

# Hampton Falls School District News

2011-2012 School Year  
November/December 2011

## School Board Update

As the present school year moves toward completion of the first quarter and the staff at Lincoln Akerman School works diligently with each child to improve their knowledge and academic skills, the Hampton Falls School Board has been actively working on many priority issues including:

1. Renovations within the school's physical plant to meet safety requirements from state and federal regulations.
2. Continuing to examine and make decisions about the most advantageous uses of the Kensington Road property.
3. Examining the space needs of the school population and developing plans for addressing these needs.
4. Addressing the full scope of both the recommendations of the 2011 Facilities Report as well as the recommendations of the Facilities Upgrade Committee.

The Lincoln Akerman School facility is a major asset to this community and we now must progress to utilizing and enhancing it as best we can. Through its work the board hopes to bring a clear long range construction / renovation plan to the community for their consideration.



If you have not had the opportunity to visit Lincoln Akerman recently the following represents a list of some of the renovations and changes that have been made:

- Badly degraded carpeting in the 3-4 wing, ramp and K-2 wing has been replaced.
- Carpeting in the upstairs (5-8) wing hallway has been removed and replaced with tile. During the project a 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom and the Lincoln Akerman School Health Office was also changed from carpeting to tile.
- The main entrance of the school has been equipped with both handicapped access doors and a new security system.
- A repaving of the gym entrance roadway was completed.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class of 2011 donated several mature sugar maple trees which were planted around the Sugar Shack. As part of that project, much needed groundwork around the Shack was also completed.
- The main entrance stairwell was renovated to meet fire codes.
- A new fire safety area around the kiln was constructed within the Lincoln Akerman School art room.
- Sound deadening was completed on the wall and door leading from the music room to the library.

- A damaged portable partition between two small classrooms was replaced with a formal, insulated wall.
- As part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of a three year Life and Safety Upgrade at Lincoln Akerman School, a new fire alarm system, complete with sensors, strobes and verbal command warnings, has been installed throughout the school. The initial components (industrial water pump, 15,000 gallon water tank, pump house materials) necessary for the completion of the new sprinkler system throughout Lincoln Akerman School have also been purchased. In March, 2012, a warrant article aimed at funding the final phase of the Life & Safety Upgrade will be brought to voters with the hopes of completing this vital safety work.

The Hampton Falls School Board is now involved in the budget preparation phase for the 2012-13 operating budget for Lincoln Akerman School. Work sessions will be held in November and December to discuss and make decisions about what will be included in the budget that will be presented to the town. These work sessions are posted meetings and the public is encouraged to attend.

Negotiations with the teachers of SAU 21 are underway and it is hoped that there will be a formal tentative contract by November 1<sup>st</sup>. The SAU 21 teachers have been working for the past three years without a contract and it is the hope of all board members that an agreement can be reached that is acceptable to both the voting public of SAU 21 and the members of the teachers' association.

The school budget and all associated educational warrant articles will be presented in a Public Hearing in late January/early February, with the Deliberative Session and voting on the budget and warrant articles held shortly thereafter. These dates will be prominently advertised and your participation is encouraged.

### Facilities Upgrade Committee

A group of Hampton Falls parents and residents, along with members of the Lincoln Akerman School administration and teaching staff, began meeting last spring with an initial goal of looking at possible recommendations for renovating the Lincoln Akerman School Gym. Several notices went out to the public soliciting participation in the group and those interested organized themselves and set to work. As this group looked more closely at the gym needs and the needs of areas around the gym, the members realized that just making renovations to the gym would not effectively address the program and health and safety needs which had been identified in several Facilities Committee reports. That group then expanded their vision to try to address the space, program and renovation/repair needs of the entire Lincoln Akerman School physical plant.

This group presented its preliminary conclusions to the Hampton Falls School Board in October and will continue its work, now as a formal committee to the board. It will seek to address all space and

building needs in a single package for the board's review. While this proposal would certainly have financial implications for the entire community, it will attend to building space needs, renovation and repairs that have been deferred. Look for a formal report from that group to the Hampton Falls School Board very soon.

**Notes from LINCOLN AKERMAN SCHOOL  
Principal Mark Deblois**



The 2011-12 school year has gotten off to a strong start with 278 students, K-8, populating Lincoln Akerman School. Teachers continue to focus on refining and strengthening all aspects of the core curriculum. With the facilitation of SAU 21 Assistant Superintendent Barbara Hopkins, many Lincoln Akerman School teaching staff are working with their colleagues from the other SAU 21 schools to identify common threads within our curriculums, magnify those areas of strengths and resolve weaknesses that may be evident. This work is not designed to create a common SAU 21 curriculum, as each school and community is unique. Rather it recognizes a need for some commonality and focus as so many of our students will complete their secondary school education at Winnacunnet High School. Educational pathways into secondary school that are too disparate do not serve the high school students well. As these curriculum groups study the transition of students from elementary

to secondary school, I am pleased to report that Lincoln Akerman graduates fare extremely well in making a positive jump to the secondary level. This is true for students moving into our public high school (Winnacunnet) as well as for that population of Lincoln Akerman graduates who move into private secondary schools (around 35% of last year's graduates). This positive transition for students reflects well on the individual students, their parents, this school and the Hampton Falls community.

With the start of the new school year we have also made some alterations to our daily school schedule. We have added about ten minutes to the day by starting earlier. This has not impacted the bus schedules significantly and has seemed to have worked out quite well. We also completed a daily schedule that has allowed for the music program to be brought into the regular daily schedule. Prior to this year, Lincoln Akerman School band and choral music programs have met either before or after school. Due to the types of conflicts this type of scheduling ultimately faced, the numbers of participants in these programs, as well as their growth, suffered. It is gratifying to report that we have record numbers of students participating in our performance music offerings (concert band & chorus) and have even added a new guitar class for students in grades 6-8. This class has nearly twenty participants. Research and experience tell us that music can play a vital role in the development of the middle school student, socially, emotionally and

intellectually, and it is very exciting to see so many students responding to this program's offerings.

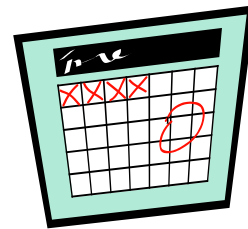
Finally, athletics also play an important role in the lives of many Lincoln Akerman School students. Last year we held a forum to discuss the nature and role of athletics here at Lincoln Akerman School that was very well attended. From that conversation, the Hampton Falls School Board demonstrated their support for keeping our students active and engaged by offering the Lincoln Akerman School administration the flexibility to provide new and varied sports options if student interest was sufficient. The goal was to provide viable options for athletic engagement. While Lincoln Akerman School has always offered a good array of athletic options, including coed soccer, field hockey, basketball (girls and boys), baseball and softball, this past spring we sponsored, for the first time, a track & field team that had a strong number of young athletes participating. The success of that program provided the impetus for a cross country team this fall. To keep costs low, Chris Lemerise (Lincoln Akerman School Athletic Director), has coordinated with Seabrook Middle School to share transportation costs for both of our new teams. In doing so, we can expand the benefits of these two new sports teams to Lincoln Akerman School students without a major financial impact.

Mark Deblois, Lincoln Akerman School Principal

### Current Hampton Falls School Board Members

Robin Moyer Ratigan, Chair [rratigan@sau21.org](mailto:rratigan@sau21.org)  
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The Hampton Falls School Board usually meets on the first Thursday of each month and 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).



#### NOTE:

The monthly School Board meeting for December has been moved from Thursday December 1, 2011 to Wednesday December 5, 2011 at 6 PM. The Board will hold work sessions with the Administrative team on Tuesday November 29 and Thursday December 1 to discuss and make decisions about what will be included in the budget presented to the town.