

EDGE MONT



SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY NEWS

WEB NEWS UPDATE

MAY 6, 2011

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

As required by law, the Edgemont Board of Education adopted a budget for 2011-2012 on April 12. Thanks to late-breaking gifts from Edgemont Rec and the Edgemont School Foundation, along with all the other reductions the Administration made after its initial proposal on March 5, the final budget-to-budget increase is down to 2.73%, with a projected tax-rate increase is 2.65%. (For background, click [here](#) for budget info and [here](#) and [here](#) for recent meeting summaries.) Because it was also the night when newly tenured and retiring teachers were being honored, ESF co-chair **Howard Hirsch** was able to announce

the ESF gift (see p. 3) to a full house. For more on the final approved version of the budget, click [here](#).

TENURE AWARDS

Seely principal **Ed Kennedy** went first, recommending Seely and Greenville instrumental music teacher **David Brandom**, whose calm manner and being great with children Kennedy says has helped increase band participation at both schools. Brandom frequently finishes his days in the pit for an evening performance at one Broadway theater or another; he has also served as a 6th Grade Camp chaperone

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NEXT PUBLIC BOARD OF ED MEETING

Tuesday, May 10

On the agenda are a public hearing on the 2011-2012 budget (as required by law—although also by law, no further changes are permitted); and a presentation by science students and faculty on environmental initiatives at EHS. All budget info is available at www.edgemont.org.

Call to order: 7 pm, Conference Room, District Office, followed by immediate adjournment to executive session; Regular public session reconvenes at 8:15pm, EHS LGI



BOARD OF ED

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and as liaison to the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA).

When she stood, to make her first tenure recommendation of the evening for Brandom, Superintendent **Nancy Taddiken** noted wryly that her appearance that evening was probably a little more welcome than on those days when she appeared—unannounced—in each candidate’s classroom, an ordeal all candidates must endure in order to earn the positive review each needs from Taddiken as well as from his or her building principal.

Greenville principal **Jennifer Allen** went next, laughing at her earlier unsuccessful attempts when, as an assistant principal at EHS, she tried to lure psychologist **Melissa Demarest** away from Greenville (where she has now been for ten years) to EHS. “Next up was EHS principal **Barry Friedman** on psychologist **Michelle Greenwald**, now the senior member of the EHS psychology team, who Friedman said has played a very important role in reshaping the EHS support network, leading by example with her strong commitment to being available to counsel, guide and empathize with students and their families. Friedman praised Dr. Greenwald’s collegial and collaborative nature.

EHS Assistant Principal **Mike Curtin** went next, recommending special educator **Darren Hawks**, who has been coaching girls JV soccer and serving as senior class advisor in addition to his course load. Curtin noted of this former PR specialist for the NBA that he “has a thorough and nuanced understanding of his students’ needs and abilities....and does not limit his understanding to their cognitive and academic skills but rather considers the whole person when working with a student.”

Christine Monseliu spoke for **Deidra Hewett**, who came to Edgemont shortly after beloved special educator Nancy Tannenbaum died—not easy shoes to fill; but Monseliu noted that Hewett “did so with great sensitivity to her students.”

JUNIOR HIGH ARTS AND DISTRICT CONCERT NIGHT

Tuesday, May 17, 6-9 p.m.

Old Gym, EHS

featuring

UNDER THE SEA

artwork including sea-inspired origami creations from our first annual Origami Day, hexagonal aquarium sculptures, ocean-inspired illuminated letters, clay fish whistles, and sea-star rattles...

and performances by:

Combined Elementary Jazz Band,
Elementary Percussion Ensemble,
Junior High String Orchestra & Jazz Band,
Senior High String Orchestra & Jazz Band,
Chamber Choir

and

the 8th Grade Radio Project and *Reflections*
literary magazine—and more!

Please join us!

Monseliu said that she is “consistently impressed by the fact that her respect for her students is at the heart of her work,” and noted that her department chair Mary Bunt has said that Hewett will step up and do anything asked of her, and has been an invaluable member of both the 7th and 8th grade teams.”

Dr. Kennedy returned to the podium to speak on behalf of highly respected Seely reading specialist **Jessica Leonard**, whom he called “perceptive, a remarkable diagnostician, and wonderful with young children.” She has taken on many assignments in addition to her official duties: she is a member of the building resource team (aka the Child Study Team) and has chaperoned 6th grade camp—but

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BUDGET HEARING

TUESDAY
MAY 10TH

8:15 PM
EHS LGI

BOARD OF ED

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what Dr. Kennedy loves most is hearing her talking to her “first grade reading friends,” or her “second grade reading friends” etc. as she collects them from their classrooms and leads them down the Seely halls. “She has an incredible relationship with her children, Kennedy said, and you can see why when you hear her do this.”

Dr. Friedman was back then to speak about **Samantha Loria**, whom he called “a team player who comes to school every day ready to help our students who are challenged by social, learning and developmental issues.” Dr. Loria, along with Dr. Greenwald has taken an administrative idea, now known as Teen Talk, “and created a program that provides our junior high students with a vehicle for sharing feelings and working through developmentally based conflicts and challenges in a supportive, warm, and accepting environment.”

About AD **Ray Pappalardi**, Friedman said: “I have a brain-teaser for you...What do you call the person in an administrative position who: recruits, screens, interviews, checks references and makes recommendations for hiring new staff three times during every school year; oversees a program in which approximately 850 students participate during three seasons; builds and manages a rather large budget for staffing, equipment and busing; fields phone calls and respectfully responds to these calls from ‘interested, concerned and totally unbiased parents/coaches;’ always acts professionally and respectfully to students, parents, community members and faculty and staff; before 8:00 A.M. but never leaves before 8 P.M.; cares about the physical and emotional health of all of our students from grades 7 – 12”—and is NOT a superintendent, a principal or an assistant principal??? —Or a crazy person, he added. No, it’s EHS PE teacher and Athletic Director Ray Pappalardi.

Devan Ganeshanathan then stood to speak for math teacher **Bryan Paul**, who has been teaching regular and honors Math 9 and is looking forward to teaching

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ESF MAKES BIG TECH GIFT

The **Edgemont School Foundation** (ESF) announced its largest gift ever at the April 12 Board of Ed meeting: \$162,000, to fund critical infrastructure upgrades to the computer network capabilities at all three schools. This gift followed its 2010 gift of \$118,000 towards new wireless networks at Greenville and Seely Place. Together with the Earlier Edgemont Rec gift ([click here](#)), this brought the tax-rate increase down half of a percentage point.

In announcing the gift, ESF co-chair **Howard Hirsch** emphasized that these gifts are possible because of the many people in the community who contribute to the ESF—and to Edgemont Rec, and the E Club, and the PTA and PTSA: to all the community groups without whose assistance “an Edgemont education” would have stopped looking like “an Edgemont education” a long time ago. “We learn year after year during these budget hearings that our school tax dollars are merely the price of admission for receiving an education,” Hirsch warned, urging everyone in the community to support the PTA and PTSA, which enhance the regular curriculum with guest lecturers, field trips, assemblies, and communication through eChalk; to the E Club, for “the many extras they provide”: sports awards dinners, evening football and soccer games, the fitness center, and other programs and equipment.

The list goes on. Everyone in this community owes an enormous debt of gratitude to all those whose gifts make possible the programs and equipment our students depend on—and for providing them when they are needed, instead of waiting for an “easier” budget year. Thank you, yet again, to our incredibly generous Edgemont community!

OTHER GIFTS

In addition to the giant gift from ESF that night (see above), the Board of Ed accepted musical instruments from current junior **Jack Young** and **Ethan Schurkman**, a member of the class of 2010; along with \$2000 from the Intel Science Talent Search in honor of our semifinalists **Quanquan Liu** and **Lawrence Wu** ([click here for background](#)). The Board also accepted \$5500 from the PTSA for International Day and the GO; and, on April 26, another \$200 from the PTSA towards the EHS yearbook, *Respectus*. As always, the Board accepted these gifts with great appreciation, grateful for the continuing generosity of the Edgemont community.

BOARD OF ED

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two new electives being offered at his initiative: Introduction to Probability and Statistics and AP Statistics. Paul also coaches modified baseball and girls varsity golf; and Mr. G noted that he values not only the concept of the student-athlete, but the development of the whole child. He has been described by math chair Debbie Schulman as a hands-on and technologically-adept instructor, who weaves in technology appropriately to support his lessons. Mr. G said he has “found Bryan to be extremely passionate about the subject he teaches, and that he balances this passion with a high level of awareness of his students’ strengths and interests; and that he has been most impressed with Paul’s consistent level of attention to students at both ends of mathematical spectrum. “The mathematical ability or proficiency of the student is not what is important to Bryan, Mr. G said; “what matters is that they are his students.”

Jennifer Allen wrapped up the tenure honors by recommending “Greenville’s **Rosanna Ragone**, whose colleagues she Retiring, and honored that evening were EHS math teacher **Susan Cardellino**, Seely Place 6th grade teacher **Alan Cass**, Greenville 5th grade teacher **Barbara Frascella**, Seely Place 2nd grade teacher (and EHS graduate) **Kerry Gerling**, Greenville 2nd grade teacher **Gail Grollman**, EHS special educator **Diana Herman**, EHS guidance counselor **Susan Holden**, EHS social studies teacher **Ellen Perlman**, Seely phys ed teacher **Mary**

KIDS VOTE, TOO!!
3-9 P.M.

**Bring them with you anytime after 3 —
they will be voting
(on a real voting machine, of course)
on what refreshing treat they want
for Spirit Day—
Watermelon? Popsicles? Cold drink boxes?
Or ice cream treats?**

Sponsored by the PTA & Student Council.

Raciborski, Seely ESL teacher **Susan Silkowitz**, EHS health and AP Psychology teacher **Ilene Smith**; and Greenville 5th grade teacher, ETA president and Edgemont Rec director **Paul Solomon**. We will feature all of these beloved veteran educators in the summer print issue of the newsletter.

BUSINESS ITEMS OF NOTE

There was no Superintendent’s Report on April 26, but there were several important business items. First, tuition rates for nonresident students was set for next year ([click here](#)). The District bases its tuition rates on our budget-to budget increase (2.73%). There are two tiers of rates, depending on when a student began,

since we raised tuition beginning in July 2005. In discussion, administrators said our rates for next year make us competitive with other options in the area—Shirken said that our elementary rates might be a little lower than other options; on the other hand, if people choose to send students here, they have to pay for their own transportation, which they would not if they picked a private or parochial school.

The Board also authorized several certiorari settlements: with Rudeth Realty, Scarsdale Woods Condominiums I and II, and 636 Central Park Avenue Associates, and also the transfer of funds from the cert reserve to pay these settlements. (None of this requires any new tax levy—we knew these were all coming and have factored them into our budgeting for next year.) Board

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REGISTER TO VOTE

You must be registered in advance to vote on May 17.

Register at Central Office (at EHS) on **Monday, May 9, 3 p.m.– 7 p.m.**

Visit **www.edgemont.org** for details on eligibility to vote.



Important Announcement for Parents of Incoming Edgemont Kindergarten Students

If you have a child who is eligible for enrollment in Kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year (who is at least 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2011), please contact:

Rosemary DeVito, Registrar (914) 472-7767, ext. 4407
rdevito@mail.edgemont.org or

Mimi Southard, Assistant Registrar (914) 472-7767, ext. 4431
msouthard@mail.edgemont.org

Central Office
300 White Oak Lane
Scarsdale, NY 10583

If you do not have a child currently enrolled in the District, you will need to complete a [residency affidavit](#). If you do have a child enrolled, you may be asked to confirm the residency information the District has on file.

Your early reply will be most appreciated.

VOTE

MAY 17
EHS GYM

6 A.M.-
9 P.M.

PLEASE CONSIDER SERVING ON SCHOOL BOARD NOMINATING NEXT YEAR

Click [here](#) to read a letter about qualifications, requirements, and why this is so important, from the President of the Edgemont Community Council.



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member **Wasim Salimi** was outspoken in his outrage at the way condominiums use the tax system inequitably ([click here](#) for a simplified explanation of how the State handles property taxes for multi-family properties differently from single-family homes).

The Board also acknowledged the report on the District's petty cash audit, the area of our finances on which the State auditors focused this year. Audit Committee member **David Stern** summed up the results by saying that they found a little sloppiness but no major problems. The Board will have to consider balancing the need to answer each item on the auditors' laundry list against the cost of doing so, which in some cases would be higher than any funds which might be recovered. Perhaps, Stern suggested, next time we should make the cost-benefit argument to the auditors before they start their work.

Finally, a custodial contract was approved, covering years dating back to 2009: with a 2% increase for 2009, 2010 and 2011 and a 2.25% increase for 2012. By the end of this period, this group of employees will be contributing 10% toward their benefits.

**HAS
TOM ABINANTI
HEARD
FROM YOU YET?**

Visit

www.edgemont.org
for info on the tax cap
(on the home page)
and urge him
to help stop it.

COMMENTS FOR THE BOARD?

Email boe@edgemont.org

NEW PTSA SCRIPS GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER

*Click [here](#) and scroll down to
Resources > Gift Card Program to download order form.
Thank you for supporting the PTSA!*

