



# North Shore Schools

*Discovering Your Dreams*

## BOE/TOWN Meeting Summary Initial Budget Presentation January 21, 2010

### Discussion/Presentations:

1. On January 21, 2010, the BOE held a Town meeting where Superintendent Dr. Edward Melnick presented the Initial 2010-11 Budget Proposal. Many residents were in the audience for this important meeting.

### Budget Presentation:



2. Dr. Melnick explained state and federal mandates are increasing while aid to the school district is down approximately \$500,000. Mandated costs make up 36% of the school budget and are increasing over \$1 million dollars in 2010-11. These costs include the MTA Tax, Special Education, Social Security, and the NY State Retirement System Contribution (which is increasing 6%-9 % of payroll this year or approximately \$833,000.) He said, “The BOE can not determine the amount of our contributions, New York State requires that we must pay and have our employees take part in the retirement system.” Dr.

Melnick asked those in the audience, “Where do we get the money to cover these increasing mandated costs? From taxes or by decreasing the 8% of the school budget that makes North Shore unique and special.”

The Superintendent demonstrated how North Shore’s contractual obligations (i.e., teacher and staff salaries and benefits) make up 56% of the proposed budget. He stated, “The teacher contracts don’t expire until June 2012.” Additionally, Dr. Melnick emphasized that the remaining 8% of the budget relates largely to the programs and initiatives that make for a “unique and special” school district or “what makes North Shore Schools distinctive.” He reiterated that with decreasing revenue, the board will have to determine how much of an increase can be offset by cutting some areas of the budget. Trustees will look at each line item in the coming months. **Dr. Melnick clarified that the goals for planning the budget this year include addressing all these factors while attempting to maintain the scope of the programs now in effect while providing the best education at a reasonable cost.**

Dr. Melnick stressed “Our Trustees have a very difficult job ahead of any other board that has sat before them. They have to figure out how to arrive at a budget that can be palatable to this community during these economic times.” **President of the Board, Dr. Igor Webb, told the audience “It is very difficult for us to make an accurate judgment about what the community thinks without you telling us.”** Please go to the [www.northshoreschools.org](http://www.northshoreschools.org) homepage to get a copy of this presentation.

### Track & Field Project:

3. Dr. Webb explained that during the last few months the BOE has been discussing the North Shore High School track and field. He said, “The track is coming to the end of its life and experts say it could last maybe three years.” He added, “The high school field has a drainage problem and

because it is grass, it needs to rest adding to usage issues. Replacing it with artificial turf is the only way to get enough usage for the field.” Dr. Webb clarified that at no time did the Town of Oyster Bay extend an offer to the district to replace the field. Additionally, any new proposals recommended by the board would not include lights.

To pay for the track and field, Dr. Webb stated that funding could come from two possible sources:

1) Monies existing in the current Capital Reserve Fund (the community would first have to vote and add this as a project to the current Capital Reserve Fund list) 2) A community fundraising effort spearheaded by the Viking Foundation. Dr. Webb said, “The Capital Reserve Fund was created to avoid spikes in the budget. *Both of these options would not cause an increase to the budget or cost taxpayers extra.*”



After the Town Meeting, Trustees decided to hold off on adding a referendum to the May 2010 budget vote requesting residents to approve the addition of the “HS Track & Field ” to the list of current projects in the Capital Reserve Fund. The Board agreed that it was best to focus on passing the budget in May 2010 without confusing anyone in this difficult year. They all agreed that in the Fall of 2010, there would be a separate vote asking residents to include the “Track & Field” as a project to the current Capital Reserve Fund.

#### 4. A Contingency Budget

Dr. Melnick reiterated, “If the budget is not passed this year, the budget increase for next year will be zero (since the CPI or Consumer Price Index is at zero.) This is significantly different than years in the past where a contingency budget would allow for an increase of approximately 4%. Dr. Webb said, “I believe that our community will understand the situation and not put us into contingency with disastrous implications.

If the budget fails, it was explained that any program not mandated could suffer cuts- sports, fine and performance arts, extracurricular activities/events, security, small classes would get bigger, and many positions throughout the district would need to be eliminated.

(For further information regarding this meeting, please see the North Shore Board of Education Minutes for January 21, 2010 at [www.northshoreschools.org](http://www.northshoreschools.org))