

Maugham HSA Meeting
Thursday, April 19, 2018, 2:00pm
Minutes

Call to order – Meeting was called to order by Dara Wasserlauf.

Principal's Report – Mrs. Ferrara

- a) **PARCC** – For parents of 3rd, 4th and 5th graders, state testing is underway. The 4th and 5th graders completed three days of language arts and are finishing with math. The 5th graders will take the state science online assessments for the first time on May 9-10. This year is a pilot year for this testing. 3rd graders will start PARCC testing next week. No homework is given during PARCC testing so the kids love it. The Governor said he is looking to do away with PARCC but we do not know what will be the case for standardized testing next year. Overall, PARCC testing has been going smoothly.
- b) **Pollinator Garden** – We have a lovely new pollinator garden and the kids are excited to see what will bloom.
- c) **Unique Week** – The first week back in April students had “Unique Week.” Usually April is autism awareness month. Instead of focusing on autism alone, the school decided to spotlight and celebrate every child’s unique qualities and encourage inclusion. Classes participated in various activities and attended an assembly with a motivational speaker, Mike Simmel, who played basketball for the Harlem Wizards and has epilepsy. He spoke about his experiences growing up with epilepsy and how it made him stronger. Thank you to the HSA for helping to pay for this assembly.
- d) **Leave Replacements** – We have two leave replacements for next year. Mrs. Bross will be out for maternity leave; she is in only for another week. Ms. Taha was hired to fill in. She knows the 1st grade curriculum very well as she was a student teacher in Mrs. Cimler’s classroom this year and worked closely with the first grade teachers. Mrs. Bross will return in March 2019. Ms. Kim has left. Mrs. Walsh will replace Ms. Kim’s ELL class. Mrs. Walsh taught at Mackay School and worked in Mrs. Cusack’s classroom this year. She will reach out with welcome letters to parents.

Parent question: What is the safety kids program status? Mrs. Ferrara: 4th and 5th graders who work as safeties can no longer man the front doors under new security measures. We will brainstorm for some new ideas how to utilize them as they really enjoy helping. We welcome any ideas from parents. Please feel free to reach out to Mrs. Langford and myself.

Guest Speakers: Mrs. Ferrara welcomed guest speakers Acting Superintendent Barbara Laudicina, Business Administrator Yas Usami and Board of Education member Jocelyn Schwarz (also a Maugham parent).

[Attached to these minutes please refer to the Budget Information 2018-2019 handout]

Barbara Laudicina, Acting Superintendent – Thank you for having us. Many of you have been to our budget meetings but here is a synopsis. We were asked by the Board of Education as administrators to cut \$2 million dollars from the budget in sustainable costs beginning in the 2018-19 school year. This required some difficult decisions and restructuring. For background, there is a state mandated 2% property tax levy cap and we had more than 2% spending increases which are largely attributed to increases in salaries and health benefits. Because this tax levy cap of 2% has been imposed on NJ school districts, we have to tighten our belt and make some decisions.

Restructuring for Sustainable Savings:

- a) **Central Office Administration:** Eliminate from Central Office the position of Assistant to the Superintendent for Teacher Evaluation and Effectiveness. We reluctantly eliminate this position. To fill in the gap, the principals are willing to pitch in.
- b) **Building/District Level Administration:** Eliminate elementary vice principals position, reduce the Middle School and High School vice principal positions from 12 months to 10.5 months, and reduce Supervisor of Library Media Services position from 12 months to 10.5 months.
- c) **District staff:** Eliminate one High School Business teacher position, eliminate .4 physical education teacher at the Middle School because not needed, reduce Central Office secretarial staff by .5, contract out behaviorist position due to a resignation of current person, and create a new custodial position that will reposition work hours from Monday-Friday to Tuesday-Saturday which will reduce overtime costs.
- d) **Care plus program after school component at the High School and Middle School:** Eliminate only the after school component of this program as it has been underutilized. We are keeping the day time component. This is a resource where students come for counseling services. This program is still growing and we are invested in its success.
- e) **Teacher stipends:** Reduction of stipend positions totaling \$75,000 in savings.
- f) **Proposed revenue:** Reintroducing a student activity fee for participation in clubs and athletics (this was previously implemented in 2010).

The total for all of these sustained reductions equals \$928,096.

In addition, we have one-time reductions that the principals identified that may or may not be sustainable cuts beyond 2018-2019 which total \$609,927. These cuts include technology supplies and equipment, anticipated positions not needed, school supply lines, virtual high school, and teen leads.

The total reductions for 2018-2019 equals \$1,534,023.

We want to give as many learning possibilities as possible to our students. Some of the ideas and programs that we are very excited about next year and that are supported by the 2018-2019 budget include the following:

a) Student learning opportunities:

1) Elementary schools: Grade 3 Next Generation Science Standards/New Jersey Student Learning Standards-Science (NGSS/NJSLS-S) science program resources, Spanish program materials, and Fountas and Pinnell Common Reading Assessments (this past year we piloted reading assessments in the elementary schools and Mrs. Craft has been helpful in this; consistency is a big part of this so we proposed to adopt this new reading program assessment).

2) Middle School - schedule review: The Middle School is looking to revise its schedule. Instruction drives the schedule. Mr. Fabbo is reviewing this.

3) High School: New courses including AP Computer Science A, AP Physics I, Band Honors, Sociology and Yearbook; new textbooks (try to buy the on-line component) (eg. AP Computer Science, Physical Science and Sociology); and Personal Finance Literacy course offered online.

b) Continue to review curriculum cycles.

c) Transition from SMART Boards to Smart TVs: Smart TVs have come down in price whereas SMART Boards are costly to repair and replace. We will be moving to smart tvs which are more financially sound.

d) Replace teacher laptops as needed.

e) Implement capital projects: Capital projects for 2018-2019 planned include High School - boiler replacement and Person Trap, Mackay School - fire alarm system upgrade, Smith School – ABA room bathroom addition and sub-division kindergarten room for related services, and District – replacement of athletic fieldhouse roof.

Parent question: What is a person trap? Laudicina: it is similar to a locked vestibule.

f) Upgrade security across District: We are considering covering security measures through the Capital Fund or Emergency Fund as a one-time cost, not a recurring cost like a salary. When

considering what security measures to make, cost is a factor because it can be costly especially since the school buildings were built a long time ago.

Parent question: What about using security door codes (eg. Smith school has door codes)?

Laudicina: People can see the code you enter as they look over your shoulder. We want to minimize parents' access to the building. We have been told that every time a school door opens it is an opportunity for something to happen. While it is a little inconvenient for everyone, it is for every child's safety.

Laudicina: Security has been a big discussion with the Board. The Board has asked the Administration to add an additional \$259,000 to the 2018-2019 budget to be considered for security improvements. Class III Officers (armed security guards) are being considered by the Board. We reduced positions in the District because we could not afford them and now to put Class III Officers back in sends mixed message to the staff that were let go. It is a very sensitive topic. Some feel strongly about adding armed security guards, while some want more information. What does it mean to have an armed officer in your school? My philosophy is that this should question should go to a November vote and if parents are very supportive or unsupportive they need to exercise their vote. My suggestion is to put it to a vote and stick to the budget presented. Parents can exercise their vote.

Parent question: Is it (armed security guards) effective? Jocelyn Schwarz: There is a Community Task Force Meeting tonight and they will present what they have learned. The sense of the Board was in favor of adding \$259,000 to the budget for security (a preliminary permission to look into it further).

Parent question: Is there anyone in a counseling aspect on the Task Force Committee?

Laudicina: We added a drop-in center this year (our Care Plus Program services and counselor). Emotional health is high on our radar. We consider at-risk kids that need to be addressed. Our staff, principals and teachers identify them. While we are not perfect, it is very integral in our work. Ferrara: All of the elementary school share access to the center and counselor.

Laudicina: Each of the elementary schools has a counselor. This is unusual because this is not necessarily the case at other elementary schools. This was instituted a while ago. These counselors are a great addition. They are very involved, meeting with parents and students as needed and identifying those students in need.

Yas Usami, Business Administrator –

-There is a 2% tax levy cap on the budget however in the years a district does not go up to the 2%, whatever that portion is can be saved for future (banked cap). This is the same for healthcare exemption as well as enrollment adjustment. This allows school districts to increase taxes and go above 2% tax levy cap without going to a vote.

-The preliminary budget proposes a 2.58% tax levy increase.

-We have enrollment adjustment for 2018-2019 in the amount of \$305,015. We also have banked cap at \$417,000 available to us this year but we have to use enrollment adjustment and healthcare waiver before using banked cap.

-Can use banked cap up to three budget years from when it is first established. Can use part, all or none of banked cap.

-We have health care cost waiver of \$55,105.

-The District receives \$1,688,573 from State aid but we are not fully funded according to the formula. We should receive \$1.9 million of State aid under the formula. State aid is slowly getting bigger but we will have to see what happens next year.

-Use of fund balance - excess from previous year can be used for future budget year or put into reserve accounts (\$2,292,774). Have to make resolutions in June before fiscal year ends in June to put into reserve accounts. This requires projections to be made. We try to keep projections conservative. After audit is completed in the fall, we see how much excess we have and decide how to distribute the excess. Resolutions are worded with "not to exceed ..." We can use this surplus towards security from the emergency reserve account to offset any tax levy increase.

-Health insurance has been difficult to manage because we do not have control over it. School districts have been mandated to contribute to health insurance premiums. There is a 15% projected increase in health insurance premium for 2019.

-For the average property value (\$785,000) the 2018 school tax increase would be \$154 (includes debt service).

-If it is decided to add an additional \$259,000 for security, then the following numbers would change: there would be a tax levy increase of 2.99%, the health care cost waiver would be \$314,015 and the tax increase would be \$180.

Parent Question: What is the activity fee? It is a fee charged to students to participate in clubs and athletics per year. This is similar to what was done in prior years.

Parent question: If we put \$259,000 into the budget and don't use it for security purposes, what would it be used for? Laudicina: since this would be a recurring cost, it is something that should go to a vote for parents to support or not to support.

Parent question: Are improvements to the Spanish program in the elementary schools off the table? Laudicina: Yes it is off the table for now. Little by little we can restore things. We have to tighten our belts now and we will always consider new programming in the future.

Jocelyn Schwarz, Board of Education member: We encourage everyone to attend the Task Force meeting tonight.

HSA Committee Reports

a) **Variety Show**: Will be having additional auditions on May 2nd, at 4:20-6:30pm. Any talent is welcome (eg. puppet show, piano playing, singing). Spread the word.

b) **Lunch Committee**: Due to all the snow days and because school will be open on the Friday before Memorial Day weekend (5/25), the Committee will provide one slice of pizza and a bottle of water to each student.

c) **Photo Committee**: Photos have been coming in. Will start reaching out to the class moms asking them to contact parents who go on the class trips to collect more pictures of the students. Will send this email via the HSA.

d) **TEF Run**: This is a reminder about the annual Tenafly 5K Run (fundraiser for the Tenafly Educational Foundation (TEF)). We encourage you to sign up online to compete or volunteer. Wear your Maugham shirts the day of the event. The school with the most students and parents participating in the event wins. We want good representation.

e) **Pollinator Garden**: We are planting plants designed to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. The garden is located on the north side of the school. Since it has been a cold April, we are growing some seeds inside as a backup. The plants currently in the garden now can withstand the cold.

Next HSA meeting will be held on Thursday, May 17 at 7:15pm.

Questions/Comments/Concerns: None.