

Spotlight

NEWS FROM THE BURLINGTON SCHOOLS

Volume 4 No. 8

December 14, 2011



Greetings all,

Budget time is in full swing. Last night, the Board proposed a budget for public input that is very complicated this year and will need all of your involvement and support to spread the word.

This year's budget presents several challenges to the School District. As Finance Chair, Alan Matson notes: "FY 2013 will see the loss of significant Federal funding as well as a shift of employee benefit payments from the City budget to the School budget. On the other hand the District continues to grow and our equalized pupil numbers are up nearly 2% in FY 2013".

A summary of the budget includes: an increase in base spending, 3.0%; requests for additional staffing needs, 1.6%; increase in local budget due to loss in Federal funding, 3.0%; and likely transfer of expenses from the City of Burlington to the School District, 2.9%. The net result is that the likely tax effect will be an increase of the local school tax from \$1.30 to \$1.43, an increase of 10%. (All of these numbers are preliminary and are subject to information that has not been finalized by the State, the City or the Federal government and represent the District's best understanding of the current funding/expense environment.)

It is important to note that one-third of this tax increase will have a direct offset in a lowered city tax rate, as the retirement costs for non-teacher employees is being shifted from the City to the Schools in this proposal. It is also important to note that our enrollment continues to grow, in particular in our lower grades. Our first grade class is nearly 30% larger than our senior class, whereas in Vermont as a whole the number of students enrolled in first grade is 10% less than the number of expected graduates next year.

Public hearings are scheduled for:

December 15th and January 4th, 7 p.m. BHS

January 9th, 6 p.m. location TBD

January 10th, 7 p.m. BHS

More details will be released at these hearings, beginning tomorrow night. I will share information as it comes forward. Please become involved. It is up to us to work together to let the community know what our students need!

Jeanné



The giving and volunteer season is in full swing and we are asked daily from every agency out there to donate to their cause. It is a challenging time for everyone and even more so for the agencies that the United Way supports.

This is the last week of the School District's campaign and to date, with three schools reporting in, we are approximately \$500 behind last year. As always our goal is to exceed the year before, and at least match it.

If you haven't made a contribution and would like to, you may contact Betty Gill directly at 864-8462 or bgill@bsdvt.org by [this Friday](#) for a form.

Thank you for considering UNITED WAY.

Dan Balón Attends National Leadership Academy

Last month Dan Balón, Director of Diversity & Equity, attended the Corporation for National and Community Service-American Express Leadership Academy for rising executive leaders in education and the non-profit sector in Washington, D.C. The week-long academy brought together a cohort of 24 participants selected from 120 nominees nationwide. Among the participants were executive directors and school leaders from organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, Teach for America, and many other diverse, public institutions. The first lady of the State of Nevada was also present!

Led by the Center for Creative Leadership, the experience provided skill-building and leadership development to bring back to the District and Vermont's SerVermont (VT state office for community service) many new, effective approaches to leadership in today's increasingly diverse environments. In fact, through this experience the District (through Dan's involvement) is now part of a larger national discourse on the future of the non-profit sector as a job-creator, after being part of the first ever White House Forum on Non-profit Leadership. Many issues related to No Child Left Behind, culturally responsive teaching, affirmative recruitment and hiring were all salient topics that are now part of the core conversation for the future of our work.

Thank you and congratulations, Dan, for representing our District and State in D.C.! If you are interested in learning more about the experience, feel free to contact Dan:

dbalon@bsdvt.org or 864-8494



**OPEN ENROLLMENT—
ANY FORMS WITH
CHANGES DUE
12/19/11 AT 9 A.M.**

**DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO
IF YOU ARE INJURED AT WORK?**



Intervale Fundraiser



On August 29th, Intervale Community Farm took a heavy blow from flooding due to Hurricane Irene. Intervale is an important part of the Burlington community and has close ties to our District through the Farm 2 School Program and the farmers there need our help! The Flynn School Community wants to answer that call! Flynn has chosen Intervale for this year's fundraising efforts. On November 28th farmers came to Flynn (pictured above) to share their stories and to kick off our "Helping Hands Helping Farmers" campaign. Students are being asked to bring \$1 for the campaign, more if they wish. Personal donations can be mailed/made out to the Intervale Center, 180 Intervale Rd., Burlington, VT 05401. Please write "Intervale Center Farmers Recovery Fund" in the memo line. Or, donate online at www.intervale.org. Let's not forget those hardest hit.



fill the bowl
to help your community
A benefit dinner to raise awareness about hunger sponsored by the 3rd grade at The Integrated Arts Academy
Thursday, December 15th
6:00-7:30 pm

Select from over 200 original handcrafted bowls made by 3rd graders and faculty at IAA, sample delicious soups and breads from local restaurants and bakeries. Proceeds from your donation (\$5 minimum per bowl) will benefit locally, The Intervale Center, as well as globally, the Heifer Foundation. The bowls are to be taken home as a reminder that someone's bowl is always empty. There will also be a silent auction of artist made ceramic bowls that you may bid on.

Tech Byte

VTVLC



Did you know that the Burlington School District is a partner district of VTVLC, the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative? In other words, our students can take any online course without additional cost to them. In exchange, two Burlington instructors teach on VTVLC: Zhihang Hao (Chinese 1,2) and Vitaliy Kulapin (Game Design 1).

The VTVLC coordinates the efforts of Vermont public schools to offer online classes for students in grades 6-12. Students have more courses to choose from than what would typically be offered at their own school. Students are able to enroll in a VTVLC course that may be offered at their own school, but due to a scheduling conflict, may have to make a choice about what course to take. VTVLC courses allow students to work in the course when their schedule allows, even before or after school. Students no longer have to make difficult decisions about whether to take band or physics!

To learn more about VTVLC, watch the following video on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsR2Dcv_WA or check out their website for more details, including current and upcoming course offerings: <http://www.vtvlc.org/>.

Learning Geology through Hands-On Experience

ECHO's Inquiry in the Schools project has been working with EES students for two years as one of eight schools investing time in science, learning through the lens of the Lake Champlain Basin. From teacher professional development to classroom lessons to field trips to ECHO, students and teachers have been immersed in place-based science on topics such as geology, properties of water, properties of matter and classification. Although the grant project is ending, the long term effects of this project have been captured by improved science curriculum and teaching methods, science equipment closets and a lasting relationship between schools and ECHO. Pictured here is Tracy Truzansky, ECHO's Assistant Director of Education, delivering a lesson on geology to Amanda Bonanni's 5th graders in the learning center. This project was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Burlington School District, Saint Michael's College and funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services Museums for America.

