

Board of Education Highlights

June 21 Meeting

BOE President Susan Carlsson announced that the school PTOs, Bernards Parents of Exceptional Children, and the Bernards Township Education Foundation contributed \$110,000 to the school district during the 2009-10 school year.

The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Committee gave a presentation to the BOE, summarizing their findings and work during the 2009-10 school year. Alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drug use among Ridge students are all above the national average. The committee's recommendations are to revise the current K-12 health curriculum, improve the 8th to 9th grade transition experience by expanding Project Adventure, and pilot a voluntary random drug testing program. Another recommendation is to provide parents with up-to-date alcohol, tobacco, and drug-related information through the use of technology and the involvement of the PTO.

July 26 Meeting

The school district has hired a full-time manager for the Ridge PAC who is also a certified teacher. This position was previously part of the Aramark contract but is now a district employee.

During the Board Forum, Susan Carlsson raised concerns about the new 2% budget cap, the superintendent salary cap, and the requirement to add a one-semester financial literacy class at Ridge.

September 13 Meeting

Dr. Goger reported that the district currently has 5712 students, with enrollment still growing at WAMS and Ridge. Elementary school enrollment has declined. Class sizes at WAMS and Ridge have both increased for the 2010-11 school year. New Jersey did not qualify for Race to the Top funds; our district would have received \$100K. New Jersey will receive \$268 million in federal funds as a result of the Education Jobs Fund Act, but it is anticipated that this money will go to urban districts.

The BOE discussed its goals for 2010-11. The first was to review practices in other high-achieving, low-cost districts before finalizing the budget model. The second was to address drug and alcohol prevention in grades 6 -12. The third was to improve communication with the public in order to increase participation and awareness.