

## **Board of Education Summary January 10, 2011**

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Goger said that modifications to the Ridge science lab curriculum are in progress. Science supervisor Brian Heineman will give a presentation to the Board of Education when the curriculum changes are complete.

Honors criteria for math at Ridge have been tightened for 2011-12. Large numbers of students have dropped from Honors math to CP, causing CP class sizes to increase from 27 to as high as 35. Honors criteria for science have not been changed. See the Ridge *Program of Studies 2011-12* on the Guidance website for more information.

Kindergarten enrollment numbers at Mt. Prospect, Cedar Hill, and Liberty Corner are lower than last year, by 10 to 15 students at each school. Oak Street kindergarten enrollment increased by 10 students. A substantial number of parents expressed interest in the YMCA's "wraparound" program. Although the enrollments are down at three schools, the Board cannot yet assess whether the earlier kindergarten registration date and change to a part-time program have impacted enrollment.

Somerset County currently has no Executive County Superintendent or Business Administrator. Trudy Doyle's contract was not renewed by the governor. There is currently no plan regarding the budget approval process for Somerset County school districts, and our school district has not received the annual election calendar. The plan is to proceed with the traditional budget process.

### **Presentation: Community Service and Service Learning at Ridge High School**

Kristin Fox, social studies supervisor, and Frank Howlett, Ridge principal, described the current community service requirements at Ridge:

- All 10<sup>th</sup> grade students at Ridge must complete 25 hours of community service through their American History class.
- All students in the National Honor Society must complete 12 hours of community service.

In addition, students who complete 100, 200, or 250 hours of optional community service are recognized each year at the awards ceremony. For more information, refer to the Community Service Opportunities section of the Ridge website.

A large group of Ridge students have volunteered to tutor 7<sup>th</sup> graders in math and English at the BRICK Avon Academy in Newark on Saturdays. The school is being run by a group of six teachers who completed the Teach for America program.

### **Finance Committee**

Susan McGowan reported that the Finance Committee met in December with a new company that helps schools raise money by branding district assets such as athletic fields and gyms. The committee asked the administration to consult legal counsel, and Nick Markarian is reaching out to other New Jersey districts that are working with this company.

The Ridge Sports Foundation is looking for new projects. Given the district's financial situation, the Finance Committee recommends that the BOE not give any money to the foundation. However, the Sports Foundation can bring ideas for new projects to the BOE.

### **Facilities Committee**

Ken Wilke reported that SEE (the company that the district is working with to save energy) has compiled a baseline for gas and electric usage. From August to October 2010, there was a 10% reduction to baseline, not including gas for Ridge and WAMS. SEE also completed a federal Energy Star assessment. Two elementary schools are close to attaining this. In addition, Bernards Township will be included in the next round of solar installations through the Somerset County Improvement Authority. Finally, the district is working with Concord Engineering on a total district energy audit. The kickoff meeting was last week, and the final report is expected in 5 to 6 weeks.

### **Community Relations**

Robin McKeon reported that the film *Race to Nowhere* will be shown on January 26 at 7 pm at the Ridge PAC. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://rtnridgehighschool.eventbrite.com> and will also be sold at the door.

### **Public Forum**

Adam Hecht provided an update on the fundraising initiative to restore full-day kindergarten. John Fry, a Ridge physics teacher and Bernards Township resident, voiced his concerns about the changes to the science program as a result of the 8-period day at Ridge High School.