

**VOTE
APRIL
21st**

JACKSON SCHOOL NEWS

School District Information for the Jackson Community

April 2009

Proposed Budget Seeks to Advance District Tax Rate Increase is Lowest in 8 Years

Creating a budget that serves the needs of students and is responsible to taxpayers is typically difficult. Doing it in a struggling economy makes it even more so.

"We know people are hurting, we know they are worried and we took every step to create a budget that does what we need to do for students, while at the same time is fair to taxpayers," said Superintendent of Schools Thomas Gialanella. "I would not call it a 'good' budget, because it forces us to reduce our staff and alter some of our initiatives, but I would not hesitate to call it a 'fair' budget."

A new factor in explaining the budget to the public this year was the recent property tax reassessment in town and how that affects a homeowner's tax bill.

"We have people asking us 'If my property assessment doubled, does that mean

my school tax is going to double, too?'," Gialanella said. "The answer is no. In fact, when you compare the 2008 average assessment with the 2009 average assessment, that 'average' homeowner is seeing a \$93 decrease in their estimated school tax under this budget."

*"This budget does not do all we would like to do, but it is a fair budget given these economic times."
~ Superintendent Thomas Gialanella*

Residents are encouraged to use the district's online Estimated School Tax Calculator to figure out what they would pay under the proposed budget. Users can just input their 2008 and 2009 assessments and it will compute your estimated school tax.

"If you don't have access to the internet, call our hotline at 732-833-4686 and we will do it for you," Gialanella said. "We do not want people to assume the wrong thing. We want everyone to be educated about the facts."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EFFICIENCY MATTERS

The New Jersey Comparative Spending Guide, produced by the NJ Department of Education, ranks school districts of similar size and type to give a reasonable comparison of how districts utilize public funds.

In this document (available online), the Jackson School District is compared to 105 districts like us (meaning they are K-12 districts with more than 3,501 students), the Jackson School District.

DID YOU KNOW?

We have the **THIRD LOWEST** comparative cost per pupil. We spend \$3,279 less per pupil than the state average.

We are **14th LOWEST** administrative costs per pupil (\$262 below state avg.)

That when it comes to student-to-administrator ratios, we have more students for each of our administrators than any of the other districts in our group.

Jackson School District "Goes Green" to Save "Green"

The colors of Jackson might be black, red and silver, but when it comes to trying to save money and preserve our natural resources, the magic color is GREEN.

Teachers using shared computer drives to share work, posting curriculum and research guides online instead of printing and binding them, using student writing and homework "drop folders" instead of turning in papers and stepping up recycling efforts are just some of the ways the district tries to conserve resources and save money.



"It's not just about finding ways to save money, it's about having a responsibility to our environment," said Superintendent of Schools Thomas Gialanella.

The district has made strides in recent years toward "greener" practices and will continue to implement new strategies.

"It's a process, but one we are taking seriously," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 FOR THE WAYS WE "GO GREEN"

The Jackson School District issues an ECO-CHALLENGE!

How "green" can we get?

After reading some of the ways the district tries to be "green," do you have another idea?

We are asking the entire Jackson community to help us do more.

Send your idea to us at jsd@jacksonsd.org and we will see if we can make them work!

Inside:

Information about the Proposed 2009-2010 Budget

Use Our Calculator to Estimate Your School Tax

Congratulations to our District Teachers of the Year

Join Our E-Mail List To join, visit www.jacksonsd.org

GOING GREEN, CONTINUED

Of course, we recycle. But recycling isn't enough. The district is working to implement as many ways as possible to conserve resources and reduce costs by being "green."

For example, in the past, teachers working on curriculum would share edits and ideas through meetings, resulting in many copies.

Now, we utilize shared drives where teachers post revisions and ideas online.

And while different schools do different things, we are working toward applying all the feasible "green" strategies district-wide.

Examples of how we are working to "go green" in our schools include:

- Using email for staff communication;
- Moving toward online parent notifications via e-mail lists;
- In some subject areas, students can turn their work in online, rather than turning in a paper copy;
- Trying to send notices to only a family's eldest child in a school;
- Using both sides of paper for memos to parents and school work
- Lights that turn off with motion sensors;
- Using white boards instead of paper or worksheets ;
- Putting student homework on Study Island instead of student planners
- Using recycled materials for art
- Online test taking
- Lesson plans on computer
- All college applications, transfer requests, working papers are online

BUDGET SEEKS TO SUPPORT ADVANCE DISTRICT, CONTINUED

The proposed tax levy, which calls for an increase to the tax rate of 1.54-cent increase per \$100 of assessed home value, is the lowest increase presented in the past 8 years. The proposed tax levy increase is also below the state-imposed four percent cap on tax levy increases.

"In a budget our size, you don't get below cap without having to make some difficult choices," he said. "But in these financial times, that is what we had to do."

Among those hard choices is the elimination of:

- Two administrative positions
- Four teaching positions
- Five media assistant positions
- Six paraprofessionals
- One secretary
- Four maintenance/custodians
- One security position

The proposed budget also reduced supply budgets across the board, requires the elimination of the adult school program and limits certain technology upgrades and capital improvements.

But even though limiting the tax rate increase required these hard decisions, Gialanella said the district is still pushing forward and will still have the programs and staff necessary to advance student learning.

"We are moving forward and we have not lost sight of our primary goal – which is to create life-long learners who excel in scholarship, character and initiative," he said. "This budget may be lean, but we can still fulfill our mission to our students."

Gialanella said he hopes the community will take the time to avail themselves of the information the board has posted online and will ask questions if they have them.

"Right up to just before the polls close, we will be manning our hotline and answering questions," he said. "If you are wondering something, people should not hesitate to ask."

We are aggressive in our pursuit of grants:

Applications Include:

- **4MAT 4 Algebra** - \$35,184 to enhance 9th grade curriculum
- **2010 Career Academy** - \$100,000 to create a 2-year college prep curriculum with a career theme and field work
- **After 3 School Programs** - \$150,000 to provide after-school child care with enrichment
- **Teaching American History** - \$200,000 for professional development and alignment with CCCS
- **First Energy Mathematics, Science, Technology Education** - \$500 for innovative programs and instructional materials
- **Governor's Initiative: Enhancing Program Options for Students with Disabilities** - \$250,000 to provide staff development and parent outreach to further inclusion initiatives
- **Reading First** - \$75,000 to provide differentiated instruction materials for classroom teachers

Jackson's High School Students Honored for Academic Excellence

The National Merit Scholar Program and the Edward J. Bloustein Distinguished Scholarship Awards are reserved for only those students who demonstrate the highest level of academic excellence.

This year the Jackson School District is proud to announce that three students have earned distinction under the National Merit program as "Commended Students" and that 32 students – the most in our district's history -- were named Edward J. Bloustein Scholars.

"This is quite an achievement for the students and something both they and the community should be proud of," said Director of Guidance Laura Wheaton.

The National Merit Scholarship

Program honors the most outstanding students throughout the country. The program allows high achieving students the chance to compete for \$50 million in scholarships for college.

Our "Commended Students" are:

From Jackson Liberty High School:
Michael Robinson.

From Jackson Memorial High School:
Amy Dwyer and Brad Heisler

The Edward J. Bloustein Distinguished Scholarship awards \$1,000 scholarships to students who:

- Place in the top 10 percent of their classes and have a minimum combined SAT score of 1260 or higher;
- Or are ranked first, second or third in their class at the end of their junior year.

Our Bloustein Scholars are:

From Jackson Liberty High School:

Daniel Bluman, Jacqueline Cherko, Ruby Corman, Michael Della Donna, Andrew Derkack, Philip Gallaro, Jordan Gochman, Kate Llona, Paul Maier, Alexandra Murdocca, Monica Pirigy and Rebecca Weigand.

From Jackson Memorial High School:

Ryan Baumert, Tyler Book, Breanna Caruso, Daniel Clayton, Lauren Coiro, Dianna Cornell, Amy Dwyer, Eric Hamilton, Cory Leviton, Sarah Macor, Melissa Markle, Kevin Mathews, Alexander Miller, Stephen Montgomery, Jessica Mulvihill, Jennifer Okulewicz, Rachel Rozansky, Kayla Sabatini, Shannon Watt and Nicole York.

ON WHAT ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO VOTE?

FEDERAL AND STATE PROGRAM

- Government-supported programs, grants and services
- We spend only those funds we receive from the state or federal government.
- This portion of the budget is NOT subject to voter approval on April 21.

DEBT SERVICE

- Money designated to repay projects for which we have already received voter approval (e.g. prior referendums).
- This portion of the budget is NOT subject to voter approval on April 21.

THE GENERAL FUND

- The district's "operating budget"
- Provides the people, supplies, materials and equipment we need to transport, educate and provide facilities for our students.
- This portion of the budget IS subject to voter approval on April 21. Voters are asked to cast ballots on the proposed TAX LEVY to support the General Fund. A district's tax levy is the amount of money to be raised by taxation.
- **The proposed tax levy would raise the tax rate by 1.54 CENTS per \$100 of assessed home value, the lowest school tax rate increase in the past 8 years.**



WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS BUDGET?

This proposed budget seeks to preserve our programs and services as best we can and to continue updates vital to student success. In keeping with the district's rotating five-year curriculum plan, this year's updates focus on:

- Health and Physical Education
- Special Education
- Technology
- Enrichment

Although we are not able to take on every internal improvement we would like, the following projects are included in the proposed budget.

- Remove carpeting in child study team area at Rosenauer and replace with VCT tile;
- Replace heating units in IMC at Rosenauer (outdated electric unit fails and is expensive to repair);
- Remove carpeting in 30 rooms at Goetz and replace with VCT tile and resurface gym floor;
- Remove rugs in two rooms and band rooms at McAuliffe and replace with VCT tile and resurface gym floor;
- Replace carpeting in Fine Arts office and Fine Arts Auditorium and athletic offices at JMHS.



A picture of carpeting at Goetz Middle School that is held together by tape.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED 2009-2010 BUDGET

TAX LEVY Amount subject to voter approval	\$64,892,178
GENERAL FUND District's "operating budget"	\$125,444,185
TOTAL BUDGET Total proposed budget increases less than one percent from previous year (0.85%)	\$137,228,603

IMPACT OF PROPOSED TAX LEVY

Because the recent property tax re-assessment in town altered the "average" assessment and the ratable base, comparing this year to last year can be a bit confusing. To compare "apples to apples," we look at each year's respective "averages."

	2008	2009
Average Assessment	\$153,000	\$332,800
Estimated School Tax (using actual 2008 rate)	\$3,534	\$3,441 (Using proposed rate)
Difference	Under the proposed budget, the "average" homeowner would pay about \$93 LESS in school taxes.	

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

Don't Guess, Assume or Wonder... KNOW.

To estimate how the proposed budget would impact YOUR taxes, you can use our online

School Tax Estimate Calculator.

Just plug in your 2008 and 2009 assessments and calculate. If you do not have access to the internet, call our district hotline and 732-833-4686 and we will do it for you.

For the calculator and other information, such as the budget presentation from the March 31 public hearing, the 2009-2010 budget document itself or where you vote, visit:

www.jacksonsd.org

WHAT NEW INITIATIVES ARE PROPOSED?

This proposed budget would allow us to move forward with proposed initiatives such as:

- A structured learning program to promote school-to-work experiences;
- A new Great Books Enrichment Program to increase advanced proficiency on standardized testing;
- Applying for a new Career

Academy in Digital Media through grant funds;

- Expanding the newly piloted Read 180, System 44 and Fast Math programs to address NCLB subgroups (using stimulus funding);
- Establishing a new in-house special education transition program;
- Designing a new social skills program pilot using grant funds.

JOIN OUR E-MAIL LIST

Visit the district website at www.jacksonsd.org to join!

Got Geese? Not for long, thanks to "Rob the Dog"

Since the district lacked the ability to change the migratory pattern of Canada Geese on the east coast, we needed another idea to help keep the fowl off of district fields.

After initially hiring a private contractor to provide a Border Collie to roust the geese from their resting places, it became clear that the cost of outsourcing that task would become prohibitive.

Enter Rob. The district's very own Border Collie who, over the course of an entire year, maintains every school in the district at half as much as a private geese control service.

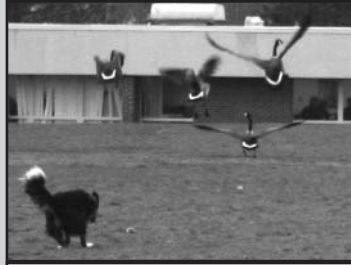
"It's no joke what these geese can leave behind," said Facilities Staffer Mickey Fink, Rob's handler of the droppings that create a fecal coli form bacteria health hazard for students. "We need to keep on top of these fields every day."

In his green bandana and ID badge that identify him as a member of the district Facilities Staff, Rob is a very popular staff member, not only for his hard work but for

his friendly nature. At the sight of geese on his fields, he bounds out of Fink's vehicle and begins his systematic prowl of the fields, spooking the geese into their exodus.

After coming in with Fink (Rob lives with Fink and his family on his "off" time,) Rob begins his day in the district at 6:30 a.m. to clear the fields before students go out for gym class. He finishes up around 9 a.m. and takes a break in a pen at the maintenance building while Fink resumes other duties and goes back to work in the afternoon.

When requested, Rob also services the fields at the Justice Complex as part of a shared services agreement between the board and the Township.



Rob chases geese off of the fields at Jackson Memorial High School last week.

By the Numbers...

Using our own border collie to control our geese population costs **HALF AS MUCH**, gives us a **FULL YEAR** of service and allows freedom to use him anywhere we choose.

- A full year of service at contracted rates would have cost the district almost \$15,000 to control just ONE location.

	Private Contractor	"Rob" 
2006-2007	\$5,280 for 14 weeks at McAuliffe and Liberty only	
2007-2008	\$7,560 for 24 weeks at Liberty only	Rob purchased in Jan. 2008 for \$6,205.66 - includes initial purchase, training, travel expenses to bring him home and handler stipend.
2009-2010 Proposed		\$6,000 for 52 weeks at all district schools, as needed. (Incl. \$4,000 handler stipend, \$1,500 for veterinarian & \$500 in grooming.)

Honorable Mentions - Accomplishments of our Students and Staff

Jackson Liberty High School Boys Track Team and the **Jackson Memorial High School Girls Track Team** each took first place in their respective divisions during the Rebel Relays earlier this month.

JMHS student **Shannon Watt** won the NJSIAA Group IV State Shot Put Championship and **Shane Carle** won the Shore Conference and Ocean County Shot Put Championship.

JLHS junior Suzanne Chansky, JMHS juniors **Loryn Bono** and **Raymond Pinchon** and JMHS sophomores **Jillian Deibel** and **Shannon Brueckner** were just accepted into the 2009-2010 NJ All State Chorus. The students auditioned and were selected from hundreds of students from throughout the state for this very competitive and prestigious honor.

JMHS students **Renee Hahn**, **Alena Valle**, **Kim Earley**, **Kristen Cladek** and **Carolyn Bucci** placed in the top three

of various categories in Sprachfest, a language festival and regional academic competition sponsored by the South Jersey American Association of Teachers of German this month.

Goetz Middle School student **Sophia Porras** won first place in the 2009 Girl of the Year "Stop the Bullying" poster contest sponsored by the American Girl company. Sophia was one of 32 winners chosen out of 20,000 entries.

Fourth grade students in **Mrs. Donna Burke's** class at Crawford-Rodriguez Elementary School were chosen from among 11,000 fourth graders in the state as the winners of the "Celebrate New Jersey" contest.

The class wrote and performed historical narratives, created art work and posters, and performed Revolutionary War scenes while music of that time was playing. The class was recognized for their accomplishments on April 4 at the Paramount Theatre in Asbury Park.

Best of the Best: Jackson School District's 2008-2009 Teachers of the Year

Each spring the district recognizes one teacher in each school who goes above and beyond for his or her students.

"Our teachers of the year set the example in their buildings by being creative, passionate and inspiring," said Superintendent of Schools Thomas Gialanella. "They represent all that we love about the teaching profession."



The Jackson School District Teachers of the Year were recognized by the Board of Education on March 31. The teachers were also presented with gift certificates from the Jackson Educational Foundation.

One teacher among the 10 is selected as the "District Teacher of the Year" after a nomination process that includes writing an essay and submitting recommendations.

This year's District Teacher of the Year is Claire Grisanti from the McAuliffe Middle School.

Grisanti is described by her peers and supervisors as a "truly student-centered educator" who displays leadership characteristics that improve the daily lives of not only students, but of teaching peers as well.

Grisanti said she was "very honored."

"I have worked very hard in our school district for several years, both as a parent and a teacher, to convey the importance of education to our students," she said.

"To be recognized in this way means that I have accomplished what I set out to do many years ago and that is to be a teacher who leads by example," she said. "The most important lesson that we can teach our children is the value of education and the many doors that a complete education can open for them."

DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Christa McAuliffe Middle School
Claire Grisanti

TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Crawford-Rodriguez Elementary School
Ellen McPolin

Elms Elementary School
Kathleen Williams

Lucy N. Holman School
Sharon Alkalay

Howard C. Johnson Elementary School
Dina Devivo-Calabrese

Rosenauer Elementary School
Jill Hendrick

Switlik Elementary School
Susan Magee

Carl W. Goetz Middle School
Marybeth Beichert

Jackson Liberty High School
Laura Borrelli

Jackson Memorial High School
Kathleen Bunce

Attention Parents of Current High School Juniors:

If your child will be applying for a parking permit for the 2009-2010 school year, you must attend a mandatory meeting on teen driving safety before he or she can receive a permit.

We are holding these meetings on two separate dates. You may attend on either of these dates, regardless of what high school your child attends.

**Wednesday, April 29 at 7 p.m.
Jackson Memorial High School**

or

**Tuesday, May 5 at 7 p.m.
Jackson Liberty High School**

At this meeting we will inform you about our parking permit procedure and provide you with information about teen driving safety.

ROTC Cadets Soar into Unique Achievements

As if the leadership, communication and discipline skills students develop by participating in the district's Air Force Junior ROTC (AFJROTC) program were not enough, two cadets have earned places in two different, competitive programs designed to expand their horizons even farther.

Senior Daniel Clayton has been accepted into the first level of a NASA program called INSPIRE, which stands for the Interdisciplinary National Science Project Incorporating Research and Educational Experience. It is a multi-tiered program for students who are interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and careers.

"I'm excited for the experience and to have access to some training and resources that will help me as I pursue my future goals within the Air Force," said Clayton, who

so far has been chosen to participate in the Online Community portion of the INSPIRE program. This allows him to interact with NASA experts and educational specialists.

This summer, junior Kevin MacDonald will be experiencing a summer program that Clayton enjoyed last year – the AFJROTC Aerospace and Technology Honors Camp. The objective of this camp is to introduce high-achieving high school cadets to scientific, technical, and rated career opportunities in the Air Force.

Selection to attend the camp is very competitive. The cadets chosen represent the top one half of one percent of the approximately 110,000 AFJROTC cadets worldwide.

"It's going to be a great experience," MacDonald said. "I'm looking forward to it."



JMHS Principal Tony Gaita is flanked by AFJROTC Cadets Kevin MacDonald, left, and Dan Clayton.

VOTE TUESDAY, APRIL 21

POLLS OPEN 11 A.M. TO 9 P.M.

**“Where do
I vote?”**

Voting districts are listed below.

Call any district school or the district hotline at
732-833-4686 and we can tell you where you vote.

A street-by-street list is also on our web site at

www.jacksonsd.org

Districts 1, 3 & 21
Jackson Municipal Bldg.
95 W. Veterans Hwy

Districts 2 & 15
VFW Post 4703,
54 Magnolia Dr.

Districts 4 & 24
Jackson Senior Center
45 Don Connor Blvd.

District 5
Winding Ways Clubhouse

Districts 6 & 19
Holman Elementary
125 Manhattan St.

Districts 7, 8, 9 & 27
Italian American Club
36 Christopher Columbus
Blvd.

Districts 10 & 12
Knights of Columbus
401 Bartley Road

District 11
Meadowbrook Clubhouse

District 13
Oak Tree Mobile Homes
656 Diamond Road

District 14
Ocean County Vo-Tech
850 Toms River Road

District 16
Sixty Acres Clubhouse

Districts 17 & 25
Jackson Mills Firehouse
465 N. County Line Rd.

District 18
Jackson Twp. MUA
135 Manhattan Street

Districts 20 & 23
Elms Elementary School
780 Patterson Road

Districts 22 & 26
Westlake Clubhouse

District 28
Four Seasons at Metedeconk
Lakes Clubhouse

District 29
Four Seasons at South
Knolls Clubhouse

Jackson School District

151 Don Connor Boulevard
Jackson, NJ 08527

www.jacksonsd.org

Board of Education

MARVIN KRAKOWER, *President*
JOHN MORVAY, *Vice President*
SHARON E. DEY
BARBARA FIERO
LINDA LACKAY
SCOTT SARGENT
MARTIN SPIELMAN

Administration

THOMAS GIALANELLA
Superintendent

LU ANNE MEINDERS
Deputy Superintendent

STEPHEN GENCO
Assistant Superintendent

MICHELLE D. RICHARDSON
Business Administrator/Board Secretary



NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #124
Jackson, NJ
08527

Local Postal Patron
Jackson, New Jersey
08527