

NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

NASHOBA NEWS

VOLUME 1, ISSUE XVI

APRIL 28, 2005

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Last Day of School will be Wednesday, June 15, 2005. Lunches will not be served and students will be dismissed early as shown below.
- Rowlandson, Pompo/Center and Sawyer will be dismissed at 11:35 a.m.
- Burbank Middle, Hale Middle and the high school will be dismissed at 10:40 a.m.

Town Meeting

Schedule

Bolton—May 2

Lancaster—May 2

Stow—May 16

Tri Town

(Next Meeting)

June 1, 2005

7:00 PM

Bolton Town Hall

- ♦ Early Release Days Wednesday, May 4, 2005 and Wednesday, May 18, 2005 for Professional Development.

NRHS SOUNDS OF MUSIC



Nashoba Regional High School Music Teacher Tom O'Toole shared the following information with me after an extremely successful spring vacation trip to Virginia for competition. Music students from Nashoba Regional High School had a successful trip to the Festival of Music,

Williamsburg. The Concert Band took first place in its class (based on school size) with a rating of "superior" (highest possible) as well as the overall championship (a nice glass trophy.) They also won an award for outstanding woodwind section and Ellen Hartford (euphonium) and Colleen Makary (oboe) were presented with awards for outstanding solo performances. The Concert Choir also earned a rating of "superior" and was first in the class. Both Ellen Hartford (violin) and Giulia Rizzo (piano) were given awards for their performances accompanying the Concert Choir. Both groups had a clinic with one of their judges following their performance. In both cases the clinicians gave some suggestions for continued improvement and compliments

on the skills that the students have already mastered.

Overall, the trip went exceptionally well. The students were positive representatives of NRHS for the four days we were away – there were no incidents, accidents or complaints from the hotel management. Despite some unusually cool weather, the students had a great time at Virginia Beach, Colonial Williamsburg and Busch Gardens over the weekend.

In other Music Department news

At the MICCA competition the high school Concert Band won a silver medal, the Concert Choir, a silver medal, the Madrigal Choir, a bronze medal and the Women's Ensemble a bronze medal.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE HOUSE BUDGET

(See page 2 for highlights of the original House budget)

Despite the recent House Ways and Means Budget proposal which parallels the Governor's budget proposal there is some good news in our efforts for additional state aid. First, there have been a large number of amendments filed by reps. to add K-12 funds to the budget. Secondly, it is apparent that legislators are hearing more from superintendents, school committee members and community officials that serious damage is being done to programs and services to students. Thirdly, our recent meeting with the Senate President was encouraging and we are hopeful the Senate Ways and Means budget proposal will reflect a better budget outlook.

In any event, both house and senate leadership has indicated that looking ahead to FY 07 they will be re examining the equity and adequacy of Chapter 70. MASS has already prepared materials which we will develop in greater depth on this issue as we approach next year.

In the meantime, I urge you to continue the efforts for FY 06 by supporting the stability aid proposal which increases every chapter 70 budget by 3.75% and the restoration of half the cuts. Let your senators and reps. know your interest and concerns.

Tom Scott Ed. D, Executive Director
Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

House Ways and Means Budget, H. 4000

House Ways and Means Recommends Additional Chapter 70 Monies

On April 13, 2005 The House Ways and Means Committee released its version of the state budget for F. N'. 06. Amendments to the budget are due on April 15 by 5PM., and debate on the budget is scheduled to begin on April 25 and is expected to last, at least, through the week.

The House Ways and Means Budget followed the Governor's Budget in recommending an increase of \$77 million in Chapter 70 funding. It is anticipated that the proposed increase in Chapter 70 will meet the foundation budget obligation of the Commonwealth, and also ensure that no school district receives less than it received in RY 05. H. 4000 also proposed an increase of \$2 million for kindergarten grants, including \$1 million to expand the number of full day classrooms. House Ways and Means provides \$1.1 million to establish a certificate of occupational proficiency for vocational school programs, as was recommended in the Governor's Budget. H. 4000 increased by \$1.5 million the funding for Adult Basic Education programs over the FY~ 05 appropriation; however, the Governor had proposed an \$8 million increase to this line item. H. 4000 also provides an increase of \$1 million for school intervention and targeted assistance an increase of \$250,000 for classroom behavior and alternative education grants, and an increase of \$150,000 for gifted and talented programs.

School Building Authority

One of the major successes of the prior legislative session was the establishment of a School Building Authority with revenue to reduce the backlog of over 400 projects, which are awaiting funding. Last year the legislature provided a bond authorization and other monies to establish the Authority. MASC was pleased with the appointment of the new Executive Director of the Authority Katherine Craven, who had previously served as the Counsel to the House Ways and Means and the Speaker of the House. In order to facilitate the clearing of the project backlog the House Ways and Means Budget proposed transferring an additional \$93 million, which will help the Authority to meet its stated goal of providing funding to all projects on the approved list within three and a half years.

Special Education Circuit Breaker

Current law requires that the cost for special education instruction shall be reimbursed at 75% of all the approved costs that exceed 4 times the state average per pupil foundation budget. Reimbursements for eligible costs for certain special education placements rose from approximately 35% in fiscal year 2004 to approximately 70% in the current fiscal year. This account and its predecessor, the so called 50%/50% account, have traditionally run deficits during the year that require a supplemental appropriation. The Governor had proposed level funding of the circuit breaker line item at \$201.6 million, and House Ways

and Means has also proposed level funding of that account. MASC will work towards fully funding this account during the EN'. 06 budgetary process.

Charter School Reimbursements

The House Ways and Means Budget reimburses sending school districts for charter school tuition in the amount of \$50 million pursuant to chapter 71, ~ 89. For RN'. 05 this line item was funded at \$37.7 million, The Governor had proposed the same funding as H. 4000, but had made \$12.4 million contingent upon the removal of the charter school tuition cap for school districts that place in the lowest 10% of all districts statewide for two consecutive years, a contingency that was eliminated by the House.

The House Budget also includes \$14.7 million to ensure that no charter school receives less funding in tuition payments in EN. 2006 than it received in EN'. 2005.

MCAS Remediation and Test Expansion

In the FY. 05 budget MCAS Remediation Grants were funded at about \$15 million. House 1 had proposed increasing the funding to \$20 million. the House Ways and Means Budget recommends a reduction in this account to \$10 million.

Funding for student and school assessments including the administration of MCAS has been increased from the \$20 million recommended by the Governor to \$23.3 million contained in House 4000. The increase in this account appears, in part, to allow for grants to districts to develop portfolio assessments for certain special education students.

Regional School Transportation and Out of District Vocational Transportation

Regional School Transportation has been level funded by House Ways and Means at the FYK 05 level of \$38 million, which is below the statutorily required level of funding. It is anticipated that amendments will be offered to the budget to increase this line item.

The statute governing out of district vocational transportation was amended twice during FY. 05. Currently the statute (G. L. c. 74 ~ 8A) allows, subject to appropriation, for reimbursement to the full extent of the amount expended for out of district transportation. House Ways and Means funded this account at \$1.6 million.

Pothole Money

The so called Pothole account was funded in RY 05 in the amount of \$16.8 million. This account provides funding for school districts that experience extraordinary increases in enrollment and significant prior reductions in chapter 70, among other criteria. Neither the Governor's Budget nor the House Ways and Means Budget has recommended funding for this account. Printed from: **legislative bulletin**

Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. Stephen I. Finnegan, Esq., April 15, 2004