

## **Board of Education Summary January 23, 2012**

### **Ridge Student Government**

Ruthie Robinson, vice-president of Ridge student government, reported that the seniors won the junior/senior volleyball tournament. The tournament raised \$1000, which was donated to charity. Ridge X Factor, a talent show open to all Ridge students, is replacing the junior class fashion show as the main fundraiser for the junior class. The show will be held March 16. "Pennies for Patients," which raised \$1000 last year, starts February 2.

The Ridge student government, in partnership with the National Honor Society, is conducting a community service award competition during spring semester. Every Ridge team and club has the opportunity to enter a proposal. The most innovative and high-impact proposal will win a monetary award, which will be presented at Senior Awards Night on June 1.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Goger announced that the Ridge Art Department received Honorable Mention for the College Board Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Arts. The art department will receive an award of \$1000 to support arts programming.

### **Finance Committee**

The Board accepted a donation from the Oak Street School PTO for \$3600 for the Wizard of Words school assembly.

A dependent eligibility audit for health insurance was put out to bid; the lowest responsible bidder is BMI. The audit will cost \$12K and is projected to save between \$41K and 208K. The Board authorized BMI to conduct the audit, contingent upon attorney review and execution of a mutually agreeable contract.

The Board passed a resolution to begin the bond refunding (refinancing) process. In 2006, the district refunded \$9.2 million of the \$44.6 million issued in 2005 after the referendum. By law, refunding is not permitted unless a 3% net present value savings can be achieved. The district is currently paying 4.51% on the 2005 bonds, so a true interest cost of 3.01% is required in order to refund. The current interest cost is 2.91%. Refunding of the \$32.8 million balance will result in a saving of \$1.23 million (\$60 to \$70K per year) from 2014-2030.

### **Personnel Committee**

The Board appointed Sean Siet to be Assistant Superintendent effective July 1, 2012. Sean will be responsible for Human Resources and will continue to oversee Curriculum and Instruction. A new Guidance Supervisor position will be funded for 2012-13 to oversee the guidance counselors and the college admissions process.

### **Facilities Committee**

The bids for the solar energy PPA were disappointing. Somerset County is still involved with solar energy projects, which could provide savings for the district. Nick Markarian has reestablished contact with the Somerset County PPA project group.

The Facilities Committee recommends that an ad hoc committee be formed to evaluate the athletic program and improvements to athletic facilities, including drainage problems with athletic fields on the east side of Ridge and resurfacing of Lee Field.

The focus for summer 2012 is priority 1 projects, which total \$1.9 million. These projects include electrical and lighting upgrades, exterior work, and interior floor, casework, and cosmetic improvements.

### **Curriculum Committee**

The Board approved the purchase of new textbooks for Honors and CP Chemistry at Ridge and new mathematics textbooks for grades 3 to 5, all for use during the 2012-13 school year.

### **Policy Committee**

Three mandatory policies were approved on second reading and adopted: Home Instruction Due to Health Condition (M2412), Home or Out-of-School Instruction for General Education Pupils (M2481), and Dating Violence at School (M5519).

### **Board Forum**

The Board discussed the proposed ad hoc committee on athletic facilities as well as branding of athletic facilities to raise funds for the district. Nick Markarian will write a description of the athletic facilities committee and send it to the Board for input. Finance chairperson Susan McGowan said that she wants discussion of branding to stay in the Finance Committee.

The Board also discussed moving the Bernards Township school election from April to November. On January 17, Governor Christie signed legislation that gives communities the option of moving the annual election of school board members to the general election date in November. In school districts that change the election date, the annual base budget (the proposed budget at or below the 2% tax levy cap) will no longer be placed on the ballot. Voters will still vote on any proposed expenditures above the 2% cap.

The Board will vote on whether to change the school election date at its next meeting, February 13.