



# Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools *Board Highlights*

A summary of  
Board of Education  
meetings published  
by Superintendent  
of Schools Jim Schultz

Meeting of September 25, 2007

## Board of Education plans to address long term building needs

At their meeting on September 25, Board of Education members continued the discussion of draft Board SMART goals for 2007-08 goals and how these tie in to the questions that must be answered and the decisions that must be made before the district will be ready to hold a public vote on a major facilities referendum.

Superintendent JIM SCHULTZ described how the overall enrollment trend has been upward. Last year, the district exceeded 3,500 pupils for the first time in 20 years. The district needs to think about the impact of continued community growth (especially if the AMD plant in Malta becomes a reality) and the potential impact of full-day kindergarten if the state Legislature mandates this.

However, total enrollment numbers are down this fall by as much as 60 children compared to last year, and the housing market has taken a downturn of late as well. "We must keep moving forward and keep planning," he said. "We already have a number of space needs throughout the district but they are mostly driven by program needs rather than enrollment needs, at least for the time being."

The Board reviewed a handout summarizing the fact that there are basically five alternatives they could choose regarding long term space needs. They potentially could:

1. Do nothing and allow the status quo to continue.
2. Renovate the Hostetter Building and use it for classes or other purposes.
3. Sell the Hostetter Building.
4. Build additions onto one or more of our five schools.
5. Build a brand new school.

Mr. Schultz said there are many questions to be researched and answered for each of these alternatives and how they might be combined as well.

An ad hoc Hostetter Building Use Task Force chaired by Assistant Superintendent RICK EVANS has begun collecting ideas on how the former elementary school might be used. Residents and staff are invited to share their ideas with the task force through an opinion survey on the district website ([www.bhbl.org](http://www.bhbl.org)). The task force will present its findings to the Board of Education on October 23.

Board members agreed that their previous idea of holding the district's next major facilities referendum in October 2008 was not possible. The tentative plan had been to charge a district-wide renovations study committee to start meeting in January, evaluate renovation and space needs in all schools, and develop a set of recommendations for the Board of Education by June 2008. "That committee can't start their work until the Board decides what to do with the Hostetter Building," said Board president MICHAEL WOLF, "and I can't realistically see us being able to make that decision by January."

Mr. Schultz stated that last March's EXCEL referendum — whose approval by the voters meant BH-BL could access \$4.9 million in state renovations money — has bought the district some time. "We're using the EXCEL money to fix our most urgent infrastructure problems, like the roofing work at each school this summer and, next summer, replacing the Pashley heating system. This does buy us time, but there are space needs too and other infrastructure needs coming down the pike, like the Stevens heating system."

Board members agreed their goal should be that by August 2008 the Board will clearly define the scope and timing to the district's next facilities referendum, including the question of where to find additional classroom space. This means that a study committee could then use the Board's parameters to evaluate proposed facilities projects during 2008-09 with an eye to holding the actual referendum sometime in 2009. Mr. Schultz noted that several options before the Board would involve redistricting all elementary pupils, so much thought needs to be given and opportunities for public input provided on the question of where to put more classrooms. Shenendehowa just spent four years evaluating a similar question.

Board members indicated they would be ready to vote on their proposed goals at their next meeting.

### Action items

Board of Education members approved: the gift of \$3,000 from the Friends of Music to help defray costs of high school music students' trip to compete in Florida next spring, the gift of a \$1,000 "shopping spree" prize for

Pashley School from Scholastic Book Fairs, an overnight activity at the Albany Museum for high school pupils in the Interact Club (formerly called Key Club and now sponsored by the BH-BL Rotary), and recommendations from the Committee on Special Education.

Also approved was a AAA debit card to be used exclusively for booking tours and airline tickets for World Language pupils' trip to France in April 2008. School Business Administrator DINA JOHNSON noted that \$5,000 in district funds already budgeted for this trip could be moved into this card, which can then be monitored by the business office and would be more appropriate than expecting staff members to put charges of this size on their personal cards.

## More Discussion Items

Regarding the district's policy for field trips to distant areas, Mr. Schultz reminded Board members that he is responsible for considering U.S. Department of Homeland Security threat levels in scheduling field trips. Parents and staff should be aware that when threat levels are raised, there is a chance some previously scheduled trips will be cancelled.

Mr. Evans told the board that there is a need of an additional 0.2 FTE in math teaching time at the high school. Math teachers have been exploring options to address class size issues in Core Algebra, which has an unusually high number of special education pupils. Mr. Evans plans to research several questions asked by Board members and return with a specific personnel proposal at their next meeting in October.

Board member TIMOTHY KELLIHER demonstrated a financial modeling tool he has created to help the district anticipate the impact of various decisions. His spreadsheet program is set up in such a way that plugging in a different number for one year enables the Board to see that number's impact — say on the budget and taxes — several years into the future. Board members agreed this will be of great value in the budget development process.

Board members suggested a number of changes in a draft charge to a new Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning for Interscholastic Sports that Mr. Schultz shared with them. A revised charge is expected to be approved on October 9 so that committee members can be solicited and the committee can start to meet by late October. The board is seeking recommendations on several specific questions related to strengthening and focusing the interscholastic sports program.

Also discussed were revisions to policy P5411 on student physical exams to make it conform to new state requirements regarding the grades when pupils must have physicals. Board member BOB SPECK said he is creating an archive of materials related to the state's proposed "P-16" (i.e., preschool through college) vision for education. Mr. Schultz stated that the property the district is trying to buy on the eastern end of Lakehill Road is being surveyed so that the district's proposal can hopefully be submitted to the Ballston Planning Board in October.

## Personnel Action

### RETIREMENT

FRANKLIN DUQUETTE High School Cleaner  
effective 12/29/07

### RESIGNATION

ERIC MUSCANELL High School Cleaner  
effective 9/28/07

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

AMY DURANT High School Math Teacher  
effective 10/1/07 - 1/22/08

### MILITARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

CHRISTOPHER DESO Charlton Heights Grade 5 Teacher  
effective 10/9 - 10/26/07 and 1/22 - 6/26/08

### APPOINTMENTS

KAREN KELLEY Middle School Special Ed. Teacher  
effective 9/17 - 10/1/07

FRANCINE KILICHOWSKI School Bus Driver  
effective 9/26/07 - 1/31/08

JANICE MURPHY Middle School Food Service Helper  
effective 9/26 - 11/5/07

The Board also named ALISON CUYLER, KRISTINA NEDDO and SUSAN TOMLINSON Technology Integration Specialists and hired CARY ANDERSON, CHELSEA BRITTON, NICHOLAS DANZ, COURTNEY DUCHESNE, SARA McFADDEN, ERIN LUDEKE, and EMILY OSTROM as lifeguards.