



Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.

Hopatcong Borough Schools

Mr. Art DiBenedetto
Superintendent of School

Mr. Joseph S. Piccirillo
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

State of the District Meeting

Wednesday, August 28, 2018

6:30 p.m.

High School Cafeteria

- The theme is **EVERYBODY**
- Significant input from parents about:
 - G&T programs at elementary school – increased scope with principals and teachers
 - About report card changes
- Needed phonics program at Durban Avenue – recruited reading specialists to create a formal phonics program to instruct teachers. Will offer formal phonics instruction at Tulsa Trail if necessary.
- Selling of the cell tower easement
 - \$2.1 million dollar bid
 - 60 days to make final decision
 - ½ of the money this fiscal year, ½ of the money next fiscal year
 - One month until we hear decision
 - When sale is finalized, permission from the BOE to use some of the money for new initiatives at HS
- New initiatives at the HS
 - Construction skills program
 - Cosmetology program
 - Additional AP courses
 - Improve the athletic facility
- Other schools
 - AC at the Middle School
- Grades 4 and 5 students can take advantage of most MS clubs
 - Intramurals
 - STEAM innovators club
 - Drama Club
 - Lego Robotics
 - And more
- Grade 8 can take advantage of HS clubs – clubs offered
 - 8th and 9th grade intramurals
 - Robotics club
 - STEAM club
 - Cultural horizon

- And more
- A lot of overlap of clubs between MS and HS; trying to vertically align
- Expansion of Alphabest – will include grades 4 – 7 at the MS
- MS and DA playgrounds are taken care of
- School starting on Friday this year
 - Extra day for teachers to organize classroom
 - “Energy burning” day
- Service awards for teachers 15 years of service and on (Every 5 years)
- Social-emotional learning
 - Trying to arm students with the ability to cope to depression, anxiety
 - Not easy but a vital task
 - Kids are challenge but a society that is not friendly
 - Having Prosecutors office come in to give night presentation to adults
 - Center for Prevention coming to work at MS with students. MS co-principals are championing programs to come in and work with kids
 - Brining in expert organizations to assist in role
 - Want a happy student who feels safe, listened to, self-actualized and deal with a situation
- Changes over the summer:
 - New art teacher
 - Started a second MH program
 - Will recommend next month to the BOE the hiring of a construction skills teacher
- New courses at the HS
 - Climatology
 - Bio-sustainability
 - Design Process
 - Robotics
 - United States History through the Arts
 - AP Art History
 - AP French Language and Culture
 - Principles Engineering
- Enrollment problems in the process of being changed
 - Two choice students came back to district today
 - Predicts enrollment will be up
 - Have a large group of students from Colombia
 - Intent to welcome all newcomers with open arms
- Double ESL services
 - Do not need to speak same language as students
 - Impressive process
 - From 9 to 31 ELL students in the district
- Social-emotional learning (SEL)
 - Tri-County Behavioral will do a \$100 needs assessment and will either send child back to school or refer to higher order of care – asked if they would be willing to have a counselor in one of our buildings

- Working on more cost-efficient drug test
 - Found a group that runs health clinics in school districts in NJ for reduced to no cost – Zufall – in the infant stages to work out a situation with this company
- 8th graders will be able to take HS credits as of September – students who take algebra or the advanced Spanish class can take HS credits
- Raised number of credits for HS graduation for incoming freshman class to 140 credits

- Goals and what we are exploring:
 - Curriculum 5-year plan – go through course-by-course, subject area by subject area.
 - Job descriptions, organizational charts, processes
 - Cell tower, HMX sale that will get cash into the district – Central Office will be transparent and specific with funds and align them with goals and initiatives
 - Related to climate and SEL
 - Related to a Long Term Facilities Plan – what needs to be improved for compliance, safety, and cosmetic updates. Make purposeful and intentional updates.

- Money in capital reserve to be used for facilities updates – need to prioritize

- Will continue to get State Aid cuts – need activism

- Re-bid for HMX school at \$750k

- Biggest obstacle is Choice – 64 of HS students go to Lenape Valley HS

- Concurrent credits
 - 6 or 7 classes that are concurrent now \$75 a credit
 - Want to get it up to 15 class
 - Want to include SCCC and WPU (\$100/credit, 20% of cost) – 15 classes from each
 - NJ goal to every HS student graduate with 6 college credits
 - Want students to eventually get Associates Degree while in HS
 - Taking classes during the HS day that will go toward college degree
- CTE Programs
 - Academy idea – an academy is essentially a major
 - Build an expertise and interest while in high school
 - Third party assessment, college credit, internships, clubs
 - Can get a CTE certification
 - Picks up employable skills
 - Federal grant funding

- Exploring an after-school/after-care program for autistic children
 - Would not cost the district anything
 - Meeting next week with federally funded program

- Opportunity for middle school students to go to 6 evening sessions for skiing (includes everything) and it would be \$100 a student
- BASF Grant – tied to robotics

- **Bring any possible grant opportunities to Mr. Piccirillo**

- Professional Development Plan approved at 8/26/19 BOE meeting
- Mr. Hallenbeck is a great resource for safety and security

Questions

1. Why does HS and MS get out at 1:55 pm?
Our busses are shared with other schools, that's why there was an increase in clubs and Alphabest.
2. Why don't we look for other bus company?
Would need to re-bid on all bus routes. It would be a gigantic costly challenge.
3. Peanut butter?
Peanut free classrooms but students can have in the cafeteria; there are peanut free tables.
4. Will recent increase in enrollment change State Aid cuts?
Will not, just predicting enrollment increase also
5. Academy information?
Hoping to bring some students back from Tech (cannot duplicate some of the programs), CDL truck driving program, going to need tradesman from the town to be an advisory committee. Entire process is a full community engagement. Looking to offer classes at night.
6. Hs students having difficulty getting classes they need, what should they do?
Fix it by getting the enrollment up
7. How many kids are choice other than Lenape?
Number is small, Lenape is most competitive. Charter is big competitor.