



# FOCUS

On Franklin  
Township Public Schools

*SPECIAL BUDGET EDITION*

*APRIL 2011*

## **2011 – 2012 Proposed Budget Based on Student Achievement as Top Priority**

Dear Community Member,

We considered many variables when developing the Franklin Township Public School District Proposed Budget for the 2011–2012 school year. First and foremost is our commitment to improving the academic achievement of our students. The proposed 2011-2012 Budget enables us to maintain our momentum toward improvement. It is a budget that, as in years past, despite many constraints and painstaking decisions, puts the education of our children first.

**What are we up against?** Budget planning is never easy. This year it was more challenging than ever due to the extreme financial conditions that we, as well as school districts throughout the state, are facing. Many hours were filled with meetings, discussion, fact-based analyses and weighing countless suggestions, passionate comments, insights and preferences shared by our students, parents, community members and employees. We examined options and agonized over decisions that we would be forced to make.

**Our unions, administrators and staff have stepped up.** It is with great appreciation that we thank the Franklin Township Education Association (FTEA) for working with us and approving cost savings through contract revisions that will preserve the paraprofessionals as District staff members, saving them from being privatized next year. We thank the Franklin Township Support Staff Association (FTSSA) for approving contractual cost savings that will preserve the custodians and grounds men as District staff members, also saving them from privatization. We acknowledge the FTEA, FTSSA and the Franklin Township Administrators Association for making concessions that helped to preserve programs/positions for our current year. Many of the concessions made by the Administrators Association were for two years and will continue to help next year. Non-union administrators and non-certificated staff have also made concessions and contributions to help.

**The necessary cut-backs are staggering – \$11.5 million in a two-year period!** Last year, while planning the budget for our current school year, we learned that State Aid for our district for 2010-2011 would be reduced by \$6.5 million forcing our district to make many painful cut-backs. During our planning process this year, we needed to identify \$5 million in reductions for next year's budget due to rising costs of required expenditures such as increased student enrollment and Charter Schools. The new 2% tax levy cap, a reduction to last year's 4% tax levy cap, imposes a mandatory reduction to our own efforts to present a responsible budget to our community.

**How was the budget developed?** Per our past practice, the budget planning process began with input from teachers, principals, administrators and parents; extended Public Comment sessions were held at Board meetings. This year, we established more formalized systems for receiving feedback, including hosting a community Budget Forum and accepting suggestions on-line and at the District office. Discussions and deliberations continued to the last possible minute, even after the Preliminary Budget was passed on March 3. We added a second question to the ballot to attempt to preserve the transportation staff as District employees; restore the FMS athletic program and sophomore football; selected fine, visual and performing arts and athletic programs that were cut from the 2010 - 2011 budget.

**Where do we go from here?** With the 2011-2012 Proposed Franklin Township Public School District Budget, we will continue our diligent efforts toward increasing academic achievement. This responsibility is our highest priority above many others that we all truly value and cherish. As a community member and neighbor, we ask you to remain our partner in the education of our youth. Please remember to vote in the Wednesday, April 27 School Board Election.

Sincerely,

The Franklin Township Board of Education and Edward Q. Seto, Superintendent of Schools

**School Board Election • Wednesday, April 27, 2011 • Polls Open 2 – 9 P.M.**

### Building Success Through New and Multi-Year Initiatives

The Franklin Township Public School District review from the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC), the New Jersey Department of Education’s monitoring and evaluation system for public schools, was in mid-March. While acknowledging our continuing efforts to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks, Dr. Kathleen Serafino, the Executive Superintendent from Morris County assigned to supervise Somerset County, and her staff, provided the District positive feedback and accolades regarding the progress we have made in many areas since the last review three years ago. We look forward to sharing the report when it is available. Many of the items below were included in the QSAC review. This list represents some of the numerous educational initiatives in-the-works that serve as the building blocks for improving student academic achievement and supporting our district’s key initiatives. (See back page.)

- ✓ Balanced Literacy model encompassing programs such as Reading and Writing Workshop, Words Their Way, Making Meaning and Foundations in K–6 Language Arts develop greater proficiency, address weaknesses and provide opportunities for individualized instruction at the ‘just right’ level
- ✓ Reading and Writing Workshops at Franklin Middle School
- ✓ District and community-wide, “Rock for Reading” *Campaign for 1,000 Books*, the recommended number of books for K-8 classrooms; on the way to raising \$100,000 through various fundraisers, while increasing focus on reading
- ✓ Common assessments for content areas helping to identify each student’s strengths and weaknesses in Language Arts and Mathematics; continued use of Learnia, a Formative Assessment program for grades 3–8
- ✓ Math Trailblazers for K–5, integrating Science and Language Arts and maximizing learning with real-world contexts
- ✓ Two consecutive periods of Mathematics and two consecutive periods of Language Arts at Franklin Middle School (FMS) allowing for longer instructional time and greater continuity in these core subjects (a research-based success strategy)
- ✓ Improved instruction due to increased collaboration between Franklin High School (FHS) Language Arts teachers and the literacy coach through common planning time and team approach to lesson development/student writing assessment
- ✓ Establishment of school-wide professional learning communities for reading and writing at FHS including faculty from other disciplines to help improve literacy in content areas
- ✓ Re-design and implementation of an Academic Intervention Service to address needs of low- and mid-performing students
- ✓ Trimester updates and building level reports to track and monitor academic progress
- ✓ Rave reviews from New Jersey County Teachers of the Year who visited FHS and observed teachers and students
- ✓ Continuation (without formalized funding next year) of Positive Behavior Support programs at Conerly Road, Elizabeth Avenue, Pine Grove Manor, and Franklin Middle schools resulting in improved behavior and focus on achievement; additional procedures established for “at-risk” students
- ✓ Hands-on Science program featuring practical application of scientific method and student research (e.g. 600 projects at the Sampson G. Smith School Science Fair); collaborative Science and Mathematics lessons as part of Kean University Math-Science Partnership, established through participation of 31 teachers
- ✓ 26 FHS Chemistry students working with mentoring coaches from Johnson & Johnson through Bridge to Employment project funded by the corporation
- ✓ Initiative to improve reading comprehension in Secondary Social Studies through non-fiction text; increased application of proven strategies due to collaborative work of teachers and the literacy coach at FMS; application of Stanford University in Social Studies program at FHS to increase critical and analytical thinking and improve writing skills
- ✓ Expansion of technology in the classroom as technology coaches and teachers incorporate use of tools and methodologies (e.g. Skype, Google Docs and wikis) to increase collaboration locally and globally
- ✓ Continued support of the Arts contributing to student development of critical thinking, problem solving skills and more (e.g. FHS’s triumph as NJ State Champions in the Mainstage Thespian Competition, with some students also taking honors)
- ✓ FHS nationally ranked Model UN team earning many awards e.g. Best Small Delegation at Washington Area Conference
- ✓ Maintained focus in Health/Physical Education on adopting a healthy lifestyle; FHS Wrestling Team’s achievements marked with District 18 State (second straight) and the County Championship; history-making student diving win

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2011 – 2012 Operating Budget

<b>Where the Money Comes From (Sources of Revenue)</b>		
<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Property Taxes	\$115,806,508	89.41%
State Aid	\$ 11,542,927	8.91%
Budgeted Fund Balance	\$ 2,000,000	1.55%
Interest and Miscellaneous	\$ 170,480	.13%
Total Revenue	\$ 129,519,915	100%
<b>Where Your Money Goes (Operating Fund Expenditures)</b>		
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 89,531,419	69.13%
Special Education	\$ 17,849,014	13.78%
Transportation	\$ 8,359,766	6.45%
Operations/Maintenance	\$ 5,738,686	4.43%
Instruction and Support	\$ 5,011,901	3.87%
Charter School	\$ 2,837,987	2.19%
Capital Outlay	\$ 191,142	.15%
Total	\$129,519,915	100%

**Ballot Question One:** RESOLVED, that there should be raised for General Fund \$115,806,508 for the ensuing school year (2011 – 2012).

**Ballot Question Two:** RESOLVED, that there should be raised an additional \$760,000 for the General Funds in the same school year (2011 – 2012). These taxes will be used exclusively to restore the middle school athletic program and sophomore football; selected fine, visual and performing arts and athletic programs that were cut from the 2010 – 2011 budget and maintain transportation employees of the Board of Education and related services. Approval of these taxes will result in a permanent increase in the District’s tax levy. These proposed additional expenditures are in addition to those necessary to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards.



Our student enrollment continues to grow. There are 182 more students projected for the next school year.

- ☑ **For Ballot Question One**, the projected property tax increase for the average home valued at \$319,950 is \$92.07, a 2.26% difference.
- ☑ **For Ballot Question Two**, there is an additional increase of \$12.80.
- ☑ The increase for both questions together is \$104.87.

**Franklin Township  
Public School District**

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***Focus*, A Newsletter for  
Franklin Township Public Schools**

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**Please Deliver by April 22, 2011**

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**School Board Election:**  
**Wednesday, April 27, 2011**  
**Polls Open:**  
**2 – 9 P.M.**

**Some Polling Locations and  
District Numbers Have Changed!**  
**Please check your sample ballot to  
find out where to vote!**

**District Continues Focus on Superintendent  
and Board of Education's Six Initiatives**

1. Nurture a culture of learning.
2. Improve student achievement through curricular revisions and instructional materials.
3. Ensure safety and security.
4. Maximize efficiency of operational and administrative functions.
5. Recruit, hire and maintain high quality teaching staff.
6. Strengthen community relations and communications.