

# Mendham Township Schools

## District Newsletter

### The 2014 - 2015 School Budget



On behalf of the Board of Education, I am pleased to present the proposed 2014-2015 Mendham Township School District Budget. Beginning in early November, the budget development process encompasses identifying educational priorities, projecting financial resources, evaluating faculty and staffing needs, and determining the needs of our current and planned programs and services. Through focused financial strategies such as zero-based budgeting, spending reductions, energy conservation efforts, shared services with Mendham Township and other surrounding school districts we are able to continue our commitment to a fiscally responsible approach in managing the school district.

Once again, because of the hard work and dedication of our Staff, Administration, and School Board we are able to deliver a budget that has **no reductions to any of our programs**. This year's budget will require a 1.7% increase to the local tax levy. After several years posting a zero percent increase, with rising expenses in all areas, a zero percent increase was just not possible this year. This increase in the tax levy is amongst the lowest in the last 10 years. Just five years ago in 2009-2010, state aid for Mendham Township was \$768,000. Despite a modest increase for 2014-2015, state aid to Mendham Township is \$430,042, a difference of over \$330,000. The tax rate can be computed at about \$8.00 for every \$100,000 of assessed home value – for the year. Despite increasing expenses in fixed costs such as insurance, utilities, salaries, and transportation, that came to well over \$1.2 million, we are pleased to present a budget that has a minimal impact on the tax levy (\$237,200) for the citizens of Mendham Township. While maintaining a focus on high quality instruction and a well-rounded school experience, our effort throughout the process was always to employ a fiscally sound approach in order to be responsible to the taxpayers. Some of the major components of our budget for next year include:

- ⇒ Continued support and growth of our technology programming and commitment to infusing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills across the curriculum.
- ⇒ [Academic coursework of the highest quality that have lead to both schools rated as Reward Schools by the NJ Department of Education. Mendham Township Middle School has been rated a Reward School for two consecutive years, both for high achievement and high growth, an unprecedented honor.](#)
- ⇒ Maintaining our wide array of co-curricular, extra-curricular, enrichment, and gifted and talented offerings.
- ⇒ Award winning Music, Art, and World Language curriculum at both the Elementary School and the Middle School.
- ⇒ Following through on our commitment to a safe, state of the art school facility, equipped with the best technology and resources we can provide.



### Inside this issue:

<i>Chromebooks</i>	2
<i>NJ DOE School Performance Reports</i>	3
<i>Egyptian Death Masks</i>	4
<i>Dance-In-Residency</i>	4
<i>Giving Back the Gift of Reading</i>	4
<i>Second Grade Science Fun</i>	5
<i>Guys &amp; Dolls</i>	5
<i>Geography Bee</i>	6

### Board Members

Andrew Christmann  
*President*  
Jocelyn deGrandpre  
*Vice President*  
  
Jeffrey Brauner  
Kenneth Elgarten  
Brian Jendryka  
Frank Kontely  
Fion Wood

### Board Meeting Dates

*Elementary School  
Media Center 7:30 p.m.*

April 22\* & 29\*  
May 20 & 27  
June 17 & 24  
July 15 & 22  
August 19 & 26

\* Week Change

## The 2014 - 2015 School Budget.....*Continued from Page 1*

Throughout this budget approval process, I will utilize the District's website, newsletter mailings, our new Mendham Mail system, MTSD radio programs, Eye on MTSD video, and face-to-face meetings to communicate the budget information to the community. A list of Board of Education meeting dates, additional budget information meetings, and contact information will be available on the "School Budget Info" page on our website, [www.mendhamtwp.org](http://www.mendhamtwp.org). You may also request information from our Business Office by calling (973) 543-7107 extension 240.

I strongly believe that this budget represents strong fiscal management while preserving the best K-8 educational programming in the State of NJ. Be assured that despite difficult financial times, our schools continue to thrive and our students continue to achieve. Thank you in advance for your support and feel free to contact me at any time.

*Salvatore Constantino, Superintendent of Schools*

## Chromebooks Add New Dimension to Learning and Teaching in Fourth Grade

Recently, fourth grade students and teachers alike excitedly welcomed the new Chromebook 1:1 technology program into their classrooms. Chromebooks are small, lightweight laptop computers that run Google Chrome OS operating system. Along with instant web access, students also have access to Google Apps for Education. Google Apps include cloud storage for each student through Google Drive, a virtual flash drive which provides access to each student's online documents. Students can sign on to their Drive from any internet connected computer.

The student benefits of a 1:1 program are notable. Students are able to immediately access Think Central, the online component to

Go Math, our current math program. They can access RAZ Kids accounts to work with on screen text. They are also able to immedi-



ately publish typed writing pieces. Students can search, access, and retrieve information from the Web. Google Documents allows students to work collaboratively on live documents. A group can research a topic, discuss and record ideas live, visible to the entire shared group.

The benefits for teachers are duly notable. Teachers are able to send student groups copies of articles and stories to read. Gone are the days of running off twenty copies of five-page articles. Through the use of Google forms, teachers can create quizzes to send to students. By adding a component called Flubaroo, those quiz results are instantly graded, providing teachers with instantaneous assessment results. Having results at their fingertips, teachers can decide which students might need more on the spot support, or which students can receive enrichment.

Chromebooks are indeed leading a clear path to an enhanced 21st century education at Mendham Township!

*If you are a fourth grade family and would like to learn more information; please attend a Chromebook workshop on Thursday, April 10th from 7-8 pm in the library. The event will be facilitated by Mrs. Erica Parke. Since this is an RSVP event, kindly email Mrs. Parke [eparke@mendhamtwp.org](mailto:eparke@mendhamtwp.org) .*

## NJ Department of Education Publishes School Performance Reports

In March, the NJ Department of Education published the School Performance Reports. The School Performance Reports reflect the results of the 2013 NJASK testing and reveals that MTMS and MTES continue to meet all of the NJDOE's No Child Left Behind Waiver targets for all school-wide and subgroup student populations. Additionally, the report identified MTMS as a recipient of the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) coveted "Reward School" designation. MTMS has earned this title since its inception - alongside only four other middle schools across the entire state of New Jersey!

- \* Mendham Twp. Middle School students scored in the 100th percentile statewide for overall academic achievement and in the 99th percentile statewide for overall student academic growth. Both performances were the highest in our Peer Group ("schools with similar grade configurations and that are educating students of similar characteristics").
- \* Mendham Twp. Middle School students passed 98% and 95% of the NJASK Language Arts and mathematics sections respectively.
- \* Thirty-five percent and 79% of our Mendham Twp. Middle School students earned advanced proficiency ratings on the NJASK Language Arts and mathematics sections respectively - which represents the highest combined advanced proficiency rate in MTMS history!
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary School outperforms 99% of schools statewide and 91% of schools of similar demographic characteristics as measured by the NJASK.
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary meets 100% of the NJ State performance targets in the area of Academic Achievement.
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary School's Schoolwide Proficiency in Language Arts is 92% and falls in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide.
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary School's Schoolwide Proficiency in Math is 97% and falls in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide. 75% of Mendham Twp. Elementary School students are *Highly Proficient* in Math.
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary School outperforms 99% of schools statewide and outperforms all other schools in its peer group in the area of student growth.
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary meets 100% of the NJ State performance targets in the area of Student Growth.
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary School's Schoolwide Performance in the area of Student Growth in Language Arts demonstrates *High Growth* and falls in the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide.
- \* Mendham Twp. Elementary School's Schoolwide Performance in the area of Student Growth in Math demonstrates *High Growth* and falls in the 100<sup>th</sup> percentile statewide.

Congratulations to our students for their hard work and dedication towards meeting the extremely challenging and rigorous program requirements at MTMS and MTES. Thanks to all of our parents for supporting our students' efforts to be the very best students they can be. Our teachers continue to work diligently to meet the needs of all of our students and to constantly work to improve instructional practices. The 2012-2013 School Performance Reports certainly reflect excellence in our school community and our common pursuit to provide the very best education for Every Student Every Day!

## Egyptian Death Masks



The sixth grade students at Mendham Township Middle School completed a unit of study

on ancient Egypt in their social studies classes. While studying the ancient Egyptian civilization the students learned about pharaohs, pyramids, the Great Sphinx, the Nile River, mummies, and the afterlife.

To complement their studies, students created individual death masks, as these masks were a very important aspect of ancient Egyptian burials. They provided the dead with a face in the afterlife,

and enabled the spirit to recognize the body. Egyptian death masks could be very elaborate, depending upon the status of the person who was deceased. The masks were usually constructed by taking a plaster cast of the person's face, then making a copy of thin gold plate that was then painted with a likeness of the deceased person.

Cathy Reilly, the sixth grade social studies teacher, with the help of parent volunteers organized and guided the students in creating their masks. The students first spread Vaseline on their faces and then working with a partner, molded plaster-coated gauze strips on their faces. After 15 minutes the strips dried and were carefully re-

moved. The masks were then painted gold to replicate the masks worn by the pharaohs as they journeyed to the afterlife. The students later decorated their masks with paint, ceremonial beards and rhinestones. The completed masks are on view in the sixth grade social studies classroom.



*Egyptian Death Masks  
Plaster Cast*

## Dance In-Residency Program at MTES



In February, our second grade hosted a dance in-residency program facilitated by Mrs. Joanna Pang Atkins, artist in residence. Music, dance, history, geography, social studies and traditional attire are all incorporated into this Multi-Cultural Folk Dance residency. During the course of this residency, the students benefited from a general exposure to various cultures around the world and experienced the process of learning by participation and performance. At the end of the residency, all second grade classes performed in an assembly for the entire school. Each second grade class represented a country and did a traditional folk dance as follows; Mrs. Milow -Australia, Mr. O'Keefe-Russia, Mrs. Pieper-Italy and Mrs. Reed-Dominican Republic.

## Giving Back the Gift of Reading



At the elementary school in honor of Dr. Seuss, our focus was on the national reading campaign, "Read Across America" and to share in our enthusiasm, parents were asked to look through the house for one or two gently used books. The books were passed on to children in need of opportunities to read and learn. To add a personal touch, we asked that parents help their child write a short note and place it inside the cover of the book.

The donated books were used as part of the "Teach for America" program to help a disadvantaged elementary school in Atlanta, Georgia. It lacks a school library and sufficient funding for books.

## Second Grade Science Fun

As part of their Air and Weather unit in science, second graders explored the properties of air. In order to discover the effect of air resistance, the students made paper napkin parachutes. As the parachutes were launched, the students were able to witness the power of air resistance as well as the reason for the design of parachutes. They also used various tools to discover that air takes up space and that air has pressure – as they made “water fountains”. With water squirting everywhere, they discovered that air pressure can be a powerful force!



## Guys and Dolls



On March 6th-8th the Mendham Middle School Stage was transformed to a different time and place as over 75 of the students participated in the Musical Production of Guys and Dolls Jr. The show was dedicated to Ms. Debbie Kirsch, our previous director who lost her battle to cancer this past fall. Although she is no longer with us, her legacy has lived on in the hearts and spirit of all of our past and present cast and crew members. Beth Amiano Gleason, who choreographed last year’s show, took on the role of director this year and continued the wonderful tradition and standards that Ms. Kirsch had become known for in our community. The four amazing performances this year can certainly attest to that with a record number of tickets sold and over 1300 people attending at least one of the four shows.

The show featured Liam Wintz as Sky Masterson, Deidre Thompson as Sarah Brown, Nick Walker as Nathan Detroit and Emily Laird as Miss Adelaide – (replaced by Allison McGrath for the Sat. Matinee) As the show opened, the audience was treated to a great rendition of “The Fugue” by Joe DeGrandpre (Nicely Nicely Johnson), Brenden Elgarten (Benny Southstreet) and Finn Wintz (Rusty Charlie) . Sarah Brown and the Mission Band then entered the scene with “Follow the Fold”. The Mission Band members included: Jocelyn Alam (as Arivde Abernathy) Lauren Rapp, Davis O’Neill, Melissa Schaberg, Saira Alam, Emily Gottschalk, Maxine Kim, Anna Mikula, Lauren Volmuth, Matt Volmuth and Alex Yang. Evelyn Smith as General Cartwright (played by Ava Stefanelli for Sat Mat.) kept an eye on the Mission, while Luke Potash as Lt. Brannigan kept his eye on the Gamblers. Some of the Gamblers included: Colin Elgarten, (Harry the Horse) Gavin Purdy, (Big Jule) Ally Laird, (Angie the Ox) Carter Mills, (Society Max) James O’Neill, (Liver Lips Louie) and Clay Mills (Lookout)

Later on in the show Miss Adelaide was joined by her Hot Box Girls singing a toe-tapping number called “A Bushel and a Peck” adorably arranged by Choreographer Nicole Spadafino. The number was introduced by Nicole Daugherty (Hot Box MC). The Hot Box dancers consisted of: Soffia Baggio, Amelia Berisha, Bella Bhimani, Isabella Boesgaard, Alexander Bosrock, Juliana Bosrock, Melissa Calabresse, Natalie Christian, Stephanie Do, Maggie Kearns, Abigail McGrath, Grace O’Mahoney, Kate Schryver (for the Sat Matinee) Ava Stefanelli, Isabella Troni, Kaitlin Vasquez, Samantha Vasquez, Grace Walker, and Jessica Walker. The role of Hot Box Girl Mimi was played by Allison McGrath (and Isabella Bosrock for Sat Matinee).

One of the highlights of the show was Joe DeGrandpre’s emotionally charged rendition of “Sit Down You’re Rockin the Boat” with the ensemble. The ensemble rounded out the cast and consisted of David Bond, Madeline Bull, Madison Caputo, Grace Chapis, Kayleigh Danieli, Maureen dePoortere, Kali Devereaux, Skye Devereaux, Olivia Eichman, Noelle Gonzalez, Josephine Gutowski, Grace Hassell, Hannah Keighley, Alex Kelly, Emma Mangino, Ashley Nobes, Victoria Parish, Rena Palumbo, Sophia Pettine, Julia Postell, Hailey Popson, Abigail Reing, Aaron Saha, Emma Schaberg, Kate Schryver, Fiona Sipple, and Kendall Wood.

As with any production, it would not have been possible with out the help of those students who worked behind the scenes. Hannah Staples led the stage crew which also consisted of: Ines Caileaud, Aiden Stefanelli, Ashley Walsh and Bethany Walsh. During the busy final week of practices Julia Ford served as the student assistant to the director.

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## William Schumm Wins MTMS Geography Bee



William Schumm, an eighth grade student at Mendham Township Middle School, won the school-level competition of the National Geographic Bee on January 10, 2014 and a chance at a \$50,000 college scholarship. Kyle Morris, a seventh grader and Joe Sylvester, an eighth grader placed second and third, respectively.

The school-level Bee, at which students answered oral questions on geography, was the first round in the 25th annual National Geographic Bee. Other participants in this round of the competition included Scott Herman, Emma Mangino, Matthew Messina, Grace Meis, Colton Rogers, Ellie Romweber, and Brandon White. The Bee is sponsored by the National Geographic Society.

The kickoff for this year's Bee was the week of November 11, 2013 with thousands of schools around the United States and in the five U.S. territories participating. The school winners, including William Schumm will now take a written test; up to 100 of the top scorers in each state will be eligible to compete in their state Bee April 4, 2014.

The National Geographic Society will provide an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for state champions and teacher-escorts to participate in the National Geographic Bee national championship rounds May 19 -21, 2014. The first-place national winner will receive a \$50,000 college scholarship, a lifetime membership in the Society, and a trip to the Galapagos Islands, courtesy of Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic.

Everyone can test their geography knowledge with the exciting GeoBee Challenge, an online geography quiz at [www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee), which poses 10 new questions a day.

The National Geographic Society is the world's largest nonprofit scientific and educational organization. The 121-year-old Society reflects the world through magazines, books, maps, television and interactive media. National Geographic magazine, the official journal of the Society, has a circulation of about 10 million and is read in every country in the world.

Cathy Reilly, social studies teacher, organized the school bee.



*Students in group photo from left to right: Joe Sylvester, Emma Mangino, Ellie Romweber, Grace Meis, Colton Rogers, William Schumm, Scott Herman, Brandon White, Kyle Morris, Matthew Messina*