



The HIGHLANDS Report

Northern Highlands Regional High School District • Allendale, Upper Saddle River, Ho-Ho-Kus • March 2006

Message from the Superintendent

After numerous trials and tribulations we are pleased to inform you that, with the exception of punch list items, our building project has been completed. Accordingly, we would like to invite you to our Dedication and Open House which will be held on Sunday, April 2nd at 1:00 PM. Please join us and tour the facilities which include:

- 15 new science labs
- 7 new prep rooms
- 4 new classrooms
- 280 new computers and an expanded network
- 4 new bathrooms
- 2 new woodshops
- 1 new instructional kitchen
- 2 new girls' locker rooms with athletic storage areas
- New Student Activities Office
- 14 renovated classrooms
- New public address and intercom system
- New computer aided drawing facility
- New ceilings in all corridors
- 1 new computer lab
- 35 ceiling mounted projectors
- 1 new elevator
- 1 new photography darkroom
- New cafeteria and serving area
- 2 renovated computer rooms
- New Student Assistance Counseling Office
- 2 renovated music rooms with instrument storage
- New fire alarm system for existing and new areas
- New wellness center with free weights and cardiovascular equipment
- New world language lab

We are indebted to you for supporting this project which will serve Highlands students for decades to come. In addition, we are proud of our staff and students for the remarkable patience they exhibited during the long construction period.



Congratulations to Our National Merit Scholarship Program Finalists in the 2006 Competition

Zachary S. Pastore, Anna Y. Murray, Rachel A. Faust, Brittany B. Bettman,
Sarah B. Schechter, Corinne B. Grzybowski, Michelle A. Norworth, Andrew Weintraub

Spring of 2006 Guidance Update

Curriculum changes for the school year 2006-07 are relatively few in comparison to those that took effect in 2005-06. At the same time, we have some new and interesting courses to offer, including:

- ❖ a full-year introductory course called Real-World Engineering This is a great way to find out if this popular college major is an appropriate choice for a high- school student considering his/her future career;
- ❖ more new AP's - AP American Government and Politics, AP Statistics, and AP Computer Programming;
- ❖ a new math sequence that complements our Physics First sequence - Concepts of Algebra/Math Patterns (gr. 9), Concepts of Geometric and Math Reasoning (gr. 10), and Applied Math (gr.11)
- ❖ a new business course for seniors called Work-based Internships/Apprenticeships, a real-world program that provides career-related, on-the-job training to students

For the first time, sophomores will have the option of taking one of four AP courses - AP Govt and Politics, AP Statistics, AP Computer Programming, or AP Economics - provided the student has an A average and, in some cases, a teacher recommendation.

We are happy to say that two of our three Honors SUPA (Syracuse University Project Advance) courses have run for the first time this year; all three are designated honors courses and will be offered for the next school year:

- ❖ Economic Ideas and Issues, a semester-long course that earns a student 3 college credits (2.5 high-school credits will be recorded on the high-school transcript, upon successful completion of the course);
- ❖ Forensic Science, another semester course that earns a student 4 college credits (2.5 high-school credits will be recorded on the high-school transcript, upon completion of the course)
- ❖ Practices of Academic Writing (fall semester) and Narratives of Culture: Introduction to Issues of

Critical Reading (spring semester) that will be treated as a year-long course. Upon successful completion, a student will earn 6 college credits, computed as 5 high-school credits on the high-school transcript.

Students interested in requesting college credit will contact the university requesting that the course title, credit, and grade be forwarded to a specific college or university. Most colleges will accept credit for this SUPA course.

The titles of our Technical Drawing classes I & II have changed to Computer Aided Drawing and Design I & II.

As students select from core courses and a plethora of electives and semester courses, we urge them to consider their strengths and interests in each course as means to seriously considering a major for college. Some students are so motivated about their interest and aptitude in a given area that they are already seriously researching which schools offer their and whether or not to apply Early Decision or Early Action to the school that offers the best "fit." Students who have definitely decided upon a first-choice can apply early. A school's early application policy can be either early decision or early action:

- ❖ Early Decision colleges often require students to commit to only one college, and to not apply elsewhere until notification; in other cases, colleges permit early-decision applicants to apply elsewhere, provided they agree to withdraw any other applications, when notified of acceptance.
- ❖ Early Action colleges usually permit students to apply to other colleges as well; however, students accepted early action do not have to decide whether or not to attend until May. Increasingly, colleges like Yale, Harvard, and Stanford employ a single-choice early action, non-binding policy, but disallow students from applying to any other Early Decision or Early Action school until notified.

Whichever the option, students must acquaint themselves with the policies of schools to which they are applying early.

Syracuse University Project Advance

Northern Highlands is in the first year of offering college credits to our seniors through Syracuse University's Project Advance. The Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) program facilitates and administers a cooperative arrangement between the university and Northern Highlands. Through SUPA, Syracuse University enables our high school seniors to take regular Syracuse University courses on the campus of Northern Highlands.

The SUPA program allows Highlands' seniors to experience the rigors of college work and the self-discipline needed in college. Seniors are not only challenged during their senior year, but they will continue to maintain and develop academic skills and good study habits. Finally, the program provides more options for students when they are in college by accelerating course work, reducing college requirements, and allowing for more classes while attending college.

Generally speaking, Syracuse University courses are recommended for conscientious students who have achieved a grade of a B or better in earlier studies in the discipline, and who want the challenge and rigor of taking a college level course for degree credit during their senior year.

The 2005 - 2006 tuition rate for Syracuse University courses offered through PA is \$99.00 per credit hour. For purposes of comparison, the current tuition charge

for an undergraduate course at Syracuse University is \$774.00 per credit hour.

Syracuse University asserts that a high proportion of students (approximately nine in ten) have reported receiving recognition for their Syracuse University courses in the form of transfer of credit hours, fulfillment of general education or major program requirements, placement in more advanced courses, or a combination of these. For students who continue their post secondary enroll at Syracuse University, the credits (and grades) they earn automatically become part of their records as Syracuse University students.

Students enrolled in SUPA receive a transcript that includes a complete record of all courses taken at Syracuse University through SUPA. Due to Syracuse University policy and federal law that protects access to student records, the individual student is the only person authorized to request that an official Syracuse University transcript be sent to a college or university of his/her choice.

Syracuse University offers a multitude of advance courses through SUPA. The courses offered to seniors at Northern Highlands are Forensics and Writing Studio/Reading and Interpretation.

Northern Highlands' faculty members who are teaching the SUPA courses are considered adjunct professors of Syracuse University.

Transition Project

Northern Highlands has been selected by Princeton Center for Leadership Training (PCLT) to participate in *Transition Project* for the 2006-2007 school year. We will be joining a network of established programs across New Jersey developing peer leadership skills among 11th and 12th grade students working to assist incoming freshmen make a successful adjustment into high school.

There are 52 New Jersey schools across the state currently implementing the *Transition Project*. In these schools, faculty advisors train a team of upperclassmen in a variety of leadership and facilitation skills; in turn, upperclassmen co-facilitate a number of monthly hands-

on outreach sessions for freshmen that focus on the following topics: decision-making; problem solving; time management; active listening; communication; relationship-building; prejudice reduction; adjustment to change; identity exploration; and academic achievement.

Transition Project also creates a bridge for middle school peer leaders who were involved in school leadership programs as 8th graders, and are interested in peer education at the high school level. Northern Highlands will continue to actively recruit former middle school student leaders to participate in the program as peer leaders when they reach the 11th and 12th grade.

KUDOS

Congratulations to all of our athletes, activity participants, coaches and advisors. It certainly was a very exciting and successful first semester at Northern Highlands. Our athletic program is currently in first place and aiming for its sixth straight NBIAL All-Sports Championship. Our girls soccer team won the league and Bergen County championship (the 8th in school history) and finished the season ranked #1 in Bergen County and #3 in New Jersey with a 22-1 record. Our girls tennis team repeated as state sectional champions (the 10th in school history), earned the league and county championships (the 6th county honor in school history), and were named as North New Jersey's team of "Team of the Year" by *The Record*. The girls and boys cross country teams had great success - the girls winning the state sectional championship and the boys bringing home the league championship. Mr. Frank Gilli was also recognized as Bergen County's "Coach of the Year" for both the boys and girls cross country. The athletic success has continued into the winter season with the indoor boys and girls track teams recently capturing the league championships and both of our varsity basketball teams qualifying for the county and state basketball tournaments. Swimming and ice hockey have also qualified for post-season play.

Additionally, the Northern Highlands Regiment (marching band) consistently scored well and was recognized for best overall music and/or visual performance throughout the fall competition season. The school newspaper - *The Highland Fling* was awarded the **gold certificate** from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. The Freshman Literary/Art Magazine also received a **gold certificate** from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. 116 Highlands students received a total of 202 medals and/or awards for their performance at the Regional DECA Conference. They will now advance to the State DECA competition in March. Over 150 of our students also performed marvelously in the school's fall play "Tartuffe", as well as in the annual holiday concert and talent show. Northern Highlands is also proud to announce that it will be inducting over 75 members into this year's National Honor Society.

Many of our students earned individual honors this past semester:

- Kevin Raschen is New Jersey's best tuba player and has been selected for the **All-State Band**.
- Kevin Raschen, Stephanie Jacobs, Kenny Kummerfeldt, Neil Pathak were selected to the **Bergen County Senior Band**.
- Stephanie Jacobs, Kenny Kummerfeldt and Emily Schechter were selected to the **North Jersey Region 1 Band**.
- Ethan Weinberg, Kristin Macri, Lisa Marie Ianuzzi, Sarry Chung, Mark Dakes, Kevin Gotkin, Quentin Garzon, Jessica Norworth, Fei Long, Diana Brown and Matthew Deitchman were selected to the **Bergen County Chorus**.
- Allison Benoit, Taylor Brown, Diana Brown, Kristin Macri, Jessica Norwoth, Ethan Weinberg, Donju Min and Fei Long were selected for **All North Jersey Chorus**.
- Todd Ingenito and Christine Sedrak won 2nd Place Team award at the **Ramsey Debate** and Karen Donohue and Christina D'Alia won 2nd Place Team award at the **Pascack Valley Debate**.
- Sam Richard, Adam Nathan, Corinne Grzybowski, Alyson Cohen were **best delegates** and Jason Sherwood was **outstanding delegate** at the **Brown University Model UN** and Kevin Gotkin was outstanding delegate at the **Harvard University Model UN**.
- Andrew Belmont and Alyce Tzue received the **National Council of English Achievement Awards in Writing** (only 21 given in NJ):
- The **Mock Trial** team tied for first place in their county division and is currently competing in an elimination playoff round.
- Ben Diestel -1st team **All Bergen County - Cross Country**
- Christina Gomez -1st team **All Bergen County - Soccer**
- Jen Byer - 1st team **All Bergen County** and was named to female athlete of the fall season by *Northern New Jersey Sports*.
- Ashley Kamen - 1st team **All Bergen County - Soccer**
- Danielle Schulmann -1st team **All Bergen County** and *The Record's* "Player of the Year" - Soccer
- Caitlin Egan and Dana Opperman -1st team **All Bergen County - tennis doubles**,
- Laura Danzig -1st team **All Bergen County - Tennis**
- Kim Raimondi and Alex Taylor - 1st team **All Bergen County - field hockey**
- KR Ling scored her **1000th varsity career point** in girls basketball on 12/16/05.
- Fred Santaite is **ranked #1 in the state** and won the Bergen County Championship in wrestling.
- Caroline Vloka, Sammy Roberts, Phil Arredondo and Mike Fotinatos have qualified for the Junior Olympics in Fencing. Caroline and Sammy are both **currently ranked 2nd and 16th nationally** in the cadet division.
- Meagan and Kathleen Heslin were named as **Scholastic All-Americans** by U.S.A. swimming

We wish all of our students and co-curricular staff much continued success throughout the second semester and look forward to seeing many of you at our various events throughout the remainder of this school year. For school event information please refer to the district's website: www.northernhighlands.org.

A Brief Look at 40 Years of Northern Highlands' History

For years, Allendale high school students had attended Ramsey High School and Upper Saddle River students had gone to Mahwah High School. But in the early 1960s it became clear that the towns of Allendale and Upper Saddle River might need their own high school. The towns were rapidly growing: where strawberry farms had existed, developers were putting in big homes.

After the Northern Highlands Regional High School District was approved, the first site considered - Lake Street and Route 17 in Upper Saddle River - was rejected. Later Western Union would have its national headquarters there and currently, Pearson Education (which publishes, among other imprints, Prentice-Hall books for schools) is at that location. A site was chosen in Allendale, at the crest of Hillside Avenue, for Northern Highlands Regional High School.

The district's first superintendent, Gerald F. Hopkins, worked from a small office in downtown Allentown and went about hiring architects and the first faculty long before the first classes would be held. Mr. Hopkins should be credited with creating a building with special aesthetic appeal - rock walls and trees were maintained and the building itself had courtyards, much glass and beautiful brick, even in inside corridors: the cheapest route was not taken. And he should be credited with hiring, from the start, a superb faculty.

Northern Highlands opened in September of 1965 with workmen still putting finishing touches on the building. Since the bell system hadn't been completely installed, a teacher "rang" a cowbell to let students know it was time to change classes.

The school's first graduation was in June of 1967.

Soon it became clear that the enrollments were overwhelming even this new "space-age" building that housed the

state's first high school planetarium and a closed-circuit television system.

Residents passed a referendum, and new wings to Northern Highlands opened in 1973 in the back of the building, to house English, science and social studies classrooms.

Enrollment peaked in the late 1970s at Northern Highlands, with a total student body of just under 1500 students.

In the 1980s and early 1990s enrollments slowly declined to a low of around 750 students. What to do? Some board of education members proposed "an orderly system of shutting down parts of the building," but that never happened. Instead, several rooms were rented out to different educational groups, and this generated some extra revenue.

Ho-Ho-Kus residents approved sending their students to Northern Highlands, and, after the plan worked its way through the legal system, students from Ho-Ho-Kus, with the town paying a per-student tuition rate, began at Highlands in September of 1996. Later, Saddle River residents were given the option of sending their students to either Ramsey High School or to Northern Highlands. The addition of students from these two towns has benefited the school in many ways as the students seamlessly fit into the student body.

In September of 2005 Highlands opened with over 1300 students, and a major new science wing, in the back of the building, as well as other additions and renovations, was ready for students. Northern Highlands would be celebrating 40 years of superior education offered to the young people of Allendale, Upper Saddle River, Saddle River, and Ho-Ho-Kus.

S1701

In the summer of 2004, the School Budget Reduction Law, commonly known as S1701 was signed into law. The salient points of the law include: the reduction (retroactively) in the amount of surplus a school district may have, a reduction in the budget growth (CAP) and in the amount of banked CAP (by 50%), limits on certain administrative costs, limiting the scope of second questions a school district can put before the public, limits the amount which can be transferred between budget accounts to 10%, and prohibits transfers between budget accounts and surplus for the first nine months of the year and only with the Commissioner's approval during the last three months. These, along with the convergence of other factors such as increased gas and electric costs, stagnant or near stagnant enrollment, limited or no growth potential in other revenue sources and the regular increases in the cost of goods and services, health benefits and salaries come together to produce a very difficult budget season.

Surplus & CAP

Two years ago when S1701 was enacted, school districts were able to maintain up to 6% in surplus and had to request from the Commissioner to go below 3% - now the State mandate is 2%. In 2004, S1701 was applied retroactively and required Northern Highlands to reduce surplus - after the budget had been approved - by approximately \$200,000. In the past two years, Northern Highlands' surplus has been reduced by over 60%.

(continued on page 6)

S1701 (continued from page 5)

In the past, the State has provided mechanisms for a school district to qualify for exemptions to the budget CAP (due to enrollment, Special Education costs for example) to use in increasing the budget. If a school district did not use the total earned allotment, (perhaps doing so would have increased the tax levy too much) the balance was carried over as Banked CAP. As mentioned, the State reduced any earned Banked CAP by 50%. This further limited budget growth and a district's ability to meet needs.

Administrative Cost

S1701 also created an Administrative cost penalty box. Certain budget accounts were deemed by the state as Administrative and a maximum was set for the calculated cost per pupil on these accounts. Unfortunately, the State included such volatile costs as legal fees, communications costs (telephone), legal ads, election costs and such mandated costs as the auditor's fee and New Jersey School Boards membership fee. These are combined with the salaries, health benefits, supplies and materials of the Superintendent, Business Administrator, Principal, Supervisor of Special Education, Guidance, Athletic Director and all the secretarial support associated with these offices. Driving factors in making this calculation fluctuate include student enrollment and the fact that Northern Highlands only has four grades over which to spread these costs.

Other Factors - Second Questions, Transfers

The State has for many years allowed school districts to place second questions before the public for specific needs. S1701 has more narrowly defined the scope of these questions. Second questions may not contain programs and services that were included in the district's prior year budget (unless approved by the Commissioner) nor may they include any programs and services mandated to achieve the core curriculum content standards. And, if a second question is proffered and defeated, the district may not subsequently provide that item in any other manner. Thus the options a school district has in asking the public for support of the district are even more limited. The transfer issue, while it may not seem salient, is very important due to the nature of the budgeting process. School budgets are prepared 1 to almost 2 years in advance. It is nearly impossible to know 100% what will be needed financially in a specific account. And, if extraordinary unexpected costs arise before the April date for transfers from surplus, a myriad of budget lines would need to be reduced in order to meet this need. This has the potential to wreak havoc on the entire budgeting process.

Northern Highlands Regional High School District
Hillside Avenue • Allendale, New Jersey 07401
www.NorthernHighlands.org

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