



Durham • Freeport • Pownal

Providing our students with a world-class education that will challenge minds, engage creativity, develop self-discipline, and advance inherent strengths.

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PRESORTED STANDARD
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Permit No. 14

March 2014

March 15, 2014

Dear Citizens,

This report on the state of our schools is based on the *RSU5 Strategic Framework*, created in 2010 as the result of nine months of joint effort between the community, district educators, and the Board of Directors. The Framework contains our mission and vision along with a set of performance indicators to gauge our success. These indicators are by no means perfect, and no single measurement or test should ever be used to judge the quality of RSU5 programs. These results are from various assessment methods, both qualitative and quantitative, and can help to give the community, the administration, the teachers and students a sense of how RSU5 is proceeding toward our mission, vision and goals.

This year's report contains information about the academic performance of RSU5 students, their aspirations and post-secondary plans, and our use of resources. Its purpose is to keep the community informed about our schools' performance and to help frame vital discussions about what you want for your schools.

Nelson Larkins, Chair, RSU5 Board of Directors
Shannon L. Welsh, RSU5 Superintendent of Schools



District Vision and Mission Statement

OUR MISSION:

To provide our students with a world-class education that will challenge minds, engage creativity, develop self-discipline, and advance inherent strengths.

OUR VISION:

Our schools provide a safe, engaging environment that fosters a passion for life-long learning.

Our educators are mentors dedicated to providing our students with the knowledge and skills that will help them adapt to our changing world.

Our community supports the concept that each individual – be they student, educator, parent, or community member – bears responsibility for the success of our mission.

All stakeholders understand that financial responsibility is a facet of each decision that is made and tirelessly seek the resources to support our mission and vision.

RSU5 Roles for a Quality Education

There are many pivotal roles required to provide quality education for the students in our district.

- **Students'** engagement and full participation are fundamental for learning and fulfilling their personal aspirations.
- **Parents** provide direct involvement and support in learning, and are critical to the success of our children.
- **Educators** bring commitment and innovation to the crucial process of finding new ways to meet the learning needs of our students.
- **Board members** provide leadership that upholds the Vision and Mission of RSU5, dedication to the school/community collaborations, and communication that is fundamental to continuous improvement.
- **Community members** support adequate funding for the programs, learning opportunities, physical buildings, and professional development requirements of our system.

RSU5 Board of Directors 2013-2014

To contact **all** members of the Board via e-mail use:
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RSU5's Academic Performance

The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)

The NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) is used by Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, "to meet No Child Left Behind Act requirements for testing Reading and Mathematics once each year from grade 3 through grade 8. The NECAP is designed to assess learning from the prior year (teaching year) at the beginning of the next school year (testing year). Therefore, grades 2-7 Reading and Mathematics are assessed at the beginning of grades 3-8." In this report, "2013" refers to the test that was given in the fall of 2012 (school year 2013). These charts show the performance of RSU5 students against the state average and the region in grades 3, 5, and 8. It is normal for scores to fluctuate year to year, so an average of the last three years is used for comparison. This year there is also a chart showing a progression of the same group of students (this year's 8th graders) through grades 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The region includes seven area school districts: Brunswick, Cape



Elizabeth, Falmouth, RSU15 (Gray-New Gloucester), RSU51 (Cumberland and N. Yarmouth), RSU75 (Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell and Topsham), and Yarmouth. This comparison group was chosen to include sev-

eral of the state's top scoring districts, so it sets a very high competitive bar, with RSU5 starting in the middle of the pack.

NECAP summary:

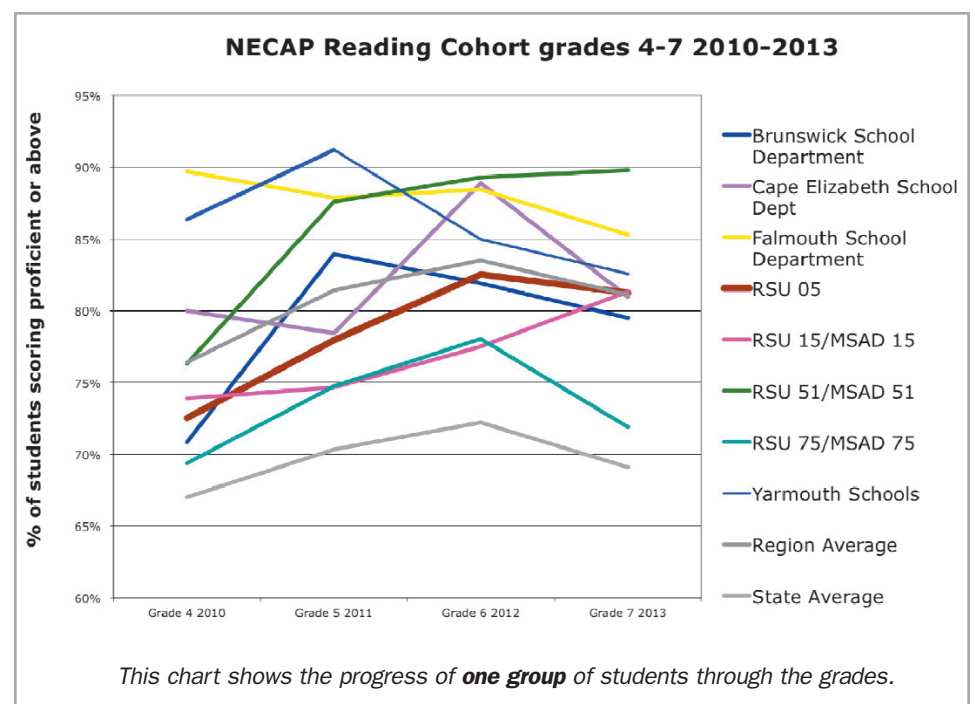
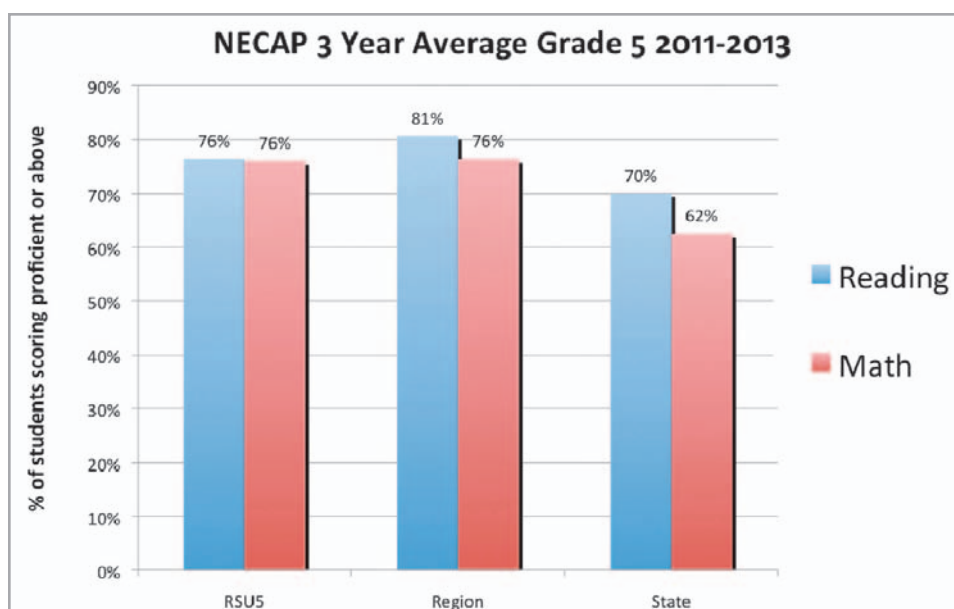
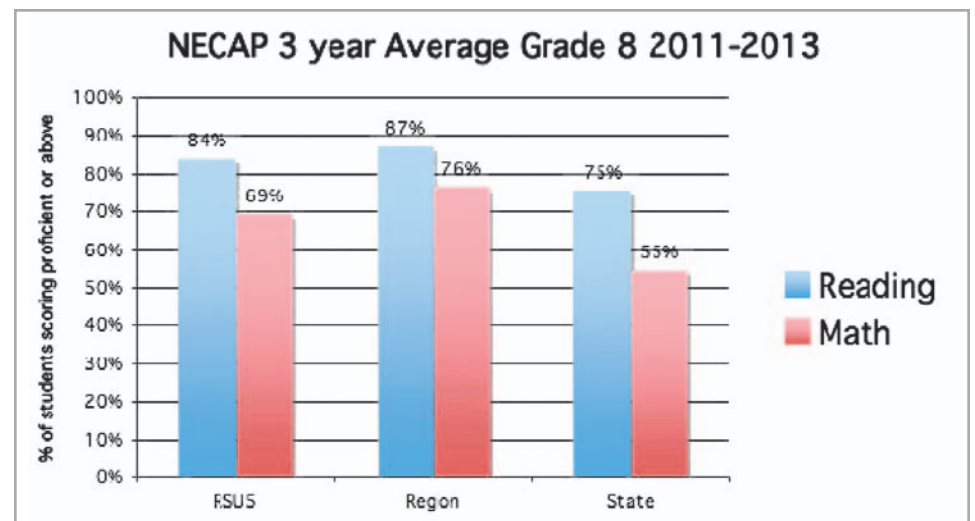
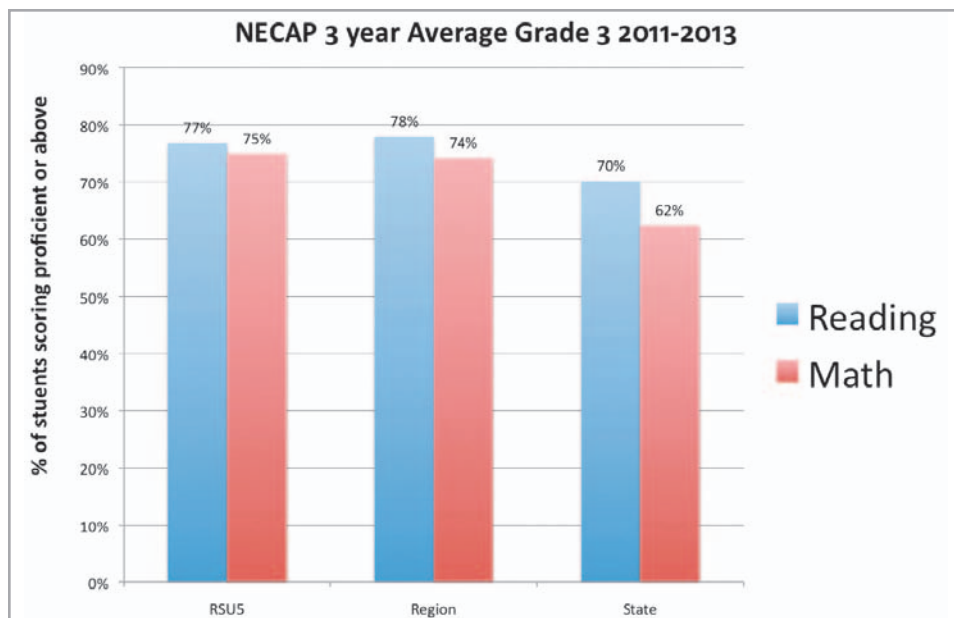
It is easy to misconstrue or over-interpret the results; they

Comparison Set:

Brunswick, Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth, RSU15 (Gray-New Gloucester), RSU51 (Cumberland and No. Yarmouth), RSU75 (Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell and Topsham) and Yarmouth
THE REGION COLUMN IS AN AVERAGE OF THESE SCHOOLS

must be combined with other data points for an informed picture. Over the last three years, RSU5 students continued to out-perform state averages, landing in the top third of the state in reading and math.

Grade 3 students exceeded the regional average in math and were on par with it in reading. Grade 5 students were at the regional average in math and (similar to grade 8) were somewhat below the regional average in reading. Math performance in grade 8 continues to show opportunity for growth. Steps already begun to achieve this growth include targeted professional development, and a new RTI (Response to Intervention) program to ensure that every student gets the right assistance when learning difficulties occur.



The Maine Department of Education makes available a wealth of school comparison data. To find out more, go to the following URL: <http://dw.education.maine.gov/education/medw> or search for the Maine Education Data Warehouse.

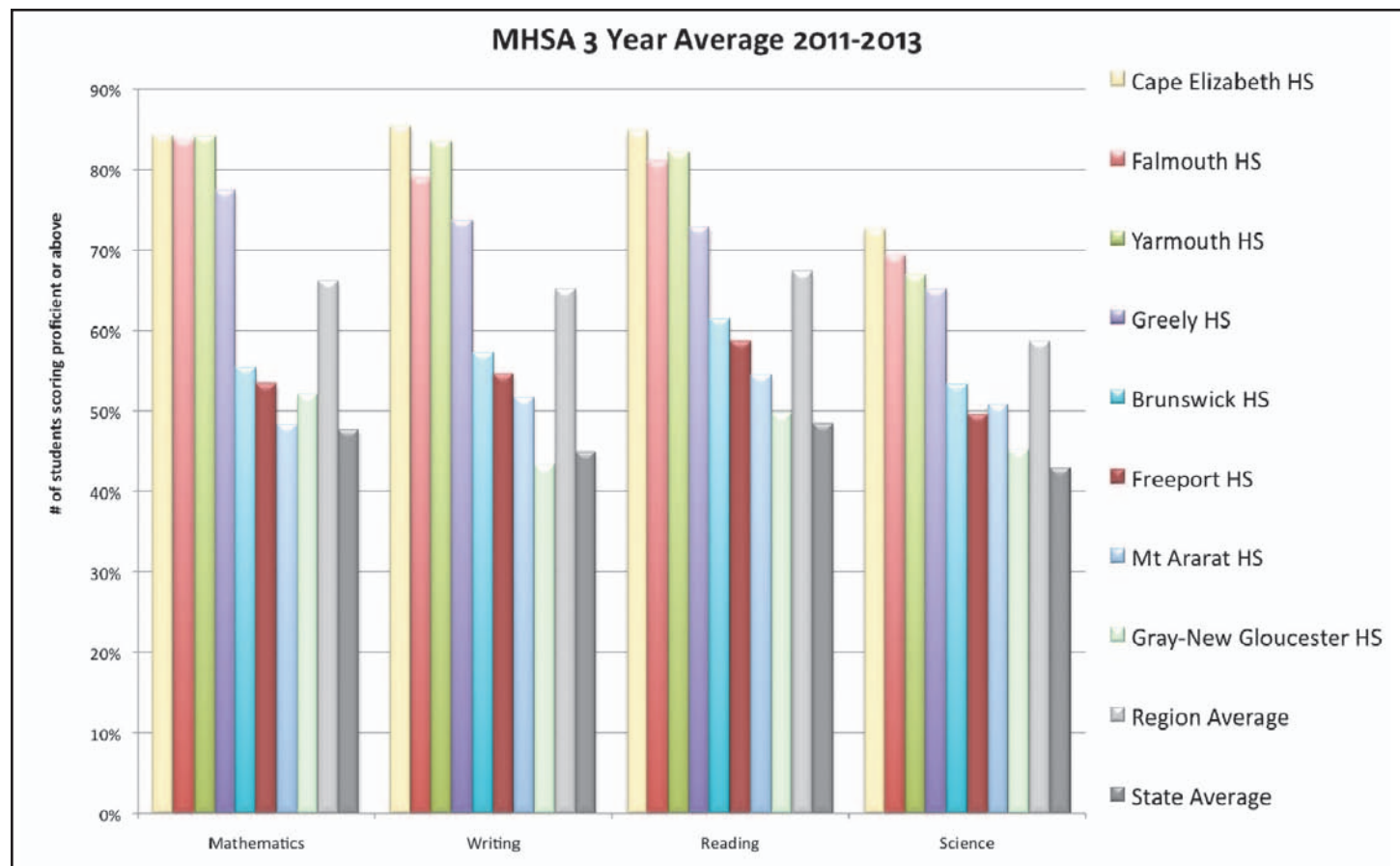
The Maine High School Assessment (MHSA)

All 11th grade high school students in Maine take the MHSA in the spring. The MHSA uses the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to measure student proficiency in Critical Reading, Mathematics, Writing, and Science.

We are reporting the 3-year cumulative average (2011-2013). At Freeport High School these scores fluctuate from 4-10 percentage points year to year.

MHSA summary:

Over the last three years, Freeport High School students performed well above state averages, with opportunities to improve against the regional average, particularly in mathematics. Regional averages should be seen in context; on the math portion last year, FHS ranked 22 out of 135 high schools in Maine.¹ The challenges are well known, and initiatives are underway to increase professional develop-



ment and improve opportunities to learn. High school departments have redesigned courses to target the higher order career and college readiness skills in

the common core, and to implement the state's new requirement for a proficiency-based diploma by 2018. Their greatest need is time, in the form of

professional learning days, and professional development.

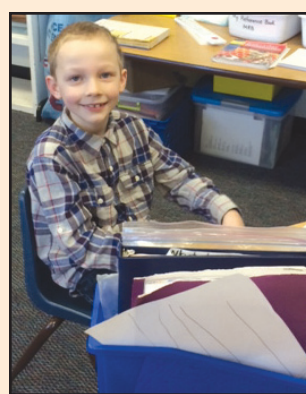
¹ Based on scaled scores http://www.maine.gov/doe/mhsa/documents/grade_11_districtfinal.xls

Fountas & Pinnel Reading Assessment

During the 2011-2012 year, a new Reading assessment was given to all K-8 students. It provides detailed diagnostic information that helps teachers fine-tune their assistance to growing readers. It also can provide a snapshot to help us understand the impacts of our literacy initiatives. The "F&P" is given in the fall and spring, and also as needed mid year. The spring scores will be used for data reporting for all students. Data is currently available on the spring 2013 assessment for grade 2 (this year's third graders.) 81% of these students were meeting or exceeding grade level benchmarks in the spring of 2013. Spring to spring comparison scores will be reported for the first time in May 2014. For more information about this assessment, please see the RSU5 web site under "Curriculum."

Test Changes for Next Year

The 2014-2015 school year will see several changes to state-mandated testing. Both the NECAP and the SAT will be replaced by the new *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium* (SBAC) test.



This is a computer-based, adaptive test intended to provide more useful data on student performance. This spring will be the last required SAT (Maine High School Assessment). In future years, students planning to attend college should still take the SAT. (The state's science tests in grade 5,8, and 11 will continue to be given in the spring.) Complete information on the new assessment is available at the Maine DOE web site: <http://www.maine.gov/doe/smarter/>

The Northwest Evaluation Association Test (NWEA)

The NWEA tests are computer-based assessments of Reading and Mathematics. These tests adjust to the student. When a student answers a question correctly, the program offers a slightly more challenging question or problem; when a student answers incorrectly, the program reduces the level of difficulty. Over 1,200 school districts across the country use NWEA assessments to inform instruction.

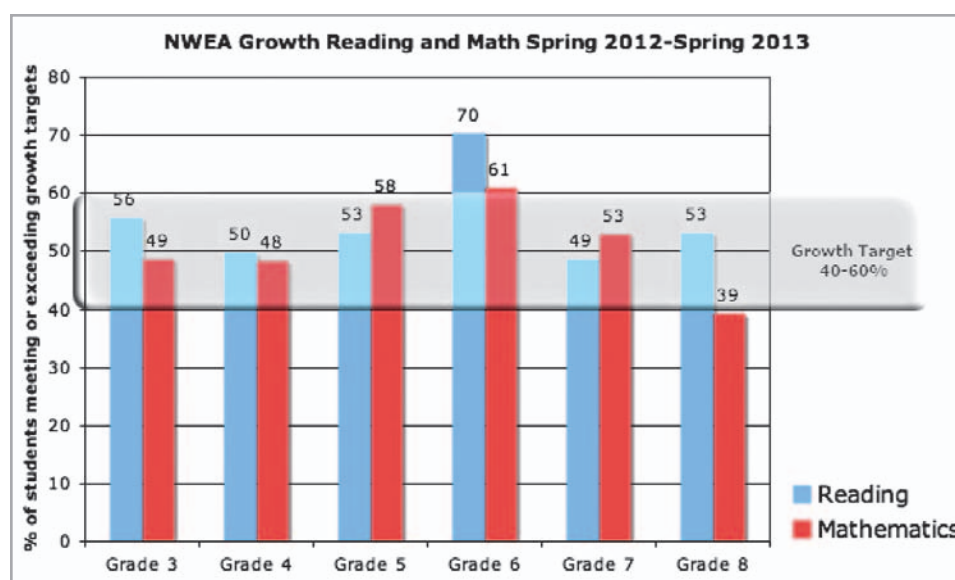
Each test is tailored to the individual student; therefore, it is possible to measure individual student growth on these assessments. NWEAs provide students with targets for performance. Schools with 40%-60% of students meeting/ exceeding growth targets are achieving typical growth for the school as a whole.

The graph below shows the percent of students that showed above-typical growth.

NWEA summary:

It is important to understand that these data do not represent the percentage of students who are proficient, but rather the percentage of students – regardless of proficiency – who are improving knowledge and skills in Reading and Mathematics at an above-typical rate. About 25% of students score at or above the proficient level but do not show above-typical growth from the prior year. RSU5 is committed to challenging all students to achieve their potential, including those that are already high performing.

This additional potential for learning is being addressed in several ways, including adoption

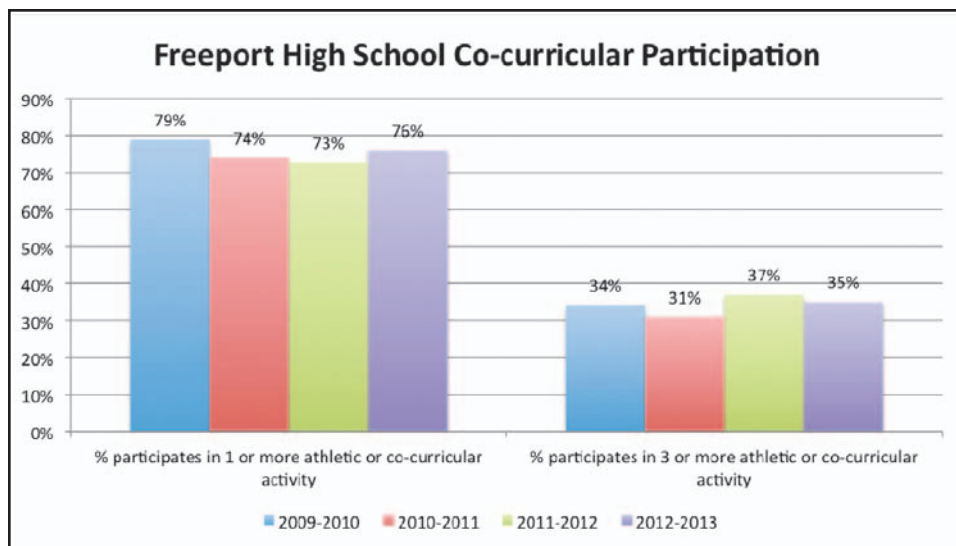
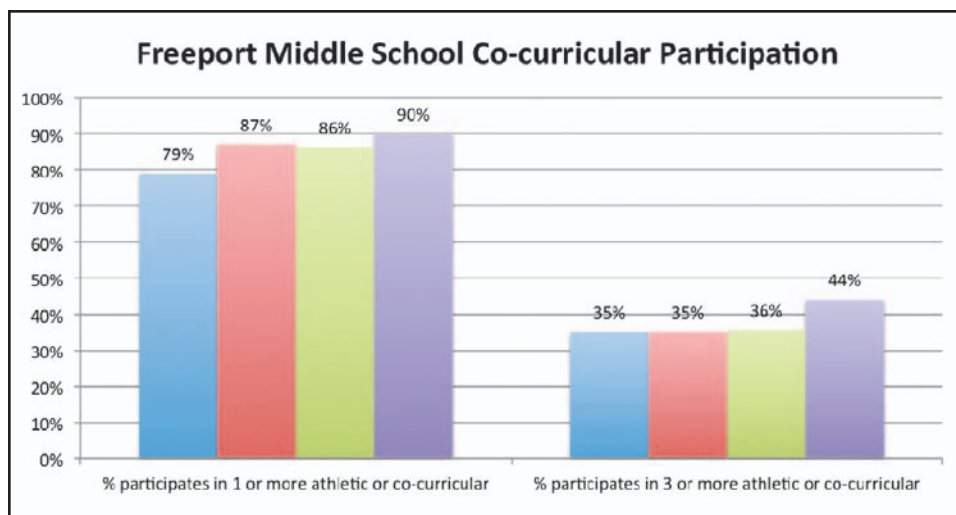
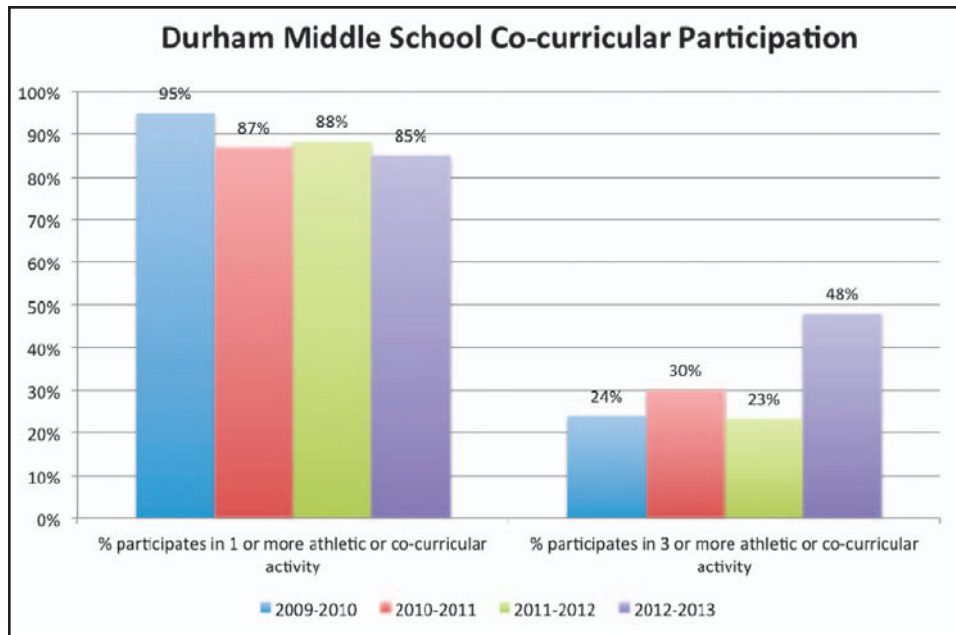


of Reading and Writing workshops (which encourage students to advance individually) and a redesign of the Gifted and Talented program, with additional professional development for teachers to refine their strategies

for differentiating lessons. In addition to the Math program improvements described above, the change to a standards-based system will also support acceleration and challenge for higher performing students.

Co-curricular Participation

Co-Curricular activities include school-sponsored clubs (e.g., drama or debate) and school-sponsored athletics. Co-curricular activities take place before school, after school, or during school when classes are not in session. This number is important because there is a strong correlation between involvement in these activities and academic success. Totals will fluctuate from year-to-year as programs change to support student interest and demand.



- Students Transfers -

This year begins to show the increasing effect of charter schools, with 13 RSU5 students choosing this option. At the high school level, all of the charter school transfers were to Baxter Academy. RSU5 schools are actively involved in planning for the choice environment, which entails a focused improvement process, and a re-articulation of the unique strengths and offerings of each

Student Transfers													
Grade Level	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Prior Years' Average (2009-2012, FMS, FHS only)							3.8	1.5	0.8	2.0	3.0	1.8	0.3
Transfers to Maine Charter School 2013-2014	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	5	0	0
Transfers to Other Private or Religious School 2013-2014	0	1	2	0	3	1	3	0	0	8	5	1	0
Total Transfers 2013-2014	1	2	2	0	3	1	4	0	0	13	10	1	0

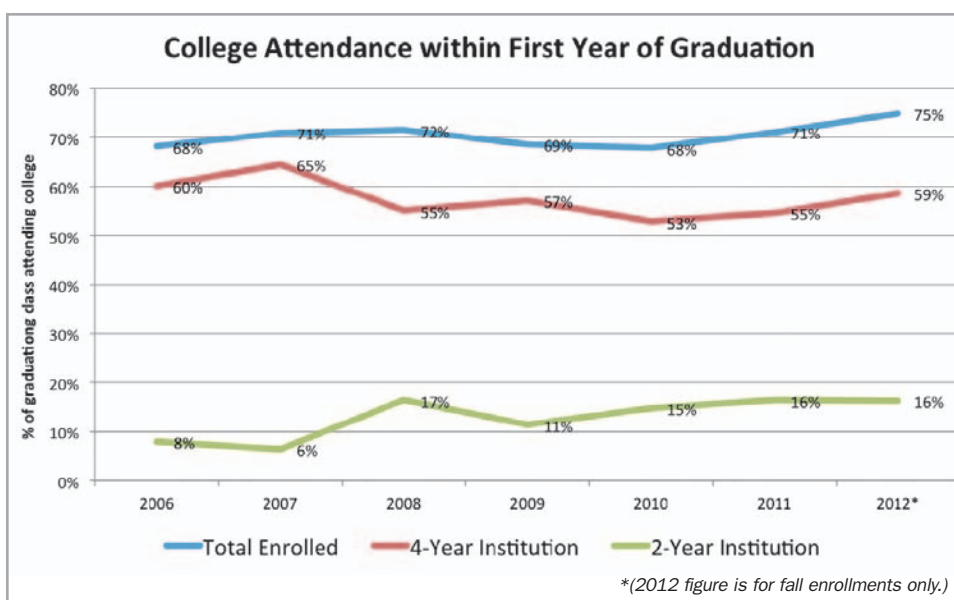
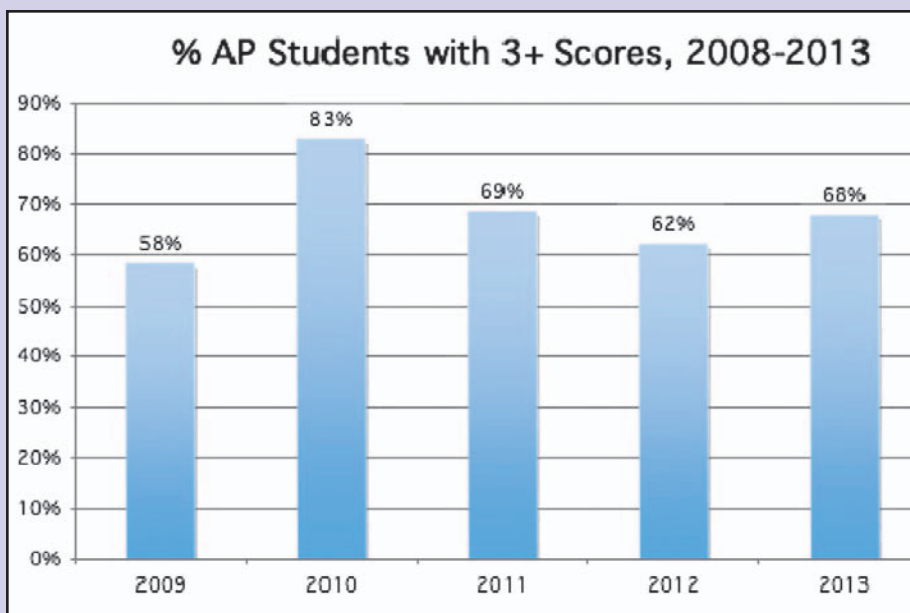
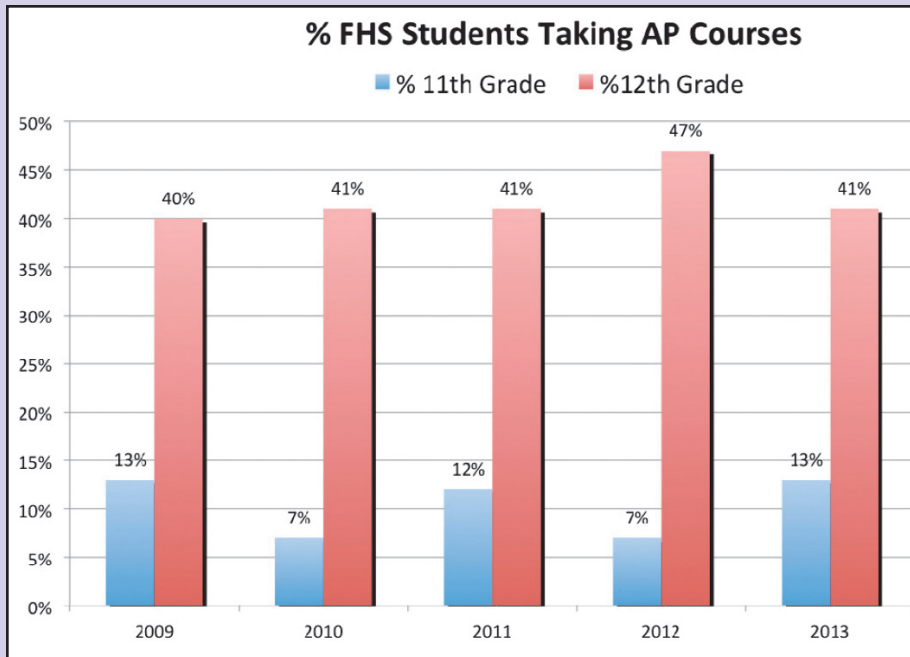
school. There are many examples of public schools that thrive in choice communities, and Freeport High School is well positioned to continue to

attract students, with a full suite of Honors and AP courses, Virtual High School and Plato, college course opportunities with students

receiving dual credits, Independent self designed credit courses and expanded Service Learning opportunities in all curricular areas.

Advanced Placement (AP) Participation

The College Board certifies AP courses; the exams are administered in the spring. AP courses often earn students college credits and therefore can reduce the cost of a college education. At Freeport High School, 11th and 12th graders are eligible to take AP courses. The graph below shows the number of FHS students who took AP courses, and the number of students who passed the AP test with a score of "3" or better.

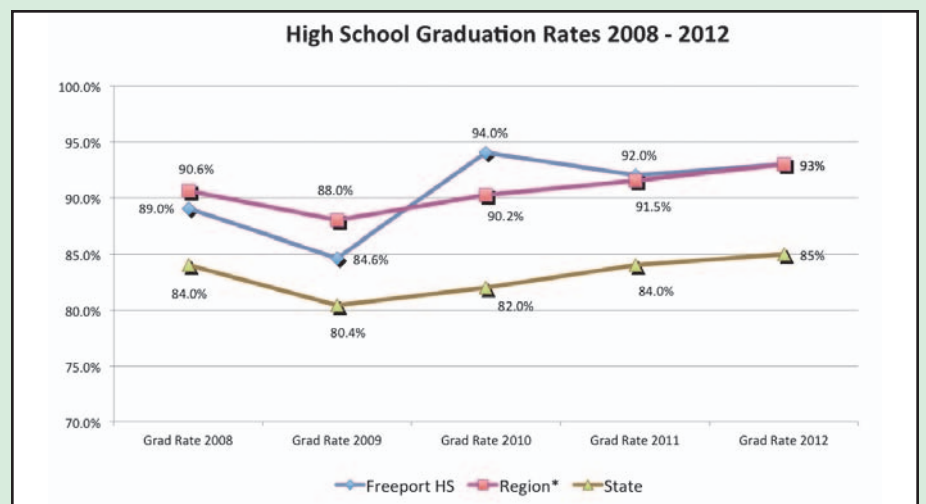


College Matriculation

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) tracks postsecondary matriculation, retention, and graduation. The NSC uses student name, date of birth, and high school to identify the percentage of students enrolled in college, those who persist, and those who graduate. This chart shows college matriculation from Freeport High School in the first year after graduation, from the class of 2008 onward. To see a copy of the full NSC report, including degree awards, college locations, etc., please contact Joe Makley makleyj@rsu5.org



High School Graduation Rate



This calculation is now provided by the state, based on the following question: "...of the students who enter 9th grade in a given year (the "cohort"), what percentage of them received a diploma in four years or less? The formula accounts for students who transfer in [or] out...over four years."

Proficiency-based Diploma

In accordance with Maine Law, after January 1, 2018, the awarding of a diploma from RSU5 will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency in the content areas of Maine's system of Learning Results and meeting the cross-content performance standards of the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results, rather than the accumulation of credits. This change particularly impacts the 9th grade class next year, because their diplomas will be awarded under the new requirements.

Courses at FHS:

The course offerings and credit requirements for next year's 9th grade students will be similar to prior years, with some changes to the *program of studies*. Each course now has a more specific description of what must be learned or demonstrated (standards.) FHS teachers have been working for two years on these new course descriptions, which help to shift the focus from the *teaching* to the *learning*.

Credit at FHS:

Students taking the required courses will have the opportunity to "demonstrate proficiency" in order to pass the course, and this will fulfill the new requirements. This is referred to in the law as the "traditional pathway." The law also allows for "multiple pathways" toward demonstrating proficiency. This includes choices currently available such as virtual courses, career and technical education, adult education, community service, independent study, etc., along with expanded opportunities for learning outside the traditional school day. Students who wish to pursue a "non-traditional pathway" will have greater flexibility to do so, but will need to have an approved plan.

Standards-based grading at FHS:

Freeport High School plans to continue to issue grades. The process of arriving at a grade using standards is somewhat different, but many teachers already use standards in their grading, so the change will be more noticeable in some classes than others. In general, standards-based grades are more a measure of specific knowledge and skill in a content area, (or standard,) and less a measure of behavioral components. This transition is vital to the ongoing

RSU5 Cross-curricular Standards for Work and College Readiness Grades 9 - 12²

WCR.912	Grades 9-12	RSU5 Graduation Standards Cross-curricular Grades 9-12
WCR.912.A	Self Management	Self Management
WCR.912.A.1	Revise work for accuracy/quality	Consistently revises work for accuracy/quality. Self-assesses academic performance against identified learning targets. Identifies learning strengths and needs based on current performance. (B)
WCR.912.A.2	Research and critique	Routinely identifies action steps necessary to address learning needs. Uses procedures and strategies across courses and in different learning situations. Uses resources and support to implement action steps. (B)
WCR.912.A.3	Complete tasks; Meet deadlines	Organizes time and materials to meet deadlines and complete tasks to expected levels. Routinely applies criteria for quality work. Uses time management strategies and tools to meet deadlines. Seeks support when necessary to complete work on time to expected levels. (B)
WCR.912.A.4	Set Goals; Take actions	Sets career and college goals and applies strategies to meet them. Evaluates personal strengths, aspirations, interests and attributes to identify long-term career and college options and goals. Researches requirements for success. Takes action to meet requirements for success. Applies college entrance and/or job-getting strategies. (B)
WCR.912.A.5	Take Responsibility	Takes responsibility for actions and behaviors. (D)
WCR.912.B	Interpersonal Skills	Interpersonal skills in classrooms and small groups
WCR.912.B.3	Interpersonal skills in small groups	Assumes shared responsibility for accomplishing small group goals. Listens and contributes appropriately in a group situation. Performs a role that furthers the group's work. Helps solve group problems and reconcile differences. Builds on the ideas, abilities and perspectives of others. (D)
WCR.912.B.4	Interpersonal skills in the classroom	Routinely: Participates appropriately in classroom activities. Identifies and demonstrates key communication skills. Asks questions during class, and willingly answers the teacher's questions. Consistently offers ideas and questions that help clarify discussions. Contributes accurate, relevant information to whole class conversations. Stays focused during whole class activities. Follows classroom and school rules and procedures. (D)
WCR.912.C	Reasoning/Problem Solving	Reasoning/Problem Solving
WCR.912.C.1	Identify Patterns and Connections	Routinely identifies patterns and connections in information, situations, and across disciplines. Conducts comparisons using specific criteria. Analyzes and explains conflicting perspectives. Applies patterns and principles across disciplines. (C, E)
WCR.912.C.2	Use evidence and support for arguments and explanations	Constructs support and provides evidence to defend arguments, explanations, and lines of reasoning, including: Identifying a valid thesis or position. Evaluating the relative strength of supporting evidence. Assessing credibility, accuracy and strength of the thesis. Integrating multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media to support arguments. (A, E)
WCR.912.C.3	Demonstrate a problem solving approach	Routinely uses appropriate methods and processes to solve problems, applying them with precision. Analyzes problems by identifying givens, constraints and relationships. Plans and monitors the effectiveness of solution pathways. Makes and tests inferences, hypotheses, and conjectures to draw conclusions. (C, E)

² These standards reference the *Guiding Principles* of the Maine Learning Results:

- A. Clear and Effective Communicator
- B. Self-Directed and Lifelong Learner
- C. Creative and Practical Problem Solver
- D. Responsible and Involved Citizen
- E. An Integrative and Informed Thinker

effort to support each individual student, because the grades will show much more clearly what each student needs to work on to improve performance.

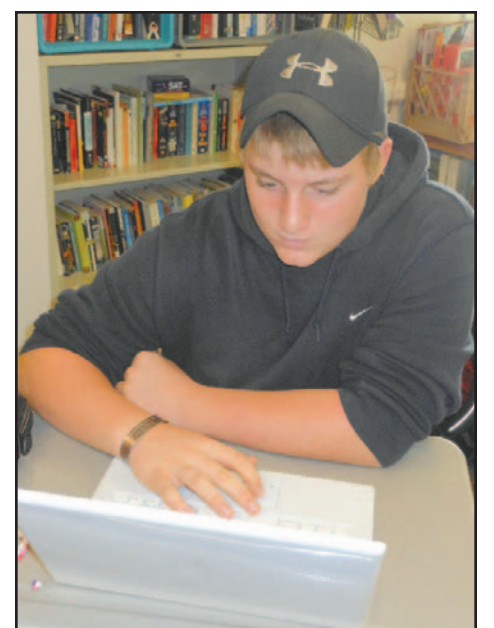
Cross-curricular standards at FHS:

The standards in the table below will be assessed over many classes. This is to ensure students have the opportunity to demonstrate the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results, required for awarding a diploma in 2018. These skills are important across the disciplines. Parents and students will receive feedback on these cross-curricular standards during ranking periods, along with regular course grades.

The transition to a standards-based system offers the poten-

tial for a number of improvements, some of which will happen over time. These include:

- Assignments with greater meaning and relevance (more authentic tasks, rather than academic tasks)
- The ability to choose different kinds of assignments within a class (fewer "one size fits all" tasks.)
- New course pathways (different course selections, including activities/courses outside the school)
- Personalized pathways (the opportunity for a self-designed program.)
- Innovative new approaches to persistent learning challenges (to change the trajectories for those who traditionally have not done well in school.)



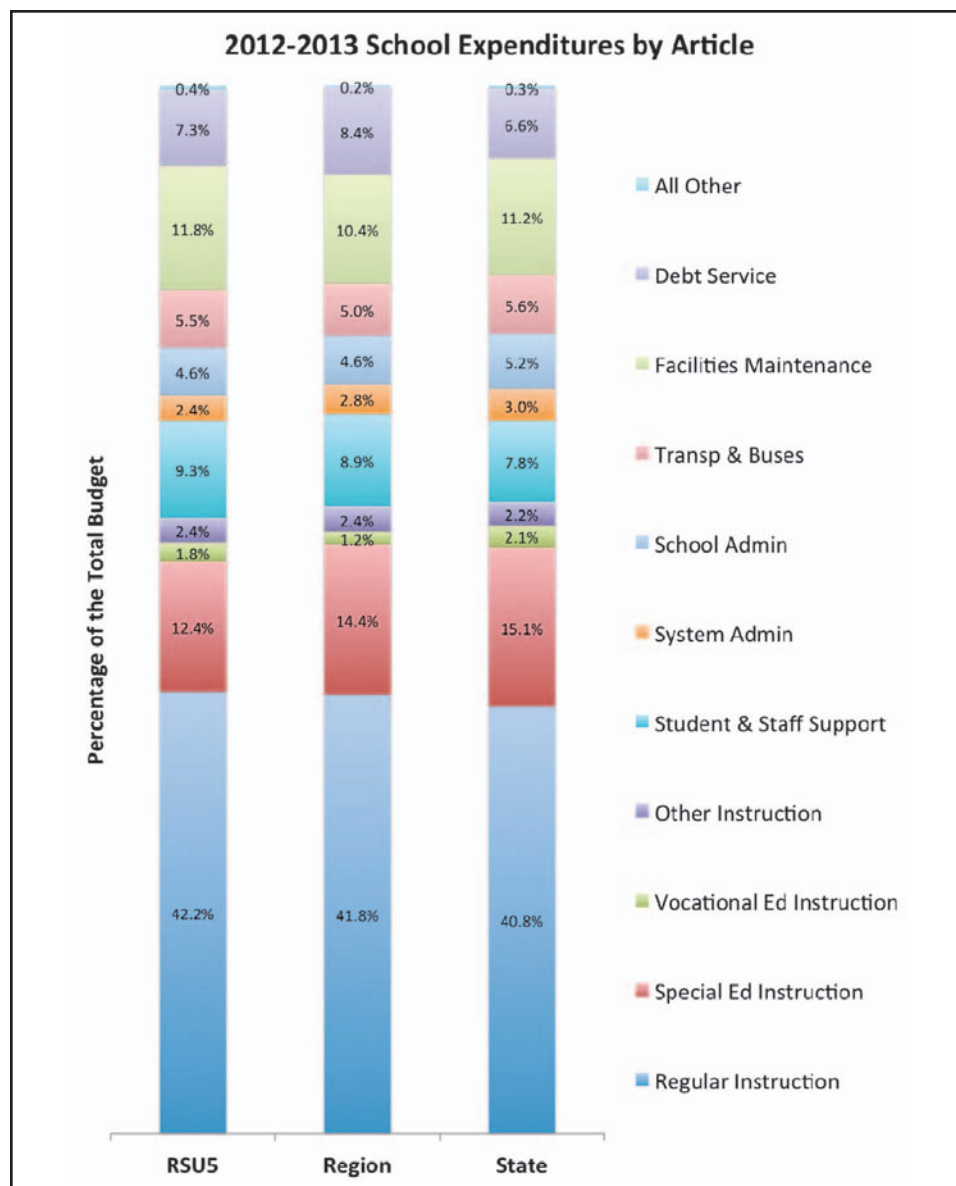
All of these changes are geared toward becoming more focused on each student, and providing the assistance, flexibility and challenges necessary to help all students achieve at higher levels.

RSU5's Financial Performance

The RSU5 Board of Directors endorses the notion that effective use of financial resources is vital to the development of a high performing school system. The Board also recognizes that financial resources are – and will continue to be – scarce and often less than optimally desired. Knowing this, all members of RSU5 need to be vigilant in ensuring that our resources are best spent in ways that will continue to promote our mission and vision.

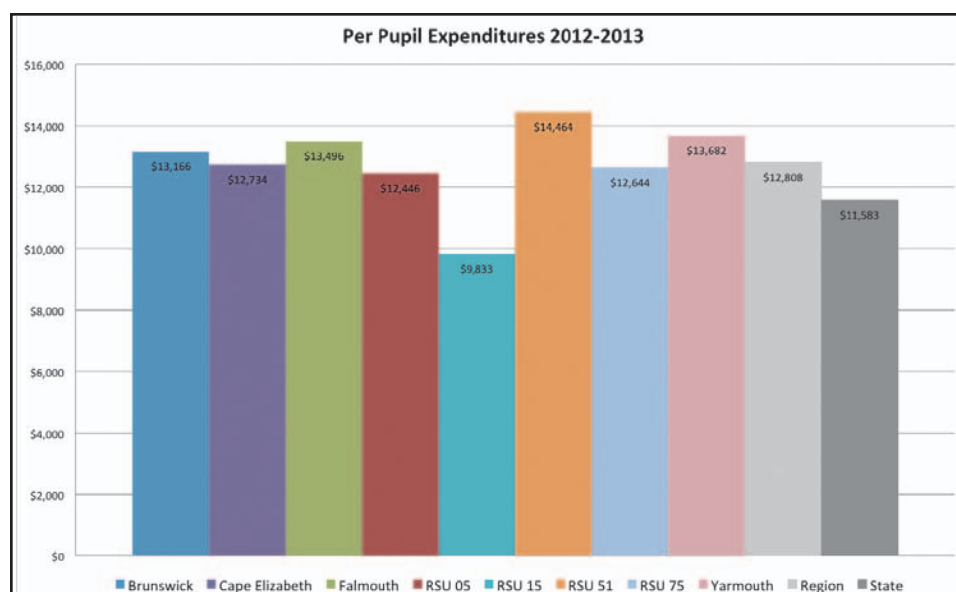
Expenditures by Article

The RSU established comparative measures to demonstrate our financial focus on students and programming. This graph shows the percent of our total budget spent within each area of the budget as compared to the region and state. It is a comparison of *budget priorities* rather than dollar amounts spent. This data is from 2012-2013.



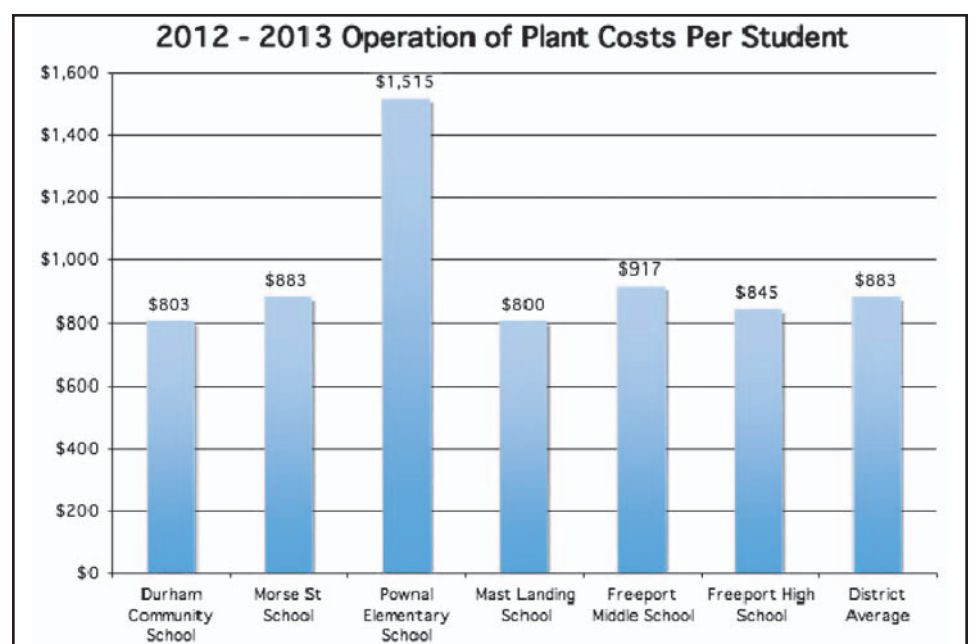
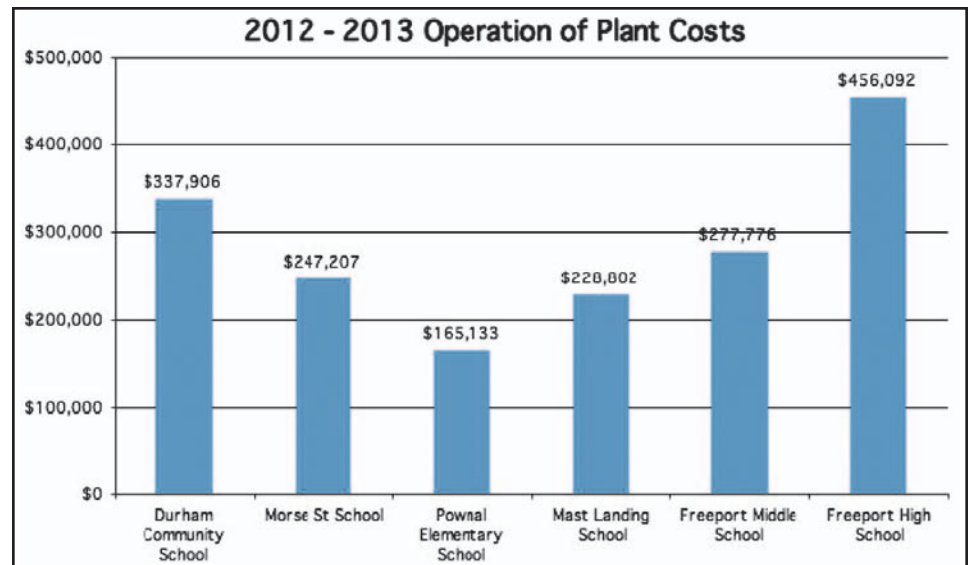
Per Pupil Expenditures

Benchmarking and communicating our per pupil expenditures against state and regional school districts will help our community gauge our relative effectiveness and help us better plan for the future. This graph is based on data from 2012-2013.



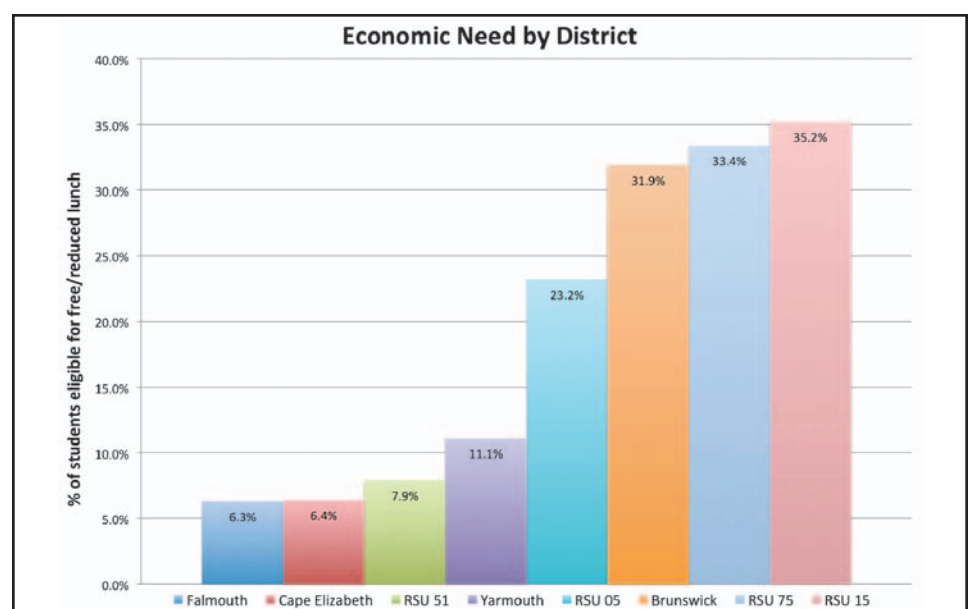
Operation of Plant Costs and Efficiencies

The RSU strives to provide a safe and effective environment in which to achieve our mission. Proper maintenance and timely improvements are a high priority to ensure that learning is optimized in all our facilities. These graphs show the budget and cost per student of each of our buildings.



Student Need

This chart represents the percentage of students who qualify for reduced price lunch based on income. While lower family incomes often correlate with lower academic performance, this is not inevitable. RSU5 is committed to joining a limited group of "good to great" districts in which all students can succeed at high levels. This requires a professional culture in each school, where evidence-based practices (the very best teaching practices) are used regularly and with fidelity, and every student is challenged and expected to succeed at high levels. These improvement efforts will continue with the community's support, in the form of professional development time, access to demonstration classrooms and experts, and on-site coaching.





You're Invited!

To Dine and Discuss

Please join the Board of Directors for a hot meal and conversation about the *State of the Schools Report*, and the 2014-2015 Proposed Budget.

Conversations will take place from 5:30-6:30 p.m. on the following dates:

Wednesday, April 9, 2014 – Pownal Elementary School

Wednesday, April 30, 2014 – Durham Community School

Wednesday, May 7, 2014 – Freeport High School

We would like to hear your thoughts on these important topics.



Budget Process Calendar 2014-2015

The Board believes we must make every effort to help our communities understand the Board's budget priorities and to hear your feedback. The budget process will formally begin with a Budget Presentation to the Board and the public at the board meeting on **Tuesday, March 25, 2014** at 6:30 p.m. in the FHS Cafeteria. The following dates are also scheduled as part of this process:

March 26, 2014

Board Meeting for Budget Review with public comment, 6:30 p.m., FHS Cafeteria

- Opportunity for town leadership and public to comment

April 9, 2014

Board Meeting for Budget Review with public comment, 6:30 p.m., Pownal Cafeteria

- Opportunity for town leadership and public to comment

April 30, 2014

Board Meeting for Budget Review with public comment, 6:30 p.m., Durham Cafeteria

- Opportunity for town leadership and public to comment

May 7, 2014

Board Meeting for Budget Review with public comment, 6:30 p.m., FHS Cafeteria

- Final opportunity for the public to comment
- Board will deliberate on the budget

May 14, 2014

Board Meeting for Final Budget Adoption, 6:30 p.m., FHS Cafeteria

- Board will take final action on the budget

May 28, 2014

Annual Budget Meeting for budget approval, 6:30 p.m., Location TBD

- Durham, Freeport and Pownal residents will vote on the budget Article by Article in large "Town Meeting" style gathering

June 10, 2014

Budget Validation Referendum in each town

- Citizens from Durham, Freeport and Pownal go to their voting locations to vote on the budget by secret ballot

The Board encourages our citizens' involvement in this process. Please join us for these important meetings to learn more about our budget and the quality educational programs we are working to provide. After each meeting, we will post the budget handouts at rsu5.org/budgetcalendar so please log on to get more information and to follow our progress. We welcome your participation!

