

Board of Education Summary
March 28, 2011
Public Hearing on 2011-12 Budget

Budget Presentation

Board President Susan Carlsson gave an updated budget presentation. She reviewed the cuts to state aid in 2009-10 and 2010-11, followed by an unexpected increase of \$777,412 for 2011-12. The district is working within the 2% tax cap and will not take any cap adjustments. They plan to reduce current staffing levels and reduce health care costs because of the 1.5% employee surcharge, the result of new legislation.

Full-day kindergarten will be parent-funded, special education at William Annin has been reduced by \$225K, support staff has been reduced by \$60K, and the 8-period day at Ridge would save \$360K in the first year. Athletics has been reduced by \$70K -- this includes eliminating JV golf, eliminating sophomore football games, and limiting freshmen game schedules in all sports as well as other reductions. The additional state aid (\$777,412) could be used for capital projects or to restore the 9-period day at Ridge (\$360K) and add a guidance counselor at William Annin (\$70K), leaving a balance of \$347K.

Board Forum on 2011-12 Budget

Each Board member presented their priorities for the budget. Over the past two weeks, the Board received over 360 emails from parents, students, and community members regarding the 9-period day at Ridge High School. Approximately 98% of those emails were in support of using some of the additional state aid to keep the 9-period day at Ridge in 2011-12 instead of instituting the revised 8-period schedule.

Vote on Budget

The Board voted as follows:

- Increase property taxes by 2%.
- Retain 9-period day at Ridge for 2011-12, using part of the additional state aid.
- Add a guidance counselor at William Annin.

The Board also voted to approve the 2011-12 budget.

Presentation on Solar Energy

Anthony Catana from the Spiegle Architecture Group gave a presentation that explained how a solar energy Power Purchase Agreement could be used to fund a portion of the required \$1.5 million in roof repairs. (This is a different solar energy proposal from the one proposed by the Somerset County Improvement Authority. The purpose of the county proposal is to reduce energy costs; it does not include roof repairs.) By installing solar panels on the roofs of school buildings, on parking lot canopies, and on the ground, the district could earn money to pay for roof repairs. There would be no impact on Bernards Township taxpayers.