

## 2009 SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

According to MGL, Ch 71, Section 37, "The school committee in each city and town and each regional school district shall have the power to select and to terminate the superintendent . . ."

In October, eighteen members of the Old Rochester Regional Joint School Committee, representing the SU#55 (Mattapoisett, Marion & Rochester Elementary) and the Old Rochester Regional (ORR) schools, selected Mr. Doug White as the new superintendent to the ORR/SU#55 school districts. Mr. White is a graduate of Assumption College and UMass-Amherst, received his Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Management from Fitchburg State College and is currently a doctoral candidate at North Central University. Mr. White served as the Coordinator of Student Support Services for the Plymouth Public Schools before moving to Henniker, NH, where he was the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent of the SAU #24 school district. The SAU #24 school district serves five schools, four school boards and three towns, very similar to ORR/SU#55.

The 8 month lengthy process of selecting a new superintendent started with a review of prior practice and a selection of an executive search agency by the school committee chairs of the ORR and SU#55 schools. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) was selected to facilitate the search process and charged with the duties of developing an informational brochure, advertising and recruiting qualified candidates. The search process involved all stake holders of our schools gathering information through on-line surveys and focus group meetings directed toward community members, parents, elected officials, staff and students. A web page on the ORR web site was developed by the school committee chairs to communicate time lines, advertisements, meetings and other pertinent information to the communities. The search process brought forward many qualified candidates, was inclusive of all stake holders and successful in the goal of hiring the next superintendent to serve the children and communities of the ORR/SU#55 schools. We welcomed Mr. White and said fare-well to the retiring Dr. William Cooper on February 1st, 2010.

In addition to selecting and terminating the superintendent, the school committee's primary function is policy making and budgeting. In 2009 the Mattapoisett School Committee developed and introduced a hiring policy to guide the administration in selecting the best possible candidates for the ORR/SU#55 schools. The policy includes a provision that takes advantage of skills and experiences of community members allowing them to participate in the hiring process. It has been successfully used to hire principals and teachers within the ORR/SU#55 schools since its adoption.

The 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school budget years are proving to be challenging due to reductions in local revenues and state aid (chapter 70). The three major sources of revenue for the schools include: real estate taxes, state aid (chapter 70), and federal/state grants. Chapter 70 funds reduce the total operating funds while grants are an addition to the operating budget.

Center & Old Hammondtown Operating Budget	\$5,588,290.00
State Aid - Chapter 70	\$556,663.00
Federal/State Grants	<2%

The current budget of \$5,588,290 represents a funding increase of 4.69% from the previous year and a reduction of programs to students; the enrichment and science programs servicing K-6

students were eliminated. The current budget also encompassed a reduction in regular education transportation (1 bus) and a 17% cost increase in the special education section of the school budget which has seen a continual increase since 2007. Unfortunately, Mattapoisett is not the only community grappling with increasing special education costs. The Marion & Rochester elementary schools have also seen considerable increases as well as many communities throughout the commonwealth. In response to the challenge of increased special education services and costs the school board successfully advocated for a study of this area. A study was conducted late in 2009 by Walker Partnerships with recommendations to the ORR/SU#55 schools. A copy of the report and recommendations by Walker Partnerships is available on the Old Rochester Regional web site [.oldrochester.org](http://oldrochester.org).

Budget cuts by the ORR/SU#55 schools also eliminated the districts shared assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction position. The SU#55 schools representing elementary education for tri-town students preserved a small portion of that funding to support curriculum efforts such as the current district-wide redesign of the math curriculum in Grades 1-9.

The Mattapoisett School Board adopted the following goals for the 2009/2010 school year:

- Support the 2008 ORR/SU#55 strategic plan through advocacy and funding
- Collaborate with the Board of Selectmen to establish a facilities commission to preserve the investment in school facilities
- Establish a specialized mechanism to fund capital improvements using a portion or all of the elementary schools year end excess funds

Respectfully submitted,

MATTAPOISETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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