

## **Board of Education Summary November 8, 2010**

The main agenda item was a Program Review regarding the 2011-12 school budget. Valerie Goger, Superintendent, Nick Markarian, Business Administrator, Sean Siet, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Jean O'Connell, Director of Special Services, and Frank Howlett, Ridge High School Principal, presented an overview of the report that was posted on the [www.bernardsboe.com](http://www.bernardsboe.com) website on November 3. Over the summer, district administrators visited several high-performing New Jersey school districts to research how instruction is delivered. The presentation included the results of their research and recommendations for program changes for the 2011-12 school year.

The Bernards Township school district has an estimated budget shortfall of \$1.4 million for the 2011-12 school year, due to a combination of sharply reduced state aid, a new 2% spending cap, and last year's budget defeat. To reduce the budget, the administration proposed changes in several areas:

1. Change the current 9-period day at Ridge, which provides 8 instructional periods, to a revised schedule that provides 7 instructional periods. Expand the use of "Option II" so that students can earn high school graduation credits outside of Ridge. For example, students could take online courses to meet their Practical Arts requirement and satisfy PE requirements through participation on school sports teams. (Parents would pay for the online courses.) Students could also take college courses and participate in internships and receive credit toward graduation requirements.
2. Reduce full-day kindergarten to a part-time program. For the remainder of the school day, an enrichment program run by the YMCA would be offered at each elementary school. Parents would pay for the enrichment program.
3. Keep the team model at William Annin, but eliminate extra sections and 9 off-team teachers to save money. This will result in increased class sizes.
4. Reduce the number of special education teachers in grades 3 – 8. Eliminate in-class support for science and social studies in grades 3 – 5. Discontinue resource room instruction for science and social studies at William Annin.
5. Reduce the number of curriculum supervisors by combining positions. For 2011-12, the Social Studies and World Language positions would be combined.
6. Reduce the number of elementary school assistant principals from four to two. The remaining assistant principals would share time between two schools.
7. Move one guidance counselor from Ridge to William Annin.

The estimated savings from these program changes is \$868,560, so additional cuts will be required before the 2011-12 budget can be finalized. The administration will post "Frequently Asked Questions" regarding the above items on the website soon.

The current plan is for the Board to vote on these proposals at the November 22 meeting. The Board is committed to making a decision regarding kindergarten and the 8-period day soon to give parents the option to enroll their students in private schools.

Later in the meeting, Susan Carlsson reported that a second mediation session with the Bernards Township Education Association took place on November 2, but no agreement was reached. The next step in the process is Fact Finding. The Board of Education is waiting for their attorney to advise them on the required procedures.