

Everyone attending the March 8, 2011 Board of Education meeting was treated to the National Anthem by the High School Choral group and then a performance by Joey Watts. Mr. Thomas Weber, Supervisor of Performing Arts and Ms. Pam Barnes then bragged about why our High School is a model school of the Arts for the state as they presented recognition awards to 19 students. 13 students of these students were selected out of thousands trying out for the SJ Regional Ensemble with several making first chair. 4 students are part of the NJ All Women's Choir and 2 made NJ All State Wind Ensemble.

The state gives and the state takes; 36,453,924 in state aid for our 2011-2012 school budget is a lot but the state also slammed the district with multiple costs, leaving us \$200,000 in the hole to come out of the budget. Some of these costs are approximately \$800,000 for charter schools, \$317,000 to the SDA (School Development Authority – yes, the division that hasn't finished our High School) for "interest", \$136,000 for incarcerated juveniles, and the list goes on.

In order to meet the 2 % cap increase, 3 million dollars was eliminated from the proposed budget which currently under review by the county. The proposed budget will be presented and voted on by the board at the March 22 Board of Education meeting.

Many ways to view the proposed budget are available; school website, Channel 2, and varies open public meetings.

This year's election occurs on April 27th, the Tuesday during Spring break. If you are going to be away or have a 18 or older child living away at college, a mail in ballot can be obtained by visiting the school website (<http://www.eht.k12.nj.us/>)

Dr. McCartney recognizes that cuts are going to make voters unhappy, especially if it's in an area of interest. He encourages voters to realize that a defeated budget equals additional cuts and definitely results in "that special interest cut" not being re-instated. With a passed budget, it may be possible to add one of the cuts at a later date.

In the Public Portion:

- Many members of the audience spoke about their feelings regarding the Latin program being phased out and had questions about how cutting Latin saves money, how this cut will affect the perception of academic excellence in the district which in turns affects the ability to draw quality teachers, etc.
- One of the performer of the High School musical, Beauty and the Beast announced the play will be April 14 -17th and request the board to support the play by taking out an ad.
- Mary Ann Spiker, Chairperson for Project Graduation, requested financial support from the board and announced that this will *probably be the last year for Project Graduation* due to lack of volunteers.
- A parent questioned if the rumor of a full period of Language Arts being cut at the Middle Schools was true.
- Another member of the audience wondered if the cost for sports could be an out of the box question.
- The student representatives requested clarity on many of the rumors flying around the High School be given. They also reported on an EHT 2010 graduate attending the University of Washington has been missing since March 5. Friends and family have taken to Facebook to spread the word; the group "Marizela Perez: Please

Help Find Her” has become a driving force with more than 28,500 people checking out the site.

- A parent believes the writing programs in our district could be improved. He also reported a 73.9 % increase cost for transportation in the past 7 years.
- Ms. Waszen, President of the EHTEA, stated that our district exceeds nationally in AP writing and noted that our governor doesn't talk about NJ school sports teams but focus on academics. She also commented that people maybe angry now about the budget and cuts but a defeated budget will just make people angrier.
- Another parent pleaded that EHT residence rally together and “Go Beyond” by letting all our politicians know how angry we are.

Dr. McCartney replied to the public portion stating that any cuts are not wanted but are a necessity due to 2 % cap. Any cut considered was researched thoroughly before being made. Alternatives such as on-line or distance learning are possibilities to give our students some of what they have lost. He noted that current Latin student will be accommodated but will not be offered at this time to in-coming freshmen.

Concerning sports and other co-curricular activities, he believes along with the state that they go hand and hand with academics. Students must keep their grades up in order to participate, teaches discipline, etc. If an out of the box question is defeated then by law, the district can not have those sports or co-curricular activities for the budgeted year even if the money is found to support having these programs. He noted that out of the 80 plus per cent of the budget goes to academics and less than 1 % to co-curricular actives.

Language arts as it has been taught in the past are changing. The trend is to incorporate writing skills not just in English, but also Science, History, etc.

The next BOE meeting is March 22, 2011 at 8 PM in the BOE room of the Alder Ave. Middle School.

Be sure to come to Candidate's Night on March 17th at 7:30, also in the BOE room of the Alder Ave. Middle School. This is your chance to listen and anonymously question any or all the candidates. If you have questions you'd like presented but can't make the meeting, call me at 653-2009 or SRfromEHT@aol.com.