

The Panther Press

Your Source for News from Point Pleasant Borough Schools

VOLUME
16
Number 1

Foundation to fund library upgrades

The Point Pleasant Foundation for Excellence in Education was founded in 1997 with the goal of strengthening community participation in programs that enrich the values and traditions of Point Pleasant Schools. The organization's primary objective is to provide funding to support school programs, improvements and initiatives that foster excellence.

Over the past 18 years, the Foundation, in cooperation with the Superintendent's Office, has sought to identify high priority opportunities within the schools that are in need of financial support. To date, the Foundation has donated more than \$360,000 to district schools in the form of Student Grants and Scholarships, Teacher Grants, and new technologies and equipment. The Foundation has also provided financial support for the High School's Just Around the Corner school store, a vocational training center for students with multiple disabilities, as well as for the district's Summer Reading Program, providing funds to purchase grand prizes since the program's 2008 inception. The Foundation also oversees Point Pleasant Schools' Hall of Fame, honoring exceptional teachers, students, alumni and community members who have made a positive impact on or who have bequeathed a positive legacy to the district.

The Foundation's targeted areas include, enhancing opportunities for students to achieve total life enrichment and enjoyment through a balance of academics, athletics, and the arts; providing opportunities beyond the traditional learning experience, not funded through currently established programs; and encouraging projects and programs promoting the use of most recent technologies in teaching and learning.

It was the Foundation's commitment to supporting innovative learning opportunities that was at the root of the organization's pledge to fund various improvements at the High School's Media Center. Following the success of a previous partnership with the Foundation, in which the organization provided \$7,300 to finance upgrades to the Media Center's computers, Media Specialist Kimberly Manser presented the foundation with a subsequent funding request to remake the center into an authentic 21st century media center that is a thriving and dynamic learning hub.

"My vision for the renovation is to establish a professional and collegiate level experience for students where expectations are high and a feeling of professionalism is evident," Mrs. Manser said. "My hope is that the revitalized space will become a true information resource center that provides comprehensive cross-curriculum support and that successfully extends learning beyond the classroom."

In her proposal, Mrs. Manser requested \$30,000 to fund the purchase and installation of comfortable seating for leisure reading, a multi media collaboration center, individual desks for quiet study, and informational areas for research needs as well as mobile charging stations.

"The upgrades specified in Mrs. Manser's grant proposal perfectly align with the Foundation's mission of enriching the learning experience and ensuring every educational advantage for the children of Point Pleasant Borough," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "A successful partnership between school and community enhances our ability to provide a quality education for our students, a fact underscored by the Foundation's recent donation. We're so grateful for their commitment to supporting continued innovation in our schools."

According to Mrs. Manser, the renovations will be completed over the summer.

"When our students return to school in September, they'll find a state-of-the-art 21st century learning space that supports active exploration and encourages discovery," added Mrs. Manser. "Thanks to the Foundation's generosity, our students will have access to a dynamic and engaging multipurpose Media Center that meets their evolving educational, technological and social needs."



The cast of Point Pleasant Borough High School's *Beauty and the Beast*

In This Issue:

- 2016-2017 District Budget: **Page 1**
- PPBHS presents *Beauty & the Beast*: **Page 1**
- Programming for Change: **Page 2**
- 2016 Teachers of the Year: **Page 3**
- District to install turf field: **Page 4**
- Superintendent's Perspectives: **Page 4**

Board of Education approves 2016-2017 Budget

The Point Pleasant Borough School District has once again proven that an unyielding commitment to developing an annual school budget that provides for a first-class educational experience for the children of Point Pleasant Borough yet is sensitive to the town's taxpayers can guard against the common pitfalls that plague many New Jersey school districts during the spring budgeting season. The sluggish economy; a prohibitive State Spending Cap; lagging State Aid figures; and an ever-expanding list of un- or under-funded State-mandated programs, were, once again, no match for the district as demonstrated by the Board of Education's recent adoption of the district's 2016-2017 budget, a spending plan that, maintains all academic and co-curricular programming; makes all necessary accommodations for the continued integration of the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy in accordance with State mandates; addresses the technological and material requirements to continue to effectively administer the PARCC standardized assessments as prescribed by the State; and provides for all essential maintenance and upkeep to the district's more than half a million square feet of building space and exterior property, at a total amount that falls within the parameters of the state tax cap and that is significantly less than neighboring New Jersey School Districts.

On Monday, April 25 the Board took the final step in the months-long budgeting process, when they voted unanimously to adopt the proposed spending plan, appropriating \$42,252,758 for the 2016-2017 school year, of which \$32,707,297 will be supported via local taxes.

CURRICULUM INITIATIVES

The budget provides for increased instructional continuity and collaboration among all grades and schools with continued development and refinement of standards-based instruction and assessment in all academic areas, as well as further efforts to align curriculum with the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

"The coming year's curriculum and improvement initiatives are focused on providing our educators with the materials, knowledge and skills necessary to support their continuous growth and achievement as well as that of their students, while also promoting college and career readiness among all Point Pleasant Borough students," said Director of Curriculum & Instruction Susan Ladd, Ed.D. "Targeted professional development coupled with the continued use of supplemental learning tools like Achieve3000 and the Scholastic Reading Inventory and strategic addition of new materials as well as the continued integration of technology in the classroom will help foster increased student success at all levels."

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

College and career advancement opportunities offered in the Point Pleasant Borough School District will increase in the coming year with the introduction of new college credit earning opportunities at Point Pleasant Borough High School.

"Next year's introduction of AP Computer Science

Continued on Page 3

Point Pleasant Borough High School presents *Beauty & The Beast*

If ever there was a question as to whether high school students could successfully stage a production of Disney's beloved hit musical *Beauty and the Beast*, Point Pleasant Borough High School's Performing Arts Department has proven the answer is a resounding "yes".

Despite their well-deserved reputation for staging outstanding performances of complex and challenging material, the Department's selection of *Beauty and the Beast* for their 2016 Spring Musical production was ambitious by any measure.

Based on the classic 1991 Disney film of the same name, *Beauty and the Beast* tells the story of a selfish prince [Kevin Jasaitis] who is turned into a hideous beast as punishment for his cruel and callous behavior, and a beautiful, compassionate and headstrong young woman named Belle [Georgianna Flagg], whom he

has imprisoned in his enchanted castle. The Beast's only hope of breaking the spell and restoring his humanity rests on earning Belle's love before time runs out. The Beast's attempts to capture Belle's heart appear to be in vain as his selfish tendencies and demanding ways

push her farther away; however, the prince's household staff, who have been transformed into anthropomorphic household objects, step in to play matchmaker.



Georgianna Flagg as Belle sits with Kevin Jasaitis's Beast

With ornate costumes, multiple complex sets, elaborate choreography and huge ensemble numbers in which the actors are required to wear everything from giant cutlery to china and even an armoire, the musical spectacular posed some significant challenges to the Performing Arts Department. However, as is true in many instances, the greater the challenges, the greater potential exists for rewards. And for the cast and crew of Point Pleasant

Borough High School's *Beauty and the Beast*, the rewards were plentiful, received in the form of raucous applause and standing ovations given by the audiences during each

Continued on Page 3

Point Pleasant Schools
2100 Panther Path
Point Pleasant, NJ 08742

POSTAL PATRON
POINT PLEASANT, NJ 08742

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
LAKEWOOD, NJ 08701
PERMIT #89

Budget (continued from page 1)

Principles will bring the total number of Advanced Placement courses available at the high school to 17," Ms. Ladd said. "Additional existing educational partnerships and specialized learning opportunities and the continued exploration of new programs allow our students to get a head start on college while helping better prepare them for the rigors of college life."

The district offers two distinct college-credit earning opportunities through a partnership with Ocean County College: the first program allows students to take select college courses – taught by high school teachers who also serve as adjunct OCC professors - embedded in the regular school day; the second program - Jump Start - allows students to take college classes at OCC's main campus or at any number of satellite schools, including Point Pleasant Borough High School.

The district also has a Computer Science cooperative agreement established with Monmouth University. The program combines classroom-based learning with practical experience, providing a pathway to acceptance at Monmouth as well as specific scholarship-earning opportunities.

Students also have opportunities to pursue post-secondary experience through a partnership with Ocean County Vocational Technical School and the College Tech Prep program.

"Ocean County Vocational Technical School and the College Tech Prep program provide students with focused hands on training and targeted instruction opportunities in specialized fields," she said. "Students completing these programs earn a diploma as well as technical certifications, and, in many cases, college credit, and are prepared to enter the work force, pursue a trade or continue their education in college or a post-secondary technical school."

TECHNOLOGY

Research shows that, when used effectively, technology enhances standards-based learning across the curriculum, and because technological fluency is essential for living and working in the 21st century and

beyond, every effort has been made to infuse technology into virtually every curriculum area.

Infrastructure upgrades, coupled with the strategic addition of hardware and components have provided not only the devices, but also the consistent wireless access and sufficient bandwidth necessary to support a fully integrated instructional model. The ongoing transition to this model will be further facilitated with the purchase of additional quantities of Chromebooks for each school, provided for in the budget.

Chromebooks were introduced into the district last year to great success and have been an invaluable classroom tool, facilitating real time collaboration between teacher and students, with limitless possibilities thanks to the comprehensive suite of Google Apps for Education.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To further support the district's transition to the integrated instructional model afforded by the Google Chromebooks, the district will continue to host strategic professional development programs grounded in Google for Education, helping staff harness the transformative powers of Google in their classrooms. Additional technology workshops and training will help ensure classroom technology use is effective meaningful and appropriate to students' needs.

FACILITIES UPGRADES

"District facilities are regarded as a treasured investment," said Superintendent Smith. "Our Board of Education and district administration believes it's our duty to keep our schools safe, comfortable and appropriate to our students' needs."

According to the Superintendent, the coming year will see continued maintenance and proactive assessment of building systems to further ensure building safety and durability.

"The budget looks to maintain the momentum established in previous budget cycles with continued work on a number of key capital improvements,

including, the continued replacement of classroom lighting at the middle school and additional security camera upgrades at all district schools, replacing all analog units with digital cameras," he said.

The budget also contains a provision for the conversion of the varsity field to a turf field. [see related story p. 4]

"Installing a turf field has been a long-term district goal," said the superintendent. "After years of saving and building up our capital reserves - which can only be used to fund capital projects - we are finally able to make this goal a reality."

The installation of the turf field will complement a number of recent upgrades to the field lighting, the bleachers and the refurbishment of the track, which was completed several years ago.

TAX IMPACT

"The district's responsibility to Point Pleasant taxpayers is second only to the responsibility we have to our students," said Superintendent Smith.

In accordance with the State's current school funding formula, local property taxes account for 76 percent of the district's total budget. Under the 2016-17 budget the general fund property tax increase equals 1.3 cents per \$100 of assessed home value, which for the average Borough home assessed at \$381,600, is an additional \$51 per year, which represents the lowest increase in more than 20 years!

"Despite incremental increases to the district's State Aid over the last couple year, our State Aid numbers are still, more than six years later, about \$1 million under 2010 levels," said Mr. Smith. "The fact that we were able to craft such a comprehensive budget that is within the State's allowable Spending Cap is remarkable, and truly a testament to School Business Administrator Steve Corso's business acumen and the austerity demonstrated by the Board of Education. The 2016-17 budget provides the essential tools to uphold the district's rank as not only one of the top achieving school districts in the State, but also one of the lowest-spending."

Programming for change in PPBHS Room 206

When used effectively, technology enhances standards-based learning across the curriculum. Because technological fluency is essential for living and working in the 21st century and beyond, the Point Pleasant Borough School District has made every effort to integrate technology into virtually every curriculum area.

More than a classroom complement, however, technology comprises its own curriculum content area, the goal of which is to teach students to become independent, responsible and effective users of information and technology. Through daily, interdisciplinary technology use, students learn to conduct research, solve problems, and think critically while gaining the essential communication and vocational skills that are necessary for success in the global economy.

"Point Pleasant Borough Schools offer diverse opportunities for students to not only become proficient users of computers and mobile technology but also learn valuable programming and back end design skills," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "These opportunities have better prepared our students for the technological demands that await them at college and in careers while providing them with increased opportunities to achieve success."

The technology-based educational opportunities available in the High School's classroom 206 have gone a step further, not only providing students with opportunities for achievement and the acquisition of professional experience but also allowing them to put their technological savvy to use to affect lasting positive change in their school and the surrounding community with the development of a series of specialized applications and programs.

The understanding that students taking classes in room 206 will use their programming skills to affect positive change stems from the personal philosophy of the room's teacher, Nick Gattuso whose approach to computer programming – both as a teacher and in practice – has been heavily influenced by a moral imperative to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Over the last 14 years, Mr. Gattuso and his students have earned a reputation for dedicating classroom projects to specific charities and causes.

"I try to teach my students how to use their programming, engineering and problem-solving skills for good," said Mr. Gattuso.

When each new project is introduced, Gattuso assembles his students into conventional project management teams, with a resource manager,

technical manager and lead programmer, who work together to complete the assigned project. Students are inspired by the knowledge of whom they are designing each project and the potential impact it could have on the life of the recipient, leading to unique opportunities for collaboration and inclusive learning.

Panther Assisted Learning Software, or PALS, is one such project. PALS is a suite of assistive learning applications that have been in development in room 206 over the last four years. The applications are designed for the students in the school's Multiply Disabled/Transition class.

During the development phase, the nascent programmers work alongside their special needs peers to design applications based on each special education students' specific needs. Apps created for PALS include, a navigational tool to help students new to the Transition program navigate the high school; a program to simplify units of liquid measure; a money-changing app; and a shopping simulator designed to help the students navigate the supermarket.

"The development of the PALS applications for the students in the Multiply Disabled/Transition class aligns with the program's goal of teaching vocational sufficiency while promoting community integration among students with multiple disabilities," said Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services Rita Miller. "PALS provides our students with multiple disabilities with new ways to achieve their potential, ultimately helping them to become independent members of the community."

"The development of these apps has also facilitated increased interaction between our students with multiple disabilities and their non-disabled peers," she said. "This interaction is central to the inclusive school climate that we have been working to foster in the Point Pleasant Borough School District."

The district was recently notified that the PALS initiative was one of 10 New Jersey special education programs to receive the 15th Annual Innovations in Special Education Award, an award that recognizes exemplary programs for special education students.

Additional service projects completed by Mr. Gattuso's students include, designing the original school store website, the proceeds from which help support the Transition program; designing the original website for the organization Friends of Jason, which was established to honor Jason Condit, a 10-year-old New Jersey boy who lost his battle with cancer in 2014; and designing the first rendition of the Ocean of Love for Children with Cancer website as well as the organization's mascot – Sammy the Seal, which is still in use today.

Anxious to work with the organization again, Mr. Gattuso recently contacted Ocean of Love to offer his class's

design services. After a discussion with the organization's social workers, the concept for Cell Destroyer was born.

"Cell Destroyer is video game modeled after the classic Pac-Man game," Gattuso said. "Instead of Pac-Man, Ocean of Love mascot Sammy the Seal is the player's icon and instead of eating dots, Sammy 'eats' cancer cells. Throughout the game play, Sammy moves around the game board gobbling up the cancer cells to effectively 'beat cancer.'"

He said the game is available for play from any web browser and can be downloaded to run as an application on any computer and certain mobile devices and will soon be installed on the computers at Ocean of Love's Toms River headquarters.

Gattuso's Advanced Software Engineering Topics class also recently completed their first mobile app to provide key information to Point Pleasant Borough High School students. The app, now available for download on all Android and Apple devices, provides students with helpful school information like daily announcements, lunch menus, schedules and calendars as well as local lunch spots and other links.

"The district is very proud of the unique educational experiences and opportunities available in room 206," said Superintendent Smith. "In addition to the work they're completing in his class, Mr. Gattuso's students are eligible for some unique opportunities thanks to his relationship with Monmouth University."

According to Mr. Smith, Mr. Gattuso was instrumental in establishing a Computer Science Cooperative agreement with Monmouth University, which combines typical lessons with practical experience, and provides a pathway to acceptance at Monmouth as well as specific scholarship-earning opportunities.

"Mr. Gattuso is also heavily involved with Monmouth University's Summer Research Program, which has employed a number of our high school students over the past several years," he said. "The Summer Research Program offers our students paid employment and valuable hands-on experience in a college research lab."

Mr. Smith said, as advisor to the Programming Club, Mr. Gattuso has led his team to victory besting larger schools with renowned clubs.

"Mr. Gattuso has inspired record numbers of students to pursue careers in the computer sciences," said the superintendent. "And thanks to his dedication to altruism, we can be assured that the next generation of technological leaders will share Nick's moral imperative to use their programming skills to make a positive difference in the world."

Point Pleasant Borough Schools' Teachers of the Year

Research has proven that nothing has a more profound or lasting effect on student achievement than the quality of their teachers. As the architects of student achievement, educators have the capacity to transform and enrich their students' lives, positively impacting lifetime outcomes. Unfortunately, teachers rarely receive the recognition and praise they deserve for the vital role they serve in the development of an advanced, well-educated society.

The Point Pleasant Borough School District believes that teachers' efforts should be regularly recognized and applauded. At a time when teachers are once again, serving as the subject of negative political rhetoric, acknowledging the contributions made by exceptional teachers every day, both in- and out- of the classroom, has become increasingly important.

"An ongoing commitment to recognizing exemplary teaching contributes to our district's positive culture, boosting morale and helping to motivate and inspire our staff to achieve their personal best," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "Our district's teachers regularly capture the attention of various local recognition programs and have also been honored - with increasing frequency - by numerous regional and national programs."

According to the Superintendent, over the past several years, district educators have earned a number of prestigious awards, like the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching, Princeton University's Distinguished Teacher Award, the Masonic Fraternity's New Jersey's Educator of the Year Award, and New Jersey's Exemplary Elementary and Secondary Educator Awards.

"These awards honor our district and serve as a testament to the superior quality of our schools' education professionals," said the Superintendent.

On Feb. 26, the list of recent awards granted to Point Pleasant Borough educators grew by four as Superintendent Smith, along with his fellow Central Administrators, visited the district's four schools to announce the recipients of the 2016 Ocean County Teacher of the Special Recognition Award, presenting each of the shocked recipients with a bouquet of flowers commemorating their selection for the prestigious award.

For their outstanding efforts on behalf of the students of Point Pleasant Borough, Dave Johnson from Point Pleasant Borough High School, Jennifer Fitzgerald from Memorial Middle School, Kathleen Gronert from Nellie Bennett Elementary School and Mim DeSomma from Ocean Road Elementary School were named the district's 2016 Teachers of the Special Recognition.

The Teacher of the Year Program was established with the goal of highlighting the rewards of teaching, as well as the important services outside the classroom environment that lead to student success.

The criteria for selection include, the use of innovative instructional techniques & methods; the ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn; skill and dedication as an educator; and the ability to foster excellence in education by ongoing contributions to the improvement of student learning and the learning environment.

"The Educator of the Year program provides an excellent opportunity for school systems and their communities to recognize exemplary teaching," said Superintendent Smith. "We are so fortunate that there are so many exceptional teachers in our district, although, each year, it becomes increasingly more

difficult to narrow it down to just one winner per school as the list of nominees continues to grow."

Initially nominated by parents and fellow staff members, the Teachers of Special Recognition are selected by a panel of district administrators, teachers, parents and community members. A committee identifies the four educators who best demonstrate the use of creativity, innovation and efficiency in the classroom and who foster a learning-focused environment.

After 13 years spent working in the business world, Point Pleasant Borough High School Class of 1985 grad Dave Johnson decided he needed a change. With a Bachelor of Science in Management Science and Marketing from Kean University and an MBA in marketing from Montclair State, Johnson went back to school to pursue a post-baccalaureate alternate route to teaching, graduating with his teaching certification from Jersey City University in 2005. That same year, Mr. Johnson returned to his alma mater to accept a position in the High School's Business Education department.

For the past 11 years, Mr. Johnson has drawn upon his extensive educational and professional history to teach Accounting, Entrepreneurship, Personal Finance, and AP Economics, attributing his success as a teacher to his practice of the ACDC Leadership® style of teaching.

"ACDC, an acronym for *Active Learning, Cooperative Learning, Discovery Learning and Community*, is a hands-on, student-centered teaching philosophy" he said. "It's implementation has helped facilitate a culture of student engagement in my classroom and has made me a more successful teacher."

Throughout his teaching career, Mr. Johnson has also sought to improve the school climate, a goal he's accomplished through his role as Universal Team Leader for the Be On Point character education initiative.

"In the four years since the Be On Point program was introduced, there has been a significant reduction in the number disciplinary referrals, while positive behaviors, including student attendance, have increased," he said. "A relationship established with the Ladacin Network has also helped forge a bond between our respective student bodies and has created a more inclusive learning environment."

Memorial Middle School Teacher of the Year Jennifer Fitzgerald's love of teaching is hereditary.

"My love for teaching was instilled at an early age by my father, an incredible teacher," said Mrs. Fitzgerald, an eighth grade math teacher. "He always told me that the best teachers have passion for what they are teaching and compassion for those they are teaching."

Mrs. Fitzgerald - or Mrs. Fitz as her students affectionately refer to her - earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary and Middle School Mathematics from University of Delaware. She continued her education at Montclair State, earning her master's in Middle Grades Mathematics.

After two years in the Franklin Lakes School District, Fitzgerald relocated to Memorial Middle School in 2004.

"From day one, Memorial School has been like a second home to me, filled with amazing teachers and fantastic students," she said. "I have grown as a teacher throughout my time in Point Pleasant by learning from the best of the best."

Throughout her teaching career, Mrs. Fitzgerald has distinguished herself as an exemplary educator and leader. She serves not only as eighth grade team leader,



Teachers of the Year: Dave Johnson, Mim DeSomma, Kathleen Gronert, Jennifer Fitzgerald

but also as member of the School Improvement Panel, and co-chair of the Academically Talented Committee. She's also the eighth grade team leader for the school's Ocean County Math League team and has recently become a Google Certified Educator.

"My goal beyond teaching my students Algebra 1 is to motivate, challenge, and inspire them," she said. "Their enthusiasm, creative-thinking, and excitement for learning inspires me each and every day."

Nellie F. Bennett Elementary School teacher Kathleen Gronert's teaching career has spanned more than three decades and on two continents.

A 1984 graduate of Boston College, Mrs. Gronert's first teaching assignment was in Spain at the American School of Madrid and later at the Colegio Agaiva, a start-up American school in Cambre. She returned to the United States in 1986, promptly interviewing for a new position at Nellie F. Bennett, which required candidates to have a Spanish background. Gronert was hired and started working at the school the following week, where she has remained ever since.

Over the past 30 years, Mrs. Gronert has spent 10 years teaching basic skills, nine years teaching first grade, and is currently in her eleventh year as a second grade teacher.

"Teaching is a very passionate profession," she said. "I, like most teachers become very attached to my students and take my job seriously. It's this passion and love for my students that drives me to continue to better myself and do what is in their best interest at all times. I am rewarded every day with seeing my students grow, learn, and be kind to each other."

The rewards of teaching have also proven irresistible for Ocean Road Elementary School special education teacher Mim DeSomma, who after a 14-year hiatus during which she was a stay-at-home mom to her five children, returned to the teaching profession resuming her career at Ocean Road School nine years ago.

"There is nothing more rewarding for me than to see my students' faces light up when they accomplish a goal and are beaming with pride," she said. "While I feel honored to play a small role in educating our students, I am even more grateful for the lessons my students have taught me about perseverance, determination, and unconditional love."

"Teachers of Special Recognition are dedicated, inspiring, and committed to making a difference - in short, they are like these four exemplary educators," said Superintendent Smith. "I offer my wholehearted congratulations to each of them for this outstanding achievement."



Beauty (continued from page 1)

of the musical's five sold-out performances at the Loren Donley Center for Performing Arts.

"Point Pleasant Borough High School's

production of *Beauty and the Beast* made for a thrilling theater experience," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "*Beauty and the Beast* has been immortalized in print, on film and on stage and though, the story is a familiar one, our the high school's production exceeded every one of my expectations. This production will remain for me - as I'm sure it will for many others fortunate to have counted themselves among its audiences - the best and most memorable adaptation of an iconic musical."

The credit for staging what Superintendent Smith calls Broadway-caliber productions, is due to the Performing Arts Department outstanding staff and students, and the dedicated students of the cast and crew.

"From the expert leadership provided by Director Ian Kearns, to the pitch-perfect performances of the cast, framed by the tutelage of Dramatic Arts teacher Becky Muraglia and Vocal Director Terry Bojanowski to the musical's outstanding orchestral accompaniment led by Band Director Scott Visco, *Beauty and the Beast* is a shining example of the level of excellence achieved through full collaboration," added the Superintendent. "But I have to give credit to the student performers. Although our students are fantastic in every role in which they appear, this production was truly something special with each actor's performance so perfectly suited to their character. It was as if the roles were meant for the students that inhabited them. It was truly a magical experience."

Beauty and the Beast cast: Maggie McKeon as Enchantress; Georgianna Flagg as Belle; Kevin Jasaitis as Beast; Pierce Drzymkowski as Gaston; Denis Long as LeFou; Nicholas Bertinelli as Maurice; Matthew Norkus as Cogsworth; Liam McLaughlin as Lumiere; Olivia Youngman as Mrs. Potts; Sean Haugh as Chip; Jamie Noon as Babette; Cecelia Zitarosa as Madame de la Grande Bouche; Rebecca Hobba, Cassandra Armendo and Maggie Stupar as Silly Girls; Keith Redzinak as Monsieur D'Arque; and Gwendolyn

Attridge, Shea Conboy, Megan Haugh, Emily Mickle, Jamie Morris and Laura Regec as the Featured Dancers.

Ensemble cast: Hayley Adolf, Natalie Andreyev, Amy Bergquist, Bill Buttino, Nicole DeJacimo, Alysa Fernandez, Angela Filtz, Jaelyn Harold, Jack Henry, Caitlyn Hill, George Jason, Meg Leahy, Donovan Lee, Ashling McNally, Starlee Millet, Devin Moeller, Amy Narcy, Alejandro Oquendo, Anesa Oquendo, Michael Petillo, Jackson Tremblay, Megan Taulafo, Matt Wells, Mary Wittman and Stefanie Wittmann.



Superintendent's Perspective

Although the weather might indicate otherwise, spring has arrived, bringing with it one of my favorite times of the school year. With the many live performances, art and film festivals, and student award and recognition programs that honor student achievement throughout the year, spring is one of the most exciting here in Point Pleasant Borough Schools. These events and activities provide unique insight into the academic, artistic and athletic growth our students have experienced during the school year.

However, spring is also somewhat bittersweet because it also signals the end of another school year. It's hard to believe that the end of the 2015-2016 school year is just weeks away. Soon, our schools' will confer to our students their highest honors at their promotion and graduation ceremonies. It's never easy to say goodbye but we send these young men and women off to realize their dreams and ambitions secure in the knowledge that we have prepared them well.

Before we look toward the future, however, I'd like to pause and reflect on what, so far, has been an unforgettable year. With its many achievements the 2015-2016 school year will stand as a monument to achievement with our students far exceeding all standards of excellence. This year, like in previous years, our students have received commendations for their academic pursuits, seen critical acclaim for their work in the performing arts and have secured a number of state sectional championships and sportsmanship awards. What sets this year apart, however, is not only the volume of honors, but also the level of prestige of the awards that have been bestowed upon our students and staff. This year, students were distinguished as AP Scholars, Algonquin Rising Stars, and participants in the WorldStrides High School Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall among others. Our students have taken top honors in, various art competitions, like the Fourth Congressional District High School Art Exhibition and the Scholastic Art & Writing Competition; performing arts contests, including the NJ Drama & Forensics League Contest; digital video contests like the Ocean County Library Film Festival; and numerous essay contests. A number of our student-athletes have also earned spots among our area's top athletes on All County, All Shore, All Division and All State teams!

District staff members have also earned recognition this year, including, seven district teachers whose commitment to 21st Century teaching and learning inspired their pursuit of certification through the Google Certified Educator program; an Exemplary Secondary Educator; four Teachers of the Year; an Educational Support Professional of the Year; a Greater Media Teacher Who Rocks; the Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Volunteer; and two Coaches of the Year!

Thanks to the Board of Education's recent adoption of the 2016-2017 budget, even greater success is promised in the coming years. In alignment with the district's commitment to delivering a first-class educational experience to our students while remaining accountable to Point Pleasant taxpayers, the approved budget maintains our schools' high quality educational and co-curricular programs and progressively addresses students' evolving needs with new programs and initiatives yet imposes the lowest tax increase in over 20 years!

The 2016-2017 budget represents a hard won achievement for district administration and the Board of Education who share the challenge of crafting a school spending plan that facilitates learning yet is sensitive to the needs of taxpayers. I believe the approved budget meets with both those goals and provides for the best possible educational experience for the children of Point Pleasant Borough.

On behalf of the Board of Education, Central Administration, and the entire Point Pleasant Borough School District, I thank you for your continued support.



Vincent S. Smith
Superintendent of Schools

Vincent S. Smith
Superintendent of Schools

The Panther Press

Volume 16, Number 1

Published twice a year by the Point Pleasant Schools Board of Education, 2100 Panther Path, Point Pleasant, NJ 08742.

The Panther Press is a newsletter written for the purpose of raising community awareness of school happenings and district initiatives. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Panther Press 2100 Panther Path, Point Pleasant, NJ 08742. Point Pleasant Schools is an equal opportunity/affirmative action organization. Copyright 2016.

Articles may be re-printed upon notifying the Panther Press Editor.

Editorial Staff

Publisher: Vincent S. Smith
Editor: Jacquelyn Goss

Point Pleasant Borough 2016 Board of Education

President: Susan Ward
Vice President: Sean Hagan
Susan Byington
Matthew Jordan
William Munn
Cheryl Salway
Larry Williams

Board Attorney: Viola Lordi, Esq.
Board Secretary: Steven Corso

Central Administration

Superintendent of Schools: Vincent S. Smith
Curriculum & Instruction Director: Susan Ladd
Pupil Personnel Services Supervisor: Rita Miller
School Business Administrator: Steven W. Corso

Mission Statement

To assure that all students are equipped with the essential skills necessary to acquire knowledge and understanding; to instill the desire to question and look for truth so that students may become critical thinkers and life-long learners; and, to assure that all students practice self-discipline, perseverance, fairness, and judicious decision making.



It is the expectation of this school district that all pupils achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade levels.

District to convert varsity field to turf

School athletics serve a central role in the tight-knit Point Pleasant Borough community; unfortunately, the Point Pleasant Borough School District has encountered significant challenges in providing the town's children with quality playing fields to accommodate their growing athletic needs.

"Point Pleasant Borough is one of New Jersey's most densely populated towns," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "Our land-locked location, coupled with the shortage of available playing fields and a delicate grass field has imposed significant limitations for our student athletes.

"Because developing new playing fields in Point Pleasant is not possible," said the superintendent, "the district has sought ways to maximize the playability of the Point Pleasant Borough School District's existing fields."

Superintendent Smith said after years of exhaustive research, careful deliberation and debate between district administration, the Athletic Department and the Board of Education, the decision was made to convert Point Pleasant Borough High School's varsity field to a turf field.

"Installing a turf field has been a long-term district goal," said Superintendent Smith. "Unfortunately, the associated costs had always proven prohibitive."

But thanks to years of saving and working to build up capital reserves, according to Mr. Smith, that goal is set to become a reality sometime during the next school year.

"The 2016-2017 budget allocates funding from the district's capital reserves – which by law can only be used to fund capital projects – for the conversion of the varsity field to a turf field," he said.

According to the superintendent, the project, which will likely begin after the close of the Fall 2016 athletic season, will include the installation of FieldTurf's CoolPlay™ system as well as the necessary drainage. CoolPlay™, the latest innovation by

industry leader FieldTurf, is constructed with FieldTurf's patented three-layer infill system. Although the CoolPlay™ base layers are comprised of the FieldTurf standard cryogenic rubber and silica sand blend, the top layer substitutes eco-friendly cork in place of the traditional crumb rubber surface.

"In addition to promising surface temperatures approximately 35 degrees cooler than traditional turf systems, CoolPlay™ provides better shock absorption and is more durable yet does not compromise safety or performance," said Mr. Smith.

District Athletic Director Chris Ferrone echoed the superintendent, saying, "The fragile nature of the existing grass field, has required the district to place heavy restrictions on field usage.

"The installation of the turf field will allow us to lift many of these restrictions, allowing the district to confidently schedule multiple sporting events without threat of cancelation due to weather or other sub-optimal field conditions, he said."

Superintendent Smith added, "Once it's complete, the new field will provide the children of Point Pleasant with a versatile playing field accessible to multiple sports that can be used safely, year round and for years to come."

