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Baby Hats Everywhere!

By Chris Romano - Secretary

Many thanks to all those who created baby caps. They came in all sizes, shapes, designs, and colors. When all was said and done, the WCT and WCRT members made 350 baby caps. There wasn't a day in December that my mailbox wasn't stuffed with adorable hats. Most came anonymously. The support of the retirees was overwhelming. In droves they sent me their finished products. I even heard from retirees in Florida!

When I went to the Pack 'n Mail store in Hopewell Junction with my three big bags ready to be shipped, the woman there spent at least fifteen minutes

ooooing and *ahhhing* over the hats. She couldn't believe what we had done.

We can all be proud that our caps will help 350 newborns around the world. Something so simple, yet so fun to create, can make such an enormous difference in a baby's life. Our members are always ready to step up to the plate and help, and this was just another example of their generosity. I thank you all for your thoughtfulness and creativity. Start thinking about next year's campaign and keep that yarn ready.



Superintendent Presents Budget Reduction Measures at Special Board Meeting

By Meredith Inkeles - VP Internal Communications

Superintendent Powell presented a range of proposed budget reduction measures to the Board of Education Trustees, WCSD staff, and community members on Thursday, December 18, 2008 in the Wappingers Junior High School auditorium. The audience, which filled almost two-thirds of the auditorium, was told that this special board meeting is only the first of many and that “nothing will be final by the end of tonight.”

Powell prefaced his presentation by stating that he did not want to scare staff or community members, that he doesn't want to just take an axe and chop away at the budget. The hand out can be viewed on the WCSD web site at http://wappingersschools.org/COS/Supt/Budget/Bud0910/Reduction_Measures/Default.html. This document contains proposals only. They are not recommendations and all possibilities need to be examined for its own merit.

The proposal measures were divided into five types:

- **Type 1** - elimination/curtailment of instructional programs and services;
- **Type 2** - elimination/curtailment of non-instructional services;
- **Type 3** - review of revenue projects and business practices;
- **Type 4** - use of RFPs (Request for Proposal) for the sub-contracting of services; and
- **Type 5** - implementation of improved operating efficiencies.

Superintendent Powell highlighted a few topics from each type. For example, he spoke about examining an increase in elementary class sizes that would specifically impact Evans, Gayhead, Oak Grove, Sheafe Road, and Vassar Road and could produce a minimum estimated savings of \$349,371. From Type 2, Superintendent Powell talked about considering a referendum to increase the walking distance to a higher limit. This bid would have to be examined by the Board to see if it is even feasible. During the overview of Type 5, Superintendent Powell spoke of examining an alignment of the WCSD and parochial school

calendars pertaining to busing which could create a minimum estimated savings of \$53,267.

Part of the presentation was spent on estimated savings that could begin in the second semester of the current school year. A grand total of \$729,501 could be realized to help ease the budget issues of the 2009-2010 year. This money could be found through actions such as energy conservation, a reduction in BOCES print shop services, a cutback on field trips, and publishing school and district newsletters online or via e-mail. All in all, for the 2009-2010 school year, the District is looking at a minimum estimated savings of \$4,560,732 to a maximum estimated savings of \$10,264,578.

After Superintendent Powell finished his presentation, the Board Trustees were able to ask questions and make comments. Here are some of the Board Trustee remarks in order of speaking:

Trustee Incoronato:

- Glad that advisorships are being looked at
- Reopening negotiations with the unions was conspicuously absent from the proposal
- Some of the electives have to go

Trustee Porpora:

- Not going to support and health services cuts to students (mental health services, substance abuse services, psychologists, nurses, social workers)
- Concerned with unfunded and underfunded mandates - the District spent \$3,435,836 in 2007 on these mandates

Trustee LoCicero:

- Will not support a cut to kindergarten
- Wants to look at more of the advisorships for cuts
- Of the two certifications, Tri-States is more important - if possible keep that one
- Wants to impact the students as little as possible
- Nonessential memberships to groups can be cut

Trustee Lumia:

- Reduce enrichment
- No cuts to Honors or electives
- Does not want to see renegotiations of contracts

(continued on page 3)

Next Steps in the Budget Debate

Reprinted from the *NYSUT News Wire* - December 23, 2008

NYSUT leaders and legislative staffers are meeting throughout the holiday break with senior staff in the governor's office and the Legislature to minimize damage in the governor's budget plan. On the federal front, NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi and the state AFL-CIO Executive Committee met with U.S. Rep. Charlie Rangel to discuss ways for New York to win federal stimulus funding. Rangel followed up the labor meeting with a press conference announcing his intention to make sure New York is a prominent beneficiary of any stimulus package.

Strategy and planning meetings are also on-going with our coalition partners and fellow unions as we gear up for what is certain to be the most difficult budget negotiations in decades.

As part of our concerted strategy, we'll be launching media campaigns, letters, e-initiatives and other

communication efforts after the holidays to build momentum for alternative ways to raise revenue and avoid painful cuts. The public is with us, as seen in a recent Siena College Research Institute poll that found overwhelming support for raising personal income taxes on the wealthy.

NYSUT is working with a broad variety of groups - New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness, Alliance for Quality Education, Citizen Action, Working Families Party and Fiscal Policy Institute, as well as our K-12 and higher education partners in the Education Conference Board, on a multi-pronged initiative. One recent coalition success resulted in favorable media coverage of a letter from 100 economists from New York State who called for a more balanced approach to the state's fiscal crisis. The economists called for raising taxes on high-income households, rather than imposing painful cuts to close deficits.

Superintendent Presents Budget Reduction Measures *(continued from page 2)*

- Central Office Staff - look for cuts there
- Look into delayed payment of salary percentage increase to when the member retires or resigns
- Eliminate laptops, Smart Boards, and computers
- Begin school in the middle of August and close the buildings in the cold months

Trustee McMahon:

- In favor of saving money through technology such as online communications

Trustee Shultz:

- Cannot support losing mechanics position - the buses need to be safe
- A few more reductions in advisorships can be made

Trustee McGeary:

- Kindergarten cuts are not an option
- No problem eliminating enrichment
- Literacy Coaches can go - if a teacher needs a teacher to help them teach they shouldn't be teaching
- No cuts to social workers and psychologists
- It is okay to get rid of a library clerk position
- Don't need to hire a new mechanic

Trustee Dr. Chandani:

- No one should lose a job in this economy
- Look carefully at all insurances

The floor was then open for public comment. Thirteen people approached the microphone. Of those thirteen people, five mentioned enrichment and how it would be unfair to take this program away from the students. Two former WCSD graduates spoke on behalf of elective art programs and how cutting the classes would do a disservice to students. A parent of a St. Mary's student spoke about the differences in the public and parochial calendars being based on religious reasons and cautioned it could lead to legal problems. One district parent mentioned that saving money on the backs of the teachers is unconscionable and another parent does not want to see any teachers cut; another community member wants the union contracts to be revisited.

The meeting closed with attendees buzzing with questions, none of which will be answered for some time. January 12, 2009 will be the next Board of Education meeting where discussions will be held about some cuts for the 2008-2009 budget and what savings they can bring to the Fund Balance for the 2009-2010 school year.

Fishkill Elementary Cares

By Mandy Scalzo and Lucretia O'Dell

The school system has long held a tradition of being a warm and giving environment. Fishkill Elementary proves this, again, with their latest act of generosity. This December, Fishkill Elementary came together to aide one of their own students. A student had just received news that she has leukemia. She had just battled and beaten it, no more than one year ago. Now, at Maria Ferrari Medical Hospital for Children, the child's Christmas wish is for a laptop with webcam capabilities so that she can see her classmates again.

On Thursday, December 18th, Lucretia O'Dell, (AIS Teacher), organized a fundraiser, where each student would bring in a dollar to be able to wear a crazy hat or crazy socks! Teachers also donated money for the ability to "dress down" for the day. Fishkill Elementary school, staff, and students donated over \$2,000 in one day for this needy family. Everyone in the school realized how good it truly feels to give during this holiday season.



Good News!

- Congratulations to the following teachers whose tenure was approved at the December 15, 2008 Board of Education meeting: **Keri Duncan** (Reading), **Jennifer Smith** (Special Education), and **Cassandra Tatten** (Reading).

- Congratulations to **Jennifer** (Van Wyck), **Chris** and big sister **Isabella Colucci** as they welcomed their newest addition, Luca Joseph, on December 2, 2008. Luca was 6 lbs, 12 oz and 20 inches. Everyone is doing great!



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FOR SALE: *Antique oak child's school desk - top that is removable - can be positioned on an angle or flat for writing - pull out drawer on the right side underneath the chair. The drawer has a unique old metal Victorian drawer pull - a very functional, fully usable & very decorative piece of furniture. Asking \$100. ***Unique antique learning toy** - Chautauqua Industrial Art Desk by the Lewis E. Myers Company - child's portable lap desk - converts into a chalk board, easel, map and multi-subject picture-information that scrolls on top - scroll features a variety of vibrant illustrations on a variety of subjects - © on one of the pics is 1913. The bottom right knob on the scroller is missing (there are three, there should be four) - doesn't affect the scrolling mechanism. There is a small, old tension crack on the bottom edge of the map section of wood. It is incidental, old and doesn't affect the integrity. Asking \$50. ***Full box of six glass antique fire grenades in their original metal box** - both are in good condition - a rare, complete set - quite collectible considering the difficulty in finding these intact and complete. Bottle collectors and vintage firefighter collectors would love this set! Asking \$100. If interested in any items, please call 845-661-2567. Leave a message.

FOR RENT: 1 bedroom apartment in Hopewell Junction. Beautiful, quiet neighborhood, close to many district schools. Large closets, great outside deck, pool. \$900 a month includes everything. Contact Carrie -505-7444. Available January.

FOR RENT: Village of Wapp. Fls. 2 BR apt. on 2nd floor. \$1,200 per month. Heat & hw incl. LR, DR, EIK, 2 BR, 1 bath, plus 2 extra rooms for office/den. HW floors, ldry, walk up attic for storage. 1 car garage. No pets/smokers. Call Anne at 297-1643.



Board of Education Meetings

Schedule (*meetings are held at the District Offices at 8:15 PM*)

- January 12, 2009 - Ketcham, Orchard View, Sheafe
- January 26, 2009 - Fishkill, Fishkill Plains, Wappingers
- February 9, 2009 - Evans, Myers, Van Wyck
- February 23, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Orchard View
- March 9, 2009 - Gayhead, Sheafe, Vassar
- March 23, 2009 - Ketcham, Kinry, Oak Grove
- April 6, 2009 - Evans, Fishkill, Wappingers
- April 26, 2009 (TUESDAY) - Fishkill Plains, Myers, Van Wyck
- May 4, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Vassar
- May 18, 2009 - Gayhead, Orchard View, Sheafe
- June 8, 2009 - Ketcham, Wappingers



We're on the Web!
see us at:

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