

## 2-3 teachers may be gone: Hearing on Tuesday

By The Echo Staff

At least two or three teachers are likely to lose their jobs at Mount Greylock over the summer if spending at the school is held to an increase of only 4.1 percent in assessments to Williamstown and Lanesborough. That's the key impact of budget figures, which will be the subject of a public hearing on Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the school library.

The budget figures were unveiled by the school board at a first public hearing on March 13 in Lanesborough.

The fiscal year starts each July 1. The budget proposes spending just \$47,000 more in fiscal 2008 over 2007 – a total of \$9.4 million. But the total taxes assessed on Lanesborough and Williamstown would rise by 4.12% to \$6.4 million – a \$254,392 increase. That's because the amount of money the school got in 2007 from three key sources will drop by almost \$290,000:

- Tuition received from out-of-district students is projected to drop by \$46,775 over the current year.
- Charter-school reimbursements will drop by \$43,335.
- The school will stop taking money from its "rainy-day" fund – called the Excess & Deficiency account. It used \$206,800 from this fund – like a savings account – to balance the budget in 2007.

Under state law, laid off teachers must learn about their status by June 15. However, Supt. William Travis says he hopes to identify and notify the affected teachers before that. Layoffs will be based upon seniority in an affected subject area, not overall longevity at the school.

While things are still tentative, here is what school officials say is the situation right now, speaking in terms of "fulltime-equivalent" staff. A loss of one FTE, might mean the loss or transfer of two part-time teachers, for example. So it may be inaccurate to equate "FTE" changes with specific people. The approximate losses:

- Half an FTE in "world languages".
- Half an FTE in math
- One FTE in science
- One and one half FTE in English
- One FTE in social studies

Fractional increases in FTE staffing in other areas should hold the layoffs to the two- or three-person figure in what is still a fluid situation, said Travis. The fractional increases would come in visual arts, music, and business/computer, among other places.

Travis said the \$254,392 tax increase to fund the local share of Mount Greylock spending was a figure worked out in negotiation with the finance committees of Lanesborough and Williamstown. If the current figures hold, Lanesborough will contribute \$2,137,753 – a 5.47% increase of fiscal 2007, and Williamstown will contribute \$4,285,355 – a 3.46% increase over the current year. The reason Lanesborough's figure would be up by more than Williamstown is because Lanesborough's share of the school's shrinking student body is rising.

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*From Peru, to Costa Rica to South Carolina, MGRHS students fanned out for fun and charity during February break. Pages 2 and 4.*

### OPINION

*A appeal for French -- and for the environment. Page 3*

**Wanted: Writers, photographers, editors: Join The Echo team . . . recruitment meeting Wed, March 21, 2:30 p.m. in the library.**



## Appreciation

*Teachers treated to a meal — courtesy of community*

Paraprofessional Kris Trites, standing left, organized the second annual "appreciation day" for MGRHS faculty and staff, who gathered on Wednesday for a buffet lunch in the library. Entrees and deserts donated by parents and the community were served by Parent Teacher Organization volunteers Diane Glick and John MacDonald. Trites thanked donors of nearly 40 food items.

## Eight MG students to join 120 peers on April 11 to hash out pros/cons of life

By Gina Iannitelli and Sean Peltier

Some 120 grade 9-12 students from Berkshire County -- including up to eight from Mount Greylock RHS -- will get a day off from school on Wednesday, May 11, to spend with their peers at Shakespeare & Co. in Lenox in discussions about what is right and what's wrong with living as a teen in Berkshire County -- and how to change it. As a senior project, Greylock student Jen Kodela has been part of the planning group for the "Berkshire County Youth Development Conference."

The intent: Giving teens confidence in their decisions and everyday lives. Kodela belongs to the committee along

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with Rudi Bach, Ashleigh Carr, Kate Merrigan, and Dahlia Bousaid. The Echo interviewed Jen to get some information on why the conference interested her.

**ECHO: "What is the main topic of this conference? Drugs and alcohol?"**

Jen: "The grant, which is \$7,500, came from a drug/alcohol organization, but the actual conference is not targeted on drugs and alcohol. It is both involving and informing youth throughout Berkshire County on topics such as healthy relationships."

**ECHO: What made you get interested in this project?**

"Well I worked for the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition as the unity intern and when the money came to me we had \$7500 to use in some way. We suggested doing a conference to allow for connecting of the county so I got involved like that and turned it into my senior project also."

**ECHO: Do you feel like it's worthwhile?**

Yes, very much so. Its actually coming together really nicely. There are a lot of Williams College people doing workshops, and representatives of the UN have gotten involved with running workshops, and all different people are helping out.

The Lenox campus of Shakespeare & Co. is the location and featured keynote speaker is freshman state Sen. Ben Downing, D-Pittsfield.

The goal, according to Kate Merrigan, United Neighboring Interdependent Trusted Youth (UNITY) program coordinator in North Adams, is to; "Create a unique opportunity for students form across the county to come together or share their hopes, frustrations, passions and concerns as teen-agers, specifically in Berkshire County. It's about what is great and what isn't about growing up here and thinking about changing those things that they want to change."



Senior Jen Kodela