

# THE HIGHLANDS REPORT

Northern Highlands Regional High School District Allendale / Upper Saddle River, N.J. April 1995

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## DISTRICT LOOKS TO ECONOMIZE

In a plan announced to the Board of Education on February 13th, Dr. Westervelt proposed a major restructuring of the four supervisory positions and further indicated that he will take on the responsibility of administering the Guidance Department. As Dr. Westervelt explained, "In view of diminishing finances, including reduced state aid, we must preserve our broad curriculum offerings and maintain our instructional staff as the highest priority. If that means reducing administrative and supervisory overhead, then we have to do it. Everyone, including teachers, will have to take on more responsibility."

The reorganization plan proposed by Dr. Westervelt is estimated to save more than \$120,000 in management costs. Part of this savings comes from redeploying supervisors back to classrooms to teach an additional period and part comes from a reduction in salaries. The number of administrators and supervisors will be the lowest in the history of the school district. During the 1989-90 school year, for example, with 722 students there were 7 administrators and 9 supervisors. Next year with a projected enrollment of 755 students, the District will be served by 3 administrative and 5 supervisory personnel.

Other economy measures include reductions in clerical and custodial staffing. Chaperone and field trip budgets will also be reduced with the expectation that parent volunteers will assist. Moreover, while the District needs a new bus, a decision to lease rather than purchase a bus has been made.

While some fees may be increased, such as athletic and facility use fees, monies are

being generated as well from raising rental fees. Presently, two outside groups rent office space at Northern Highlands. The district is actively seeking other groups to rent office space.

Escalating special education costs came under scrutiny this year also, and while such programs and services are mandated, attempts to educate more students within the school rather than tuitioning them out to other schools is under study.

The cost for printing of publications, such as the Curriculum Guide and Student Handbook, has been reduced in the 1995-1996 budget as well. "Many of these printing jobs can be done in-house in the future," stated Bill Beisswanger, Board of Education member and chair of the Finance and Management Committee.

Mr. Beisswanger reviewed these and other cost-cutting measures at a pre-budget hearing on Wednesday, February 15th, in the school auditorium. The hearing was initiated by the Finance and Management Committee to solicit public input on these and other areas of savings for the 1995-1996 budget.

At that meeting several residents questioned whether shared services between the districts had been investigated. Dr. Garrahan assured the audience that these areas were being considered, but once again advocated that the communities of Allendale and Upper Saddle River should reconsider regionalization. "The time has come to put education above all of the other parochial interests our Boards may have. Regionalization just makes sense," he asserted.

# CURRICULUM ARTICULATION INCREASES : *TRI DISTRICT SCIENCE ARTICULATION COMMITTEE IS FORMED*

The five principals of the Allendale and Upper Saddle River schools met at Northern Highlands Regional High School to examine better articulating the curricula of our schools. As a result of the meeting, it is clear that all the schools are interested in greater K-12 articulation, increased use of interdisciplinary approaches to student learning, and the creation of opportunities for common staff development activities.

The group agreed that they would meet regularly. It also was decided that the major emphasis for this year would be in science. However, to a lesser extent, reviews in other curriculum areas also will occur this year.

The Tri-District Science Articulation Committee consists of twenty teachers representing the six schools in the three districts. Its first meeting was held at Northern Highlands on February 2, 1995. It was apparent from the discussion which took place that many benefits can be derived from this formal articulation effort.

Feedback on the meeting was positive. A steering committee consisting of Deni Boyer (USR), Judy Dayner (NH), Chuck Mainenti (A), and Patrick Spangler (NH) was formed. To guide its efforts, the committee developed a proposed mission statement which will be finalized at its next meeting.

Dr. Edward Westervelt, Assistant Superintendent, has held two meetings with the substance abuse staff of the three districts. Discussions on the curriculum and staffing revealed that there is not much alignment in that

area. A speaker will be invited to the next meeting to increase awareness of the types of programs which are available at the various school levels.

In English and in Health & Physical Education, articulation this year will help Northern Highlands in curriculum assessment, one of our district goals. Mr. Bruce Emra and Mr. Carl Mortensen are representing these curriculum areas.

The articulation in social studies and foreign languages will be led by Mr. Robert Hellwig. He will be joined at the foreign language meetings by Mr. Emra, who will assume the responsibility for supervising the foreign language department next year.

Ms. Marianne Maynard, who is currently the supervisor of mathematics and who will become the supervisor of mathematics, science, and technology next year, serves on the science committee and also will direct our efforts in mathematics.

In art, Mrs. Karen Rossen has been working closely with the art educators at Cavallini and Brookside. The teachers and their students are visiting Highlands, and have been invited to exhibit their work at our art festival to be held later this year. Works of Northern Highlands students are now on display at Brookside.

Given the current high interest in articulation, and the progress made so far, we remain optimistic about the benefits which will accrue to the districts because of the efforts being made.

# CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION ARE INTEGRATED THROUGH THE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Where can a student learn about Afro-Caribbean dance, the art of critiquing, fairy tale dramatization, and the music of the roaring twenties? Northern Highlands students enrich their knowledge of many subjects through classes and workshops held in the Cultural Arts Center. Many teachers have integrated the Fine Arts into their curriculum by providing opportunities for their students to *experience* their subject through performance based activities.

English classes have explored novels and plays through a variety of drama in education workshops under the direction of Mrs. Murray. After completing an acting warm-up, students dramatize scenes or situations that directly relate to the work that they are studying. By participating in a scene or situation, students gain a greater understanding of the characters, plot, setting, and theme of the book. They have the chance to express themselves and to demonstrate their creativity by improvising original scenes relating to the text being studied.

Mrs. Kelly's Child Development classes have also participated in drama in education workshops. Seniors have dramatized fairy tales with their preschool students. After completing dramatic warmups, they created scenes from "The Three Little Pigs" and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". These cooperative activities enhanced the senior evaluations of the preschool children while building teamwork and confidence in the youngsters.

The Cultural Arts Center has been the setting for a variety of workshops and presentations. Mrs.

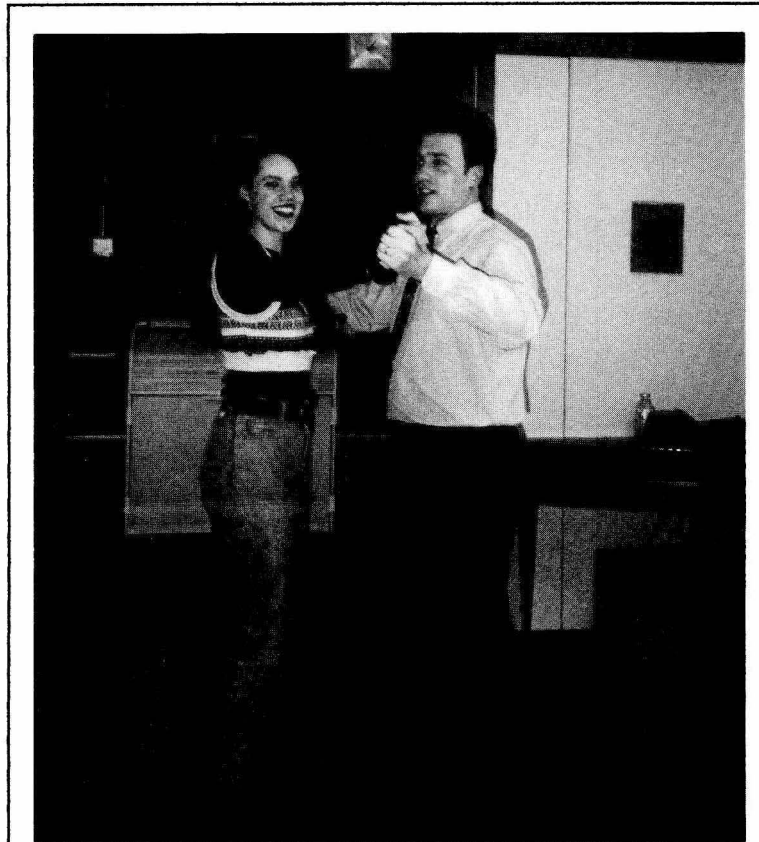
Bigelow's and Mrs. Meyers' Humanities classes came to the center to hear and perform original music projects. U.S. History II classes were treated to a unit on the music of the roaring twenties as a result of the collaborative efforts of Mr. Keenan and Mr. Horne. Mrs. LaFiura's Art class used the dance mirror as a tool to

enhance their observation and perception skills through a drawing assignment. Most recently, technology has been integrated into the music curriculum. Music students use the sound modules to practice their instruments and to experiment with the Korg synthesizers and the MacIntosh computers. Individualized compositional and ear training drills are made possible through the use of this equipment.

Northern Highlands students benefit from many artistic workshops provided by **Project Impact**. Physical

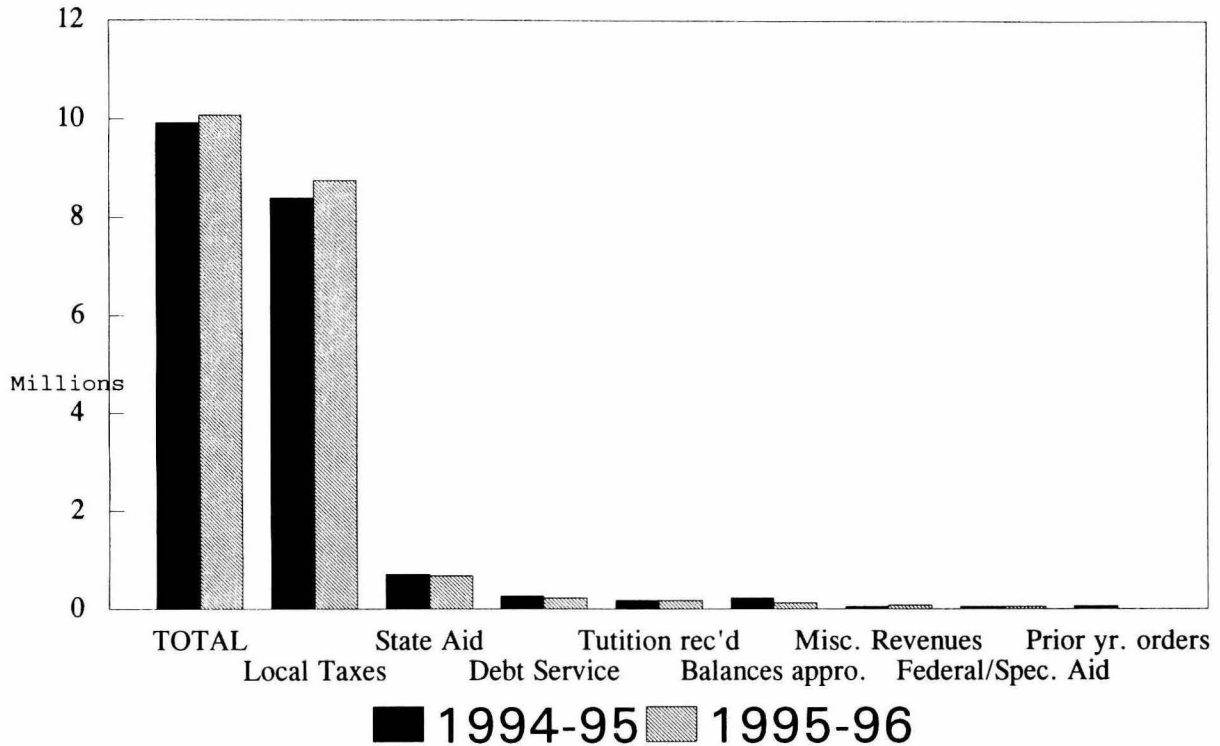
Education classes have participated in African and Afro-Caribbean dance seminars held in the Cultural Arts Center. The wood floor and dance mirror provide the perfect setting for such an activity. Humanities classes received a three day critiquing workshop. Their final project was to write a critique of an artistic event.

Many teachers at Northern Highlands work cooperatively to integrate their subject areas. Students learn the relationships between the subjects in addition to the concept being covered. The Cultural Arts Center provides a fine workshop space for students to express themselves creatively and to gain a greater appreciation of the arts in their world.

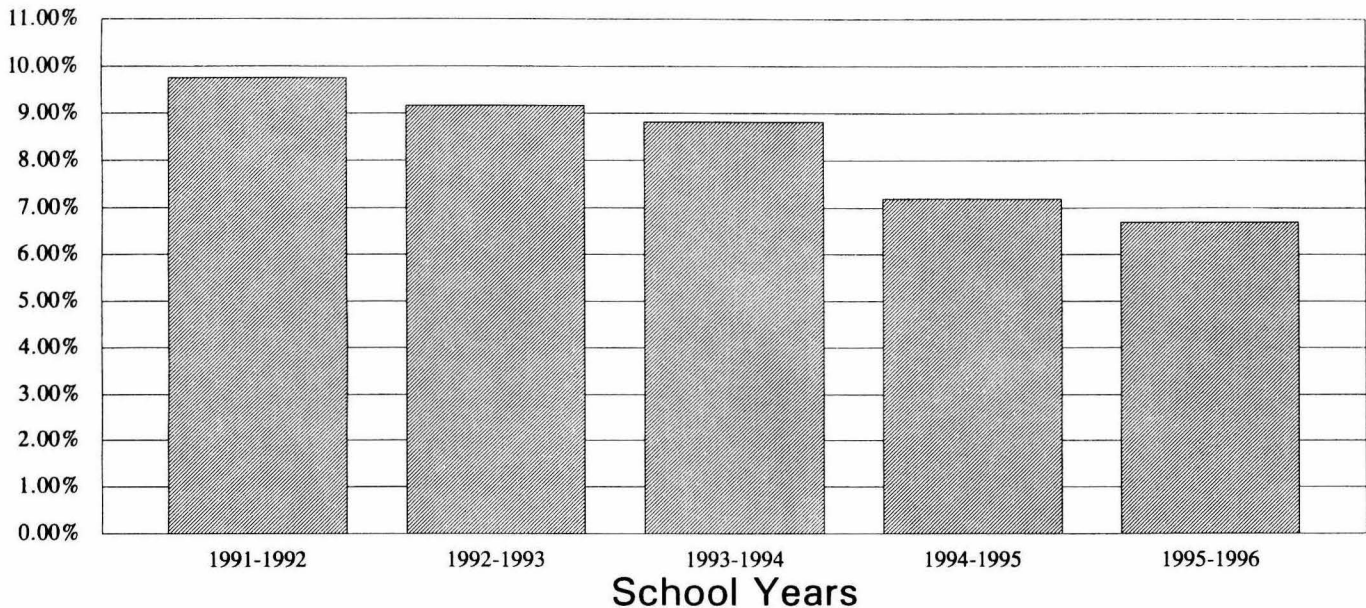


*History teacher John Keenan and Deanna Dutkus practice the fox trot in the Cultural Arts Center.*

## WHERE THE \$ COMES FROM... 1994-95 vs. 1995-96



## STATE AID as a % of the BUDGET 1991-92 to 1995-96

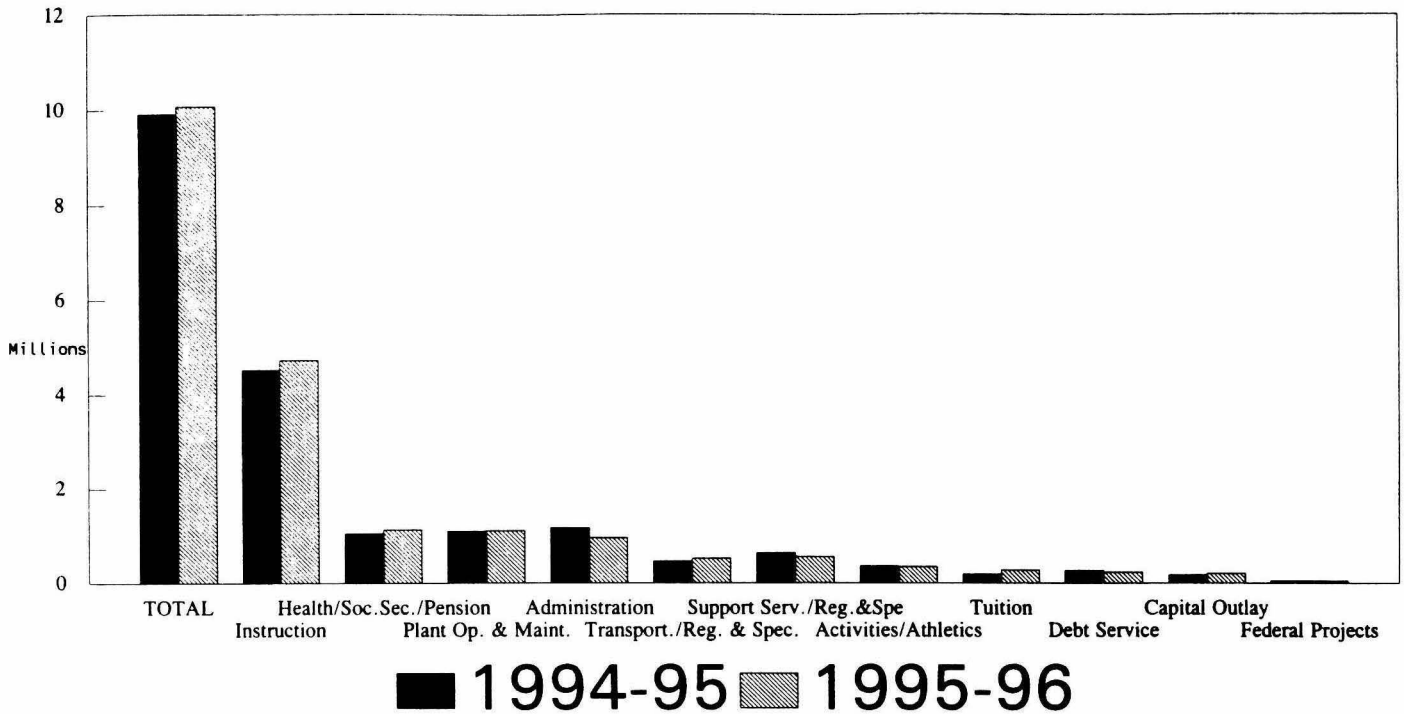


### STATE AID

The state provides Northern Highlands with five basic types of state aid: Special Education Aid, Transportation Aid, Transition Aid, At-Risk and Bilingual Aid. At-Risk and Bilingual Aid account for less than \$12,000 in revenue and have been held constant by the state for the past four years. Special Education, Transportation, and Transition Aid account for the balance of state aid. For the 1995/96 school year, state aid will account for approximately 6.7% of the total revenues for the district. For the 1994/95 school year, state aid accounted for approximately 7.2% of the total budget and in 1993/94 approximately 8.8% of the total budget.

# WHERE THE \$ GOES TO...

## 1994-95 vs. 1995-96



The 1995/96 school year budget represents an increase of **less than 2%** over the previous year's budget. The total budget for 1995/96 is \$10,068,023. Last year's budget was \$9,918,037. Nearly 47% is earmarked for instruction (state average 41%).

Of significance in the 95/96 budget is the fact that administration/supervision costs will be decreased through reorganization. Plant operation and maintenance will remain about the same. Instructional funding has increased, thereby maintaining all current programs. Approximately \$80,000 is allocated for technology.

The Board of Education's philosophy has been to:

- protect instructional programs
- lower administrative costs
- provide for technology enhancement
- increase revenues other than taxes
- explore shared services

**ANNUAL SCHOOL ELECTION AND BUDGET VOTE:  
TUESDAY, APRIL 18th**

# NEW LEVEL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ACHIEVED

Northern Highlands High School's parents have always been active. The Home and School Association has served as the "umbrella" group for many of the parent activities in support of school programs. Home and School Association publishes a newsletter keeping parents in-

Dr. Musco and Mr. Cohen, provides opportunities for coordination of parent activities and better communication among leaders of the various parent groups. The Parent Coordinating Council, initially eight parents, has grown to approximately a dozen members. Future

critical to the continuous improvement efforts of Northern Highlands because it will facilitate the direct interfacing of parents and staff. This is important because parents are the school's primary customers. Moreover, quality is directly linked with customer satisfaction.

*"In the race for quality there is no finish line."*

**-David Kearns, Xerox Corporation**

formed and raises a great deal of money through activities such as the Annual Craft Fair each fall. The Sports Association helps support the athletic program and undertook a formidable project this year: to install lights on the football field. The Fine Arts Association has served as an advocacy group for the art and music programs, this year donating funds from its "Sunday at Three" Concert Series to air-condition the Cultural Arts Center. The Parents Network has promoted recreational activities for students as part of its effort to curb substance use, and recently organized a successful Battle of the Bands concert.

What's particularly new this year is that the parents in each of these groups are meeting together on a regular basis with the school administration. The newly formed Parent Coordinating Council, chaired by Dr. Westervelt in conjunction with

projects involve the development of a family/student telephone directory and a school/community calendar.

Of perhaps even greater significance, parent involvement during the spring of this year will place parents in the role of key decision-makers as the newly formed Highlands Leadership Team takes shape. The HLT will involve two parent representatives who will work directly with staff to engage in planning for school improvement. Parent representatives will be chosen by the Home and School Association itself. They will have many responsibilities, some of which will include regular communication with the Home and School Association and monthly planning and assessment sessions with teachers, students, and the administration.

While limited initially to two representatives, the involvement of parents on the HLT is

Xerox Corporation, widely viewed as a leader in quality management in the U.S., has established the phrase "line of sight to the customer" as an important tenet in its improvement efforts. At Northern Highlands the involvement of parents working directly with teachers on the HLT will allow the organization to see and hear precisely what parents want in terms of programs and services.

Once the HLT planning process begins, it needs to become established as an integral part of the school's culture. Continuous improvement implies that there will be an ongoing effort to assess all aspects of the school's operation. Everyone (staff, parents, and students), therefore, should become used to asking, "How can we improve this program, this event, this meeting?" As David Kearns, the former president of Xerox, once said, "In the race for quality there is no finish line."

## HIGHLANDERS EARN HIGH MARKS: ACADEMIC INDICATORS ON THE RISE

All academic indicators at Highlands so far this year have been on the rise and in the "plus column". It began in September with the national release of the SAT scores for the Class of 1994. (See graphs) These results are the highest in ten years and are really quite amazing when the high participation rate is taken into consideration - 98% of the members of the Class of 1994 took the SATs. In addition, twenty-one members of the Class of 1994 were named AP scholars by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievements on the college level Advanced Placement Exams that they took while in high school.

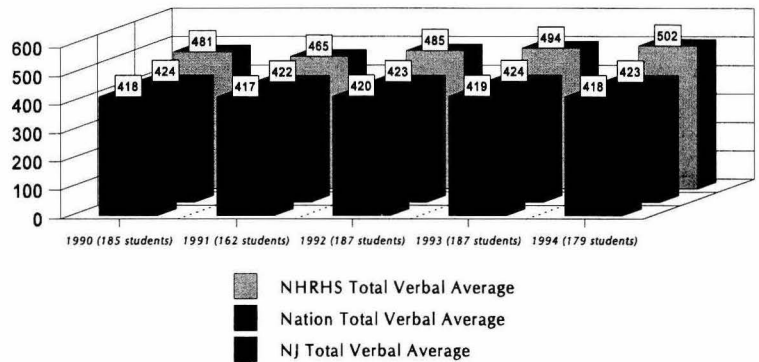
The successes of the class of 1995 are just beginning to be assessed. From the indicators that we have it looks as though they will meet and perhaps surpass the achievements of last years class. In September, five members were named semi-finalists and twenty-two were designated Commended Students in the 40th Annual National Merit Scholarship Competition. (See graph)

Twenty members of the Class of 1995 have already been accepted at colleges/universities for September under an Early Decision or Early Action Plan. This is quite an accomplishment since many institutions often have higher standards for "early" acceptances than they do for "regular". Four students were accepted to Princeton University, two students each at Bucknell and Lehigh, and one student at each of the following: American, Amherst, Babson, Brown, Hamilton, Hartwick, M.I.T., N.Y.U., St. Lawrence, Tulane, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale.

Continuing the Highland's tradition, the Class of 1996 has also achieved positive indicators this school year. The 159 juniors who took the PSAT/NMSQ in October 1994 received an average verbal score of 55 and an average math score of 53.9 on the new recentered PSAT scale. The average national verbal score for all college bound juniors was 48.9 and the average math score was 48.5. Also in October, juniors took the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT 11). Students must pass all three sections of this test (Reading, Math, and Writing) as a New Jersey Graduation Requirement. Again this year, our reported regular students performed very well - 98.2% of the juniors passed all three sections, 100% passed the Reading, 98.2% passed the Math, and 99.4% achieved a passing score in Writing.

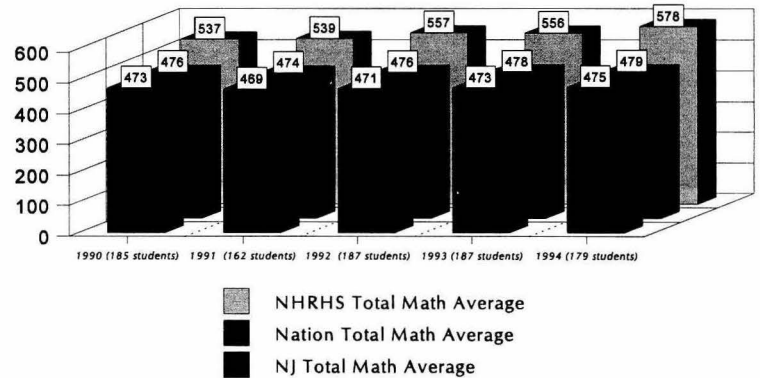
### Northern Highlands Verbal S.A.T. Performance

5-Year Longitudinal Study



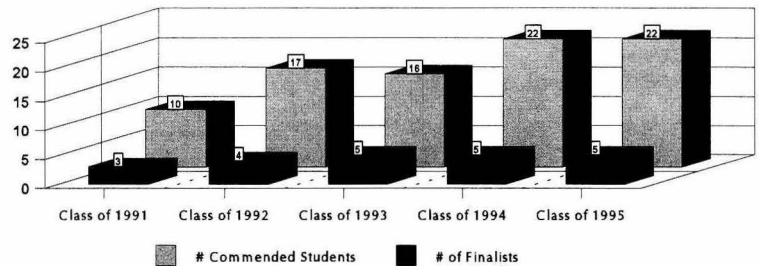
### Northern Highlands Math S.A.T. Performance

5-Year Longitudinal Study



### National Merit Scholarship Program

Northern Highlands' Finalists and Commended Students



## HIGHLANDS LEADERSHIP TEAM TAKES SHAPE

Acting in concert with new administrators Drs. Edward Westervelt and Ralph Musco, the District Leadership Council has created a written plan for shared decision-making. The plan establishes a Highlands Leadership Team (HLT) whose purpose is to monitor and implement the Northern Highlands vision and mission statement.

The HLT will capitalize on our outstanding local resources - a highly talented professional staff, an involved community, and a motivated student body - to make informed decisions. This inclusive process will utilize systematic communication by involving those groups which are affected by HLT decisions. Findings, in the form of recommendations, will be passed on to the superintendent who will share them with the Board of Education.

Representation on the HLT will include: faculty, administration, supervisors, parents, students, and general staff. Each member will be selected by his/her constituent group, and will represent it, while at the same time serving the greater interests of Northern Highlands. The HLT purview will include curriculum and instruction, and those areas which affect instructional program and pupil achievement.

The District Leadership Council has acted as a steering committee in establishing shared decision-making at Northern Highlands. When the larger Highlands Leadership Team becomes functional, the DLC will cease to exist. It is expected that the HLT will become operational by the end of the current school year. Prior to implementation, the shared decision-making plan will be presented to all Northern Highlands constituencies for their reaction/endorsement and for approval by the Board of Education.

**Northern Highlands Regional High School**  
Hillside Avenue  
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**Nicholas S. Rotonda, President**  
**Lynnette F. Krueger, Vice President**  
**William Beisswanger**

**Barclay Blayman**  
**Leslie E. Edelman**  
**Mary L. Laurent**

**Tina Malizia**  
**Nora A. Oliver**  
**Neal W. Strohmeier**

**David P. Garrahan, Superintendent**

## THE BENEFITS OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT

Northern Highlands is much more than a place to get a good education from 7:30a.m. to 2:30 p.m. during the school year. A comprehensive extra-curricular activity program integrated with a solid athletic program lengthens the school day at one time or another for 86% of the student body.

Highlanders can sign up for twenty-five clubs or activities. Options for students include working at the school store, performing with the jazz ensemble or madrigal singers, competing on the high school bowl team or writing for the literary magazine. Students may also get involved with one of four class councils or the student council. Sports also provide another route and Highlanders have eleven athletic programs for girls and eleven for boys.

Enrollment figures are kept by each advisor and a master list is developed in the main office.

The following percentages show the involvement of the various classes in at least one sport or activity through March of 1995:

Class of '95 = 88%  
Class of '96 = 89%  
Class of '97 = 81%  
Class of '98 = 87%  
Average = 86%

Northern Highlands has always and will continue to provide the kind of extra-curricular program which will promote the development of the total child.

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