



## *Wachusett Regional School District*

*Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling*

March 2011

The budget season is once again upon us and, as such, it is time to deliberate regarding the best possible use of our limited funds. As we begin the process, I want to take this opportunity to thank the taxpayers of our communities for the consistent support that has been shown to our schools. While we have not been able to fund our schools at a level that is appropriate, our Member Towns have done the very best possible for our students considering our economic circumstances.

The real culprit behind the problems that our schools face is the failure of the State to fund the Foundation Budget in an adequate manner. Educational reform in Massachusetts was intended to fund our schools in a manner that was adequate, equitable and predictable. In order to do so, the State developed a foundation formula that encompassed funding levels for each and every expense that schools require to function adequately. Unfortunately, the foundation has not been adjusted to reflect the changing economic conditions that have affected a number of its categories. For example, in the area of health costs, because only a general inflation factor has been applied to foundation increases, schools in the Commonwealth collectively spend \$1 billion above the amount that the foundation allows for health costs. In our district this amounts to over \$5 million which is diverted from expense categories that directly affect the education of our students. We raise this issue not to complain, but to encourage you to join us in bringing this matter to the attention of our state legislature. Write a letter or send an email to let those on Beacon Hill know that the inability to fund education with state dollars, as promised by education reform, has placed a tremendous burden on local governments to pick up the slack.

Even though state funding for education has failed to keep pace with changing economic conditions, the schools of the Commonwealth have met the challenges that were laid out for them when school reform began in our state in 1993. Massachusetts public school students now top the nation, and nearly all industrialized nations, on virtually every creditable form of performance assessment, and students in the Wachusett District significantly outperform the State. Lost in the broad-brush criticism of national school failure that we often hear is the fact that schools in our state and community are meeting a world-class standard of excellence. Our students, teachers and administrators are working hard to make education reform work in Massachusetts. Their hard work deserves our support.

Sincerely,

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

TGP:rlp

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## ***Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School***

### **Annual Report – 2010**

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 Clark, Mark Louney, Robert Campbell and Brian Walker, two from Gardner, represented by Helen Lepkowski and Eric Commodore, 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 rising health insurance, student transportation, and utility costs coupled with a decrease of State Aid Chapter 70 of \$246,009 and a decrease in State Transportation Aid of \$406,008.

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, which represents a \$284,389 decrease from the 2008-2009 Educational Plan.

The District was audited in August 2010 as part of the yearly financial audit by the accounting firm of Melanson, Heath and Co. from Greenfield, MA and an “excellent” report is anticipated.

### **STUDENT BODY**

Monty Tech's October 1, 2010, enrollment included 1,401 students in grades nine through twelve. Students are represented from every community in the district: Ashburnham (46), Ashby (42), Athol (122), Barre (37), Fitchburg (394), Gardner (193), Harvard (3), Holden (46), Hubbardston (53), Lunenburg (63), Petersham (6), Phillipston (20), Princeton (14), Royalston (21), Sterling (53), Templeton (104), Westminster (57), and Winchendon (115).

The Guidance/Admissions Department received 736 applications for admission for the class of 2014. Of these, 636 were for the available ninth grade openings. Due to the retention rate of our upper classes, there were a limited number of openings for upperclassmen. Monty Tech admitted 28 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, 1,340 district eighth graders participated in 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, was attended by an estimated one thousand 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 2009-2010 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 2009-2010 enrollment is the second highest ever at 742 seventh and eighth graders.

The Scholarship Committee awarded approximately \$37,560 in scholarships to members of the class of 2010. 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 donations. The School Committee, administration, faculty, and graduates themselves, are grateful for this support.

Articulation Agreements with local colleges continue 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 the tenth grade MCAS scores, Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School continued to see an improvement during the 2009-2010 school year in student achievement in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics. In the spring of 2010, Monty Tech's passing rate on the mathematics portion of the test declined slightly from 99% to 97% while the percentage of students scoring in the proficient and advance categories in math went from 78% to 80%. The school's passing rate on the English portion of the test was 100% in 2008, 99% in 2009 and 99% in 2010, while the students scoring in proficient and advanced categories in English went from 81% to 83%.

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 2010	100%	100%
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 2009-2010 fiscal year, Monty Tech was again affected by the slowing economy. Our Chapter 70 aid was reduced by 2%. As a result of this, our staff was reduced by four positions, due to retiring employees not replaced.

The current staff includes 56 vocational teachers, 2 vocational teaching assistants, 44 academic teachers, 4 guidance counselors, 1 school social worker, 1 school adjustment counselor, 1 school psychologist, 1 speech and language therapist and 1 media specialist.

## **SKILLSUSA**

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

SkillsUSA Massachusetts has the second largest membership in the nation, boasting 19,300 students and 800 professional members. The state has 42 secondary schools and one post-secondary school, 34 of which are total participation SkillsUSA Chapters.

The 2009-2010 school year was an extraordinary one for our chapter of SkillsUSA. The students met the challenges of district competitions, performed well at state-level competitions and took back to Monty Tech five national medals and four top-ten placements. Serving as co-advisors were First Sergeant Paul Jornet, JROTC instructor, Timothy Gately, English teacher, and Anne Marie Cataldo, Early Childhood Education instructor.

Highlights of the year included:

- A total of 51 medals were captured at the District Competition held in March at Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School – 20 gold, 17 silver and 14 bronze. Students in four contests swept the events, obtaining all three medals. These included: Dental Assisting, Medical Assisting, Preschool Teaching Assistant and Technical Drafting.

- Forty-five District Medalists and qualifiers, 24 local Leadership contestants, 1 state officer candidate and 14 voting delegates, for a total of 84 students attended the State Leadership and Skills Conference, held in April at Blackstone Valley Vocational Technical School and the Best Western Royal Plaza (Marlboro). Monty Tech finished the competition with 27 Medals of which 15 earned the right to compete at the National Leadership & Skills Conference held in Kansas City, Missouri, in late June. In addition, Victoria Holbert was elected to the State Executive Council and Paula Araujo was selected as a National Voting Delegate.
- Of the nine students competing at the National Conference, five earned medals and the remaining four earned a spot in the top ten in the nation. Michelle Gosselin, Early Childhood Education, earned her second Gold Medal in a row in the Action Skills Competition. Arielle Maddocks, also from Early Childhood Education, earned a Gold Medal in the Job Skill Demonstration – Open Competition. Eunices Gonzalez, Dental Assisting, earned a Silver Medal in the Job Skill Demonstration – A Category. Matthew DiBara, Masonry, earned a Silver Medal in the Masonry Competition. Conner Bailey, Drafting Technology, earned a Silver Medal in the Extemporaneous Speech Competition.
- Victoria Holbert, state officer elect, attended leadership training over the summer. Following the training, she was elected to the position of State President by her peers on the officer team.
- Monty Tech's SkillsUSA Chapter completed the restoration of Moran Park in Fitchburg, through the generosity of a grant from Lowes, Inc.

### **WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY**

During the 2009-2010 school year, Monty Tech had one of its largest groups of young ladies participate in the eighth year of the North Central Massachusetts Women in Technology Program, also known as Project WATCH (Women Achieving Technical Career Heights).

Our enrollment included: nine Business Technology students, five from Drafting Technology, and one from Engineering Technology, for a total of fifteen students. The students participated in a variety of high-tech, real-world work projects, under the mentorship of professionals at SimplexGrinnell and Tyco Safety Products. The projects covered a wide range of business and technology areas, such as finance, software development, IT hardware and software, event planning, marketing intelligence and video screening.

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, at Tyco Safety Products Co. 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.

Students interested in participating in the program must first pass a pre-screening process at their sending schools, and then attend an all-day Orientation Program, where they are interviewed by company personnel.

Of the six scholarships awarded at the program's annual Final Projects Presentation, held in May, Monty Tech students received four. Their selection was based on their outstanding performance during the year.

In addition, three Monty Tech graduates were hired to work in SimplexGrinnell's Monitoring Call Center this summer. All three graduates will be attending college this fall. Two of the students participated in the WIT Program, and the other student, a male, worked as a Co-op student in Monty Tech's Technology Department the past two years.

Monty Tech, with the support of Superintendent-Director James R. Culkeen, has played a pivotal role in the WIT Program the past three years by hosting three of the program's major annual events: the annual Orientation Day, the Final Projects Presentation, and the all-day rehearsal the day before.

## **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 provided during the 2009-2010 school year.

### **Auto Body/Collision Repair Technology**

Gardner, MWCC - security car repairs  
Winchendon, YMCA - rebuilt & painted Ford truck  
Templeton, Cemetery Department - repainted car

### **Automotive Technology**

Winchendon, YMCA - Repairs

### **Cabinetmaking**

Fitchburg Police Department- podium  
Fitchburg Moran Park - sign  
Athol/Orange Boy Scouts - birdhouses  
Fitchburg, nursing home - cutting boards

### **Cosmetology**

Gardner High Rise - Cosmetology Services

### Culinary Arts

Fitchburg Art Museum - "Art in Bloom" pastries  
Gardner Relay for Life - Pastries  
Holden - "Taste of the Town"  
Fitchburg, Nashua River Watershed Association - pastries  
Independent Restaurant Group - hors d'oeuvres - Fundraiser

### Dental Assisting

Lunenburg, Winchendon, Westminster, Ashburnham - CHIP Program  
Westminster, Winchendon - Dental Health Fairs

### Drafting Technology

Barre, Farmers Market - Banner  
Fitchburg, Silver Sponsors - Banner  
Fitchburg, Design of Shed for Moran Park  
Fitchburg, Police Department - podium design  
Fitchburg, Montachusett Challenger Little League Field - vinyls  
Fitchburg, Street Hockey - Banner  
Fitchburg, Christian Fellowship Youth Group - Banner  
Fitchburg, Jump Off Program - Designs  
Gardner, Relay for Life - Banner  
Fitchburg, Soccer League - Banner  
Gardner, Festival of Trees - Banner  
Westminster, Historical Society - Banner  
Westminster, 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Banner  
Winchendon, Toy Town Elementary - courtyard design

### Early Childhood Education

Fitchburg Community Partnership - Math/Literacy Fair  
Montachusett Association for Education of Young Children

### Electrical

Templeton, Fire Station - installation of lights  
Gardner, Fire Station - data wiring  
Winchendon, Toy Town Elementary School - light fixtures

### Graphic Communications

Westminster, Forbush Memorial Library - posters and flyers  
Interfaith Hospitality Network - bookmarks  
Gardner, Relay for Life - posters  
North Central - tickets  
Gardner, Memorial Lights - booklets/envelopes  
Ashburnham News - postcards  
Peoples Church - Letterhead/cards/envelopes  
Ashburnham, Friends of Senior Center - logo  
Ashby, Middlesex Camp - flyers

Athol, Athletic Association - tickets  
Athol, District 33A Lions Club - Ad Book  
Athol, New England Select - tickets  
Athol/Orange, YMCA - dinner tickets  
Baldwinville, Elementary School - Race and Carnival tickets  
Fitchburg, St. Anthony's Church - Tickets  
Fitchburg, St. Bernard's - Dance Tickets/Programs  
Fitchburg, High School - Tickets/Programs  
Fitchburg, Senior Center - Writing Project Book  
Fitchburg Longsjo School - poster/yearbooks  
Fitchburg, Boy Scouts - envelopes/letterhead  
Fitchburg, Forge Inn - tickets  
Fitchburg, Art Museum - brochure  
Fitchburg, St. Denis - tickets  
Fitchburg, MOC kindergarten - calendars  
Fitchburg, Troop 17 - decals  
Fitchburg, Police Academy - pamphlets  
Gardner, H.O.P.E. - tickets  
Gardner, MWCC - Handbook and booklet  
Gardner, Holy Rosary School - tickets/yearbook  
Gardner, High School - raffle tickets  
Gardner, Heywood Hospital - tickets  
Gardner, CAC - envelopes/letterhead/postcards, GALA Programs  
Gardner, Golf Commission - brochures/membership  
Gardner, Knights of Columbus - tickets  
Gardner, Athletic - Certificates  
Gardner, Doug Flutie Autism - posters  
Gardner, Public Health - pamphlets  
Westminster, Agriculture Commission - flyers  
Westminster, Pumpkinfest - flyers  
Westminster - placemats  
Winchendon, Ahimsa-Haven - Letterhead/brochures  
Winchendon - By-Laws Booklet  
Winchendon - Senior Center  
Winchendon, North Central Pathways - pamphlets

#### Health Occupations

Blood Drive  
Haiti donations  
Pediatric Day

#### House Carpentry

Holden Police Dept. - 20 sawhorses made  
Fitchburg, Moran Park - Refreshment stand



### Industrial Technology

Fitchburg - Baseball shelters

Fitchburg, Historical Society - bronze markers

Phillipston - Build/fabricate offices, DPW Barn

### Machine Technology

Fitchburg, Cogshall Park - manufactured plates and columns

### Masonry

Barre - repaint steps at Town Hall

Fitchburg, High School - dugouts

Winchendon Public School - concrete sidewalk repairs

### Welding/Metal Fabrication

Fitchburg, Fire Dept. - ladder brackets

Winchendon, YMCA - modify brackets for showers

## **SPECIAL SERVICES**

During the 2009-2010 school year, the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District provided special education services to over two hundred students. In September 2009, the Student Support Services Department is actively providing services to approximately two hundred and eighty-seven students identified with disabilities, both on 504 plans and Individual Education programs (IEP's).

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 Amendments to IDEA expand upon the 1997 reauthorization and include 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 administer medications, perform state mandated health screening exams, and provide, 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, part-time school psychologist and school social worker. All 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. 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 ATHLETICS**

The Monty Tech Athletic Program enjoyed successes again in the 2009-2010 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 seven last spring.

Last fall, the Varsity Football team broke a long losing streak and won three games in a row during a good stretch in October. They improved every week and gave their all during practice and games. They finished the year at 3 – 8 and 2 – 4 in Division 3A. The Varsity Boys Soccer team finished at 8 – 7 – 4, qualifying for the post-season tournament, where they lost to Northbridge 3 – 1 in an exciting game. The JV Boys Soccer team was 5 – 11. The Golf team was 10 – 2 – 2, playing in the Central Mass Division 3 Tournament where they finished 4<sup>th</sup>. They placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the State Vocational Tournament. 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 3 – 15. The Monty Tech faculty held their 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 3 – 6 and the Girls Cross Country team was 3 – 3. The Girls Volleyball team had a 5 – 15 record. The JV Girls Volleyball team was 5 – 12 and the Freshmen Girls team 5 – 6, as they continue to improve. The Varsity Girls Soccer team was 7 – 9 – 2, just missing the post-season berth. The JV Girls Soccer team finished at 8 – 4 – 3, with most of the girls moving up this fall. Our girls' program looks very promising.

The Girls Varsity Basketball team finished at 10 – 10 and made the Central Mass. Division 3 Tournament, where they lost to Littleton 57 – 34. The JV Girls were 9 – 10 and the Freshmen Girls were 10 – 5, as they prepared to move up to the JV Program this year. The Varsity Boys Basketball team finished at 8 – 12. The JV Boys Basketball team was 15 – 3 and played with a lot of desire and pride. The Freshmen Boys were 9 – 6 and showed vast improvement over the year. The Wrestling Team participated in many dual meets and tournaments and finished at 3 – 11. The Co-op Ice Hockey Team did very well, as they participated in the District Tournament, losing in the finals to Oakmont. The JV 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 again, it went very well. They swam at the Fitchburg State University pool, one of the best in the area.

In the spring, the Varsity Softball team again gave Monty Tech a lot to be proud of, as they won 23 straight games before losing to Blackstone Valley Tech in the Central Mass. Division 3 semi-finals. They won the Colonial Athletic League Championship for the 21<sup>st</sup> time in 25 years. They won the State Vocational Tournament for the 4<sup>th</sup> time since it started in 2000, as they beat Greater New Bedford Voc. 11 – 1 and Shawsheen Tech 5 – 1. They finished the year at 23 – 1. The JV Softball team was 6 – 12. The Boys Volleyball team was 7 – 11. The Varsity Baseball team finished at 10 – 8 and qualified for the Central Mass. Division 2 Tournament for the first time in many years. They played a good game against Millbury before losing 7 – 0. The JV Baseball team was 3 – 12. The Boys Track and Field team was 4 – 5, while the Girls Track and Field team was 8 – 2.

The outstanding Male and Female athletes for 2009 – 2010 were:

Male: Chris LaPlante of Westminster

Female: Ivette Tejada of Fitchburg

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Monty Tech is fortunate to have the support of School Committee and the administrative team that recognize the need to provide our staff with the tools to prepare our students for the workforce, military, or college. Monty Tech's technology spending could have been severely affected by the economic downturn in recent years. Fortunately, a portion of ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funds was directed toward technology spending. We were able to purchase computers and software for our students with reading and learning difficulties. We were able to purchase software that standardized the applications used in several vocational programs. We were also able to implement a portion of our disaster recovering planning needs.

Monty Tech's electrical department has made improvements to the infrastructure of the building by completing the replacement of old network wiring in the original academic wing of the building. As we look to the future, we will need to evaluate the need for wireless access throughout the building.

Data continues to be an important tool for timely administrative decisions at the school and state level. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education implemented online testing for MEPA (Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment), and Monty Tech participated as a pilot school.

## **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 2010, state and federal grant sources provided the school with \$1,616,244. Programs funded by these grants include: Essential Health Services, Social Intervention and Mediation, Improving Teacher Quality, Special Education Services and Program Improvement, Title I Support, Drug Free Schools, Perkins Occupational Education, and Summer Academic Support.

In addition to state and federal grant sources, Monty Tech was also the recipient of private and competitive grant awards totaling \$140,990. For Fiscal Year 2010, Monty Tech received \$26,175 in grant funds to support instructional services and equipment in the Auto Body/Collision Repair Department. The Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts awarded the school \$20,000 to pursue a biodiesel project (project end date June 30, 2010), while the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education awarded competitive funds to support the construction of a renewable energy center at Monty Tech. Funds awarded for the Monty Tech Renewable Energy Center (REC) project total \$94,815.

Total grant awards for fiscal year 2010 was \$1,757,234.

### **CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

Again, on behalf of the School Committee, administration, students and staff of the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School, I thank all the member communities for their continued support of Monty Tech.