

# Hampton Falls School District News

2010-2011 School Year

March/April 2011

## School Budget

The Hampton Falls School District's Deliberative Session was held on February 10, 2011. The registered voters in attendance listened, discussed and ultimately determined the Lincoln Akerman School Budget for FY11-12 that will be placed on the March 8<sup>th</sup> ballot.

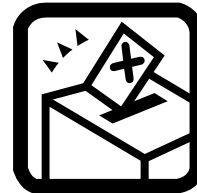
Warrant articles discussed were:

- The Operating Budget for the school
- Cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hampton Falls School Board and the Seacoast Educational Association
- Cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hampton Falls School Board and the Seacoast Educational Support Personnel Association
- \$133,000 for the second phase of a three year mandatory and recommended Life and Safety Code upgrade to the Lincoln Akerman School as required by the State Fire Marshal.

The School Board proposed an operating budget for the 2011-12 school year that was \$184,010 less than the current year's budget. This proposed budget of \$5,043,991 was presented with an overview of each functional area of the Operating Budget. Throughout the meeting, the School Board fielded questions and comments from the

community. After presentation of the budget, a citizen in attendance made a motion to add

\$50,000 to the renovations line. Discussion on the motion focused around a desire to see that needed renovations begin on the Lincoln Akerman School building to protect one of the town's largest assets. The motion passed and a proposed Operating Budget of \$5,093,991 will be placed on the ballot. Should the proposed budget be defeated the default budget will be \$4,973,098.



All Hampton Falls residents are encouraged to vote on March 8, 2011 to decide on funding for the 2011-2012 Operating Budget for Lincoln Akerman School and Life and Safety upgrades, as well as to determine the contract status for the teachers and educational support personnel.

## A Note from the Principal

### The Role of Standardized Testing in Public Education

The role of the standardized test within a school district is a topic of much conversation in educational and political circles these days. While standardized testing, a test on a regional or national scale that compares student achievement in identified grade levels and content areas, has been around for decades, the focus on its use as an evaluator of a school's

success is a relatively new consideration. This new focus on test results emanates from the passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation that was adopted during the administration of President George W. Bush. It required schools, K-12, to administer an approved standardized test each year and report the school's results to the federal Department of Education who reviews the results and, using a complex series of factors, determines whether a school earns a level of success deemed *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*. This certainly changed the face of standardized testing across America. It also created a degree of concern among educators, for when schools fail to reach AYP, it is seen as the school is failing its students and its community.

Lincoln Akerman School submits its student results on the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) each year to fulfill the NCLB requirements and has never been in jeopardy of failing to achieve AYP. As a school, LAS uses the NECAP results, along with the self-selected Northwest Education Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress, to assess individual student growth, curriculum validation and instructional practices. Both of these national standardized assessments are aligned with academic standards that all schools use as benchmarks for student achievement and the data provided through these assessments is thoroughly analyzed and become indicators for curriculum adjustment across the grade spectrum. NWEA also provides detailed individual and group information that drives instructional alterations and enhancements.

Students in grades 3-8 take the NECAPs in October of the school year and we've just recently received the results back from that assessment. As the staff and students take the

administration of the NECAPs very seriously, the results we get back provide us with a reliable indicator of both the individual student's proficiency level on this challenging assessment as well as viable data on the classes and school as a group. It pleases me to report that LAS has again this year continued a tradition of excellence as reflected by the results earned on the NECAP. Our group results in each individual class, as well as that of the school as a whole, places LAS well ahead of the state averages with LAS as a group placing 91% of our students earning results in the top two categories of scoring (Proficient & Proficient with Distinction) in Reading compared with 77% state-wide. In Mathematics LAS placed 91% of the students grades 3-8 in the top two categories versus 71% over the state of New Hampshire and, finally, in Writing (grades 5 & 8 only take this test) 87% of our students were ranked in the top two categories of scoring compared with 60% state-wide. As a school we are proud of the accomplishments of our students and recognize the efforts of the students, parents, school and community in earning these stellar scores. The school will not become complacent, however, we continue to review and analyze the individual and group results to determine the implication those results hold for this institution.

Finally, standardized scores at Lincoln Akerman become both barometers and compasses for our educational direction. As a barometer, standardized tests allow a common instrument to be administered to gain a sense of where our population stands in light of others across the state and nation. The results of these standardized instruments, once understood and analyzed, clearly point out the

direction we need to follow to continue to grow and to reach our destination. They are

useful tools to be carefully deployed and utilized to make a school more effective.

### NECAP Results

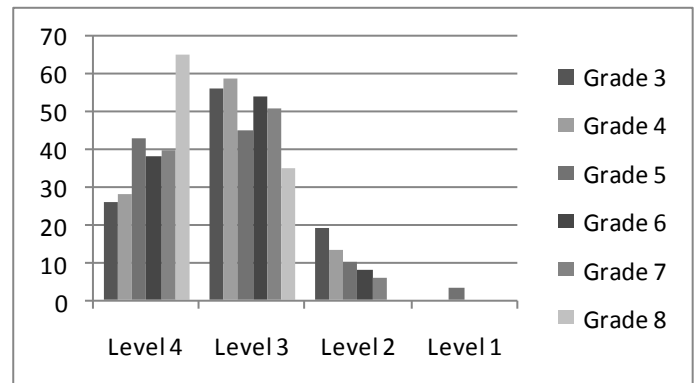
The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests are administered annually to grades 3 – 8 in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island. They are designed to measure student performance against grade level expectations developed and adopted by the three states. The tests are used primarily for school improvement and school accountability. Results are used to help improve curriculum and instruction. Individual results are part of the ongoing assessment of student progress and performance.

Student performance on the tests is designated by four levels.

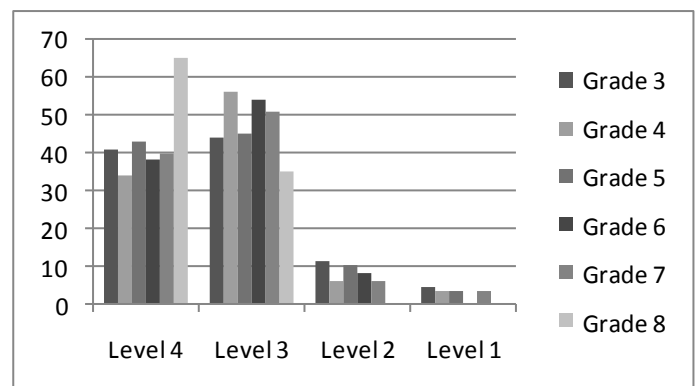
- Students performing at **Proficient with Distinction**-Level 4 demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to participate and excel at their current grade level.
- At **Proficient**-Level 3 students demonstrate minor gaps in the prerequisite knowledge needed to work successfully on the current grade level curriculum. Any gaps in skills at this level are usually addressed during classroom instruction.
- Students with gaps which may require additional instructional support score in the **Partially Proficient**-Level 2.
- Students performing at **Significantly Below Proficient**-Level 1 demonstrate extensive and significant gaps in knowledge.

Ninety-one percent of the Lincoln Akerman students performed in the Proficient to Proficient with Distinction range in the areas of Reading and Math in October 2010.

Reading Levels For LAS Students

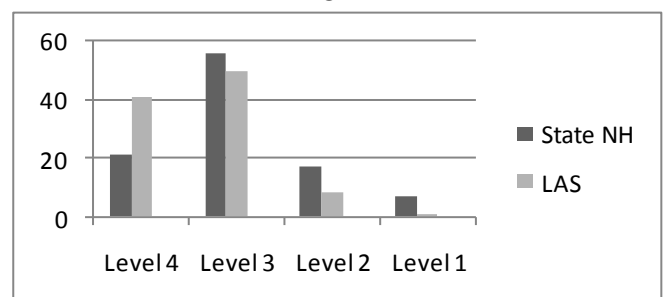


Math Levels For LAS Students

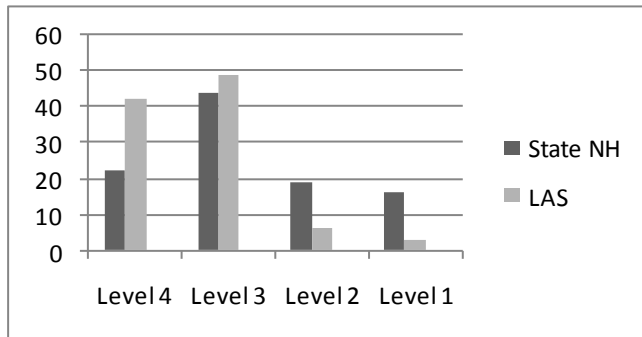


The percentage of students in the state which scored in the Proficient to Proficient with Distinction range in the area of Reading was 77% and in the area of Math was 66%.

Reading Levels



Math Levels



The teachers and staff at LAS will now have a number of meetings within the grade level teams and between vertical grade level teams to highlight areas of strength and address any weaknesses in student performance, as well as to continue to work on the alignment of grade level expectations in the different curriculum areas.

### Facilities Update

At the February 10<sup>th</sup> Deliberative Session, Life and Safety Code compliance issues and the overall deterioration of the school building were topics of discussion.

The School Board has made a commitment to continue to move forward in addressing building maintenance and Life and Safety code issues at LAS by putting forward a Warrant Article to raise and appropriate \$133,000. This is the amount needed to complete the second stage of a three year plan which was developed to accomplish the mandatory and recommended Life and Safety code upgrade at the school.

The first phase was started this year. The items to be addressed this year include making changes to a window in the Art room so if

needed it could be used as an exit and adding lights and strobes to the alarm system. These

items are required by the State Fire Marshall. The first installment of purchases for the sprinkler system was also included in this phase.

The Warrant Article on the ballot for the 2011-2012 fiscal year for \$133,000 proposes additional equipment for the sprinkler system. In the third year the remaining equipment will be purchased and the sprinkler system will be installed. The projects related to the Life and Safety upgrades are anticipated to be completed in 2013.

### Facilities Committee

The Facilities Committee has completed its information gathering and has formulated recommendations to be forwarded to the School Board. The next stage in the process will be to share the information with the School Board and the Public. Once all stakeholders have received the information, a dialogue will take place providing an opportunity for collaborative problem solving and integration of input from the larger group. Community involvement is vital in developing a successful plan and all residents are encouraged to attend and participate.

### Current Hampton Falls School Board Members

Ellen Christo, Chairwoman	<a href="mailto:echristo@sau21.org">echristo@sau21.org</a>
Thomas Baker	<a href="mailto:tbaker@sau21.org">tbaker@sau21.org</a>
Robin Moyer Ratigan	<a href="mailto:rratigan@sau21.org">rratigan@sau21.org</a>
Wayne Skoglund	<a href="mailto:wskoglund@sau21.org">wskoglund@sau21.org</a>
James Stevens	<a href="mailto:jmstevens@sau21.org">jmstevens@sau21.org</a>

The Hampton Falls School Board usually meets on the first Thursday of each month. Hampton Falls' residents are encouraged to attend meetings. Information about meeting dates and times, agendas and minutes are available on line at [www.sau21.org](http://www.sau21.org).