



# SC Spotlight

Topics of the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee April 2015

## Master Plan update

On March 19, the School Committee voted to accept the Master Plan as submitted last September by the Cambridge-based planning firm of SMMA. As outlined by Superintendent Harvey, much implementation work has been done, and much remains. A recent meeting of the District Leadership including school Principals highlighted progress made towards various recommendations that arose out of the 3-day Master Plan Visioning sessions in fall 2013. As recommended, we have implemented: Full day kindergarten, a coordinated elementary school curriculum, reliable technology and the 1:1 iPad program was implemented and Middle School team teaching will start fall 2015. Hamilton Wenham Edfund helped bring STEM, a 3-D printer and new furniture at the High School.

The District Leadership is visiting in-District schools and classrooms other than their own to get a concrete feel for the present facilities and how they fit with current educational programming. The Leadership Team will be divided into focus groups and look at priorities for the next one-three years. These focus groups will be subdivided into theme-based teams that will further consider our District's educational delivery model (curriculum and related enhancements such as opportunities for experiential learning, internships, hands-on learning, community service, interdisciplinary learning, etc.) and how it can be supported by educational structures (facilities and equipment). Various forms of outreach are also in the works. The present Steering Committee may be broadened in number to include more stakeholders including community members. This organic process of making the Master Plan the District's own, with ongoing priority-setting among the School Committee, District leadership and the community, will continue for some time. Developing a timetable for the focus group/team activities is scheduled for the Leadership's April 28th meeting.

The Master Plan is already proving itself a wonderful guide in helping our schools move forward with making sure that delivery of a top-notch educational program is matched with appropriate educational structures aligned with 21st century needs. The Master Plan documents with Executive Summary is available on the District website at [www.hwschools.net](http://www.hwschools.net).

## **Who Won Big at NE Mass. History Day? HWRSD!**

The scholastic hits just kept on coming for our students at the annual Northeast Massachusetts District History Day competition held in early March at Beverly High School. The winners (1st, 2nd and 3rd place) from each category will compete at the State competition on April 11 at Stoneham High School with a chance to go on to the National History Fair. Six 8th graders took 1st or 2nd place for their work. At the High School level, a total of 39 students won in either the individual or group categories. An amazing 28 of those placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd. The remaining 11 netted Honorable Mentions. Our students swept the entire Group Exhibit category! A big thank you to teachers Vinnie Bucci, Rob Emmett and Johann Knets for all their work helping our students shine as the competition continues at the state and national levels. A complete list of the winners and their projects can be found on the Principals' blogs at [hwgenerals.wordpress.com](http://hwgenerals.wordpress.com) and [milesrivermiddleschool.wordpress.com](http://milesrivermiddleschool.wordpress.com).

## **State Budget and Legislative News**

State Rep. Brad Hill came to the School Committee's March 19 regular meeting and gave us an update. State-wide hearings by the Foundation Budget Review Commission concerning possible changes to Chapter 70 aid to education have now wrapped up. He would welcome written or live testimony from all the School Districts he represents. On the overall State budget front, he noted a major deficit despite a large increase in revenues. The Governor's budget increases Chapter 70 school aid by \$100 million or \$20 per student. While welcome in contrast to a cut in education funding, this does not translate into much of an increase for the HWRSD. Rep. Hill is hopeful that prior cuts to regional transportation (busing) may be somewhat restored. He requested our support for proposed legislation that would revise the Special Education Circuit Breaker formula and add Special Education transportation costs to it. Finally Rep. Hill and Senator Bruce Tarr have filed a number of additional bills regarding healthcare costs and Special Education. We support all their efforts on behalf of the HWRSD and continue to monitor progress on the state budget and legislative fronts.

## **All State Chorus**

Three HWRHS singers were accepted and performed with the MA All-State Honor Chorus the weekend of March 19-21. Their two days of rehearsal with renown conductor Rollo Dilworth of Temple University culminated in a thrilling performance at Symphony Hall on Saturday, March 21. This is the highest honor a high school singer can achieve. Congratulations to HW seniors Katelyn McCarthy, Nate Shepard, and freshman Dennis van Maaren. Great job!

## **Dramafest**

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School cast and crew presented The Water Engine – An American Fable by David Mamet at this year’s Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild Drama Festival. The cast and crew put together a wonderful production, and several of them won awards. Congratulations to: Jacob Crosby (Stage manager), Julia Brown (Acting) and Katie Ryan, Julia Brown, Lia Whitman, Olivia Brown and Grace Callahan (Vocal Performance). Great job Generals!

## **Boys Basketball Wins State Title**

Generals are Division IV State Champions! Congratulations to the H-W boy’s basketball team on a perfect season. The team won the Division IV State Championship, capping an undefeated (25-0) season. It was an exciting run enjoyed by our whole community. Well-done Generals!

## **Graduation**

Graduation planning is under way, with plenty of seats available for families to enjoy. The graduation will take place under a tent with staging and will be a great event for families. End of year workshops are planned for seniors such as: How to deal with roommates, financial planning, etc. All the details are still in the works from sound, light, safety and actual logistics (flags, podium, handicap accessibility, etc). Rain or shine graduation will take place June 7th. There will be old traditions as well as new traditions to look forward to. This will be a great event for the families to come together to celebrate. Look for blogs posts, tweets, etc. to come around May 1st.

We welcome questions or comments, please contact us at: [sc\\_communications@hwschools.net](mailto:sc_communications@hwschools.net)