

Board of Education Summary February 14, 2011

Board of Education President Susan Carlsson announced that the Bernards Township School District will receive its state aid amounts for 2011-12 on February 24. She cancelled the February 28 meeting to give the administration adequate time to prepare the 2011-12 school budget. Three BOE meetings to discuss the school budget are planned for March 7, March 14, and March 28. These meetings will be held at 7 pm in the Oak Street School auditorium.

Kathleen Kirk, Ridge student body president, reported that 360 pairs of jeans were collected for the Teens for Jeans fundraiser, and the candidates for Mr. Ridge have been finalized. The Junior Prom will be held on April 29, and the Senior Prom is scheduled for May 20.

Special Education

Several special education administrators and teachers gave a detailed presentation on special education in the Bernards Township School District. Supervisor Lisa Vitale Stanzione described AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), a component of NCLB (No Child Left Behind). By 2014, 100% of every student subgroup, including special education students, must score in the proficient or advanced proficient range on the NJASK or APA (Alternative Proficiency Assessment). Strategies that the district is using to get to AYP include requiring all Resource Room instruction to be research-based and all teachers to be highly qualified. Technology used in the special education curriculum includes SMART Boards, the Lexia reading program, and Raz Kids, an online guided reading comprehension program. In addition, the iPod and iPad are being used in the ABA classrooms. Supervisor Allyson Read provided an update on the ABA program for autistic students. The goal is to prepare students to transition to an LLD class or a general education classroom. Ridge teacher Ken Cherry discussed the SLE (Structured Learning Experience) program, which places Ridge special education students in jobs in the community, including supermarkets, restaurants, hardware stores, and the VA Hospital.

After the presentation, Bernards Parents of Exceptional Children co-presidents Lisa McNey and Monique McHenry donated a check for \$25,660 to the Board of Education, to be used to purchase the Lexia reading program for all elementary schools and William Annin. These funds were raised at the BPEC's second annual gala.

Building Repairs and Renovations

Two representatives from The Spiegle Architecture Group gave a report on building repairs and renovations that are needed within the next year. Oak Street School needs the most work, in the areas of roofing and drainage. Cedar Hill needs roof work, and the music classroom needs renovation. Liberty Corner has problems with sidewalks, ramps, and drainage. The science labs and food lab at William Annin need renovations. Ridge needs only minor repairs (emergency lighting, interior doors).

The repairs have been prioritized into four categories. The highest priority projects total \$3,573,550; second highest priority total is \$5,980,432; third highest is \$1,686,200; fourth highest is \$2,674,800 for a grand total of \$13,914,982 in needed improvements. Defeated budgets and decreased state aid are the main reasons why these improvements have been

deferred. An even lower property tax cap in the 2011-12 year and uncertain state aid mean even greater challenges lie ahead.

Funding options are: referendum, ESIP (Energy Savings Improvement Plan), and PPA (Power Purchase Agreement). The ESIP and PPA options focus on energy savings and, unlike the referendum, do not require voter approval.

In the report on Community Relations, Audrey Sherwyn thanked the PTOs for showing the film “Race to Nowhere” on February 9. The Cedar Hill PTO is raising funds to renovate the school library.