

ANNUAL REPORT
GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TERM EXPIRATION (May)

Mike Langknecht, Chair	2014
Sandy Brown, V. Chair	2014
Emily Monosson	2014
Marjorie Levenson	2013
Jane Oakes	2013
Joyce Phillips	2013
Kristin Boyle	2012
Jeffrey Singleton	2012
Jennifer Waldron	2012

**GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
MISSION STATEMENT**

The Gill-Montague Regional School District promotes intellectual, ethical, and social growth within a dynamic educational community in order to develop knowledgeable, productive, and caring citizens.

**Superintendent's Annual Report
2010-2011**

I am pleased to submit this annual school report. This has been a challenging, yet exciting time to take over the educational leadership requirements in our district. I have truly enjoyed working with the administrators, teachers, parents, and community members within the Gill-Montague Regional School District to provide the best educational opportunities for our children given our limited resources.

Governance/Leadership

The district experienced some change over in leadership in 2010-2011, beginning with the School Committee. Newly elected members included Michael Langknecht (Montague) and Sandra Brown (Gill). Both members assumed their duties with enthusiasm and energy, and have contributed positively to the committee in many ways, as they were nominated as Chair and Vice Chair of the committee.

There was continued stability at the administrative level, with all central office and building administrators returning at the beginning of the school year. Robert "Chip" Wood, Director of Curriculum, retired at the end of the school year. Christine Jutres, the Early Childhood Director, Elizabeth Musgrave, Principal of Montague Elementary School, Carolyn Boyce, Assistant Principal of Montague Elementary School, Rita Detweiler, Principal of Gill Elementary School, and Carl Ladd, Superintendent of Schools, all resigned from their positions at the end of the school year. In May of 2011, at the end of the school year, I was appointed as the Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Fiscal Challenges

SY10-11 was challenging for the school year, as the budget remained level funded, which did not mean level services. Therefore, there were a lot of restructuring that occurred during the school year, to allow for the budget difficulties. This was completed in order to have an approved budget. Two years prior, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education had to establish an interim operating budget. There was a partnership developed between the school district and member towns, as well as with members of the Legislature, a Joint Oversight Group, and met in January 2010. This group consisted of members of the school committee, both finance committees and selectboards, and members of the Legislature. From this group a Technical Panel was created to

look into the intricacies of Chapter 70, discuss an affordable assessment calculation, and hopefully create a long-term plan for fiscal sustainability to which everyone could agree. The members of the Technical Panel included: Allen “Tupper” Brown (Gill Finance Committee), Michael Naughton (Montague Finance Committee), Jeffrey Singleton (Gill-Montague Regional School Committee), and Superintendent Carl Ladd.

Since a Compact was developed in the previous school year, and demonstrated a level funded budget for FY12, the school committee approved this budget along with the local towns.

Educational Improvement

In the Fall of 2010, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education completed a full review of the district, and identified the District as a Level 4 educational system. This means that the District will have to demonstrate two years of educational growth in all aggregate groups. Therefore, the District was told they will be given a program manager, and monitor and will need to develop an Accelerated Improvement Plan. The District was identified as needing to improve in some of the following areas: “Gill-Montague needs a united, forward-moving, and civil School Committee that makes high-level decisions around student needs, while taking the lead to protect the district from the distractions of past wounds, political pressures, and personal and special interests.”; Superintendent needed to revise the administrative team with new roles and responsibilities; “The district should rapidly develop and implement a comprehensive PK-12 curriculum document in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies that addresses both alignment to the new state frameworks and internal horizontal and vertical alignment. Once developed, the district has to ensure its effective implementation through supervision, professional development and coaching, appropriate resource allocation, and other means.”; “The district should provide its teachers with the professional development, coaching, and administrative supervision that will enable them to understand, practice, and effectively implement a variety of instructional strategies.”; “The evaluation process should be revised to include goal-setting for all educators, consistent with the new statewide framework that will be established in spring 2011 by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.”

Therefore, the District worked laboriously with their professional development committee to determine what types of professional development would be required for the remainder of the FY 2010-2011 school year, and possibly for the following year.

At the elementary level they continued to emphasize a balance between the academic and the social curriculum. Teachers worked to refine their instructional techniques in several key initiatives – Tools of the Mind for Pre-School and Kindergarten, Math Expressions, and Responsive Classroom. Gill Elementary School focused specifically on data collection and reinforcing data into their classrooms to improve instruction.

At Great Falls Middle School, under the leadership of Donna Fitzpatrick, teachers continued training in Developmental Designs and working with Keys to Literacy to improve the reading and writing skills of all students. Significant efforts around a “Bully Busters” initiative were continued by the principal and other key staff members, which emphasized the importance of identifying bullying behaviors and how to deal with them proactively.

At Turners Falls High School, Donna Fitzpatrick became the principal for this building as well as the middle school. She continued to expand the Reconnecting Youth program, and supporting a Dual-enrollment program with Greenfield Community College.

The Special Education department, under the new leadership of Jean Bean, Special Education Director, continued its efforts to provide outstanding programming for our students with limited resources. Ms. Bean continued to maintain the programs that were developed previously. She also developed a new therapeutic program in the primary grades for those students who require stronger supports than the regular education classroom. In addition, we were able to continue with the partnership with Greenfield Public Schools, which fosters collaboration across the county.

Establishing a Path to Success

As a result of the Comprehensive District Review, our efforts turn now to incorporating the Strategic Vision into an Accelerated Improvement Plan that will focus on greater alignment of curriculum and instruction, continued efforts

to rein in district costs, and greater collaboration fostered between all the stakeholders in the community. This is again ambitious work but is critical if we are to meet the needs of all of our students in the 21st century.

Finally, I would like to applaud the administration, staff and students for their successes and accomplishments this past year. They have done a tremendous job under often times difficult conditions. I would like to thank my Executive Assistant, Robin Hamlett, for her dedication and loyalty to this District. I would not have been able to walk into this difficult situation in May, as the Interim Superintendent, without her support and understanding of the District. Gill-Montague Regional School District is fortunate to have such an exceptional group of people working with our students and for our communities.

Please know that I am always available if you wish to discuss concerns or how we might make our schools better. Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadine G. Ekstrom, C.A.G.S.; EDLM
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Montague Elementary School Annual Report 2010-11

Parents, Students and Community Members of Montague Elementary School:

I am pleased to present you with the School Annual Report, which provides key information about the 2010-2011 educational progress for Montague Elementary School. This report contains information about student assessment, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the Annual Report, please feel free to contact me

STUDENT DATA: Statistics describing the student population served by Montague Elementary School during the 2010-11 school year may be found below:

- Hillcrest served grades PK & K, with 3 Preschool classes and 4 Kindergarten classes.
- Sheffield served a 1-5 grade span, with 3 classrooms for each grade.
- The average class size was 18 students.
- Our average daily attendance rate was over 94%.
- There were 389 students enrolled during the school year.
- Our population of children receiving Free and Reduced Lunch increased to 60% (from 62.5% in 2009-10) maintaining our school-wide Title I status.
 - Our F&R Lunch population allows us to offer breakfast to all students regardless of income.
- Our English language learner population was just over 7% and included children with widely varying degrees of English competence.
- Special education population fluctuates over the year. The Sped population midyear was @ 23%. Two substantially separate programs for children with significant disabilities grew and were included in this number.
 - Our therapeutic program served 12 students with emotional disabilities.
 - Our suite for children with developmental disabilities served 9 children.
 - Montague Elementary practices inclusion for all children with special needs.

- **Overview**

Montague Elementary School did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as identified by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). More than 99% of students in grades 3-5 took the state MCAS test. The district worked on implementing the Strategic Vision, a vision of excellence for all that incorporates the concept of the Whole Child, is focused on instructional improvement, stabilizes enrollment long-term, and is fiscally sustainable with a detailed strategy that emphasizes high expectations, accountability, and building relationships and gathering supportive data that aligns with the goals chosen.

- **Continuous Improvement**

In 2010-11, Montague Elementary focused on ELA (Reading and Writing) and Math. Based on our MCAS and MAPS scores, and other student data, we decided to zero in on specific goals, strategies, and action plans in ELA and math across the grade levels. Montague Elementary continues to focus on ELA and math while upgrading and updating materials and instruction in ELA and math as described by our goals and school improvement plan. Our three Title I Reading teachers have also contributed tremendously to student achievement and have helped students accelerate their reading level to meet grade-level expectation. Several tools are used to evaluate student performance, including portfolios, test scores, observation, report cards, standardized and non-standardized assessment, such as MAPS, DIBELS, DRAs, MCAS, and running records. These tools are used to gather and analyze data and to focus continuous improvement on academic achievement for all students.

- **Extended Learning Opportunities**

A variety of techniques are used to identify and provide support to academically At Risk students, including but not limited to: achievement, attendance, and discipline data; staff and parent referrals; and Individual Educational Development Plans. Students who are identified as academically at risk are matched to appropriate extended-learning opportunities. Through our Instructional Dialogues with teachers, Student Support Team Meetings, data analysis, and parent communication, we identify at-risk students in each classroom and create an individualized intervention program for each child. These lists of students, interventions, and methods are monitored for

effectiveness and adjusted as needed. Montague Elementary has before-and after-school programs that provide tutoring, homework assistance, reading help and enrichment activities.

- **Family Involvement**

Our School uses various strategies to regularly communicate with the community. Regular and timely one-way information is given to parents through the use of monthly newsletters and notes and letters from teachers as needed. There are also many opportunities for two-way communication with families and community members, including conferences, phone calls, workshops, Family Literacy and Math Nights, PTO meetings, general parent meetings, Special Education PAC meetings, home visitations, and other methods.

- **School & Community Relationships**

Montague Elementary works with families and community to build positive relationships that support student learning. Our School has an active Parent-Teacher Organization and Community School Council. The school has a strong relationship with several outside organizations, such as The Catholic Social Ministries and Nurturing Families programs. The school provides opportunities for families to participate in events that support student achievement. Activities include information on how parents can support student learning at home, staff development on family involvement, parenting classes that support student and family learning, computer classes for parents, and conflict-resolution training for students and adults. Parent support groups, family attendance at school functions, and parent volunteer experiences all contribute to parents becoming actively engaged with students.

- **Student Attendance**

Our School has a supportive, student-centered climate that promotes attendance and a safe, orderly environment. Student work is regularly on display in hallways and common areas throughout the school. There are follow-up and accountability notes for parents and students whose attendance may be negatively impacted by academic, emotional, social, or family problems. Our school has a crisis plan in place and conducts fire drills on a regular basis to ensure student safety. The School adheres to the district policies around student conduct and complies with Safe and Drug Free Schools, GMRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, utilizes Responsive Classroom strategies, develops individual classroom and school rules, and provides a system to identify student needs that impact attendance. The student handbook, Parent Compact, parent newsletters, individual discipline classroom plans, Admin. Plus attendance data, and tardy and absenteeism letters are all used to build communication between students, staff, and parents regarding attendance.

Overview of School Improvement Goals 2010-11: We continued to build on the goals of the previous year. We had covered much ground in 2009-10 and needed to solidify our gains by strengthening our new found community and continuing to focus on lifting student achievement.

Goal 1:Academic Achievement:

We will lift academic achievement in all grades, Preschool through Grade 5. These ways in which this was addressed:

- Continuous development, refinement and alignment of academic and social curricula.
- Instructional practices were continued to be improved upon.
- Daily Team Time: Teacher meetings with Principal every morning 8:30-9 a.m. encouraged collegiality through frequent opportunities for teachers to communicate, consult, and work together collaboratively.
- Increased effective use of assessment data to guide instruction
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Goal 2:Breadth of Learning for the Whole Child:

Montague Elementary School continued to support and expand a broad and well-rounded educational experience for all children that values and develops student talents, intelligences, interests, competencies, and learning styles in all their diversity and variety. Time and resources were committed to the arts, technology, and physical education as central to a well-rounded elementary education through regular and frequent opportunities for high-quality learning experiences. This was accomplished through the following objectives:

- Objective: Frequent opportunities for students to learn, share, and celebrate the learning process and developing skills in the areas of arts, physical education, and technology.
- Objective: Increased exposure of students to professional art, artists, athletes, performers, etc. to enrich their learning experience.

MATHEMATICS	Met Target	Actual	Met Target (92.2)	Actual	Met Target	Change from 2010	Met Target	Actual	AYP 2011
Aggregate	Yes	99	No	75.8	No	-3.5	Yes	95.1	No
Lim. English Prof.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Education	-	-	-	62.5	-	-	-	-	-
Low Income	Yes	99	No	71.2	No	-4.5	Yes	94.6	No
Afr. Amer./Black	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hispanic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Native American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White	Yes	99	No	77.2	No	-4.4	Yes	95.2	No

Adequate Yearly Progress History										NCLB Accountability Status
		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
ELA	Aggregate	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No Status
	All Subgroups	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	
MATH	Aggregate	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No Status
	All Subgroups	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	

Gill Elementary School

Students and Staff

The 2010-2011 school year was characterized by continued strong enrollment at Gill Elementary School with an average enrollment of 133 students. Approximately 44% of these students attended Gill School under the option of school choice. Of that school choice population, approximately 25% were intra-district students and the other 19% were from out of district. Class size varied from 16 to 22 students at all grade levels. In terms of personnel, we hired a new First Grade teacher. The role of principal remained a full time position dedicated exclusively to Gill Elementary School. A full time nurse help met the needs of the student body.

Improvements to the School Building

The improvements for Gill school concentrated on the installation of the new well and heating system. New flushers (flushometers) were installed in the boy's bathroom. To the exterior, roof gutters were added to the front of the building at the entrance and driveway drains were removed along the front and blacktopped. Black top was also added at front door to eliminate the step up. Parents improved and maintained a flower garden by the entrance to the school.

Parent and Community Involvement

Parents continued to be involved in many ways. The efforts of the PTO continued to focus on fund raising with the goal of purchasing new playground equipment, which was realized at the end of the school year. The PTO continued its traditions of offering a before-school Ice Cream Social, a Winter Crafts Night, Trivia Night, a Family Dance, a Scholastic book fair, a Read-a-thon, a Spring Carnival and the culminating Arts and Eats Night. In the fall, the staff offered a separate Open House and a Curriculum Night that were very well attended. Attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences was also at approximately 95%.

This year also marked a deeper connection between the Gill Elementary School community and the Northfield Mount Hermon (NMH) school community. For half the year students in advanced Spanish came and taught Spanish to our Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grade students on a weekly basis. Students from NMH also undertook smaller

projects, such as tutoring individual students, and putting on dance and dramatic productions. Students from Eaglebrook also came and put on a winter concert.

School Council

The School Council continued to grow and become a more pivotal component of the Gill School Community. The Council was comprised of Rita Detweiler, Principal, Mark Silverman, Fifth Grade teacher, Joanne Flagg, Sixth Grade teacher, Matt Leaf, Kate Jones as parent representatives and Sue Colgan and Kara McLoughlin as community representatives. This group developed a School Improvement Plan that was submitted and accepted by Carl Ladd, the Superintendent of Schools for the Gill-Montague Regional School District. This Improvement Plan focused on 4 main goals with an emphasis on aligning our writing curriculum, exploring a wide variety of assessment practices with an emphasis on the interpretation and implication of data, fostering the spirit of community that characterizes Gill School and addressing the social, emotional and health needs of the district.

Academic Program

The staff continued with the implementation of the district's social and academic curriculum. Responsive Classroom formed the core of the social curriculum from First Grade through Sixth Grade. Instructional programs continued to be supported with Houghton-Mifflin Reading, Houghton-Mifflin Math Expressions and Tools of the Mind in Kindergarten. The staff had the support of a math coach. Our Sixth Grade continued to participate in a weeklong environmentally focused outdoor learning experience at the Sargent Center in New Hampshire. To develop a love of writing, the staff in collaboration with the School Council, hosted a successful writing night in the spring.

A majority of the staff met before school as a part of a book study group to read and discuss How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students by Susan M. Brookhart. The faculty also met at least once a month to talk about data as a part of the monthly staff meeting and on professional development days. The outcome of the data meetings was a need for improvement in math. The PTO supported our efforts at improving our math program by paying for an after school remedial math program that met twice a week for 8 weeks. Our efforts paid off with a rise in our overall math scores to meet AYP. We also met AYP in English Language Arts due to a high achievement in scores of our low-income students.

In summary, sustained student enrollment, academic achievement, and parent and community involvement characterized this year. New innovative programs were developed and implemented with a focus on enriching our academic curriculum especially in the area of analyzing data and improving instruction. Our overall results on MCAS demonstrated continued high levels of performance in both Math and English Language Arts.

Great Falls Middle School 2010-11

Great Falls Middle School is a middle school of approximately 250 students in grades six through eight. A team structure, common planning time, flexible scheduling, and philosophy that acknowledge the needs of young adolescents are what set us apart from junior highs and many other middle schools. We take great pride in the quality of the education that we offer our students and in the cooperative and respectful atmosphere where students and teachers work and learn together. Great Falls Middle School is housed in the addition attached to the East end of Turners Falls High School. While Great Falls Middle School is substantially separate from the High School, the library, gymnasium, pool, auditorium, band room, and cafeteria are shared facilities.

Great Falls Middle School is composed of three interdisciplinary academic teams, one at the sixth grade level, one at the seventh grade level, and one at the eighth grade level. This year is the first year the sixth grade also operates as a team, where students have different teachers for academics versus the previous model where the classrooms were self-contained and students did not move from teacher to teacher. The seventh and eighth grade teams include teachers of math, science, language arts and social studies as well as special education. The sixth grade team is composed of a math, language arts, science, and a special education teacher. Three of the teachers also teach social studies. A fourth team is composed of the teachers of related arts classes of art, physical education, and family consumer science, and reading. In addition to the four academic courses all students participate in a study skills class where they learn skills to help improve their overall academic performance by building essential skills. Great Falls Middle School students also participate in the Developmental Designs for Middle School program, taking part in a Circle of Power and Respect three mornings per week where students get to know one another, learn to interact

respectfully, and have the opportunity to participate in group greetings, sharing and activities. There are also full school meetings every Monday and Friday when the middle school comes together in the theater. As part of this philosophy students create a social contract with rules they develop and agree will help the middle school be a great place to learn.

Throughout the year, students have the option of participating in marching band, jazz band, concert band, and chorus as well as peer mediation, and student council. In addition, all students are invited to participate in a variety of after school activities offered daily through the After School Program. The program offerings include a wide range of activities that vary each session. There are three sessions during the course of the school year. In addition to the activities already mentioned, students may participate in the inter-scholastic sports program which includes soccer, football, field hockey, cross country, volleyball, golf, basketball, swimming, baseball, softball, tennis, and track.

The highlights at Great Falls Middle School:

- Annual First Day Celebration: The middle school began the year with a First Day Celebration. On the day prior to school opening, parents and families of our students joined the faculty and staff for breakfast in the cafeteria. Tours of the middle school and shared middle school/high school facilities are provided and parents have the opportunity to meet with the teachers of their child's team. It was a great success and a wonderful start to the new school year.
- Open House: Meeting with parents, family members, and people in the community is essential to an effective school program. At our annual open house we all came together to learn about the middle school program and the middle school facility and its many advantages for our students. The open house is always a wonderful way to start the year and helps parents and teachers get to know each other as they begin the important work together of educating children. The evening culminates with staff and families sharing donuts and cider in the cafeteria.
- The Annual Community Pot Luck Supper: Parent and community involvement in the education of our young people is essential to any successful school. This annual event provides an opportunity for students, parents and staff to make critical connections and get to know one another. We solicit prizes because it also serves as the culminating activity for the annual school raffle which raised nearly \$3,500 for student activities. During dessert, student entertainers, as well as, a faculty band entertained the attendees.
- GFMS/TFHS musical production of "Come As You Are" March of 2011 provided students with a wide variety of activities and learning experiences as a means of educating the "whole child", one of the middle school goals. In this endeavor, more than 50 middle school and high school students joined together to perform this production. A tremendous amount of help from parents, staff, and the community preparing sets and costumes went into making this a wonderful event. The production in the school theater was truly a marvelous experience.
- The social development of our middle school students is important and this past year we had a Farewell Dance sponsored by the 6th and 7th grade students for the 8th grade. This event provides the opportunity for students to work together to plan, organize, and finance a large social event. The Farewell Dance is a semi-formal dance and this year, the event was once again held in the middle school/high school cafeteria. The Farewell Dance was, as always, **the** social event of the year for middle school students.
- Community Service: As citizens of any community, it is important that students understand and value the need to be of service to others. Once again, the student Great Falls Middle School Student Council, with the charitable assistance of the middle school community, successfully responded to the needs of others by collecting several car loads of food for donation to the survival center. Student Council also spearheaded other fund raisers throughout the school year to benefit people in our community.

Great Falls Middle School provides a safe, nurturing, and academically challenging environment and a supportive transition from elementary to secondary school. The program is specifically designed to meet the needs of early adolescents while empowering them to develop and recognize their value and place in the global community.

Turners Falls High School 2010-2011

Turners Falls High School is a four-year, comprehensive high school accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. For this school year there are approximately 250 students enrolled.

Students of Turners Falls High School are required to earn one hundred forty (140) credits to graduate. In addition to course offerings in English, mathematics, science, and social studies, Turners Falls High School has offered diverse elective courses including three world languages (Latin, Spanish, and French), business education, technology education (graphic arts, Computer Aided Design, Wood Shop Manufacturing, Basic Video, and Television Studio Production), health education, physical education grades 9-12, art, music, fine arts, theater arts, and Native American studies. The school curriculum supports Advanced Placement courses that offer students the opportunity to receive college credit for courses. Through the MMSI (Massachusetts Math and Science Initiative) the high school has been able to add more AP classes for a total of 9 Advanced Placement classes. When a student scores a 3, 4 or 5 on an **AP** test, colleges award college credit, which can save parents tuition costs. Opportunities are available for students to take courses outside of Turners Falls High. We have partnered with Greenfield Community College's Educational Transitions Program which also provides low income students with dual enrollment opportunities at no cost to their families. Recognizing the importance of providing students with insight into the world of work, we also provide school-to-work opportunities for students who qualify. Student internships inside and outside of the school provide assistance to staff and programs at both Turners Falls High School and other schools in the district.

Turners Falls High School has a tradition of maintaining a commitment to excellence, a caring atmosphere promoted by students and staff, and a sense of community. This sense of community is celebrated every Tuesday in a school-wide meeting during which students and staff are recognized for achievement, awards presented, and student entertainment is a regular occurrence. This tradition was also exhibited in several other events throughout the year. Student Council, National Honor Society, and the Rise Up students worked on a variety of individual projects to improve school community relationships as well as several community service efforts and charitable undertakings. The high school also conducts advisory every Wednesday morning. Small groups of students are assigned to meet with a staff member to do a variety of activities, including team building, planning for the future, and building communication skills. The students are assigned to the same staff member throughout their high school career as a way to help students build connections and build supportive relationships with adults in the school community.

The Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School complex is a "Green School". This is a term that is given to schools or buildings that are designed to be environmentally sensitive, energy efficient and healthy for their occupants. In keeping with the "Green School" classification, TFHS students recycle paper, glass, plastic, and juice cartons in the school cafeteria, classrooms, and grounds. This year both the high school and middle school have begun composting. This endeavor is a win-win situation because it is good for the environment, teaches students lifelong habits, and saves the district money in trash removal fees.

The 2011 graduation was held in our air conditioned gymnasium. Students set up and decorated the facility, taking great pride in their efforts. The Turners Falls High School administration and staff celebrated the event with the students, their parents, and family members. Student accomplishments for the past school-year included the following:

Students continued to participate and excel in a wide variety of athletics: in the fall, cross-country, football, volleyball, soccer, and field hockey; in the winter, basketball, swimming and ice hockey (co-op team); and in the spring, softball, baseball, tennis, golf, and track. Many of our teams were very successful in post season play, bringing recognition to our school. A special nod to Softball for another State Championship!

Students also participated in a variety of academic, fine arts and club activities. The band and chorus continued to entertain. The band marched in the Booster Day Parade and continues to build participation after a change in staffing. Activities such as the Annual Powder Puff Football Game, Annual Arts Evening, Snow Ball, National Honor Society Induction, Prom (this year a harbor cruise), and Booster Day activities including all four classes constructing floats and marching in the parade aided in a well rounded experience for students. The Thanksgiving bonfire, prior to the Thanksgiving Day football game, was organized by students from the Technology classes and Mr. Jobst, was a highlight of the fall season. In March, students from Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School participated in the musical "*Come As You Are*", and performed to large crowds at each performance. In the spring the annual spirit week activities included a talent show, games, a barbeque, and a dunk tank with administrators and staff getting dunked for charity.

Turners Falls High School is grateful for the community's support of the many activities, athletic events, fundraisers, concerts, musical productions, and field trips and for the help of the many volunteers who assist the school on a daily basis.

Special Education and Student Support Services

The Gill-Montague School District continues to provide our students with a comprehensive system of support through the districts' Special Education and Student Support Services Team. Each of our schools have Student Support Services Teams that frequently review the progress of students and identify any student who may be at risk academically, socially, emotionally or with the physical health concerns. These teams include the principals, vice principals, school psychologists, teachers, reading teachers, guidance counselors and the school nurse. When a student is identified as being at risk by the support team interventions are provided to help get these students back on track to success. Interventions may include close monitoring of academic progress and possible reading support, regular meetings between the student and counseling support, on-going parent contact and possibly social emotional supports.

During this past school year students were given the NWEA assessments four times throughout the year. These assessments allow teachers to view student's progress in language arts and math. Reviewing student progress helps to inform the student support services team members to help teachers analyze the data and provide additional help to students in need. Our districts emphasis on early learning supports should result in improved scores on the state assessment tests.

Sometimes the interventions provided through the building based student support services teams are unable to meet the unique learning needs of students with disabilities. In these cases students are referred for an evaluation process that helps school staff and families determine if a student has a disability and requires specially designed instruction and related services. After the evaluation period school staff and parents meet to determine if a student does have a disability and requires specially designed instruction. If the special education staff, teachers and parents agree, then the student is provided with an individualized educational plan that includes any services that the team feels that the students needs in order to be successful in school.

Currently the districts services two hundred and eighteen children with special education services. When a student requires supports due to a disability but does not require any special education services the district is required to provide such students with a 504 accommodation plan. Seventy-five students are monitored through 504 plans.

Some Students within the district have limited English proficiency and require specialized instruction through our English Language Learner program. Each school has a teacher who specializes in teaching students who are still learning to read, speak and write in English. The program is coordinated by Ms Rebecca Wright. As the teacher coordinator, it is her role to identify students who require attention in learning English language instruction. Ms Wright has proven to be a strong community outreach advocate for the students and their families. She meets with families in their homes and community agencies in order to help facilitate a smooth transition into the community. Currently the district is undergoing a program review by the Department Elementary and Secondary education. Fifty four students currently are receiving English Language Instruction for part of their school day and four students are being monitored in the regular education program to ensure their continued success.

The district support teams also include the school nurses. We currently have four nurses that are covering the four schools. The school nurses provide day to day health support to students and also help provide other health services including dental care for many of our children. The school nurses come to know the students under their care and also help identify students who may be at risk for physical or mental health needs.

Included in our systems of support for students with disabilities are specialized programs that are designed for students with more significant disabilities. At the early childhood level the district has three preschool classes. Each classroom has a full time teacher, a paraprofessional and therapists. Currently the classes are housed at the Hillcrest building. Next year our plan is to have one of the classes at the Great Falls Middle School. Housing this class at the middle school will allow for some of our adolescents to have experience working with young children. We have programs for children with moderate to intense learning needs at the elementary, middle and high schools. Students are surrounded with academic support as well as occupational therapy, speech therapy and physical therapy. The high school also has a program called Transitions. This program educates students with special needs until they graduated from high school or turn 22. Most of our transitions students who are leaving our district are employed. This is our ultimate goal for this challenged group of young adults.

Some of our students have high risk in their social emotional growth and require therapeutic intervention throughout the school day. Each school building has a team that includes special education teachers that have sound knowledge of children who require therapeutic intervention. School adjustment counselors and psychologists as well

paraprofessionals allow these students to be well educated in their school community. Just a few years ago many of these children required out of district intervention and now they are part of our school community.

All of our Student Support Staff are expanding our collaboration with the community agencies in this area. Creating connections between outside agencies and our school based team's helps to ensure that families have more success in raising their children. When the school, home and agencies work together positive outcomes happen for our children.

The special education teams within our schools include special education teachers, school psychologists, speech, language therapists, team chairpersons, occupational therapist, physical therapists and paraprofessionals. Due to the complex nature of the students that are being served, staff members have been continuously trained in reading and writing strategies, math interventions, behavior management and social skills development.

Special Education and Students Support Services are funded through local funds, state and federal grants and reimbursements through the circuit breaker. The department is under the direction of an interim director and next year the district plans to hire a full time director. The towns within the region should be pleased with the programs and services that are provided to students in need of additional assistance.

Grants

The Gill-Montague Regional School District receives grant funds for both programs and personnel from private organizations and from state and federal agencies. These grants and reimbursements may cover all or some portion of the cost of a wide variety of school programs. All of the programs supported through these grants provide valuable services to students and staff. Literally every student in the district benefits to some degree from these grants. For the 2010-2011 school year we received just over 1.8 million dollars in grant funds, an increase mainly due to the federal ARRA stimulus grants. The stimulus funding is due to end in 2012 and so we will continue to actively seek out and apply for grants whenever we find an opportunity.

It should be noted that we continue to benefit from grants awarded to the Gill-Montague Community-School Partnership and the member organizations of the Partnership who work with youth in our community. Most notably, this includes a Drug Free Communities grant of \$125,000 from the U. S. Dept. of Health & Human Services.

Technology

The following are highlights of accomplishments in the 2010-2011 school year in the area of technology:

- We began using the E-SPED software program to create Individual Student Success Plans for all students.
- We further expanded our use of the state's Data Warehouse. The student information in the warehouse is designed to help teachers plan instruction to improve student performance. Access to the warehouse is free of charge.
- Maintenance was done on all computers and servers over the summer and continues to be done.
- We replaced several switches that were causing problems on the network.
- We replaced another 60 of our very oldest computers with newer computers donated to us by FCTS.
- We were able to upgrade our connectivity to the internet and between buildings resulting in faster service.
- We completed the first phase of the creation of an infrastructure for wireless service to all classrooms in all schools.
- We replaced the 10 year old library automation software for the middle/high school and renewed other software licenses.

Each year educators find new ways to use computer technology to help students learn. We continue to do our best to comply with the Massachusetts' Technology Benchmarks and to take advantage of the ever-increasing educational possibilities presented by technology. We are fortunate in having a technology support staff that is able to maintain the integrity of our computer networks and to keep our old computer equipment running as long as possible. We make every effort to keep down the cost of technology by repairing whatever we can ourselves. However, the cost of maintaining a district-wide computer network, classroom computer services, Internet service, and educational software licenses continues to grow and to strain our fiscal resources.

Gill-Montague Regional School District
GENERAL FUND
Statement of Revenues and Other Sources, and Expenditures and Other Uses – Budget and Actual
For the Year Ended June 30, 2011 (Audited)

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Actual Amounts	Variance with Final Budget Positive (Negative)
Revenues and Other Sources:				
Assessments to member towns	8,773,846	\$8,773,846	\$8,773,846	0
Tuition	530,000	530,000	608,627	78,627
Intergovernmental	6,497,720	6,497,720	6,557,464	59,744
Investment Income	20,000	20,000	10,041	(9,959)
Miscellaneous	0	0	30,928	30,928
Other Sources	586,596	586,596	586,596	0
Total Revenues and Other Sources	16,408,162	16,408,162	16,567,502	159,340
Expenditures and Other Uses:				
Administration	737,925	642,775	622,837	19,938
Instruction	5,764,642	5,046,230	4,938,451	107,779
Other School Services	899,999	928,042	891,667	36,375
Operation and maintenance	1,535,331	1,720,263	1,704,839	15,424
Fixed charges benefits	3,250,270	3,272,654	3,168,972	103,682
Debt Service	210,949	210,949	199,422	11,527
Acquisition				
Special education tuitions	3,038,122	3,038,122	2,784,011	254,111
School choice/charter	970,924	1,549,127	1,507,632	41,495
Total Expenditures and Other Uses	16,408,162	16,408,162	15,817,831	590,331
Excess (deficiency) of revenues and other sources over expenditure and other uses	0	0	749,671	749,671

Contributors to the Annual Report

Nadine G. Ekstrom, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Lynn Bassett, Director of Business and Operations

Martin Espinola, Director of Teaching and Learning

Jean Bean, Director of Special Education and Student Services

Kathleen Adams, Principal, Gill Elementary School

Maureen Donelan, Principal, Montague Elementary School

Donna Fitzpatrick, Principal, Turners Falls High School/Great Falls Middle School