



Allamuchy Township School

THE BOARD REPORT



Mountain Villa School

Volume 9, Issue 3

April 2015

Board Message

A school budget is a planning document. Although limited by state statutes and regulations, it demonstrates what the District values and plans to do. As with any plan, it must be flexible when events which cannot be reasonably expected occur.

On Monday, April 27, 2015, the Allamuchy Township Board of Education will consider for adoption the proposed budget and tax levy for the 2015–2016 school year. The Board adopted a preliminary budget for review by the Department of Education on March 23, 2015. The proposed budget, when it is approved by the Department of Education, will be published in the *Express Times* and also available for examination in the Board of Education offices.

The process of developing the 2015–2016 budget began in October 2014. The Board of Education, through the various committees, gives the administration recommendations grounded in policy for the development of the budget. Typically these policy recommendations would focus on considerations such as programming, facilities and personnel. As the process advances, discussions on the interplay of the policy recommendations with fiscal considerations such as high school tuition, contractual obligations and fixed costs and how these matters affect the tax levy lead to regular revisions of the draft budget. In mid-March, the budget process comes to a culmination with the release from the State of the State aid figures. The Board adopts a preliminary budget for State Department of Education review. After a public hearing, the last step is the adoption of the budget. Throughout the process, including at the final hearing, the Board is able to revise the budget.

Even after the adoption of the budget and the striking of the tax levy, line items within the budget, but not the tax levy, are subject to modification with approval from the Department of Education. The two most significant limitations in the budget process are the 2% tax levy cap and flat or diminished state aid. Fortunately, in previous years, the District's budget and tax levy did not meet the 2% limit, allowing the District to utilize the underused portion known as banked cap. This year's budget goes to the full 2% tax levy cap plus utilizes available banked cap. Approximately 85% of the preliminary budget is comprised of contractual or otherwise fixed expenses. The administration toiled meticulously over the revenue and expense line items to reach the proposed budget. Many of the most important operative considerations are:

- All the current educational programming in the District will be continued, including music, art, full-day kindergarten and a robust co-curricular program;
- The budget anticipates the benefits of a shared chief school administrator;
- Due to enrollment and an increased tuition rate, high school tuition to Hackettstown increased by over \$500,000, which is more than can be raised by the allowable tax levy increase;
- The tuition to Hackettstown is being managed by averaging payments over several years to account for the fluctuations in the number of Allamuchy students attending Hackettstown High School. We are grateful for the cooperative relationship we have with our partner district that allows us to negotiate this favorable budget scenario;
- Health insurance costs increased by approximately 8%.
- The administration and the Board investigated, but rejected as resulting in an increase of costs, privatizing some aspects of operations including transportation and custodial services;
- Some staffing is being reorganized or restructured to economize;

- Certificated staff will experience small attrition through retirement or changing needs of our current students;
- Known special education costs have been incorporated into the proposed budget as well as a contingency for unexpected special education costs. Future utility expense savings will be realized as a result of an agreement to construct a solar array on Board property;
- Student population is at an all-time high; class sizes will be larger than those of recent years but still within educationally sound levels

Moreover, the Board expects that the debt service portion of the tax levy will also be reduced as a result of the recent initiative to capitalize on low interest rates with a refinance of outstanding bonds. That refinance is expected to result in savings of approximately \$327,000 over the remaining term of the current bond issue for a typical tax levy savings of approximately \$18,000 per year.

On the revenue side of the budget, the District relies on the tax levy, federal funding of certain programs, state aid and other revenues. The federal funding is tied to certain programs such as Title I and IDEA. Allamuchy does not receive a significant amount of such funding. The District, through a shared commitment to be innovative, has increased revenues in areas such as transportation and out-of-district tuitions received. The District realized no increase in state aid for the third straight year. When measured against state aid levels from 2011, the District is realizing in excess of \$170,000 less in this category of revenues plus the impact of inflation and costs over time. We are able to keep our level of staffing and programming only through the dedicated hard work of our entire staff and the willingness of the Board to examine alternatives in raising revenues and reducing expenses.

It is important not to forget that the overall success of our efforts is measured by the success of our students after they leave Allamuchy Township School. The vast majority of our graduates go to some of the best colleges and universities in our country. They do so after four successful years at Hackettstown, Pope John, Blair Academy and other notable high schools. We acknowledge that the success of our students rests on the good efforts of our Allamuchy residents, parents, administration and staff as well as the students themselves.



Vegetable, herb or flower?

Mr. Lohse's 4th grade science class students were left guessing what their mystery seed would grow up to be during a recent greenhouse enrichment activity. After trying their hand at seed germination using a baggie and coffee filter, the students potted up their seedlings using an assortment of recycled yogurt, cereal, pudding and applesauce containers.



In mid-May, the identity of each child's seed will be revealed. At that point, students will label and transfer their plant in the school courtyard garden. Next September, as 5th graders, they will have the opportunity to share in the harvest of their individual plant.

Allamuchy Township School Presents *Seussical Jr.*

On March 26 and 27, the Drama Club took the school to the world of Dr. Seuss. The Spring Musical, *Seussical, Jr.* was performed for the school, followed by two evening performances for the community. The Drama Club featured 96 students in Grades 5-8. Congratulations to the cast and crew on a fun, wonderful show!



Calling All Incoming Mountain Villa Kindergartners!!!

The Allamuchy Township School District is excited to announce our first Kindergarten Countdown Camp! This program is open to all incoming Mountain Villa Kindergartners. It will be held at Mountain Villa School from August 17-20. Your child will attend an AM session from 9-11:30 or PM session from 12:30-3:00. There is no cost for this program.

Kindergarten Countdown Camp is a readiness program that is designed to assist children and families in making a smooth transition to Kindergarten. The Kindergarten teachers have many fun activities planned to help your child get ready for the kindergarten experience.

Please feel free to email Cathy Cefaloni (ccefaloni@aes.k12.nj.us) or Paige Schmiedeke (pschmiedeke@aes.k12.nj.us) with any questions.

Detailed information will be provided at Kindergarten Orientation on May 8th at 1:00 PM in the Mountain Villa Great Room. We look forward to seeing you and your child there!

Allamuchy Township School District Introduces Mobile App

Put the latest school news and events in the palm of your hand. With the district app, you can keep up-to-date with relevant school news right from your mobile device. With just a touch of your finger, you can see:

Announcements
Headline news and information
Photos

Calendar of events
School directory
Lunch menus

Personalize your experience by subscribing to specific schools, making sure the information you care about most is always front and center in your news feed. Make sure you never miss an event by saving events on your phone's calendar.

Sharing and receiving information about our school has never been easier. From a mobile device, access Google Play or the App Store. Search for Allamuchy Township School. Select the app with our logo.



Fire Department Golf Outing

Benefits Allamuchy Students

A portion of the proceeds will go to a scholarship in Chief Powderley's name

ALLAMUCHY TWP FIRE DEPARTMENT
7TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
"In Memory of Chief Jim Powderley"

Friday, August 7, 2015
 Lunch & Registration 11:30-1pm
 Shotgun Start at 1pm
 Happy Hour 5:30-6:30pm
 Dinner & Awards 6:30-8pm

\$175.00 per Golfer

Lunch and Dinner, Beer & Cash Bar, 3 Hole in One Opportunities,
 (2 Cars and a Harley)
 Giveaway's, Silent Auction, Everything Country Club Style

A portion of proceeds to go to a scholarship in Chief Powderley's name



Allamuchy Township Education Foundation

At the time of the Board Report's mailing, the Allamuchy Township Education Foundation was about to host its **4th Annual Skyland Region Taste of the Town at Mattar's Panther Valley Golf & Country Club**. A unique fundraising event in this part of New Jersey, the Taste of the Town supports one singular mission: the technology initiative of the school district. New to this year's food-and-beverage-tasting fundraiser: an exclusive meet-and-greet and cookbook signing with Food Network celebrity/chef Alex Guarnaschelli, an Artisan Market, and the "After Taste" Party with music by nationally recognized *Jimmy and the Parrots*. Taste of the Town fundraisers have allowed for the donation of over \$20,000.00 for technology in Allamuchy's schools. Plans for the celebratory FIFTH Taste of the Town are already underway for an event that is not to be missed!

The ATEF's redesigned website is now at www.atefoundation.org. The ATEF welcomes personal donations to support the schools and Rutherford Hall, and many corporations have matching gift campaigns. One such workplace giving program is managed by TRUiST. Families and friends of the Allamuchy School District are encouraged to consider the ATEF when making donations. Also, refer to the website – drop-down "Donate" – for information on the **Engraved Brick Program**, the perfect way to honor a graduate and show support for the school that starts Allamuchy students on the path of success. Spring installation will occur soon.

The ATEF meets on alternating third Tuesdays and Thursdays of the month at the Allamuchy Township School and are open to the public. Upcoming meetings are Tuesday, May 19 and Thursday, June 18.

Founded in 2008, the Allamuchy Township Education Foundation is a community-based, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that serves as a conduit for corporate and individual donors to fund innovative and challenging programs and events in support of the Allamuchy Township School District, which includes Rutherford Hall and the greater community.

Allamuchy Township Schools PTO

The Allamuchy PTO makes possible extra little things that are outside the budget that enhance day-to-day learning for students and teachers, but in March the PTO made a BIG thing happen: a MAD HATTER Dinner-Dance and Silent Auction at the Holiday Inn in Mount Olive. Attended by school moms AND dads, teachers, staff, and community professionals and friends, this “first of its kind” PTO event raised over \$17,500! Donations and sponsorships exceeded expectations, and the Silent Auction, Tricky Tray, and 50/50 all resulted in very happy winners and extremely satisfying profits.

The money raised by the PTO will fund opportunities for Allamuchy students by way of grant requests from teachers. This school year, the PTO was able to help with:

- Lighting for the Drama Club’s production of *Seussical Jr.*;
- Field Day “Ultimate Game Show”;
- iPads;
- 8th Grade trip to see *Romeo and Juliet*;
- “Extras” that make the full-day kindergarten program so successful;
- So many teacher- and grade-grants that help enrich education.

The rest of the school year stays busy with the annual Staff Appreciation Luncheon and the popular Scholastic Buy One/Get One FREE book fair at Allamuchy Township School, May 18-22, for all grades.

As always, the township is asked to support other fundraisers the PTO sponsors that require no out-of-pocket costs: Box Tops for Education (register at www.boxtops4education.com), Labels for Education (www.labelsforeducation.com), Tyson, Target RedCard (register your card to benefit Allamuchy School at target.com), TerraCycle (terracycle.net), and ShopRite gift cards. Monthly Market Day sales continue as well (www.marketday.com).



April 22 – June 10, 2015 ~ Bilingual Baby Sign Language at Rutherford Hall

Workshop for 6 months to 2 years old. This 8 week series starts April 22nd and runs every Wednesday through June 10th, 10-11 am. Tuition: \$135 per student. Instructor is Elsa Todd, who will teach mommy and baby Bilingual Baby Sign Language.

May 3, 2015, 1 pm ~ “Downton Abbey Mother’s Day Light Lunch”

Limited seating for this special event! Admission includes soup, salad, an assortment of gourmet tea sandwiches and delicious desert.

Tours of the mansion will be available after lunch. Tickets: \$45 - check our website for additional details or to purchase tickets.

May 6 – June 10, 2015 ~ SPRING SESSION *ARTstitution at Rutherford Hall* ~ SPRING Art Workshops for Children.

The 6 week series starts on May 6th and runs every Wednesday through June 10th - Tuition: \$72 per student. Pre-registration is required. Classes are grouped by age. Mommy and Me classes as well as classes for 5-8 years and 9 years and up. Need more info? www.rutherfordhall.org Registration: www.rutherfordhall.tix.com About the artist: Kerri Howard is a graduate of Du Cret School of Art and majored in fine art. “Miss Kerri” has been an art instructor for children and adults for the past 15 years.

May 16, 2015, 6 pm ~ “Jimmy Durante Show” Grover Kemble pays tribute to Jimmy Durante during a nostalgic jaunt of the life of the American singer, actor, comedian and ever popular entertainer. It will be a show like no other. 6 pm – hors-d’oeuvres will be served; 7 pm Durante show will start – Tickets \$25 – tickets available via our website www.rutherfordhall.org This is a fundraiser for new banquet chairs at our hall...donations will kindly be accepted throughout the evening.

May 31, 2015, 11 am-4 pm ~ Warren County Preservation Day at Rutherford Hall

July 2, 2015, 5 pm-10 pm ~ 2015 July 4th Celebration with music and fireworks! (Rain Date July 5th)

July (dates to be announced) ~ Mommy and Me Nature’s Art Workshops and Publish-a-Book Workshops

July 6-10 ~ Harry Potter-themed Summer Camp Level 1

July 13-17 ~ Harry Potter-themed Summer Camp Level 2

July 20-24 ~ Classic Sports and Games Summer Camp

July 27-31 ~ Hunger Games-themed Summer Camp

September 13, 2015 ~ Claude Bourbon (returning for a second concert at Rutherford Hall)



Seussology

The kindergarten through 3rd grade students of Allamuchy welcomed "Seussology" at Rutherford Hall on February 25 for morning of trivia, dancing, and fun! The program was all things Seuss and the students enjoyed the festivities to kick off Read Across America the following week. A big thank you to the Allamuchy PTO for sponsoring this program.

New Jersey Wildlife Habitats & Litter

Thanks to generous grant funding from the Allamuchy Environmental Commission Clean Communities Fund, the Allamuchy Township Second Graders had the opportunity to actively participate in the Dove Environmental Clean Communities "New Jersey Wildlife Habitats & Litter" program in December. This fun, hands-on, interactive educational program enhanced the students' animal habitat study. The children learned valuable lessons about the importance of keeping our environment clean for the health and safety of our animal population.

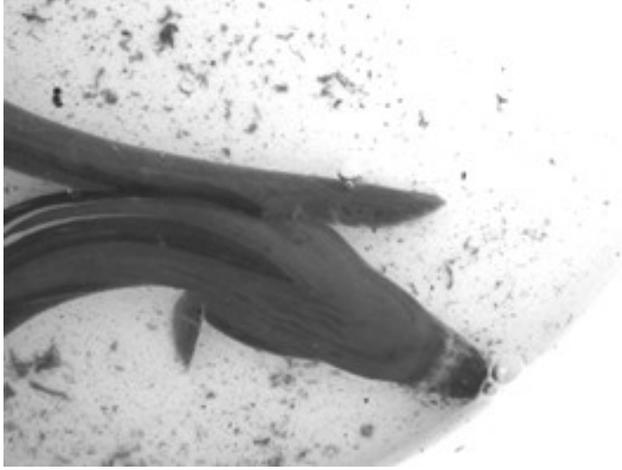
Dove Environmental Education provides hands-on, interactive programming that teaches children what they can do to help the environment by protecting wildlife and habitats. Through these special programs, children understand how litter harms wildlife and how they can take positive action to make a difference. Dove Environmental Education received special recognition from the Warren County Department of Economic Development, the Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the NJ Department of tourism for award winning programs for all ages. Diana Dove, an Environmental Educator since 1975, has been recognized for her work with young children. She is the recipient of the 2011 New Jersey Clean Communities "Excellence in Education" award and the Alliance of NJ Environmental Education "Environmental Educator of the Year" award.

Throughout the program, the children learned many valuable lessons about animal survival needs and how they can take action to help keep our environment clean and healthy. Mr. and Mrs. Dove gave a very fun and informative presentation on animal habitats and the importance of recycling and keeping the environment clean to protect these habitats. The children participated in several hands-on discovery centers that allowed the children to experience nature up

close. They completed a field guide challenge by researching facts related to specific animals and their habitats while viewing taxidermy animals and natural artifacts. A favorite activity involved making models of animal tracks in clay including beaver, bear, and bobcat tracks. The children couldn't wait to take their models home!

Most importantly, the Dove Environmental Education program motivated the children, natural animal lovers, to take action in our community and focus more of their attention on recycling and keeping our community clean. We would like to thank the Allamuchy Environmental Commission for providing the funding for this wonderful educational opportunity for our students.





SURPRISE GUEST

By Charlie Fineran
 Director Open Space
 Allamuchy Township Environmental Commission - Chairman
 Allamuchy Historical Society – President

I learned about several unique educational programs being offered at Rutherford Hall. One was for water quality testing: students tested the dissolved oxygen, PH, Turbidity and temperature, being conducted by Nancy Baglio. The second course was the macro-invertebrate Study, being conducted by Deb DeAngelis. I was very interested in both these courses! As a matter of fact, I will be conducting these same basic tests and investigations as a

member of River Watchers, a program sponsored by the Musconetcong Watershed Association. The River Watcher Program monitors the Musconetcong River at various sites, four times a year! The information collected is then forwarded to NJ DEP and entered into their database.

I visited the classes at Rutherford Hall, where I meet Deb DeAngelis. I am very familiar with the great work and exciting activities created and conducted by Deb and the school, through my position as Director Open Space and through The Allamuchy Township Environmental Commission which has often co-sponsored her work! Deb then gave this description of the programs:

In November we filled leaf/onion sacks with leaves and a couple of rocks to help keep them under the water. These were placed in the running stream portion of Allamuchy Pond and two were placed at the stream over at the ATS school. A total of 10 sacs were put into the water. The purpose was to collect a sample of macro's. These test sacks were actually in the water longer than usual, which worked to our advantage giving us a nice sampling of macro's.

Deb continued,

Macro-invertebrates as well as Water Quality testing tell us the water quality and the diversity of aquatic life. Macro-invertebrates is a study of biological organisms and their responses that allow us to determine the environmental conditions of the water. They are good indicators of stream quality. I spent several weeks teaching the sixth graders about water quality and the macro-invertebrates prior to coming over to Rutherford Hall for this investigative hands-on portion of the lesson.

During my visit with the classes, there was a loud commotion, A SURPRISE GUEST APPEARED!! This visit/appearance, just capped off an already special day! I sent photos to some experts including Royal Nadeau, Ph.D. a member of the Environmental Commission. He advised that we had found a young American Eel. It is one of the few catadromous fishes in the world! That means that the species reproduces in the ocean and migrates to fresh water to grow and mature.

What a great, wonderful learning experience for our students and Deb advised that there are plans to make this course at Rutherford Hall available to other schools!

Please visit Rutherford Hall's web site: <http://rutherfordhall.org>



Ugly Doll Auction

The 6th grade at Allamuchy Township School has worked very hard during 3rd marking period with the help of art teacher Mrs. Mayhood, designing, creating and sewing their own ugly dolls. An online auction was held to raise money for the Wounded Warriors Project, the class selected charity. We are proud to announce that our students raised \$367.00 through their Very Own Ugly Doll Auction.

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Save the Date!!

2015-16 Board of Education Budget Hearing
and Presentation

Monday April 27, 2015

7:30 pm

Allamuchy Township School

Room 149