



BOARDROOM

Highlights of the Monthly Meeting of the Board of Education

Volume 3, No. 8

February, 2010

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Fuchs reported:

District

I want to take this time to provide our stakeholders with important information regarding recent action taken by the Governor and the status of the 2010-11 budget.

On February 11, 2010, Governor Christie issued Executive Order No. 14, which declared a fiscal emergency in the State of New Jersey. In a memo to school districts Acting Commissioner of Education Bret Schundler wrote, "State revenues have fallen far short of the level projected when this year's budget was adopted. Given the short time left in this fiscal year, and the fact that school aid comprises such a significant portion of the State budget, it has become necessary for the State to reserve some of the remaining school aid payments that school districts have been slated to receive." Specifically, the Executive Order directs the Acting Commissioner to reduce district state aid payments based on the amount of surplus and reserve account monies available to each district. For the Jefferson Township District that equates to \$75,000 which the district is being directed to take from emergency and maintenance reserve accounts from the current budget.

It is important for our stakeholders to understand the ramifications of requiring the district to spend down reserve funds. The district is now forced to find new money to refurbish those reserves—which are utilized in the event of an emergency repair. This new money, as a result, cannot be used for instruction this year or to offset property taxes in 2010-2011.

*** Board Highlights ***

- Motion to approve the **purchase order** list dated January 2010 in the amount of **\$284,590.45.**
- Motion to approve the **check journal** as of January 2010 in the amount of **\$4,665,277.05.**
- Motion to approve the funds **transfers** in the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year, dated January 2010 in the amount of **\$ 0.00 .**
- Motion to approve **Change Order #6** to Lanyi & Tevald, Inc. for the Middle School Family and Consumer Life Sciences Classroom renovation in the amount of - \$362.40, thus the new total contract amount is \$414,127.96. Scope of Change Order #6 at M/S to **provide a credit** for the over the sink white boards.
- Motion to authorize Verizon to upgrade the district's existing Wide Area Network from ATM to Ethernet over Virtual Private Line (EVPL), effective July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012 at a cost of \$7,444.31/month.
- Motion to transition from the Morris County Internet Consortium to Cablevision Optimum Lightpath to provide internet access, effective July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2012, at a cost of \$2,749/month.

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

At the same time the administration and board are currently working to prepare a draft 2010-11 budget. Again, given the economic climate and the fiscal crisis facing the State, there are several challenges with which we are grappling:

* State aid figures will not be announced until March 18. As a result, the budget is being constructed without knowing whether state aid will remain the same as last year or if there will be a reduction. Rumors are rampant that there will be a reduction.

* Currently school districts in New Jersey frame their budgets within a 4% cap. Once again, given the fiscal crisis in the State, it is not clear whether this cap will remain in place or be reduced.

* The district's costs for health and dental benefits have increased. Despite having recently changed health care providers in an effort to try to address rising costs, the district has been informed by our carrier that due to our claims experience rating there will be an increase of cost in the 22% range or higher. This represents approximately a \$1.7 million dollar increase for next year.

* The district also has yet to reach an agreement with the Jefferson Township Education Association. Obviously salaries and benefits comprise a large amount of our budget.

As the proposed 2010-11 budget becomes more finalized the board and administration will be presenting information to stakeholders. There are two important dates that have already been established. First, a Budget Community Forum will be held on Thursday, April 15, at 7PM in the high school. Also, this year the school budget vote will be held on Tuesday, April 20. Please mark your calendars.

**** Board Highlights (cont'd.) ****

Motion to approve appointment of **Advocate** to design specifications for the food service program at a cost of \$6,976 (*Fund source Food Services Enterprise Fund 60*)

Motion to approve the job description for the following position:

Volunteer Coaching (Paraprofessional) Aide

Motion to approve the following overnight field trips:

| School/Group | Dates | Location |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| DECA State Competition | February 21-23, 2010 | Cherry Hill, NJ |
| FIRST Robotics Competition | March 5-8, 2010 | Trenton, NJ |

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

In addition it is my pleasure to report on the following events and activities that have taken place in our schools.

Briggs and Cozy Lake students participated in Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen's Valentines for Veterans program. Children created hand-made valentines with positive messages that will be mailed to Lyons VA Hospital and East Orange VA Medical Center (JT2015 goal 2.3.3).

In line with JT2015 Goals 2.6.1 and 5.6.4, students at the Arthur Stanlick School viewed a multi-media production titled, "**Balance of Power**". The third, fourth, and fifth graders viewed true stories of students who chose to recognize the value in their unfair circumstances and use those circumstances to improve their lives. Stanlick students were challenged to focus on their potentials and not their limitations. They learned about taking responsibility for choices and recognizing the value of obstacles that may be encountered as a way to develop character.

To help motivate and encourage White Rock students to practice and memorize their multiplication facts, the fourth grade teachers recently introduced an ice cream incentive. The children had the opportunity to make an ice cream sundae with various toppings based on how well they know their multiplication facts (0-12). The fun and exciting activity was well received by everyone who participated (JT 2015 5.2.10).

A program entitled "Girl Power" has begun and will continue until March, 2010 in the middle school. Female high school students mentor grade six and seven female students on any gender-related adolescent issue. This program is sponsored by Pass-It-Along (JT 2015 2.3.1).

The high school Guidance Department sponsored a "Return of the Graduates" assembly for the current Senior Class. Twenty alumni from the Class of 2009 returned to JTHS to share their perspectives on the

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

transition from high school to college and to provide recommendations to our seniors as they begin this process. The assembly was facilitated by the National Honor Society officers, who asked prepared questions to the alumni.

In addition, the following Good News and Progress in Our Schools are noted:

Drummond:

* On Jan.14 Officer Ivan Rodriguez visited Drummond School to collect samples of DNA from kindergarten students whose parents had given their consent. Parents will store these samples at home for use as an identification tool, if ever needed. Many kindergarten parents take advantage of this free community service program between the district and the police department.

* The ESL students learned the short "o" sound. They were also instructed to make a clock word wheel to put up on the "Word Families" bulletin board. Another lesson was to make snowflakes to demonstrate that we are all different but we come together to make a beautiful group!

* The Guidance lesson for the month of January was "Anti-Bullying". The guidance counselor discussed bullying with the students and they played a yes or no bullying game (JT2015 goals 1.7.1, 2.1.3, 2.3.5, 4.3.1).

Milton:

* On January 12 the Milton Tri-School PTA provided a show by Sadecky Puppets. Sadecky Puppets presented to the students "Castlemania". The show was about a little girl that loves castles. Short versions of stories that included castles were presented, like Rapunzel, Cinderella, and Snow White.

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

Milton (cont'd.):

* Rodeo Roundup Day was held on January 14. Students learned the letter "R" this month and this activity was planned to assist them in learning this letter. Each student made his/her own horse. In the all purpose room, students participated in an "R" relay race and sang cowboy songs around the campfire.

* Preschool students enjoyed "Snowman Day" on January 21. Parents were invited in to assist and various stations were set up in the all-purpose room. Students made snowmen, fished for snowflakes, went sledding, had a snowball fight and knocked over pyramid snow blocks. These activities assist preschool students with socialization and their gross motor skills

* Through the use of Smart Boards, teacher web pages and digital storytelling, students in grades K-2 are achieving the goal of making sure they are effective users of ideas and information. Recently digital storytelling was completed in grades K-2 (JT 2015 goal 5.2.9).

* The school counselor presented a Character Counts program to students. Mrs. Markowick read and presented the book "I Think I Am" which is connected to the character education pillar of "Fairness." Students made "Happiness Hats" which related positive affirmations and demonstrated fairness through academic achievement (JT 2015 – goal 2.1.1).

* Students have been recognized by their teachers for random acts of kindness and achievement. When a student is recognized, they are sent to see the principal and awarded a "Principal's Award Certificate". The program is promoting positive peer interaction and a higher sense of self-esteem (JT 2015 goal 2.3.5).

Briggs:

* Students discussed anti-bullying this month with the guidance counselor. The entire school

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

Briggs (cont'd.):

participated in "No Name Calling Week" January 25-29. Students wore buttons promoting the week and pledged to treat others with kindness and respect (JT2015 goals 1.7.1, 2.1.3, 2.3.5, 4.3.1, 5.6.4).

* After a unit of study on penguins, first grade classes held Penguin Day on January 27. Parent volunteers assisted with six penguin-themed stations (obstacle course, songs, paper bag penguins, poetry, bingo, and a craft project).

* Briggs students participated in a Soup Kitchen. The children read Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen and learned how a soup kitchen helps people in their community who are less fortunate. Each class came into the soup kitchen (library) and enjoyed a bowl of soup. They sat with students from other classes and made new friends. The students also brought in non-perishable foods which will be donated to a Jefferson Township Food Pantry. Helping others is teaching our students to be good citizens (JT2015 goals 1.7.1, 2.3.3).

* Second grade classes focused on reading to learn by expanding their use of questioning. They learned to think about their reading by stopping from time to time, listening to their inner voice and writing down questions about the content. Then they practiced searching for answers in other texts and learned to draw on the background knowledge of others through group discussions. Finally, the students categorized their questions and answers and discovered that there are sometimes lingering questions that are not answered.

* Second grade classes participated in hands-on science activities using the FOSS kits and other manipulatives. They explored forces, balance, and motion by creating a pulley

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

Briggs (cont'd.):

system with a rolling pin, pail and rope (JT2015 goal 5.2.11).

* Briggs teachers are participating in a book talk during their grade level meetings. Teachers are reading chapters from the book Strategies That Work by Harvey & Goudvis. During their meetings, teachers share activities that they can do to improve reading comprehension and try different activities suggested by the authors. The book talk is being facilitated by the Briggs' reading specialist.

Cozy Lake:

* Grade 2 students participated in Factory Day on January 29. Students set up a factory assembly line where they worked to produce, purchase, and consume different products (ice cream sundaes and dirt cups). Students also watched *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* to show the factory process. This is a culmination of the Social Studies unit "How Goods are Moved".

* On January 29 grade 1 students participated in Penguin Day as a culmination of their unit on polar regions and polar animals. Students learned through hands-on activities such as measuring the height of different penguins, sliding like a penguin, weights of penguins, and waddling like a penguin.

* Jenkinson's Aquarium visited Cozy Lake School students with a penguin named Kapuki to talk about a penguin's environment. Students also took a collection and have adopted Kapuki and LP as their school mascot.

Stanlick:

* Grade 5 teachers have been busy administering a mid-year benchmark reading assessments for each student. This one-on-one evaluation provides information about a student's instructional and independent reading levels. Many of the fifth grade teachers have been conducting cross-curricular study in social studies and language arts by having

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

Stanlick (cont'd.):

students research the explorers of the Americas while writing formal research papers on the topic (JT2015 goal 5.2.9). Note taking on index cards, correct outlining methods, citations, and reference pages are examples of what's being taught, practiced, and put to use during this research paper process. In addition, the fifth graders have been reading non-fiction stories about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s achievements in honor of his January birthday as well as reading stories about immigration and Ellis Island. The simulation of the Ellis Island experience took place on Wednesday, January 27, and the students demonstrated overall preparedness for the program (JT2015 goals 4.5.2 and 5.6.2). Also, the teachers in fifth grade cheered for their students at the Junior Women's Club of Jefferson Township Spelling Bee Competition held at Stanlick School (JT2015 goal 5.2.5). The evening was great, although there was some nails biting as the competition progressed!

White Rock:

* Our school-wide emphasis on improved student writing continues with portfolios and journals. For example, each class in the 3rd grade has a Build-A-Bear stuffed animal and journal. The children take turns bringing the mascot home over the weekend and writing what they did with it (JT 2015 goal 5.7.1).

* Travis Cassidy is White Rock School Artist of the Month for January. His art work entitled "Goofey Griffen" is now being displayed in the Jefferson Township Public Library (JT 2015 goal 5.1.1).

* Mrs. Jan Courtney was named Jefferson Township Teacher of the Year for 2009. She has taught music at both the White Rock School and Cozy Lake School for the past

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

White Rock (cont'd.):

eight years. Mrs. Courtney is devoted to the teaching profession and committed to providing learning experiences of high quality. At the recent holiday concert when asked why she chose her profession, Mrs. Courtney said: "What better way is there to share my appreciation and gift of music than to teach others? I am doing something that I love to do."

* The Jefferson Township Police Department recently conducted an assembly for the children in 5th grade on the effects of drinking and driving. Using an impairment simulation with goggles, the students were able to experience first hand how it feels when reaction time is slowed and they are unable to make a turn or stop, even when they have ample time and space. This program was extremely helpful with teaching the dangerous consequences of underage drinking (JT 2015 goal 5.6.2).

Middle School:

* On January 15, Ms. Brooks, grade 8 counselor, and JTHS counselors conducted an assembly at 9:35 A.M. in the H.S. auditorium, for incoming eighth grade students. The assembly covered all aspects of student scheduling for high school including PSAT prep. (JT 2015 goals 2.8.1, 5.9.1).

* On January 19, Dr. Bob Nahory, a Rutgers University Professor, shared his expertise in the area of physics. He discussed lasers, where he has done pioneer work, and various aspects of light's properties. It was an interactive video conference and students had several questions for him (JT 2015 goal 3.2.1).

* On January 23 Natural Helpers Training took place. Twenty sixth grade students learned how to be helpers within the school. Some skills learned were: communications, problem solving, and socialization (JT 2015 goal 2.3.2).

* On January 28, the sixth grade language arts classes had their Poetry Café. It was a unique

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

Middle School (cont'd.):

opportunity for students to share original poetry as well as poetry studies in class (JT 2015 goal 2.6.1).

* On January 29, the Speech Arts classes presented a performance project called "Look Who's Talking". The concept of the performance was that each student was asked to assume the persona of a famous character from history, culture, film, literature, etc. Students were then asked questions based on their research of the character. This program was held in the Media Center. Light refreshments were served after the performances (JT 2015 goal 2.6.2).

* The Red Cross Club collected donations for the Haiti earthquake victims (JT 2015 goal 4.4.1).

High School:

* On January 7, district supervisors met with the high school guidance department and child study team as well as the 8th grade counselor and CST member to discuss scheduling for the 2010-11 school year. Each supervisor outlined additions and changes to their course offerings and reminded counselors of prerequisites and recommended course sequences for students at various grades levels. The meeting clarified aspects of the scheduling process and served as a prime opportunity for supervisors to provide information that would promote more accurate student course placement.

* Mr. Mundi held a Principal's Forum program on January 12. Topics of discussion included new courses approved for next year, the scheduling process, the proposed JTHS Mission Statement, and an overview of the proposed master schedule. The next

Superintendent's Report (cont'd.)

High School (cont'd.):

Principal's Forum will be held on Tuesday,
March 20.

* Craig Schwarz has been named a Commended Student in the 2010 National Merit Scholarship Program.

* Eighteen JTHS DECA students qualified for the State DECA competition based on the results of the regional competition held at County College of Morris on December 11.