



Wachusett Regional School District

Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

February 2010

Dear Residents:

As we begin the annual process of budget planning and deliberation, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the support that citizens have shown for our schools. Because of your support, the Wachusett District has made considerable progress during the last few years. While not without incident and consequence, we have built a high school that provides our students with a facility that matches the strength and complexity of our school's comprehensive program. As taxpayers you can certainly be proud of the school that you have provided to our high school students. And it is as if they want to thank you with good performance! Last year, we saw the best testing results in our school's history. For example, seventy-two percent of our tenth grade students scored in the advanced category in math on the most recent MCAS. This result on a very challenging test is testimony to the strength of our teachers and our programs, and we owe our residents thanks for helping us to maintain the conditions that we need in order to educate students in a safe and productive environment.

The latter has certainly been a challenge in this economic climate. We realize that budgets are strained and we will make every effort to mitigate cost, but the simple fact is that our costs are currently very low. While providing quality programs in all of our schools, Wachusett has consistently spent at a very low rate. Our per pupil expense rate is among the lowest in the entire state. It is against this backdrop that one must consider our current economic crisis. Last year, Wachusett lost approximately 2.3 million dollars of revenue over the course of the state budget process. In order to meet this fiscal challenge, the District was forced to reduce forty-four staff members. We simply cannot continue to make such cuts and maintain the quality programs to which residents have grown accustomed. With this admonition over, let me renew my annual pledge to work with the Member Towns to solve our funding problem in a manner that serves our mutual interest.

Once again, thank you for your continued support of our schools. With your help and support we will continue to make every effort to develop our nation's most valuable resource.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Pandiscio, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

TGP:rlp

Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School

Annual Report – 2009

The Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District Committee presents this report to the citizens of the District. The Committee consists of twenty-two members – four from Fitchburg, represented by LeRoy Cark, Mark Louney, Robert Campbell and Brian Walker, two from Gardner, represented by Helen Lepkowski and Alice Anderson and one from each of the communities of Ashburnham – represented by Diane Swenson, Ashby – represented by Warren Landry, Athol – represented by Toni L. Phillips, Barre – represented by John Scott, Harvard – represented by Sue Tokay, Holden – represented by James Cournoyer, Hubbardston – represented by Jacqueline B. Kaminski, Lunenburg – represented by Barbara Reynolds, Petersham – represented by Ed Simms, Phillipston – represented by Eric Olson, Princeton – represented by John Mollica, Royalston – represented by Mary Barclay, Sterling – represented by Dr. Kenneth I.H. Williams, Templeton – represented by James M. Gilbert, Westminster – represented by Jeff Schutt and Winchendon – represented by Burton E. Gould, Jr.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Numerous challenges were faced during the development of the fiscal year 2009-2010 budget, including significant cuts to Chapter 70 state aid and transportation aid, along with the continually rising costs of healthcare and an aging infrastructure and the need to update and modernize our technology and vocational/technical offerings.

Considerable effort was put forth by the School Committee, administration and staff to develop a cost-effective budget. The final fiscal year 2009-2010 Educational Plan totaled \$22,104,281.

The District was audited in August 2009 as part of the yearly financial audit by the accounting firm of Melanson, Heath & Company from Greenfield, MA and an “excellent” report is anticipated.

STUDENT BODY

Monty Tech’s October 1, 2009 enrollment included 1,355 students in grades nine through twelve. Students are represented from every community in the district as follows: Ashburnham (46), Ashby (39), Athol (130), Barre (39), Fitchburg (391), Gardner (166), Harvard (4), Holden (47), Hubbardston (50), Lunenburg (64), Petersham (7), Phillipston (15), Princeton (17), Royalston (18), Sterling (50), Templeton (89), Westminster (54), and Winchendon (114).

The Guidance Department/Admissions Department received 784 applications for admission in September 2009. Of these, 706 were for the available ninth grade openings. Due to the retention rate of our upper classes, we were only able to admit 22 students to the tenth and eleventh grades.

Monty Tech continued to offer a variety of opportunities for students, parents and community members to learn about and visit the school. In October, 1,620 district eighth graders participated in our Tour Days. Students toured many of our twenty vocational/technical areas and learned about the challenging academic offerings and exciting athletic and extracurricular programs. Career Awareness Night offered interested students the opportunity to return at night, with their family members, to explore the facilities and talk with staff members. Career Awareness Night, as well as last spring's Open House, were attended by an estimated 1,000 individuals per event, comprised of students, parents, and community members from throughout the district.

The Vocational Interest Program (V.I.P.) continued to attract large numbers of seventh and eighth grade students during the 2008-2009 school year. Due to the high enrollment, a third five-week session was implemented. Participants had opportunities to attend hands-on after school sessions in a variety of vocational/technical areas. A satisfaction survey rated this program 4.8 out of 5. The 2008-2009 enrollment is the highest ever at 748 seventh and eighth graders. The survey also indicates that 719/748 students surveyed intend to, or have applied to Monty Tech.

In June of 2009, the class of 2009 graduated 293 seniors. These graduates received diplomas and technical certificates. Approximately 95% of the graduates planned to continue their education at the post-secondary level or employment, while another 5% planned to enter military service.

The Scholarship Committee awarded approximately \$31,850 in scholarships to members of the Class of 2009. In addition, they awarded \$6,000 to the practical nursing graduates. Once again, local (Business Education Enrichment Foundation) and state organizations, as well as generous individuals, continue to recognize the ability and potential of Monty Tech graduates in the form of generous donations. The School Committee, administration, faculty, and graduates themselves are grateful for this support.

The Articulation Agreements with local colleges continued to play an important role in helping our graduates enter college through credits earned at Monty Tech. Approximately 65% of our graduates entered a two or four year college. This number has continued to grow over the years.

ACHIEVEMENT

Based on tenth grade MCAS scores, Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School continued to see an improvement during the 2008-2009 school year in student achievement in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics. In the spring of 2009, Monty Tech's passing rate on the mathematics portion of the test climbed from 98% to 99% while the percentage of students scoring in the proficient and advance categories in math went from 79% to 77%. The school's passing rate on the English portion of the test was 100% in 2008 and 99% in 2009, while the students scoring in proficient and advanced categories in English went from 73% to 80%.

The following data represents the percentage of students who met the competency score in English/Language Arts and Mathematics at the time of graduation:

	<u>English Language Arts</u>	<u>Mathematics</u>
Class of 2009	100%	100%
Class of 2008	100%	100%
Class of 2007	100%	100%
Class of 2006	100%	98.3%
Class of 2005	100%	98.6%
Class of 2004	100%	94.8%

FACULTY AND STAFF

In the 2008-2009 fiscal year, Monty Tech was affected by the slowing economy. Our Chapter 70 aid was reduced by 10%, as were all schools in the Commonwealth. As a result of this, our staff was reduced by 22 positions, which included 6 retirements, 1 resignation and 15 layoffs. We did hire or transfer additional staff to cover a few of these positions.

The current staff includes 55 vocational teachers, 4 vocational teaching assistants, 45 academic teachers, 4 guidance counselors, 1 school psychologist, 1 speech and language therapist and 1 media specialist.

SKILLS USA

Skills USA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. Through our association with Skills USA, our students develop job skills, teamwork, leadership and professional skills.

Skills USA Massachusetts has the second largest membership in the nation boasting 19,300 student and 800 professional members. The state has 42 secondary schools and 1 post secondary school, 34 of which are total participation Skills USA Chapters.

The 2008-2009 school year was an extraordinary one for our chapter of Skills USA. Due to the growing membership in the state chapters, it became necessary to restructure the state from five districts to six. Monty Tech's chapter found the new structuring both challenging and refreshing. Our chapter was able to deliver productive, rewarding and educational experience for all our students. Serving as co-advisors were First Sergeant Paul Jornet, JROTC Instructor, Kim Curry, Cosmetology Instructor and James Hachey, Admissions Specialist.

Highlights of the year included:

- A total of 42 medals were captured at the District Competition held in March at Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School.
- Fifty-two students made up of medal winners and district qualifiers earned the opportunity to compete at the State Leadership & Skills Conference held in April at Blackstone Valley Vocational Technical School. Monty Tech finished the competition with 21 medals and 5 students earning the right to compete at the National Leadership & Skills Conference, which was held in Kansas City, Missouri during June.
- Of the five students competing at nationals, three earned medals. Michelle Gosselin won gold in Action Skills, Jessica Lopez won silver in Pin Design and John Perkins won silver in Power Equipment Technology. Ben O'Conner, Culinary Arts and Paul Leslie, Carpentry, finished in the top half of their competitions.
- Monty Tech's Skills USA chapter was awarded a \$10,000 grant from Lowes, Inc. for the restoration of Moran Park in Fitchburg. In June, the chapter performed 250 man hours of work removing overgrown trees and brush and then our Masonry Program poured a concrete slab for the construction of a storage shed. The final stage of the project, which is building a shed and installing a fence around the playground, will be completed in early November 2009.

WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

A total of eight Monty Tech females successfully completed the 2008-2009 session (the seventh year of the program) of the North Central Massachusetts Women in Technology Program, also known as Project WATCH (Women Achieving Technical Career Heights).

The students included five from Office Technology, two from Drafting Technology-CAD, and one from Graphic Communications. Two additional students started the program, but dropped out due to co-op positions. One student, who emigrated from Vietnam seven years ago, spent three years in the program. The experience was invaluable in helping her acclimate to her new country, as well as aiding her in improving her English. She did so well that she was accepted at three excellent colleges and universities. She is now studying business administration at Fitchburg State College.

Through the program, qualified students from four area high schools – Monty Tech, Gardner High School, Leominster's Center for Technical Education and Narragansett Regional High School – have the opportunity to spend two days a month exploring career opportunities in high-tech fields, such as Engineering, Information Technology and Marketing, at Tyco Safety Products Company and SimplexGrinnell, two Fortune 500 companies located off Route 2 in Westminster.

The Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce, serving as fiscal agent for the program, provides transportation to the industry site through a private-sector grant.

Under the mentorship of company engineers, IT specialists and other professionals, participating students have the opportunity to experience firsthand life in corporate America. They are exposed to careers in high-tech fields working on “real world” projects, acquiring skills in teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking.

Project presentations were held at the end of the year to showcase the student’s work for company executives, school personnel and families and friends.

CURRICULUM

In addition to the house building projects, the vocational/technical programs continue to provide communities in the Monty Tech District with a range of services as a component of the curricula. The projects listed below are a sampling of services accepted during the 2008-2009 school year.

Auto Body/Collision Repair Technology

Gardner – Athletic Department – pole vault stop
Sterling Police Department – push bar for cruiser
Winchendon Highway Department – repair rust and refinish vehicles

Automotive Technology

Fitchburg Boys & Girls Clubs – repaired bus

Cabinetmaking

Hubbardston – made signs for town
Barre Library – bookcases
Templeton – Narragansett School District – made a rolling cabinet

Cosmetology

Gardner High Rise – senior citizen services
Gardner – Father/Daughter Dance services
Gardner – Dunn’s Park – community service – clean up

Culinary Arts

Taste of Wachusett
Taste of North Central

Dental Assisting

Lunenburg & Winchendon – CHIP Program
Ashburnham Health Fair
Westminster Elementary Schools – Dental Education

Drafting Technology

Banners for Gardner Air Jet Rally
Westminster Conservation Trust – made signs and posters
Athol – press booth
Barre Library plans
Hubbardston – CNC files for signs

Early Childhood Education

Fitchburg Community Partnership – Math/Literacy Fair

Electrical

Winchendon Housing Authority Garage
Westminster – wiring for holiday tree

Engineering Technology

Gardner – fixed PA system for Monument Park Bandstand

Graphic Communications

Templeton School Handbook
Templeton Development Center Big Ticket
Winchendon Pop Warner Yearbook
Westminster VFW Menus
Fitchburg High School Football Program
Gardner CAD stationary
Baldwinville PTO Tickets
Ashburnham-Westminster Raffle Tickets
NEADS Postcard
Habitat for Humanity stationary
Winchendon AHIMSA Animal Rescue
Gardner Middle School Yearbooks
Westminster's 250th Flyer
North Central Charter School Prom Tickets
Lunenburg Annual Report
Fitchburg Yearbook
Westminster Placemat
Ashburnham Boy Scouts
Gardner High School Illumination Book

Health Occupations

Annual Blood Drives
Shop Angel Christmas Charity Collection

Industrial Technology

Barre Bandstand – repaired railings
Gardner Municipal Golf Course – rain shelters
Westminster – cannon wheels
Fitchburg – plaques
Phillipston – library ramp

Information Technology

Gardner – Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center Web Design

Machine Technology

Fitchburg Police Department – key chains

Masonry

Winchendon Elementary School – formed and poured sidewalks
Winchendon Housing Authority – chimney
Fitchburg – Moran Park – formed and poured pad for shed

SPECIAL SERVICES

During the 2008-2009 school year, the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District provided special education services to over two hundred students.

The federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was reauthorized in December of 2004 and came fully into effect on July 1, 2005. In August 2006, the U.S. Department of Education released new Regulations for Part B of IDEA, which went into effect on October 13, 2006. The 2004 Amendment to IDEA expanded upon the 1997 reauthorization and includes new requirements. The reauthorized act continues to emphasize the role of parents and expands opportunities for parents, general educators and special educators to work together in partnerships that support student learning and the success of students in adult life.

The Student Support Services Department at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School provides support to all students. We have full time nursing staff that administers medications, performs state mandated health screening exams, and provides, when necessary, health information to the TEAM for a student's IEP meeting. We employ a full time school social worker that is able to participate in TEAM meetings and assist students who have needs concerning finances, family issues, homelessness, maternity, health issues and proper food and clothing. Our students have access to the services of a full time adjustment counselor and part time school psychologist. Both of these individuals are available for scheduled counseling sessions and mental health emergency treatment, as well as crisis intervention. We do have on staff a full time psychologist whose role it is to evaluate all students referred for an initial evaluation or who require a three-year re-evaluation. In addition, we have a full time speech pathologist that is available to service students with disabilities, assess these students and consult the teachers within the building.

The Special Education Program at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School district is reviewed annually in May, in accordance with regulatory requirements. The results of this evaluation are used to improve the special education procedures and programs at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District. The Parent Advisory Council participates in this review and evaluation.

The Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District adheres to federal and state laws regarding confidentiality of personally identifiable student information.

STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ATHLETICS

The Monty Tech Athletic Program was again very successful in the 2008-2009 school year. Our numbers keep increasing every year. We had sixteen teams compete in the fall of 2008, eleven in the winter of 2008-2009 and nine last spring.

Last fall, the Varsity Football Team, under first year coach Matt Sallila, did not win a game, but played with a lot of heart and enthusiasm, improving every week and giving their all during practice and games. They finished the year with 35 players (9 seniors) and worked very hard in the off-season to get ready for 2009. The Freshman Football Team was 1 – 6 and had 33 players complete the year. The Varsity Boys Soccer Team finished at 4 – 9 – 5 and played hard throughout the year. The JV Boys Soccer Team was 9 – 5. The Golf Team was 5 – 6 – 1 and missed the District Tournament by one match. We had three JV Golf Tournaments at The Red Farm Golf Course in Upton and played five other matches in an attempt to improve our program. The Field Hockey Team was 2 – 16. The Monty Tech faculty held the annual Teacher vs. Student Field Hockey Game to raise money for a scholarship for a deserving Monty Tech female athlete. It was very successful. The Boys Cross Country Team was 6 – 8 and the Girls Cross Country Team was 3 – 3. The Girls Volleyball Team had an 8 – 12 record. The JV Girls Volleyball Team was 5 – 12 and the Freshmen Girls Team was 4 – 11, as they continue to improve. The Varsity Girls Soccer Team was 7 – 7 – 4, qualifying them for the District Tournament where they lost to Blackstone Valley Tech in the first round. The JV Girls Soccer Team finished at 7 – 7, with most of the girls moving up this fall. Our girls program looks very promising. The varsity cheerleaders participated in the CAL Championships held at Westford Academy in October.

The Girls Varsity Basketball Team missed the District Tournament for the first time in many years, as they finished at 9 – 11. They finished the year with four straight victories to show promise for next year. The JV Girls were 9 – 8 and the Freshmen Girls were 8 – 6, as they prepared to move up to the JV Program this year. The Varsity Boys Basketball Team finished at 4 – 16. The JV Boys Basketball Team was 6 – 13 and played with a lot of desire and pride. The Freshmen Boys were 6 – 9 and showed vast improvement over the year. The Wrestling Team was 3 – 11 in dual meets and participated in many tournaments. Bobby Monks, a senior from Athol, became the first wrestler to win over 100 career matches, as he finished with 116. We ran a co-op team with Fitchburg High School and Oakmont. Monty Tech was the host school. The Co-op Ice Hockey Team did very well again, as they participated in the District Tournament, losing in the Semi-Finals. The JV Ice Hockey Team played very well, as the younger players

look to improve their skills. We participated in a co-op Swim Team with Leominster and had seven girls complete the season. We are looking forward to this venture again this year.

In the spring, the Varsity Softball Team again gave Monty Tech a lot to be proud of, as they won the Central Mass. Division III Tournament for the second time in five years. They won the Colonial Athletic League Championship for the twentieth time in twenty-four years and finished second in the State Vocational Tournament. They beat Turners Falls in the state semi-finals to advance to the state championship game at Worcester State. They played a strong game, but fell to St. Mary's of Lynn, 8 – 5. They finished the year at 24 – 3 and Coach Reid picked up his 500th career win and stands at 516 victories for Monty Tech. The JV Softball Team was 4 – 9 – 1. The Freshmen Softball Team was 2 – 6. The Boys Volleyball Team was 3 – 16. The Varsity Baseball Team finished at 4 – 16. The JV Baseball Team was 7 – 6, and the Freshmen Baseball Team was 2 – 9. The Boys Track & Field Team was 6 – 6, while the Girls Track & Field Team was 7 – 5.

The Outstanding male and female athletes for 2008 – 2009 were:

Male: Robert Cruz

Female: Ivette Tejada

TECHNOLOGY

Monty Tech is very fortunate to have the support of a School Committee and an administrative team that is committed to meeting the technology needs of our students and staff. Monty Tech's computer inventory includes workstations using both Windows and Macintosh operating systems. Wireless access points are available in several areas of the school.

Many of our vocational programs rely heavily on computerized applications. Our academic departments have also integrated technology into the educational experience of our students through the use of interactive whiteboards. Monty Tech's students are well prepared to enter the workforce, military or college with exposure to computer software and hardware that they will encounter once leaving the school.

Monty Tech's Electrical Department has made improvements to the infrastructure of the building by adding electrical circuits in the Technology Office Server Room. They also began replacing old network wiring in the original academic wing of the building.

Data continues to be an important tool for administrative decisions. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Data Warehouse is being utilized to analyze MCAS scores and related data.

GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

Monty Tech continues to pursue grant funding on an annual basis. These funds assist in providing many educational and social services to the student population. For fiscal year 2009, state and federal grant sources provided the school with \$2,121,608. Programs funded by these grants include: Improving Teacher Quality, Enhanced Education Through Technology, Special Education Allocation and Program Improvement, Title I, Drug Free Schools, Occupational Education – Vocational Skills, Emergency Recovery, Safe Schools and Summer Academic Support. (NOTE: The Emergency Recovery Program grant for \$1,293,561 was a result of federal stimulus funding and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund [SFSF], offsetting the reduction in state aid for Chapter 70.)

In addition to state and federal grant sources, Monty Tech was also the recipient of private grant awards totaling \$23,190. Monty Tech received \$10,490 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a reimbursement for ice storm expenses. The New England Dairy Council awarded Monty Tech a grant for \$2,700 for refrigeration equipment, and Lowe's awarded the Monty Tech Skills USA Program with a \$10,000 grant to support community service and outreach efforts. Total grant awards for fiscal year 2009 was \$2,144,798.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The School Committee and administration are extremely proud of the staff and students of the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District and their accomplishments. The school continues to work with the business community, local educational institutions, higher education and its vocational technical counterparts to develop common sense plans and responses to the educational challenges we all face.

Monty Tech's School Committee, administration and staff look forward to continued growth and we are committed to providing the best possible educational opportunities for workforce development within our District, and to that end, respectfully invites and encourages the continued support of town officials, parents and citizens in each of it's member communities.