



## **2010-11 Annual Report**

### **Bernards Township School District**

2010-11 was a successful year in student achievement, fiscal stability, and personnel development and retention, although the District experienced several highly charged issues including proposed programmatic changes.

The [Board of Education Goals](#) for the 2010-11 school year addressed the development of a budgeting model which enables a thorough analysis of priorities in light of changes in funding levels and mandates, increasing community awareness, and a focus on drug and alcohol prevention. A model was developed that projects three years of revenue and expenditures, while assuming that the state aid projection is an extreme variable. To gain a deeper understanding of school life in all schools, the Community Relations Committee attended most PTO meetings over the course of the year, as well met monthly with PTO leadership and the administration. The Superintendent highlights critical Board agenda items on the website prior to Board meetings, and summaries of Board meetings will be posted on the District website following each Board meeting. A report on the bi-annual [American Drug and Alcohol Survey](#) was presented in May which also addressed the issue of random drug testing in the high school. The Township's Municipal Alliance, which includes a representative from the Board of Education, held Neighborhood Coffees in which substance abuse was discussed. A report on these meetings will be presented to the Board in the fall.

The multi-year [District Goal](#) is to understand the philosophy of differentiated instruction through the examination of learning styles of students and their teachers, instructional strategies, and assessments. Students come to school with different family environments, learning experiences, and readiness levels. The differentiated instruction process requires teachers to

ascertain how each student learns, and how a student shows that he/she has mastery of a concept. Throughout the summer and school year, staff development during faculty meetings and departmental meetings, as well as individual coaching by Curriculum Supervisors stressed the essential elements of differentiated instruction. Staff College courses such as *Teaching Styles*, *Learning Styles* and *Differentiation of Instruction for the Special Needs Child* also advanced differentiated strategies and teaching modifications. In addition, staff were encouraged to identify differentiated instructional strategies in their lesson plans. These were often the subject of lesson studies at various grade levels and content areas.

## FINANCE

At the conclusion of the 2010-11 budget building cycle, the administration, with the Board's support, announced its intent to conduct a thorough [program review](#) in response to continued limited state funding for the 2011-12 school year. Areas to be researched included: the middle school team model, high school scheduling, full vs. part time kindergarten, guidance, special education, and administrative organization. The report was presented to the public at the November 2 meeting of the Board of Education, and was followed by a [Q & A](#) in response to general questions posed by the public at that meeting, and another [Q & A](#) responding to high school science scheduling inquiries specifically.

Anticipating multi-year funding shortfalls totaling approximately \$2.5M, several recommendations were made to right-size the budget to within a 2% growth level matching the newly imposed NJDOE cap of that amount. Among these recommendations for the 2011-12 budget was a reduction from a nine period schedule of 42 minute classes at Ridge High School to an eight period schedule of 50 minutes each. It was also recommended that kindergarten be pared back to a part-time rather than full-time program, and that an enrichment wrap-around program be provided by the YMCA in District classrooms on a parent paid basis. The special education model of providing in-class support in grades 3-5 science and social studies classes was slated to be modified to the general education teacher taking on that responsibility.

These recommendations were adopted by the Board based upon their worth, but predicated on financial necessity. Another recommendation for the 2011-12 school year was the transfer of a high school guidance counselor to the middle school during the next few years as the large enrollment bubble moves through the middle grades. Other areas considered for elimination, depending on the severity of state aid shortfall, were the following: extra section classes at Annin, the elimination of two elementary assistant positions despite all four schools' enrollment well above the 500 student mark, and implementation of student activity fees at Ridge High School.

As the winter unfolded, two things happened that affected the changes in high school and kindergarten scheduling approved by the Board in November. Parents of kindergarten students

who strongly disagreed with the programmatic shift to part-time formed the *Bernards Township Public School Initiative* and raised over \$420,000 to support the continuation of a full day program. State aid was announced in early March, and the District was awarded an increase equal to 1% of its 2010-11 budget in the amount of \$777,421. The Board discussed the best use of the additional funding throughout the month of March in Finance, Personnel, and Facilities Committee meetings. The consensus was the reinstatement of the nine period schedule at the high school, the acceptance of the parental support of full time kindergarten, and the addition of a new middle school guidance counselor position rather than the transfer of a high school counselor away from that level.

In July 2011, the District unexpectedly received an [additional \\$777,421](#) in state aid. The Board used this additional aid to fund full, rather than half day, kindergarten, and reinstate nine coaching positions which had been eliminated last year. The *Public School Initiative* will return all funds collected to donors. The implementation of an activity fee at Ridge High School has been postponed. The balance of the aid was appropriated for high school staffing needed to maintain class size and for capital improvements. All PowerPoint presentations regarding the [preparation of the 2011-12 budget](#) can be accessed here. The [final 2011-12 budget](#) is linked here.

The community of Bernards Township approved the tax levy that will support the 2011-12 budget at the annual election on April 27, 2011. One incumbent and two new members were elected to the Board of Education: Susan McGowan, Priti Shah, and Linda Wooldridge.

The auditing firm of Wiss & Company is currently auditing District financial records. The 2010-11 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report will be linked here as soon as it is completed, which is anticipated to be in late October.

## CURRICULUM

In addition to the adoption of some new curricula and textbooks, several programmatic changes occurred. Along with 46 other states, New Jersey adopted the [Common Core Standards for Language Arts and Math](#). These standards will be phased in over the next three years. The largest change to the District's current language arts standards is the inclusion of more non-fiction readings. In math the major change is a more in-depth teaching of concepts initially, rather than re-teaching the same concepts in subsequent years. The changes to the Common Core standards in mathematics more closely align the math curricula with the Singapore math program. This program encourages a more thorough review of individual concepts with significant practice built in. The changes to the Language Arts curriculum will focus on improving non-fiction reading skills as well as more phonics integration at the primary grades.

2010-11 was a busy year in curricular revisions.

- ❖ Partially based on the tremendous pressure placed on students in our society to achieve at a high level, as well as the pervasive availability of electronic resources, we have witnessed an increase in cheating. A high school committee was formed to study academic stress and student integrity. The committee is considering the possibility of eliminating midterm exams, resulting in at least two weeks of additional instructional time. In addition, the committee would like to develop department level performance assessments to allow students to demonstrate the skills acquired in the course in a meaningful and relevant fashion.
- ❖ In the past, community service was only required in honors sections of American Studies or American History. Because of the value it could bring to all students, the requirement was extended to all College Prep American History students as well, beginning with the 2011-12 school year.
- ❖ Science lab reports in grades 6-12 differed in past years, based on various lab formats used by individual teachers. This necessitated taking time each year to explain and reinforce a particular teacher's format. As a result of teacher and student interest, a Science Lab Report Committee studied various formats and recommended standardizing the report in both middle and high school. It developed report criteria and an assessment rubric. The committee also examined the new technology standards contained in the revised New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and identified selected technology strands suitable for integration into required laboratory science courses in grades 6-12.
- ❖ In the past, students studied American History in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, switched to Ancient Civilizations in 6<sup>th</sup>, Geography in 7<sup>th</sup>, returning to American History in 8<sup>th</sup>, World History in 9<sup>th</sup>, and again returning to American History in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. This random order of learning, coupled with the NJ Social Studies Standards changed emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, necessitated a scope and sequence (i.e. the periods of history and the order in which they are taught) revision, which will provide a better transition from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade and from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- ❖ Criteria were raised for acceptance into 9<sup>th</sup> grade math honors and were listed in the Program of Studies effective for the 2011-12 school year. Students were also able to 'waive' into Language Arts, Social Studies, and World Language honors level classes (pending seat availability) based on their desire to pursue an area of interest.
- ❖ A modification was made in the autism program which previously utilized a one-to-one student-to-aide ratio. A transition program which moves away from the one-to-one model in order to prepare students for a mainstreamed setting was implemented. Approximately 15 students were identified as likely to achieve success with more independence. The resultant transitional classes were received well by students and faculty. The District

accepted 13 students from out-of-district into its special education classes realizing almost \$1M in additional revenue to offset the cost of the programs. This was an increase of one student from the 2009-10 school year. There are 16 students scheduled to attend in 2011-12 for an additional \$183,000.

Notwithstanding compliance with state legislated anti-bullying policies, an administrative goal was the education of faculty and support staff in the area of recognizing, reporting, and preventing bullying behavior in the classroom, athletic field, school bus, or cafeteria. A report on the [Olweus anti-bullying instruction](#) was presented to the public at the April 25 Board of Education meeting.

Academic student achievement as measured by standardized testing can be viewed in District testing reports. Because the state releases testing data at different times throughout the year, it can be difficult to compare results. As an example, general NJASK data is released in July, but the more detailed testing results including NCLB status are not released until the fall. A report will be given to the Board on state assessments in the fall and all other assessments in the spring. In addition, NJASK scores will be reviewed with parents at all elementary buildings in the fall. The Department of Education releases comparative results for all districts' AP and SAT results in its School Report Card in December of the year following the testing.

The fall [2010 Testing Report](#) examines results from testing in the 2009-10 school year. The [Post Secondary Report](#) analyzes the most recent data received in each of the specific areas, so that some slides in the report will show 2010 results while others will reflect 2011 scores. The report shows a rise in SAT scores in both Language Arts and Math, as well as an increase in the use of the District's online SAT Review program. College acceptances were up in the Ivy League schools and *Barron's Most Competitive*, while there was a slight decrease in the number of acceptances to NJ state schools as a result of more students applying out of state than in prior years.

*Performance Tracker*, a customized addition to the student record software utilized by teachers and other professional staff, was introduced to enhance the recording of and access to student achievement, especially helpful during Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS) meetings with parents.

Student achievement in the extracurricular aspects of the District were numerous, most notably the tenth straight state championship for the Ridge Forensics Team and subsequent national recognition for many students who vied in the yearly competitions hosted by the National Forensics League and Catholic Forensics League. Several student teams involved in Destination Imagination won their state competition and then qualified to compete at the 'global' level within the organization. The Ridge Girls Golf Team won the New Jersey Tournament of Champions, and Ridge Latin students took first place in the New Jersey Junior Classical League State

Convention. There were many sectional and regional victories for middle and high school athletic teams as well.

## **FACILITIES**

A [Feasibility Study Review](#) and attendant [cost estimates](#) were developed and presented to the public at the February 14 meeting of the Board of Education. The study conducted by the Spiezle Architectural Group considered enrollment and capacity, educational space and program, physical plant and systems, and budgets by school. The work deemed necessary was rated within four priority tiers, and totaled almost \$14M worth of repair and replacement projects. Monies were appropriated from the 2010-11 and 2011-12 budgets to address the most critical areas, notably the roofs. Projects were scheduled for the summers of 2011 and 2012. Work performed in 2011 included:

- ❖ Roofing restoration, repairs, and replacement at all schools except Mount Prospect.
- ❖ Electrical panel upgrades at Cedar Hill to accommodate increased electrical needs for District network servers.
- ❖ Cedar Hill School library was completely renovated through PTO funding.
- ❖ Lighting and air conditioning equipment was replaced with more energy efficient systems at Liberty Corner and Cedar Hill Schools.
- ❖ Private fiber network for data circuits was installed throughout the District, and phone service was migrated to the Internet (Voice over IP).
- ❖ A new patio is being installed outside of the cafeteria to provide overflow seating for the large classes currently moving through the middle school.
- ❖ Oak Street PTO funded the installation of additional playground equipment.
- ❖ Potential solar projects and energy savings improvement programs will be evaluated in the fall while planning project work for summer 2012.

Several operational initiatives were instituted this year, including energy conservation, and exploring savings within the health insurance brokerage.

The Board worked for the greater part of two years to develop an energy conservation plan that addressed both physical plant components as well as behavior. Energy for America (EFA) was retained to begin the first phase of the mechanical side by monitoring the boilers at Annin, and based on the success of this phase, EFA has been retained to expand its monitoring in Ridge High School in 2011-12. Schools for Energy Efficiency (SEE) was brought in to begin a three year behavior modification plan for students and staff. The utility cost avoidance realized for

both initiatives for the first year of implementation is approximated at \$120,000. Cumulative cost avoidance for the coming year is projected to reach \$214,000.

Requests for proposal (RFPs) were solicited from several health insurance brokerage firms with three intents: reduction in commission fees, enhanced coverage at a lower cost, and creation of wellness programs to limit future liability. Proposals were received from nine firms. The brokerage was awarded to Wells Fargo at an annual savings of \$100,000. The discounted brokerage fee will be held constant for three years.

## **POLICY**

Several Board of Education policies were adopted or revised during the school year, mostly as a result of state mandates. Those policies are as follows:

**Policy M2422 Health Education** - - Reflects state mandate that health education include suicide and bullying prevention

**Policy M2423 Bilingual and ESL Education** - - Reflects state law updates.

**Policy 2430 Extracurricular Attendance** -- Addresses attendance expectations and time commitments and clarifies obligation surrounding the start of preseason practices/try-outs.

**Policy M3160 Teaching Staff Members' Physical Examination** - - Reflects state law updates.

**Policy M4160 Support Staff Members' Physical Examination** - - Reflects state law updates.

**Policy M5338 Diabetes Care of Students** - - New policy reflecting state mandate.

**Policy M5460 High School Graduation** - - Updated to include use of Option II.

**Policy 5470 Photographs of Pupils** - - Added language to state Board does not endorse distribution of photographs taken by parents.

**Policy 5701 Cheating** - - Updated to include electronic devices.

**Policy 7230 Gifts, Grants and Donations** -- Clarifies conditions on receipt of gifts.

**Policy 7460 Energy Conservation** -- New policy, statement of intent, accompanying procedure outlines electrical/HVAC schedules, etc.

**Policy M8462 Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children** – Reflects state law updates.

[Policy M8660 Use of Privately Owned Vehicles in Pupil Transportation](#) - - Reflects state law updates.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

During the 2010-2011 school year the district hired 42 teachers, 23 veterans and 19 people new to the profession of teaching. The openings occurred as a result of six teachers whose contracts were not renewed, seven teachers whose positions were eliminated, 20 maternity leave openings, five retirements, two transfers, two medical issues, one transition to administration, and six resignations due to other opportunities.

To recruit new staff, curriculum supervisors attend the job fairs at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) and Rutgers. Because of the strong education programs at these colleges, their graduates have been found to be well prepared to teach. Of the 42 new teachers hired last year, nine were Rutgers graduates and five attended TCNJ. Other draws for us include: Montclair, Drew, Caldwell and Kean. Approximately \$15,000 or 16% of the Human Resources budget, is spent on advertising. The Sunday Star Ledger (NJ.com) and NJhire.com generate the greatest number of resumes. The District website has also proven very effective in listing vacancies. Many candidates reported that they found openings on our website along with much useful information about the District.

New staff had varying educational and professional backgrounds and levels of teaching experience. Twenty two teachers holding bachelor's degrees had up to 13 years of experience. Eighteen teachers holding master's degrees had up to 12 years of experience, and two teachers holding master's degrees with an additional 30 graduate credits each had 15 years of teaching experience.

Last year 29 staff advanced in their degree attainment: seven attained 30 credits beyond their bachelor's degree; ten received a master's, ten attained 30 credits beyond their master's degree and two administrators attained their doctorates. For these advancements the district contributed \$287,000 in tuition reimbursement.

Sadly, three staff members passed away during the school year after heroic battles with diseases: Kathy Bubser, Liberty Corner School speech teacher, Phyllis Blackwell, a long time secretary from Cedar Hill, and Andrew Brasno, business teacher at Ridge High School. They served the students of Bernards Township well, and they will be missed.

The administrative team changed during the 10-11 school year, welcoming Sloan Scully as the new Assistant Principal at Cedar Hill School who replaced Lori Savas, and David Hunscher who replaced Janet Ankiel as the Language Arts Supervisor, K-12.

The in-house professional development program continued to flourish in 2010-11. One hundred forty five courses were offered to staff during the school year. While some teachers took one

class, others took as many as five. In 2010 the district provided an extensive New Teacher Orientation. Four days during the last week of August, the Assistant Superintendent, Directors of Curriculum and Special Education, Assistant Principals and the Technology Manager met with new staff to review curriculum and teaching strategies. New staff attended workshops on classroom management, technology, special education, crisis management, lesson planning, and observation and evaluation. Time was also provided for new teachers to visit their individual schools and to work with principals and assistant principals. During the school year, curriculum supervisors, directors and building administrators continued New Teacher Orientation by working with our new teachers on Monday afternoons from September through November. Topics included: preparation for Back to School Night, completing progress reports and report cards, lesson planning, curriculum pacing, developing and administering assessments, technology, special education, character education, goal setting, differentiation of instruction, constructing open ended questions with rubrics, and the writing process.

The [Local Professional Development Committee](#) (LPDC) created, implemented and facilitated a mentoring program for the 19 new teachers, five of whom were certified through the New Jersey Department of Education's alternate route program. Six mentoring workshops were held from August through April and included topics as: The "Why of Mentoring," roles and responsibility of mentors and mentorees, N.J. Professional Standards for Teachers, beginning teacher needs, self-reflective journals, pre-conferencing, adult learners, observing and post conferencing and an end of the year reflection.

The 18 month negotiating process concluded with a contract between the Board of Education and the Bernards Township Education Association which was ratified in June, 2011 retroactively effective to July 1, 2010 and running through June 30, 2013.

The Personnel Committee of the Bernards Township Board of Education including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Business Administrator met with the members of the Bernards Township Education Association Negotiating Committee on several occasions. After seven formal meetings and numerous informal discussions, impasse was declared in April, 2010. In October and November 2010 a mediator from PERC came to the district to attempt to facilitate a settlement. At the conclusion of these sessions, both parties agreed to move on to the next level of New Jersey public school negotiations, a process known as fact finding. The state appointed fact finder worked for two full days with the Board and BTEA teams, and reached a settlement that included salary increases of 1.5%, 2.0%, 2.0% for the respective years of a 2010-2013 contract. The settlement also included several language and working condition modifications, as well as a reduction in the amount of tuition reimbursement paid for by the District and a freeze on all athletic and extracurricular activity stipends for three years. It is noted that the average three year contract settlements in 2010 and 2011 for the region were reported as just over 6 %.

## **END OF YEAR**

Ridge High School held graduation for its 409 members of the Class of 2011 in a wonderful commencement on June 23, 2011. Graduates received numerous academic awards and hundreds of scholarships. Twenty three Ridge students were named National Merit Society commended students. Seven were named semi-finalists, and all seven then rose to finalist status. In three ceremonies on the evening before high school graduation, William Annin Middle School promoted 473 students to the ninth grade. The middle school also produced its first literary magazine in June, entitled [WAMS Ink](#). At its June 13 and 20 meetings, the Board of Education recognized several groups of staff and students:

### **Student Championships**

Destination ImagiNation Global Qualifiers

New Jersey State Girls Golf Tournament of Champions

New Jersey Junior Classical League State Convention

New Jersey State Champion Forensics Team

### **Retirees**

Margaret Alexander	Bookkeeper/Assistant Board Secretary
Janet Ankiel	Supervisor Language Arts
Robert Cherdak	Ridge High School Science Teacher
John Clark	William Annin Middle School Language Arts Teacher
Judy Green	Ridge High School Media Center Aide
Ken LeCour	William Annin Middle School Social Studies Teacher
Robert VanWageninge	Cedar Hill/Liberty Corner Schools Music Teacher
Alexis Wintel	William Annin Middle School Instructional Aide

## Teachers of the Year

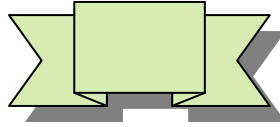
Carley Aroldi	Cedar Hill School Guidance Counselor
Barbara House-Quigley	Liberty Corner School 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher
John Gullifer	Mount Prospect School 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher
Glen Denys	Oak Street School 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher
Josh Gebhardt	Ridge High School Latin Teacher
Janet Marino	William Annin Middle School Language Arts Teacher



## PARENTAL SUPPORT

The PTOs and parents were again very generous in their fund raising attempts to support school activities. A great deal of financial support was provided by parents at the middle and high school for individual athletic teams and school clubs.

- ❖ As a result of a budget defeat 20 years ago, the District was unable to fund middle school athletics. There was no organized middle school program for many years. In 2006 parents organized the William Annin Middle School Athletics Organization (WAMS AO) and assumed full responsibility for the funding and operation of middle school sports. This past year, 13 sports were offered, with a total participation of 324 students. In addition to organizing and operating car pools for interscholastic competitions, the parents contributed \$71,000 for coaching stipends, uniforms, and fees.
- ❖ Ridge Diamond Club contributed \$22,500 for baseball equipment.
- ❖ Cedar Hill PTO raised over \$120,000 to completely renovate the Cedar Hill media center.
- ❖ Mount Prospect PTO gifted \$42,000 for classroom technology.
- ❖ Parents of Exceptional Children donated \$28,000 for software and supplies.
- ❖ Liberty Corner PTO contributed \$40,000 to air condition the classrooms that were in the oldest sections of the school, some exceeding 90 degrees on even temperate days. They also donated \$4,500 to the media center.
- ❖ Oak Street PTO donated \$21,000 in playground equipment.
- ❖ William Annin PTO dedicated \$29,000 towards classroom technology.
- ❖ All PTOs funded numerous student assemblies and field trips. Without their financial backing, most of these opportunities could not have been provided using District funds. Elementary parents also gave liberally of their time and effort in working with students in the classrooms, media centers, and at outdoor field days.



The District wishes to thank the community of Bernards Township for its support, and renews the commitment to provide services that are in concert with the District philosophy.

- ❖ Education is our first priority.
- ❖ Intellectual, social, physical and emotional developments are essential to a student's education.
- ❖ Children learn in different ways; we have a responsibility to help all students maximize their potential. Students will benefit from a challenging curriculum with high standards.
- ❖ Individual student achievement is maximized by high expectations.
- ❖ Co-curricular and community service activities are important components of effective education.
- ❖ Education provides a foundation for life-long learning, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, decision-making and respect for the individual.

Submitted by Valerie A. Goger, Superintendent

August 18, 2011