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READER OPINION: Monadnock truly is on the rise, by school principal Brian Pickering

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I would first like to congratulate Hinsdale and other area schools in the Monadnock Region on their success with the NECAP test.

On the first day of school, we held a rally in the gymnasium and announced a new beginning for Monadnock Regional High School.

We shared with our staff and students a slogan, "MRHS on the Rise," because the staff believed in themselves; they believed in each other; and most importantly, they believed in the students.

As principal, I shared the importance of being proud of where our students go to school. We told them when someone asks you where you attend school, look into the person's eyes and proudly respond, "I go to Monadnock!"

On that first day of school, we told students that this new attitude was going to be either a reality or a dream.

And for many people outside of these walls, it would only ever be a dream.

On that first day of school, the auditorium was under renovation. The gym was not complete. Our teaching staff had no contract.

And our NECAP scores in reading, writing and math were among the lowest in the region.

This fall, with Monadnock on the Rise firmly in our hearts and minds, our teachers prepared students for the NECAP tests and came up with a plan for success.

We knew that last year we finished substantially below the state average, and ranked last out of six local schools. But despite that, our staff knew better.

We knew Monadnock students could do better.

The results of the test are now out. Recently, our local paper printed some results that did not give a clear picture of the success of our high school.

In fact, not only was it not clear, it did not present the facts of Monadnock High School's remarkable turnaround.

There are many numbers to analyze, but ultimately let me just share this: If you combine the three exams, reading, writing and math, and compare the mean score with the state; our students are ahead. A year ago we were not even close.

Although we were not first in our region, our scores surpassed many, clearly indicating that the student

learning taking place in this building is as good as anywhere, with a goal of continued forward movement.

We applaud our teachers who prepared our students and continue to work to find methods of getting better.

We thank members of our support staff, who work behind the scenes toward the same vision of success.

And finally, we congratulate our junior class, for meeting the challenge and proving we can succeed academically.

This test is not the only example of our student body moving us closer to our vision.

All of our students have responded remarkably well to the many changes, and when our teachers continue to raise the bar, Monadnock students are rising to the challenge.

We understand that a six-month period with improved facilities, a teachers contract and raised test scores do not complete our dream, but they are clear examples of proving we are no longer living a pipe dream.

Our students have made "MRHS on the Rise" a reality!

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