



THE WALLINGFORD-SWARTHMORE

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Wallingford-Swarthmore Public Schools

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DISTRICT CAPS BUDGET GROWTH AT 1.4 PERCENT

The school district budget for 2011-2012 limits growth in the tax levy to 1.4 percent, the lowest increase in more than six years. Staying within the Act 1 Index for the third consecutive year, the budget represents a continuing commitment to provide a high quality education while exercising fiscal restraint.

Under Act 1 Index legislation, the district would be eligible to exceed the 1.4 percent state index and make use of an additional \$1,980,175 in tax monies for items such as mandatory special education and pension system expenditures.

Utilizing these exceptions would effectively increase the tax levy to 5.5%. Recognizing the challenging economic times, the administration and school board have rejected this course.

Compounding the fiscal challenges facing the district this year, the proposed state budget cuts call for a reduction of \$682,586 in funds supplied to the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District.

In an effort to contend with decreased state funding, while delivering on the goal to minimize tax increases, the District has pursued a number of major cost-reduction strategies.

District employees have committed

ACT 1 INDEX AND WSSD TAX INCREASE HISTORY

Year	Index	WSSD Increase
2006-2007	3.9	8.0
2007-2008	3.4	6.0
2008-2009	4.4	5.8
2009-2010	4.1	2.8
2010-2011	2.9	2.9
2011-2012	1.4	1.4

to increased contributions for health insurance coverage. Base budgets proposed by each school and program were significantly reduced. Several positions have been consolidated or eliminated, and, in select cases, retiring staff members have not been replaced.

While constraining tax rate growth, the budget will maintain high-quality education in our schools. Present class sizes are being preserved, and the full-range of curricular and extracurricular programs will continue. The foreign-language program is being expanded to begin offering Chinese at the middle- and high-school levels, and increased allocations will be made for technology leasing and purchasing in order to

replace slower, antiquated computers in all schools.

The budget also lays out a two-year financial plan and commitment to a long-needed renovation of Nether Providence Elementary School in 2012-2013. The capital reserve fund will be increased to provide for a down payment of \$4.5 million on the estimated \$16.5 million project, and the debt service line will increase steadily over two years to support project bond financing. The two-year budget plan eliminates the need to ask the voters to approve a supplementary bond referendum request.



Investing in Instructional Technology

Budgeted funds for technology are changing the face of teaching and learning in Wallingford-Swarthmore's schools. Andy Benzing's high school geometry class uses smartboard technology to simulate the attempted control of spilled oil in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. The imaging demonstration assisted students in evaluating and determining the area of an irregular shape.

NEW FOUNDATION SEEKS PRIVATE FUNDS FOR INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

Can private funding help public education? "Yes!" say community members who are launching the Foundation for Wallingford-Swarthmore Schools. The volunteer group is committed to sustaining the high quality of our schools in a time of increasing budget pressures, and plans to raise money for special projects and programs that spawn greater innovation and excellence in the schools.

Superintendent Richard Noonan has worked with educational foundations in the past. He says, "Foundations are playing an increasing role these days in the country's best public schools, and with expectations and expertise as high as they are here, there is no reason we cannot achieve the same thing. I'm thrilled that the foundation is becoming a reality in our district."

Since December, a planning group has been meeting with school officials and others to get the foundation started. Early on, the group defined its mission: "to foster innovation and excellence." It has since adopted by-laws and elected a working board and officers. The IRS has granted non-profit 501c3 status, and the Foundation for Wallingford-Swarthmore Schools is now listed as a United Way donor option.

Swarthmore resident Martha "Frannie" Reilly, an attorney who works with educational foundations, has agreed to serve as the non-profit organization's president. "In my professional life, I see how important foundations are becoming to public schools. As the mother of young children who are about to enter our schools, I am delighted to be part of a foundation that will benefit students in this district."

The foundation will work in collaboration with Home and School and other groups, and has been enthusiastically received by the district administrative team. SHHS Principal

MaryJo Yannacone is "thrilled with the idea of the foundation." SHMS's principal George King reflects, "This could not be happening at a better time." Echoing the sentiments of other elementary school principals, WES's Ellen Milgrim is "really excited about the possibilities for the foundation." School Board President Mary Gay Scanlon says the Board "supports the establishment of the foundation, and its individual members plan to donate to, and volunteer for, foundation activities."

There are more than 6,000 education foundations operating nationally. Some have been in existence for more than twenty years, raising millions of dollars. More typically, successful foundations raise one hundred to three hundred thousand dollars annually. Locally Lower Merion, Radnor and Haddonfield have successful foundations. Once established, the foundation will create an annual grants program, wherein teachers can submit requests to fund projects of their design. With approval from its board, the foundation can also serve as the nonprofit recipient of donations for other projects throughout the district, even if it does not directly seek funds for them.

The initial round of foundation funding will be used to support the expansion of the robotics program to the lower grade levels, thus providing robotics as an extracurricular option in all District schools. The State of

Pennsylvania has granted approval for the foundation to seek funds for this project from corporations and other businesses qualifying for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC), which makes it easy and almost costless for these organizations to give. "I have sought funding from businesses through the EITC program in the past, and it worked well. Businesses that enroll get access to a tax credit and children get access to great resources. We hope community members will help make these contacts with the business community," said Foundation Vice President Allison Karpyn of Wallingford.



Foundation for Wallingford-Swarthmore Schools President Martha "Frannie" Reilly staffs the foundation's information booth at the Swarthmore Fun Fair.

The foundation plans to implement a comprehensive fund-raising plan, including annual appeals, holding a signature event each fall, and seeking additional funds through grants and other sources. Board member Beth DeBruyn is coordinating the foundation's fund-raising. "We are now seeking seed money and volunteers," said DeBruyn. "Your support is welcome and needed. Please visit our website www.supportwssd.org and get involved."

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE BUILDS CITIZENSHIP

In September 1948, about three miles from where Strath Haven Middle School now sits, a 19-year-old Baptist minister named Martin Luther King Jr entered Crozer Theological Seminary. In 1970, Crozer Theological Seminary merged with a school in Rochester, N.Y.; the graceful antebellum building where Reverend King studied is now part of the Crozer Chester Medical Center.

In establishing the Martin Luther King Day of Service at Strath Haven Middle School, the school wanted to create a living bridge between Dr. King's life and students. Stepping out of the normal classroom routine for a day gives students and teachers alike a new perspective on their place in the larger world.

SHMS science teachers Lisa Cobb, Jennifer Gillespie, and Caitlyn Locke coordinated more than fifteen on-site and off-site service activities involving more than 800 students. The wide range of service choices allowed students to select options that were best suited to their individual talents and strengths. Some students shared the gift of music with nursing home residents. Others prepared meals for the homeless. Some decorated T-shirts for U.S. military troops serving abroad. Others stuffed backpacks for school children in Kenya.

Music teacher Lynn Van Druff and members of middle school chorus spent the day performing at local nursing homes. She describes the effect that this had on both students and seniors: "The joy on the residents' faces, the kindness of our students, and the impact on both brought tears to many eyes... Unbelievable impact on our students."

Science teacher Joe Buecheler accompanied a group of student volunteers who volunteered at Covenant House, a residence for homeless youth. Mr. Buecheler said that what struck him most were the thoughtful and penetrating questions that the students asked the Covenant House director:

- Do kids who live here play sports for their school? How do they get sports shoes, cleats, baseball gloves, etc.?
- Do other kids at their school know they are homeless and live here?



Strath Haven Middle School students help prepare meals for the homeless and gain a new perspective on Martin Luther King Day of Service.

- Are they allowed to date?

Mr. Buecheler identified one of the most important lessons of the day of service: "I believe all change begins with this ability to see life from someone else's experience. All the kids really did that day was pack lunches for Covenant House, but they learned that there is a population of kids out there that is facing life from a very different experience from their own. This can't be unlearned."

THREE APPOINTEES NAMED TO TOP ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS



Denise Citarelli Jones is the new K-8 Director of Curriculum and Instruction, moving over from her current position of Assistant Principal at SHMS. She has an MA degree in

English from Rosemont College, and completed her certification program in Curriculum at St. Joseph's.



Dr. Lisa Palmer is the new district Business Administrator. She is currently the Business Administrator/Board Secretary in the Haddon Township (NJ) Public Schools. Dr.

Palmer possesses an Ed.D. Degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and an MBA Degree from Rider University.



Dr. Angela Tuck is the new principal at Swarthmore-Rutledge School. She has been a successful elementary principal with the Pottstown Schools since 2001. She holds

an Ed.D. Degree from Immaculata, and MA and BS degrees from Millersville University.

MOCK TRIAL TEAM FINISHES THIRD IN STATE

The Strath Haven Mock Trial team placed third in Pennsylvania at the state final competition in Harrisburg during the weekend of March 25 and 26. This was the second time that Strath Haven succeeded in qualifying for the state competition weekend, but the first time that the team qualified for the semi-final round.

Each year, the Pennsylvania Bar Association releases a criminal or civil case for which high school teams prepare to go to trial. This year's civil case involved a pathologist who entered into a contract with a dying, impoverished elderly woman whose mutated cancer cells potentially held the cure for cancer.

Mock trial teams consist of both attorney and witness roles. This year's group only included a handful of veteran members. The team sifted through more than one hundred pages of case material, as they developed case theories for both prosecution and defense. The goal of the mock trial competition is for

students to create a fact pattern that they can present to a jury at trial. At each individual trial, students present one side of the case to an actual judge and jury. In preparation, they write opening and closing statements, direct examinations, and cross-examinations. Witnesses must not only learn the information in their affidavits, but must be believable in those roles while not betraying too much hurtful information during cross-examination.

Strath Haven finished in first place at both the local and district level. At the regional competition, Haven (representing Delaware County) finished in second place, thereby earning one of twelve prized spots at the state competition. Following a successful first round at the state level, the team

secured one of the coveted final four spots in the final round. In the end, Strath Haven finished in third place (out of 331 competing schools from across the Commonwealth).

From early October to late March, the mock trial team devotes more hours to practice and preparation than do many athletic teams during their respective seasons. The team members hone their critical thinking skills, acquire an appreciation for law, and have fun while learning.



Strath Haven High School Mock Trial team placed third in a field of 331 schools in the state final competition.

SCHOOL BOARD

Administration

Dr. Richard Noonan,
Superintendent of Schools
Lorraine DeTurk,
Business Administrator

Region One

Blaise Santianni,
Assistant Board Secretary
Marylin Huff
Vincent J. Marriott III,
Vice President

Region Two

Joanna Sloskey
Michael J. Rinaldi
Robert Reiger

Region Three

Mary Gay Scanlon, *President*
Richard Sonntag
Sally Morbeck, *Treasurer*

SHHS STUDENTS SELECTED FOR ALL EASTERN HONORS ENSEMBLE



Congratulations to the five Strath Haven High School Music Students who participated in the MENC All Eastern Honors Music Ensembles Festival and Concert this past April in Baltimore, Maryland. Pictured from left to right are Phillip Marion (Euphonium in the All Eastern Wind Ensemble), Hannah Bech (Soprano in the All Eastern Chorus), Nicholas Cheung (Percussion in the All Eastern Wind Ensemble), Sarah Shulbank-Smith (Trombone in the All Eastern Wind Ensemble), and James Reese (Tenor in the All Eastern Chorus). The All Eastern Honors Ensembles are selected biannually from 13 New England and mid-Atlantic states from Maine to Maryland.