



Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.

## Single Issue Meeting: Choice Hopatcong

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

7:00 p.m.

High School Cafeteria

Where does the future lie?

- Cannot become a choice school – unequitable and unfair
  - Meeting with Senator Oroho on June 4 to discuss matter
  - Average of 13 students per HS class going to choice school
- **UNITE THE CHIEFS** – If we are united we are stronger and we will do better for the kids

### Instruction

- Large majority of teaching staff have Master's Degree or beyond
- Many have credits beyond Bachelor's Degree
- Teachers have concentrations in certain areas – using this to our advantage in the classroom
- Students see two teachers for their core subjects at elementary level; four eyes, four eyes, two brains – proven to benefit children
- Mr. Pallotta puts all of his classes on Youtube
- Project based assignments: interviewed by students at DA; witnessed two students at TT deliver a product pitch
- Striving to get better with technology
- Mrs. Ryder's class has students at K level programming robots; learning a process, learning how to apply math
- Two out of four projects at Teen Arts Festival that were chosen to move on are from Hopatcong High School
- Our teachers apply and get grants
- We have family math nights, literacy nights
- Instruction in the district happens in the classroom and offers extended times for parents/families at night

### Curriculum

- Evolving/changing
- French teacher at the HS teach kids how to speak French and understand French but actively teaches about French culture
- Students in the HS design things on computer and build in the shop
- We are doing it just as well as everyone else
- Next year the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum will allow students to take HS credits; county allowing this
- More and more things happening to allow kids to have a more focused experience

- We need to better vocationally
  - Front page of NJ Herald talked about CTE program in another district today
  - A kid in high school should be able to major in something
  - Vocational classes help us compete with technical schools
- A comprehensive school has to be comprehensive

### **Affective Education**

- Dealing with a society where kids have an anxiety that we did not know as kids
  - Sexual identity issues
  - Social media issues
    - Expanded bullying exponentially – school has to do something about this
  - Cell phone issues
- Call this generation “the lockdown generation”
- Make sure we are providing kids with education with nothing or little to do with subject matter
- Mrs. Marinaro at the MS promoting **wellness**
- District is trying to address the anxiety that comes from society
- District has club for LGBTQ kids
- District goes into classroom to try and be proactive rather than reactive
- Mrs. Fata at the HS works magic with parents
- Has an influence on students who come from a poor socioeconomic background
  - More than 25% of kids are on free/reduced lunch
  - Success on high stakes testing is directly related to socioeconomic status
- Hopatcong does not have high rating because we do not have high percentage of students attending 4 year college and there is no rate for some of the issues the district currently has
- A recent graduate told a staff member that the small number of students at the HS allowed her to get more attention than she believes she would have gotten at a bigger high school
- Small environment sometimes has its advantages
  - 62 kids were involved in most recent HS production – over 10% of population
  - Hopatcong band is excellent and impressive – kids and leadership
  - Pride of sports teams
  - Need to do a better job at recruiting kids that we have to be involved in school activities
- District will have more cuts in State Aid
- When problems are identified, the administrators are quick to get involved

### **Principals**

- HMX/DA –
- TT – Brian Byrne
  - Grade level structure will not change
  - Going back to advanced level classes – want students to have specific and creative experiences to help advance them even farther
  - Will continue with a transition class at each grade level – basic skills, reading specialists, etc.
  - Maker Space – had to be creative because finances were tight; great staff and grants have helped it come to fruition; like to see teachers partner up using this space
  - Going to identify kids that need help, skills kids need to be helped, who can help them and how to measure growth
  - Will be staying with Standards Based Report Cards next year

- Identifying weaknesses and always looking to improve
- Addressing weaknesses in phonics program to fix for next year
  
- DA/MS – Tracey Hensz
  - Moving 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to the Middle School
  - Will continue modified departmentalization – where teachers are specialized in their area and focus on students
  - Will implement one advanced class per grade level
  - Will continue the Gifted & Talented program at the MS (can be in both G&T and advanced classes)
  - Will move back to “traditional grade” report cards
  - Will get honor roll and high honor roll back
  - Maker Space will be moved right to the MS; the MS will have the Innovation Lab and the Maker Space
  - Maker Space will be a specialty class next year (like gym, art, etc.)
  - Use the studio in the morning to give students lessons everyday – all studio equipment will be moved to MS
  - Want to have 4 – 7 have one morning announcement
  - Students will have studio once every six days like Maker Space
  - Will have recess
  
- MS – Lewis Benfatti
  - Social/emotional learning – many issues that students at this age are dealing with
  - Teachers are pushing students to use Chromebooks and become electronic learners
  - Pushing success in the academic classroom
  - Have facilities such as STEAM lab where students can learn
  - Double periods of ELA and Math
  - Wellness and academic enhancement center run by Mrs. Marinaro
  - After-school activities support in-school learning such as Lego/Robotics Club, Academic Bowl
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning
  
- HS – Emil Binotto
  - Effort to re-design the High School – have done research into how students learn
  - As a small school we have unique opportunity
  - F word – flexibility, family, focus, forgiving environment
  - Several new courses this year
  - Going to offer new elective courses in the coming year – ex: US History through the arts, Robotics, AP Art History, etc.
  - BOE is supportive of home improvements of building pending money earned through sales
    - Collaborative space
    - Innovation lab geared toward college level
  - Will build on STEAM, Science and Math foundations that are started at the MS
  - Extended time for ELA and Math for 8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be in A-wing and have their own lunch
  - Will look into additional clubs and intramurals over the summer
  - Ultimately hope for reconfiguration of B-wing to become a STEAM wing in the coming years

- We are in the process of selling some of our assets
  - HMX school is not for sale yet; but it is on its way to be
  - Putting the cell tower out to bid by the end of the week (have had 3 calls of interest this week) – minimum bid of \$1.75 million and will get money over 2 years
  - BOE has land on Lakeside Blvd. that has had interest

## Questions

- **How do we decide who gets to be in the advanced classes with Standards Based Report Cards?**

SBRC are not the only measurement of student success. There is an array of factors that teachers consider when placing students in advanced classes. Principal directed question to see how they identify students for the programs.

- **How is the curriculum being updated to challenge students more?**

This summer curriculum that needs to be immediately updated will be done then we will put forth a five-year curriculum plan. All curriculum must now include accommodations for ELL students, special education students, 504 plan students, etc. and this is mandated by the state; that is a priority this summer. The curriculum is just a path and there are side paths that can be taken. Will be addressed at the next administrative meeting.

- **Who will oversee curriculum?**

Principals will be responsible for their buildings and there will be a plan put forth.

- **What is being done to keep prospective choice students in the District?**

Plans to address parents and students who are choosing to choice out. Plan to meet with parents as group and will meet with any parents. As Superintendent, needed to learn the district before meeting with choice parents.

- **How much money is paid by Hopatcong per each choice student?**

The District pays for charter schools not choice students. If parents applies for transportation money we are obligated to pay the parents a maximum \$1,000/year

- **Why aren't phones banned for grades 4 – 7?**

In our society today, god forbid a parent could not get in touch with a student during the day (example a lockdown) then the students need that phone. Parents want to be able to contact students in an emergency. Middle School level should consider a ban of cell phones. Current MS cell phone policy is that staff members are using it as a tool in addition to Chromebooks. MS plans to look into keeping cell phones in the lockers or backpacks. The MS administration plans to look into this. 90% of current DA students have cell phones. Middle School is having internet cyber-security event.

- **How much money did we get in grants this year? Who will be writing grants going forward?**

Superintendent will write grants.

- **What can parents do as community members and parents to help?**

Humbly suggest the following, there are legislators who want State Aid cuts extended to 10 years rather than 6 and some legislators want to do away with cuts. Parents and community members can write to these legislators – be proactive.

Other:

- At the MS the after-school activities will be open to all grades so there will be inter-mingling
- Older students will be mentoring the younger students at the MS
- June 11 - 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will be going over the MS; they will have different program next year
- There will be Open House in September for students to see facility and meet teachers
- They layout of the building will be primarily split – grades 4/5 on one level and grades 6/7 on another