

Ask the CSA: What's This Talk About Regionalization?

Question: I read in the newspaper that the board is discussing regionalization with other local districts. What will that mean for the future of the Stockton School?

Answer from Chief School Administrator Suzanne Ivans:

New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine has given the state's County Executive School Superintendents a March 2010 deadline to come up with a plan to create K-12 regional districts in every county. Representatives from South Hunterdon Regional High School and the three K-6 districts that send to South Hunterdon (Lambertville, Stockton, and West Amwell) have met several times in 2008-09 to discuss what the governor's plan would mean for our districts. To address some of the preliminary questions about regionalization, the committee created a Frequently Asked Question handout,

which is available at:

www.stocktonschool.us/ask/ask.htm.

There are no immediate plans to change the current configuration of our local school districts. The first step in further exploring regionalization is for the districts to conduct a feasibility study, conducted by an independent third party, which will determine the tax and education implications. Unfortunately, feasibility studies can be very costly, so we are exploring alternatives that will not affect taxpayers. Stockton and the other districts have been working with county education officials to determine the availability of grants or other funding.

Meanwhile, the Stockton Board of Education has put together a Board Advisory Committee, comprised of local business leaders and concerned residents, to gather community input and data concerning the school and its future. This committee has done a wonderful job gathering demographic information and

brainstorming ideas regarding Stockton School's future. I anticipate that within the next six months, it will have a report ready to present to the board. This report will include some options the board can consider in the development of a District Strategic Plan for our future.

Given Stockton's size and the significant reduction in state funding for education, it is important that we take proactive steps to determine our own destiny and plan our future. And given our rich history and high education standards, careful deliberation is needed by all interested parties.

Please be on the lookout for additional progress reports and opportunities to provide your input. You are also welcome to attend board meetings to find out more. I look forward to a continued dialogue on this important issue. You can always call the school and talk to me directly at 609-397-2012. My door is open!

Sincerely, Suzanne Ivans

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Stockton School News

Winter 2009

Stockton Borough School—Serving the Community Since 1832



Pictured at the official ribbon-cutting to reopen the school are (left to right) Joanne M. Nestor, PTO president; alumni Carl Cathers; Stockton Borough Council President Mike Hagerty; School Board President Rick McDaniel, Stephen Sangemino of Precision Building; Miss Molly Nemeth, our youngest student; and Cathleen Ciesla and Michael Calafati from Historic Building Architects, LLC.

Stockton School Approved for Historic Grant

The Stockton Board of Education has just learned that we have been recommended for a Historic Preservation Grant for the work that was done on our school building in the summer of 2008. The school was one of 60 projects selected for funding by the New Jersey Historic Trust, which was created to promote historic preservation and encourage joint preservation efforts by the public and private sectors.

The list of recommended sites went before the Garden State Preservation Trust on March 11, 2009, for ratification and then move on to the Legislature for approval. If approved, Stockton will receive \$219,769.

The grant process is extremely competitive. Stockton had originally applied for this grant in 2006, when a referendum on the renovation work was held. The school did not make the New Jersey Historic Trust's list of approved projects in March 2007; however, school officials were encouraged to resubmit their application in 2008, when grants would be reconsidered.

If the legislature agrees to award the grant, the funds will reduce by approximately half the cost of the renovations, which were completed in September. The remaining expenses will be paid over 30 years by bonds issued by the district. This would be the third grant we have received from the Trust.

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PTO Pasta Dinner

Be sure to get tickets for this event, to be held at the Stockton Firehouse on Sunday, May 17th. (A reservation form appears on page 2.) The PTO is requesting pieces of donated art for the annual School Art Auction. Please contact PTO President Joanne Nestor at 609 397-0379 if you would like to make a donation.

Don't Miss Stockton Rummage Sale on March 14-15 at Mill

Back in the days before the words "recycling" and "reuse" became fashionable, the PTO at Stockton School started an annual event that addressed these issues—our annual Rummage Sale.

This year marks the eighth year of the Rummage Sale. And with that other "R-word"—recession—looming, you won't want to miss the bargains at this year's event, which will be held on Saturday, March 14, and Sunday, March 15, at the Prallsville Mill in Stockton.

The Rummage Sale has become a Stockton tradition. The current Rummage Sale chair and former PTO president Dianne McDaniel, together with lead cashier Colleen Ruzicka, "Toy Czarina" Peg Marty, and many other volunteers have worked hard to make this event a success. (The volunteers are not really "tireless"—by late Sunday afternoon we can assure you they are tired!)

The Rummage Sale will open on Saturday at 9 a.m. and last until 4 p.m. On Sunday the doors will reopen at 9 a.m., with all items on sale for half price. At

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There's something for everyone at the Rummage Sale, says event chair Diane McDaniel.

Citizens to Support the Stockton School
c/o Stockton Borough School
19 S. Main Street
Stockton NJ 08559

Report on the Pre-K Program

When the Stockton School proposed opening a part time Pre-Kindergarten classroom for four year old students a year ago, there were many questions about this new program. Now, a year later there appears to be little doubt that the program is a success. The four-year-olds—three girls and one boy—compliment the three boys and one girl in the

kindergarten class. Our future students receive high-quality instruction and the tuition money is used to offset property tax burden to our homeowners. The program has worked out so well that Jenn French, the classroom teacher, has recommended an increase from three to four mornings a week for the Pre-K students next school year.

Tuition Student Registration Open

Stockton Borough School offers a private tuition program for students in grades PreK through six. If someone you know lives outside of the Borough and is interested in enrolling a child in our unique school, please tell them to visit our webpage at www.stocktonschool.us for more information or call the CSA Suzanne Ivans at 609 397-2012 to arrange for a personal tour of the school.

News About Stockton School Alumni Is Sought

Did you, or someone in your family, attend the Stockton School? Do you have any old pictures? Do you have a funny story about something that happened when you attended the Stockton School?

Would you like to share what you are doing now? Send in your story and/or photos to the school at sbs@stockton-school.us and it may be printed in our next newsletter!

Pasta and Art Reservation Form

Name: _____
Phone: _____ Email (optional): _____

SEATING

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL (4:00 pm)

REGULAR SEATING (7:15 PM)

_____ Adults x \$10 = _____

_____ Adults x \$12 = _____

_____ Children (age 5–12) X \$5 = _____

_____ Children (age 5–12) X \$6 = _____

_____ Children under 5 (FREE)

_____ Children under 5 (FREE)

Total Enclosed _____

Total Enclosed _____

Please detach and return to:
Stockton School PTO
19 S. Main St.
Stockton, NJ 08559

Enclose your check made payable to Stockton School PTO

Seats are limited and are on a first paid/first served basis. Payment must be included with your form to guarantee your seats. For reservation information, please call Kathleen Vandegrift at 609 397-7376 or contact her via email at kathleenvandegrift@yahoo.com



Aly Baggitt contemplates the spelling of a word just prior to winning the school's Spelling Bee.

Spelling Bee Champion

Congratulations to sixth grade student Aly Baggitt, the winner of the Stockton School District's second annual Spelling Bee. Charles McDaniel, also a sixth grade student, was the runner-up. Aly will move on to the regional finals. One regional winner will win an all-expense-paid trip to the annual Scripps Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., at the end of May.

LAEF Benefit Set

The Lambertville Area Education Foundation will hold its annual auction benefit on Saturday, March 21, at the Eagle Fire Company in New Hope. Tickets are \$50 and are available at Dresswells, the Lambertville Trading Co., and the Medicine Shoppe. If you are interested in donating an auction item or in volunteering, contact Chris Morgan at 609-903-2569 or cmorgan285@gmail.com

Egg Hunt Help Needed

The Spring Egg Hunt will need volunteers to run this year. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Tami Hettman at 609-397-2578. The Egg Hunt will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 11, at the Stockton Borough School.

2009-10 School Budget

The Board of Education is still awaiting budget figures from the Governor's office. Once a draft of the budget has been finalized, it will be published on the school web page at www.stocktonschool.us.

Language Programs Provide Many Benefits

At Stockton School, we are very proud of our language programs. Under the tutelage of Madame Van Stolk, students begin learning French in kindergarten. As Madame is fond of saying, "I love teaching them French at an early age—they have no accents, and they learn to speak French like little Parisians!"

Experts agree. According to newsforparents.org, "Language is stored in the brain's left hemisphere, with pronunciation and grammar in the Brocas area. If we learn a word after puberty we will always pronounce it differently than if we learned it before our critical period ends. This is because by age 13, newly learned words are channeled to a completely different place

in the Brocas area."

When children are exposed to a second language at a young age, they are not only more likely to pronounce words correctly, but they are also more likely to easily learn a third language. Newsforparents.org also states that learning a second language at an early age has many additional benefits, including boosting English language skills, improving verbal test scores and vocabulary skills, pronunciation skills and success in future careers.

In addition to studying French in grades K through 6, students also start to learn Mandarin Chinese in Grade 4. This successful program, made possible by a generous grant from the

Lambertville Area Education Foundation (LAEF) allows Stockton to have a Mandarin teacher hold classes once a week at the school. The implications of learning Chinese in today's world are obvious.

Learning Mandarin presents a unique challenge, not only in its written form, but also in its syntax and pronunciation. Children learn that similar words have entirely different meanings when spoken, based on inflection, tone and phonology. For instance, *ma* can mean either "mother" or "horse" based on its verbal inflection.

School administrators believe that exposure to two foreign languages helps to develop a good foundation in language skills in our students.



Spreading Holiday Cheer

Stockton School students know that just because classes have been canceled for a Snow Day, that doesn't mean they can't do something to serve our community. On a cold and icy Friday Snow Day in December, several students from the fifth and sixth grades met at the home of Tom and Kathrine Hunt to make gingerbread houses. Students and parents donated edible "building materials" to construct the houses. The students delivered their edible abodes to several residents who were unable to venture out in the cold for the annual Tree and Candle lighting at the firehouse. We hope the recipients enjoyed these holiday treats as much as the students enjoyed making and delivering them!

Grant

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A ceremony was held in September to celebrate the completion of the structural restoration. Friends and families filled the schoolyard for this community celebration. After speeches by local dignitaries, guests were invited to sign a poster that said, "I was there," which was later placed into a Time Capsule. Guests also placed

items in the capsule, including things as diverse as a Stockton Fire Company mug, a one dollar bill, newspapers, and other mementos. The sealing and placement of the Time Capsule was supervised by NJ Archives Director Karl Niederer. The capsule was placed in the stone foundation of the ramp on the south side of the school by masons from Precession Building. We plan to open the Time Capsule in September 2032—the 200th anniversary of the founding of the school.

Rummage

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noon there will be a bag sale—\$5 to fill a bag. Refreshments will also be available during the sale.

For more information, or to volunteer, contact Diane McDaniel at 609-397-1664.

Have a nice day!