

BETWEEN
LaValle &
STAR NEWS
9/28 - 10/8/21

Information pertaining the the SLBOE Meeting of 9/30/24

1 message

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To: springlake@starnewsgroup.com
Cc: Stephen LaValva <slavalva@slboe.org>

Tue, Oct 1, 2024 at 11:42 AM

Good Morning -

Attached, please find the following to be considered for publication:

1. President's Statement made in response to a flyer that had been distributed to borough households
2. Our Sustainable Jersey Award press release
- 3; Photo of the Green Team

Please call directly with any questions.

Thank you,

Stephen V. LaValva, EdD

Superintendent/SBA

Spring Lake Borough Public Schools

Spring Lake, NJ 07762

732.449.6380 x 416

3 attachments



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President's Statement - SLBOE Meeting 9.30.24.docx
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Press Release - Sustainable NJ Certification.pdf
57K



H.W. Mountz Elementary School Achieves Bronze Level Certification for Environmental Stewardship

Spring Lake, NJ – August 20, 2024 – H.W. Mountz Elementary School proudly announces its achievement of the Bronze level certification with Sustainable Jersey Schools for environmental stewardship, a significant milestone in our commitment to sustainability and eco-conscious practices. This recognition highlights our school's dedication to creating a greener and more sustainable future for our community. This comprehensive submission process demands a total of 150 points across six categories. We surpassed this requirement by earning 160 points across nine categories.

Under the leadership of Principal Daniel Layton, with invaluable assistance from our Green Team Faculty members—Assistant Principal Mrs. Natalie Levine, Superintendent Dr. Stephen LaValva, and dedicated teachers Mrs. Mary Pearce, Miss Margaret Ping, Mr. Steve Janelli, and Mrs. Tara Deaver—our school has made remarkable strides in environmental initiatives.

We extend a special thank you to our parent representative, Mrs. Kerri Talucci, and Mr. Jared Kaloostian for their unwavering support. Their involvement has been crucial in implementing and sustaining our green initiatives, including the impressive collection and recycling of over 1,000 pounds of soft plastics. This effort has earned us a Trex Bench, which enhances our school grounds and further symbolizes our commitment to sustainability.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the students who played a pivotal role in our Green Team. Their dedication and hard work in conducting food waste audits, recommending greener practices (i.e. working to eliminate the delivery of individualized plastic condiment containers in lieu of large containers to be shared by all), and leading the soft plastics drive were instrumental in achieving this certification. Special recognition is due to the following student members:

- **Grade 5:** Charles Boucher, Liam Maloney, James Schrader, Vasiliki Mackres
- **Grade 6:** Helgstel Asamoah-Kyere, Dylan Talucci, Dylan Remensnyder
- **Grade 8:** Emma Vaclavik

H.W. Mountz Elementary School is proud to be one of only 18 schools in Monmouth County to receive the Bronze certification. This achievement underscores our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and fostering environmental responsibility among our students.

Over the last school year, we created a practical outdoor learning and dining space, upgraded our District website to improve digital communication, and introduced a new Student Information System with a revamped parent portal to cut down on paper-based communications between home and school. We have also passed a sustainability policy, installed LED lighting to replace all of our fluorescent lights, replaced our boilers with high-efficiency models, and are working to replace all of our classroom mechanical systems.

As we celebrate the recognition as a Sustainable Jersey school, we remain steadfast in our mission to contribute to a cleaner future for generations to come. Our ongoing efforts and initiatives reflect our dedication to creating a positive environmental impact and educating our students about the importance of eco-friendly practices.

The following information was shared by Mr. Moran, Vice President, in the absence of the Board President.

BOE and Administration have not been Fiscally Responsible

- Fiscal responsibility for a BOE is generally measured by the Tax Levy.
- Tax levy for the past 3 fiscal years (years ending June 30th 2023, 24, 25 Budget) has been flat at \$6.8mm.
- Over the past 6 years, this Board along with former Board members Jim Worth and Jahn Clark, have increased the tax Levy by a compound annual growth rate of less than 0.7%. Much lower than inflation.
- During that same 6 year period, the BOE and Administration have increased Capital Reserves from \$0.5mm at YE 2019 to more than \$3.3mm at YE 2023. Once the audit is completed (DATE) \$1mm expected to add to balance.

The Board and Administration is spending millions of dollars on Construction Contracts

- Yes, this year's budget included \$2.5mm in necessary infrastructure fixes which were reviewed at numerous BOE meetings over the past 3 years, and illustrated the Long Range Plan (accessible on the website).
- Costs are related to fixing/replacing the HVAC systems and the Boiler; both are at least 25 years old and inefficient.
 - Boiler – The Administration and Board worked with local utilities to get them to pay 70% of the cost of removing the old Boiler and installing a new one. The remaining cost is financed over 5 years with no interest.
 - HVAC – As we mentioned numerous times at our meetings - 40% of costs are covered by ROD grants secured through the hard work of this BOE and Administration.
 - The Remaining 60% will be covered by the Capital Reserve account. This allows us to keep the tax levy flat and removes the need for a referendum.
- Recently, we approved the aforementioned work. In the end, the cost will be over \$1mm lower than the architects originally estimated.

Administration is bloated – we have gone from to a headcount of 2 to 3 in our Administration. Costs are getting out of control.

- Going back to 2019, Mountz's Senior Admin had a Headcount and FTE (full time equivalent) of 3 – Dr. Bucotti, Ms. Demigola and Ms McCarthy. with a total cost to the district of \$408k.
- In 2022, the senior administration had a headcount of 4 with an FTE of 3. The four people were Dr LaValva, Mrs Levine, Mrs Femia (BA), and Mrs Sennett (Curriculum). Mrs Femia and Mrs Sennett were part time and equaled 0.5 FTE.
- Starting last year and currently, we have reverted to 3 Full Time Employees (headcount and FTE of 3) with an aggregate expense of \$428k. A CAGR of 0.8% - better than inflation.

Budget Request Have Never Been Refused

This statement is erroneous. A simple example, which all Booster Club members would remember, is the long discussion of the locker rooms. After many months and discussions, we arrived at a much lower cost option for the refurbishment of the locker rooms than the original

proposal. The Original estimate was approximately \$0.5mm however, our final cost was slightly over \$0.1mm.

Number of Students Dropped from 200 to 130?

Student statistics are available to view on User Friendly Budget, recorded in October. Number of students on roll was 147 in 2019; jumped to a peak of 169 in 2020 driven by COVID (Mountz was a school that reverted to in person classrooms with the option to stream, and several families decided to remain in their vacation homes for the school year).

- 2019 – 147
- 2020 – 169
- 2021 – 159
- 2022 – 152
- 2023 – 141
- 2024 – 130

The last time Mountz had 200 or more kids was 2015 – nearly a decade ago.

Cost Per Student

- Cost per Student has been erroneously stated at \$53K per student (overstated by 29%!)
- Actual numbers are shown in the User Friendly Budget
 - 2023 actual \$32K per student
 - 2024 revised budget \$41K per student
 - 2025 budget \$41K per student
- Please keep in mind that the costs incurred by the district are not only for the students who attend HW Mountz; they included costs related to other Spring Lake students including:
 - Tuition for high school students – such as those attending Manasquan HS, or any of the vocational schools – High Tech, Biotech, MAST, etc
 - Costs for Spring Lake student residents who are being educated out of district
 - Cost to transport every high school student who lives in Spring Lake
- The cost per student is math problem with a numerator and denominator. The BOE and Administration controls the numerator. We do not control how many families and school age children live in our Great town.

In conclusion, this Board wanted to bring awareness to the community about the untrue statements being made and bring clarity and transparency around the facts.