-laden. Today we serve one hundred breakfasts daily.

With pride, we post our tuition rate for FY13 – with no increase. Our academic roster will remain strong with new electives being added. Personnel costs are up approximately 4%, and energy costs for electricity, propane, and fuel oil are projected to increase significantly. Yet, capitalizing on new and improved facilities - the new gymnasium, performing arts theater, cafŽ, and infrastructure, and completely renovated science facilities, and with focus upon recruitment and increasing enrollment - we have committed to keep our FY12 rate of tuition.

On that note, in August we welcomed six Chinese students to our new International Student Program (ISP). Living in home-stays within the community, these diploma-seeking students represent a unique addition to our program. The ISP meets the dual goal of increasing diversity at TA - broadening the experience of young international students while enriching our own experience - and stabilizing Academy enrollment.

As we enter the New Year and a new era of leadership and growth at the Academy, we reflect upon our rich traditions and our close ties within this magnificent valley. We are grateful for our partnership with the Lyme School District, guaranteeing admission to all Lyme students who choose Thetford Academy.

Torrelee Fisher-Sass
Head of School

Hanover High School Principal's Report 2010-2011 School Year

Hanover High School is a comprehensive ninth through twelfth grade high school that serves the students of Hanover and Norwich. In 2010-2011, approximately 13% of the 749 students who attended Hanover High School were public or private tuition students. In 2010-2011, US News and World Report again selected Hanover High School as one of the top high schools in the nation.

Hanover High School is an active learning community that provides broad academic and cocurricular programs. Approximately 97% of our 2011 graduates are attending or plan to attend college. During the 2010-2011 school year, Hanover High School had fourteen National Merit Scholar Finalists and four students received National Merit Scholarships.

As an active learning community, it is our mission to engage students' **minds, hearts, and voices** so that they become educated, caring, and responsible adults. We believe that students learn responsibility by being given the opportunity to exercise responsibility, that they learn decision-making by having the opportunity to make decisions, and that they make the strongest commitment to education when they are given real power. We are a democratic school where students, staff, and community members work together as members of Council to act as our governing body.

If you would like to learn more about Hanover High School please visit our website at www.hanoverhigh.us or ask to be added to the principal's weekly e-mail by sending your e-mail address to Cathy.Niboli@dresden.us.

Respectfully submitted by: Deborah Gillespie, Principal, Hanover High School