



Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.

**Single Issue Meeting: New Initiatives for the
Hopatcong School District Including Reconfiguration**

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

7:00 p.m.

High School Cafeteria

- Recommendations to the BOE on Monday, December 17, 2018
 1. Closing of the Hudson Maxim School for the purpose of selling.
 - *Economic development zone where contractors have interest*
 - *The entire school will be picked up and moved to DA including the principal*
 2. Changing Durban Avenue School from Grades 4, 5 to Pre-K, K, 1.
 3. Maintaining Tulsa Trail as a 2, 3 building.
 - *Mr. Byrne will remain principal*
 4. Changing the Hopatcong Middle School from grades 6, 7, 8 to Grades 4, 5, 6, 7.
 - *Plenty of room to house all of the students*
 5. Adding Grade 8 to Hopatcong High School.
 - *Working with the teachers*
 - *Working with the kids*
 - *Working with the parents*
 - *Responsible for evaluations of staff*
 - *One guidance counselor to assist in transition and everyday operations*
 6. Transferring Katherine McFadden from Hudson Maxim to Durban Ave.
 7. Transferring Tracy Hensz from Durban Avenue to Co-Principal for grades 4, 5 at Hopatcong Middle School.
 8. Maintaining Lewis Benfatti as Hopatcong Middle School Co-Principal for grades 6 and 7.
 9. Assigning Jeff Hallenbeck as Grade 8 Co-Principal at Hopatcong High School.
 10. Assigning Emil Binotto as Co-Principal for Grades 9-12 at Hopatcong High School.
 11. Maintaining Chris Buglovsky as Athletic Director/ HHS administrator.
 12. Maintaining a guidance position from Hudson Maxim for Grade 8 students at the HHS.
 13. Maintaining a School Nurse position as a Rotating Professional.
 - *Speech therapist and OT stay*
 - *Retain all instructional staff from HMX*
- District Administrator positions will be addressed at the January BOE meeting.
- Whereas the school budget for 19-20 is evolving and a potential 1.1 million dollar state aid cut must still be dealt with, care will be taken to save dollars wherever possible but not in teacher cutbacks.

- *Work is being done in the midst of a State Aid cut*
 - *Do our best to avoid tax increase*
- The district received positive news yesterday that it outscored all but one other county high school on components one through seven of Instruction and Program components of QSAC.
 - Immediate priorities after the board meeting if recommendations are approved:
 1. Finalizing scheduling at each school, including start and end times, class daily period schedules and special subjects and electives that will be offered.
 - *Make sure every class can fit comfortably*
 2. Finalizing transportation routes and times.
 - *None will change by a massive amount of time but there may be changes at some of the buildings.*
 3. Planning out a “packing and moving” schedule.
 4. Selecting and ordering appropriate playground equipment for Durban and HMS.
 5. Finalizing building “areas” for grade 8 at HHS and grades 4 and 5 at HMS.
 - *Grades 4 and 5 remain same structure*
 - *Grades 6 and 7 remain more departmentalized*
 6. Completing any re-assignments of staff of both a voluntary and required transfer. This will mean staff meetings with all speech therapists and separate meetings with nurses, another with guidance counselors, K-8 and another with CST staff.
 7. Finalizing AlphaBest arrangements.
 - *Willing to expand their program to the Middle School and offer to grades 6 and 7*
 - *AlphaBest has been doing great job so far*
 - *Has a 91% satisfaction rate across the country*
 8. Finalizing the Academy Program and WPU concurrent credit courses at HHS.
 - *Dr. Edgerton and Mr. Binotto have been hard at work designing an academy program*
 - *3 tiers for academy program*
 - i. *Career*
 - ii. *Community college*
 - iii. *4 year college*
 9. Finalizing a budget that has a potential 1.1 million dollar state aid cut.
 - *Need to expand electives at the High School*
 - *Promise communication from District Office to the Community*

Questions

1. Do you know who school will be sold to?

Not at this time but there has been interest shown in the property.

2. Research of social structure for 8th grade in HS?

Still reasonably independent in the HS (dance, books, trips, etc.). Local basketball court and the band are good examples of 8th grade kids integrating with older kids. Not an unreasonable circumstances but Admin and counselors

3. What will be in place for those students who are not college bound?

Need kids to understand, experiment, explore in different areas. Career technical courses and associated tests and certifications. Believe there is ample opportunity in the community for internships.

4. Are there plans to build a new school?

No. No reason to. Operating nowhere close to capacity.

5. The governor is also proposing closing all elementary schools that are not part of a K-12 district. This means Stanhope has potential of merging with Hopatcong. That's another 400 students. Has this been factored?

I have not factored this into the proposal because the process to do such a thing could take 5 to 10 years. Voters of Stanhope and Hopatcong would have to vote on this.

6. Would 8th graders also be separated for gym class and electives?

I only said they will be separated for core-curricular subjects. Will have some involvement with the rest of the school. Will have 8th grade courses.

7. If academics come first, why has it taken 3 months basic skills classes to start in the elementary schools?

Must ask the individual principals that question. *will post answer on the website*

8. Governor's new rules may require all pre-k students to attend school. That is approx. 130 more students a year. Where will they go?

This will not be a requirement. The Governor would like that to be a requirement but it is unfunded. Theoretically they are not supposed to do this. They do have programs where District can apply for and receive grants for this. State will only fund it for Districts that apply for it. Strong group of private groups that lobby against this. We have room to fit another 130 kids if this were to happen.

9. In the statistics from last week, did you take into consideration the 30-40 foreclosures, 20 townhouses and 15-20 rentals?

Did not take in townhouses and rentals. This may not have been 100% accurate.

10. In my opinion the 8th grade should have an advisor and not an admin, reasoning?

Having an admin is a demonstration that the 8th graders will be safe. Designates the importance of what we are doing. Has potential to change.

11. Concerned for future of administration not discussed tonight

Will be discussed in Monday's executive and there will be cuts made at the January BOE meeting. Cannot maintain a significant district administration when there is such a big cut.

12. Will there be shifts in guidance counselors?

There will be interviews and meetings to find best building/grade fit for each staff member in the district.

13. If we are losing millions in State Aid why have co-principals? Will the co-principal-ship phase out next year?

No vice principals. Need educational leaders present in the buildings. Cannot answer question about next year, this will need to be evaluated and looked at.

14. Will MakerSpace and Lab move with the DA students?

Yes

15. Can HS and MS be on the same bus route?

Considering 4 and 5 on elementary bus route and 6 and 7 on the HS/MS route.

16. Will Grades 4 and 5 be allowed to join clubs at the Middle School?

Will have to consult the principals. May be difficult with potential different schedules. Need to compete and hope to work this out.

17. With QSAC are we compared to every school in the county?

Yes. Told by Superintendent

18. Mandatory community service question ***

No more mandated. Kids will be hired/paid for move

19. Will DA still have Guidance Counselor?

Yes

20. What happens to the secretary at HMX?

Have a job for her.

21. Condos?

Some are high end. We have room for students that move into more affordable ones.

22. What programs were cut in Vernon to cut budget by 1.5 million and add 7 CTE courses?

Cut classes that were traditional but did not have a high enrollment. Cutting budget does not have to be just in instruction. Does not believe in cutting instruction unless necessary or does not have enough kids to run it.

23. Have you met with Choice and Charter School parents yet?

No but plan to invite all in for a luncheon to discuss.

24. Historically where have you/BOE cut funding from whereas these changes would be reasonable?

Doing a zero-based budget. Asking every question to everything that costs us money (i.e. drug testing, Camp Innovate). Asking for inventory before ordering from each building. Can possibly save money from retirements. Working hard with HEA to create savings in the new contract. We chip away at the budget.

25. What do you anticipate class sizes will be?

Do not see any changes in class sizes. Watching our Kindergarten numbers very carefully. If there is a bubble for one age group then adjustments will be made.

26. Will 4th and 5th grade be allowed to join band and chorus with 6th and 7th graders?

These questions create thought. Will be looked into. *Get answer*

27. Why can't we have the MS K-8 and HS 9-12?

The MS cannot fit 9 grades.

28. When do you think the next info meeting will be as changes progress?

When there is enough information then the next meeting will be called. Can potentially give promise of a monthly meeting as time goes on.

29. How will guidance department be structured in HS and MS?

There will be no changes.

30. Will the current PTOs be re-structured?

4 and 5 will be considered elementary however they can make their own decisions.

31. You mention a 1.5 million budget cut but want to purchase playground equipment how does that work?

We have money in Capital Reserve. Money reimbursed by state.

32. Where did the 1.5 million shortfalls come from?

Heavy part of formula for State Aid is based on enrollment and our enrollment dropped.

33. Is it possible to fund the Pre-K program with the elimination of an admin position?

No plans to compete with local businesses by having a mandated Pre-K program in the schools.

34. Can we reduce the size of the BOE?

They do not cost taxpayers any money besides conferences. Members are not paid.

35. Once HMX is sold does it hit the school year's budget immediately?

Depends on how it is paid for. If it is paid in one sum then it can go immediately into budget. Need to look more into. The cuts are over 5 years.

36. Why is it so pertinent that the vote to close HMX happen on Monday?

If it is approved in December then that give's everyone an extra month to figure things out. Have to schedule and plan for the HS for next year. Need to work on re-configuring students. There is no issue of not having enough room it is configuring them to fit.

37. Explanation of State Aid formula for enrollment.

Used to be safe from cuts because of save harmless. No change in state aid regardless of enrollment. Closing Hudson Maxim would not help the formula. Test scores and attendance are not a factor they are usually judged by QSAC. Cannot ethically argue the cuts because the enrollment decreased by a significant amount.

38. Plans to hire a behaviorist?

Can potentially bring back Special Education students that are placed out of district to save money. May need to hire staff including a behaviorist in the coming years.

39. Murphy's decision of sanctuary state, will we get additional funding if kids are placed here?

We by law are required to serve every student and not question what their situation is.

Comments: