

REPORT OF UCS BOARD of DIRECTORS, 02March2010

The 2009-2010 school year is the third year at UCS for Principal Michael Berry. He has brought strength, stability and change to UCS. In his first year he was up on the roof with Mr. Fuller removing snow and ice. The Principal, working with the CESU Business Manager and Superintendent, had a complete evaluation of the building done by the architectural firm Dore and Whitter. This study was the basis for the heating, ventilation and insulation work done in the summer of 2008. It is also the basis for the anticipated roof insulation and roof replacement and heating system upgrades described below.

Along with the faculty and staff he developed and implemented **an** instructional model where grade level teachers work with all students in that grade level. The grade level teachers specialize in a few subject areas thereby allowing more efficient use of preparation time for the teachers and a better education experience for the students. Please read the Principal's report for a more detailed description.

As of 01July2010 John Alberghini will be Superintendent of CESU. For the past two years he has been Co-Superintendent and prior to that Associate Superintendent. He was hired as Assistant Superintendent 01July2004. Jim Massingham, who became Superintendent 01July 2004 will retire on 30June 2010. Jim was Co-Superintendent with John the last two years.

Underhill Central continues to be an exceptional school. This only happens through the dedicated hard work of the teachers, the entire staff, and administration. It is our objective to make this the best possible educational experience for those students that are gifted in one or more areas and those that require extra support in one or more areas as well as for all UCS students. In this time of great financial pressure on schools we commit and ask the UCS community to commit to support our students of all capabilities. It is important to also support the whole person with strong physical education, music and arts programs. All of this is possible only with broad community support. We thank you and ask you for your continued support.

Principal's office upgrade: Those who were in the school toward the end of the last school year may have noticed the Principal's office being blocked off with sheets of plastic. This was due to the discovery of surface mold along and inside the office walls-due to moisture from rain bouncing on the sidewalk of a once used entrance and along the foundation. The plastic sheet was used to ensure the safety of the school community. The moisture remediation and renovation was a success. The structural conditions that led to surface mold growth were eliminated and all materials were cleaned and removed. As a part of the renovation, the office has been expanded slightly, and the door moved so that the Principal's office entrance is now from the secretary/work area. The office is now more sound-proof, and the mold is gone. The total cost for this project was slightly less than \$100,000.

\$1.2 M interest free Bond: On October 6 the voters of UCS approved the board request to apply for a zero interest, 17 year \$1.2 million bond supported by the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It is estimated that this loan (because of the zero interest) will save UCS taxpayers approximately \$350,000 over the 17 year life of the loan. These funds will be used to complete the high-priority items on the facilities improvement list drawn up by our Architect, Dore and Whitter and described at the March 2009 school information meeting. Copies of the long-term Capital Plan are available in the UCS office. The major items included in the proposed work are: (1) Replace the roof, and insulation at the roof line of the north wing (the 1986 and 1993 additions) and the flat roof section of the 1980 addition. (2) Upgrade and integrate the HVAC systems in the entire building so it is more efficient and healthy. (3) Upgrade the building fire alarm system to meet ADA standards in all areas. (4) Upgrade the building electrical system, replacing 1952 electrical panels and electrical distribution systems. The roof (on the 1986 and 1993 additions) will be of standing seam construction with sealing at each standing seam that is guaranteed for 20 years against leaks. The typical metal roof installation does not include sealing at each seam and is warranted for one year for materials and workmanship. Integral with the roof installation is the roof ventilation above the insulation. It is anticipated that the work will be done during the student vacation period in the summer of 2010.

Teachers' contract: The usual pattern for teacher contracts for several years was for teachers and school boards of CESU to discuss changes in the employment contract during the final year of a contract.

Typically the new contract would also be for a period of three years. This pattern was interrupted with the completion of the three year contract ending 01July2008. The teachers began the 2008-2009 school year without a new contract. By state law, the teachers would be working under the terms and conditions of the previous contract until a new contract was agreed on. During the course of negotiations both parties agreed to focus on negotiations for a one year contract instead of the normal three years. As the end of the school year approached there was not agreement on the contract for that year. After the offer that the CESU boards identified as their "Final Offer" was not responded to by the teacher negotiation representatives, the CESU boards imposed that contract, again as permissible by state law. This contract included an average salary increase of 3.75% and an increase of health premium contributions from 12% to 15% for the existing health plan and a new optional health plan that maintained the present 12% premium contribution but at a 20% lower overall cost to teachers. It also included those contract changes agreed to by the teacher negotiation representatives and the CESU board, among these were some adjustments to the workday language. Details of this contract are available on the CESU website: CESU.k12.vt.us/

The 2009-2010 school year also began without a teachers' contract. The current status of that negotiation is also available at the above website.

Policies Approved in 2009: (Please see www.CESU.k12.vt.us/ for a complete listing of UCS policies.)

Animal Dissection

Hazing Prevention

Grade Advancement, Retention, Promotion and Acceleration of Students

Volunteers and Work Study Students

HIPPA

Student Attendance

Limited English Proficiency

Student Records

Spanish Language Instruction: Last year the voters approved an article to include Spanish language instruction as a part of the UCS curriculum for grades one through four. This curriculum change was accomplished by the addition of Ms. Michele Rhodes as a part-time teacher. She meets with each of the 1-2 and 3-4 classrooms for thirty minutes each week. This addition brings USC in line with the Jericho and Underhill ID elementary schools as our students enter BRMS. As you meet UCS students greet them with a "beunos dias" and expect to receive the same.

Consolidation Study: The interest in looking for ways to provide even a better education experience for students while decreasing the rate of increase of spending continues. You may recall, we funded a preliminary study in 2008 looking at the possibility of administratively combining the three elementary schools in the towns of Jericho and Underhill. This process was terminated in the spring of 2009 after the UID board declined further consideration. In the fall of 2009 a new consolidation initiative was started. This initiative is to look at the feasibility of combining all schools in the Chittenden East Supervisory Union into one K-12 district. At this point in time all seven school boards in the CESU have agreed to pursue this proposal. A study committee is expected to be formed in the near future.

Pre-K Class in Building: One of our lightly used classrooms is now being used for pre-K students from Underhill and Jericho. The Pre-K enrollment for 2009-2010 is approximately 20 students.

Enrollment Increase: After many years of slowly decreasing enrollment from 236 students at its peak in the 1993/94 school year to about 130 - 140 students through the early to mid 2000s the enrollment of UCS has increased in recent years to 161 in the fall of 2009.

A Garden at UCS: The board approved a proposal by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to have a garden on a section of the property north-east of the school building. Some preliminary work was done in the fall of 2009. The plan is to have vegetables growing in the summer of 2010. The PTO thinks of this as a community venture and would like you to also.

Proposed 2010-2011 UCS Budget [to be voted on March 2, 2010]: The proposed 2010-2011 UCS

budget of \$2,111,496 represents a \$155,175 increase [7.93%] over the current 2009-2010 budget of \$1,956,321. This increased of \$155,175 is driven primarily by new debt and a significant increase in enrollment in 2009-2010. The new debt arises from the first payments on loans taken out for renovations done in the summer of 2009 for mold removal/remediation [\$10,604, first payment of a 7 year loan] and the first payment of a \$1.2M 17 year zero interest loan approved by voters in the fall of 2009 [\$70,588] for heating, ventilation, electrical and roofing renovation/repairs which are planned for the summer of 2010. The total of this new debt is \$81,192. At the start of the present school year in September 2009 we had an enrollment of 161 students representing an increase of 24 students over the previous September enrollment. This significant increase in enrollment, coming at a time when most other schools in the Chittenden East Supervisory Union are seeing declining enrollments, is reflected in next year's budget as a greater proportion of shared Chittenden East services such as the central office, Special Education and transportation. The cost of these services are apportioned among the Chittenden East districts based on enrollment. The total additional cost to us for these shared programs, driven by our increased enrollment only, is \$49,107. If you exclude the \$81,192 new debt expenses and the \$49,107 increased enrollment expenses you are left with a base budget increase of \$24,876 or 1.27%.

We invite you to attend any/all UCS board meeting, 1st Tuesday of each month, 6:30 at the school, and the information meeting on March 1, the evening before Town Meeting, at BRMS to discuss these or other school related issues. See the UCS website (www.underhill.k12.vt.us/) for board agenda, and some interesting facts about our school.

Underhill Central School Directors: Derek Bellin, Peter Geiss, Tony Julianelle, John LaRue, Shara Tarule