

Board of Education Summary March 14, 2011

2011-12 Budget

Superintendent Valerie Goger began the meeting with some clarifications from the March 7 budget discussion. She said that all the district administrators cut their budgets to arrive at the \$883K cost savings, but there were no cuts in the number of assistant principals or curriculum supervisors. For example, the athletics budget was cut, which means fewer assistant coaches, fewer practices, and reductions in scrimmages and busing. The savings from the 8 period day is \$360K in the first year but will increase to over \$500K in subsequent years. The 8 period day will not cause Ridge class sizes to change. At William Annin, the \$225K reduction means that students in the resource room (a separate classroom) for social studies and science will now go to classrooms with in-class support teachers instead.

Business Administrator Nick Markarian gave an updated budget presentation. He reiterated that the goal was to use recurring revenue for programs and operating expenses, and that non-recurring revenue (including \$777,421 in new state aid) would be used for capital projects. Both the March 14 and March 7 budget presentations are posted under “Budget Information” on the bernardsboe.com website.

The county office is currently reviewing the budget. The “Advertised Budget” will appear in the *Courier News* on March 23 and will also be available on the bernardsboe.com website. The final budget presentation will be on March 28, and the Board will vote on the budget at that meeting.

Curriculum and Community Relations Reports

Bev Cwerner gave the Curriculum Committee report:

- The committee is looking at additional scheduling options at Ridge for art and music students with the 8 period day.
- The administration is looking into eliminating midterm exams at Ridge. This would result in two weeks of additional instructional time and reduce student stress.
- The Ridge guidance staff will be maintained in 2011-12. A new guidance counselor will be hired at William Annin.
- The administration is reinstating two 11th grade honors courses at Ridge: Honors British Literature and Honors Government and Economics.
- The 8 period day will not affect class sizes at Ridge.
- The state has adopted national curriculum standards in Language Arts. Janet Ankiel is looking into how this affects our district.
- New textbooks will be purchased for AP European History, AP Calculus I and II, and AP Economics. AP textbooks are college texts and wear out more quickly than high school textbooks. The current textbook for AP Economics is outdated.

Robin McKeon gave the Community Relations Committee report. The PTO presidents are sending out information to parents about absentee ballots. The Board of Education Candidates Night is April 7 at 7 pm in the Ridge Performing Arts Center.

Solar Energy Proposal

A lawyer and an engineer retained by the Somerset County Improvement Authority gave a presentation on a solar energy proposal for the school district. Solar panels would be installed on parts of the roofs at all six school buildings; in addition, a canopy is also proposed for William Annin and a ground installation is proposed for an unused field at Mt. Prospect. The solar panels would supply electricity to the school district at reduced cost. The estimated energy savings for the school district would be \$2.85 million over 15 years.

There would be no impact on Bernards Township taxpayers. The project would be financed by a 15-year Power Purchase Agreement with a private solar energy developer. The debt for the proposed project would be floated by the Somerset County Improvement Authority. The private developer would pay the debt and design, install, operate and maintain the solar installations. In return, the developer would receive a tax benefit from the federal government.

The Facilities Committee plans to review and discuss this proposal.