

Radarscreen DLT 1-2-3

Brought to you by the Scotch Plains – Fanwood PTA District Legislative Team (DLT)

Internet Resources

Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District
www.spfk12.org

District Policy Book:
www.spfk12.org/sp-f_policies.htm

Board of Ed. Meeting Schedule:
www.spfk12.org/sp-f_board_mtgs.htm

SPF PTA Council
www.spfk12.org/pta_council/

Budget 2009-2010
 Schedule of Meetings:
http://www.spfk12.org/budg_sched_dates.pdf

Proposed Budget Summary:
http://www.spfk12.org/sum_bud_update.pdf

Budget Special

- **Board member Jane Costello resigns.**
Replacement will be appointed for one year.
- **3 Scotch Plains Board member** seats up for election.
- **BOE Candidates running for three seats are:**
 - Karen Kulikowski
 - Trip Whitehouse (Incumbent)
 - Betty Ann Woerner (Incumbent)
- **Schedule of Budget Meetings** is available on Page 2.

State Cap Squeezes SP-F School Budget for Next Year

Contributed by Board Member, Linda Nelson

Each year the state's 4% cap on increasing local property taxes makes building the proposed school budget more difficult. Although costs go up, the cap on tax revenue prohibits Boards of Education from meeting these rising costs. To get the proposed budget to cap, Boards must cut any discretionary spending and when that's gone, cut from current programs and staffing. Each year's cuts come on top of the prior year's, with no possibility of reinstating or rebuilding prior cuts. Each year gets more difficult.

Like other comparable districts throughout NJ, this year Scotch Plains-Fanwood is faced with a big budget gap between growing costs and allowable spending. The first draft of the budget showed an approximately \$3 million shortfall. At the direction of the Board, the administration sharpened their knives and slashed over \$1.2 million from such items as summer work, general school supplies, custodial / maintenance supplies, equipment and capital outlay. But almost \$1.9 million in cuts were still needed.

In meeting this painful mandate, the Board and administration agreed to:

- make decisions that did not directly impact on the classroom, if possible;
- keep current favorable class sizes at the primary grades, as much as possible;
- make cuts and changes throughout the district so that no one area or grade level is targeted; and
- maintain discretionary spending—such as extracurricular activities, instrumental music programs and athletics—by considering user fees to avoid cutting programs.

This combination of spending cuts and new revenue totals the \$1.9 million needed to bridge the gap by:

- Cutting 20 staff positions, including 4 administrative, 2 clerical, 1 grounds, 3 custodial, 2 basic skills, 2 elementary, 2 middle (5th grade), and 4 high school.
- Combining all middle school sports to one team, as we currently do with middle school wrestling.
- Expanding the preschool program and charging tuition.
- Establishing an instrumental music fee for students in grades 4 – 8 of \$100 per year per student.
- Establishing a \$100 activity fee at the High School to take part in athletics, music ensembles, and extracurricular clubs and organizations. A student would have to pay no more than \$100, no matter how many activities he or she joins.
- Appropriating \$250,000 of surplus funds generated from this year's budget. A reserve for emergency expenditures remains.

The Governor will present his budget message on March 10, and school districts will receive their state aid figures by March 12.

When the new school funding formula was adopted in January 2008, the state did not fully fund it the first year, but started phasing it in. State aid was to increase for next year, but that's not going to happen because of the state's own budget deficit for this current year's budget and massive spending cuts expected for next year's. Instead, districts fear that state aid to education for next year will remain flat or be cut.

Schedule of Budget Presentations/ Discussions

Date	Time	Location
Monday, March 16	8:00 pm	Open Agenda Meeting/ Board Adopts Budget
Monday, March 23	7:30pm	High School
Tuesday, March 24	6:30pm	Coles School
Tuesday, March 24	7:30pm	Park Middle School
Wednesday, March 25	9:15am	PTA Council @ Board Office
Wednesday, March 25	7:00pm	Evergreen School
Wednesday, March 25	7:30pm	Brunner School
Monday, March 30	8:00pm	Public Hearing on Budget
Tuesday, March 31	7:30pm	Candidates Night
Tuesday, April 14	7:30pm	Terrill Middle School
Wednesday, April 15	9:30am	Scotch Plains Library
Wednesday, April 15	7:30pm	School One
Wednesday, April 15	7:30pm	McGinn School
Saturday, April 18	10:00am	Fanwood Library

To write to the Board of Ed., either

Send email to boe@spfk12.org

- Remember to sign the email with your name. Anonymous emails will not be acknowledged.
- Signed e-mails to the above email address will be considered official correspondence to the Board of Education and will be placed on the Board's public meeting agenda under "Letters to the Board."
- The Board President will respond to correspondence on behalf of the Board.

OR

Mail letters to:

Evergreen Avenue & Cedar Street
Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076

Have a question or comment – contact your local DLT Rep:

Chairperson: Cindy Clancy Warren tpw1213@yahoo.com

Brunner: Susan Johnson chrisandsusan@comcast.net

Coles: Jo Ann Halberstadter joann57@comcast.net & Donna Busichio dbratti@msn.com

Evergreen: Kathy Ramalho kramalho@comcast.net

McGinn: Leslie Oross leslieoross@hotmail.com

School One: Karen Zikas kmzikas@yahoo.com

Park Middle: Kaneez Madraswala kaneezm@gmail.com

Terrill Middle: Malinda Okoro okorofam@aol.com & David Barash drbrash@verizon.net

High School: Jodi Heinz jodi5758@verizon.net & Smita Palejwala smitapale@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor: Kalpana Krishna Kumar webmaster_council@spfk12.org