

# SCSD News



*March 2011*

***News from the Superintendent...*** Governor Corbett released his budget address on March 8<sup>th</sup> and from many perspectives, it was not an education-friendly budget. Governor Corbett called for a reduction in the Basic Education Subsidy, the elimination of the Accountability Block Grants, and the elimination of reimbursements for the expenses associated with students attending charter schools. His budget address also unveiled his proposal, now called Senate Bill #1, to create public vouchers to provide the parents of low income students with the choice of whether to send their child to public, private or parochial institutions regardless of the performance of their public school of residence.

How will Governor Corbett's budget proposal impact Susquehanna Community? Under the proposal, Susquehanna Community would lose approximately \$918,000 in state funding or approximately \$1,018 per student. The district will be reducing expenditures and analyzing other cost savings measures to reduce the impact of this severe funding reduction. The choices faced by the school district are not easy by any means. Reducing expenditures will necessitate a reduction in labor costs and almost certainly, a reduction or curtail of programs for students.

The loss in state funding on a per pupil basis is higher for the Susquehanna Community School District than any other district in Susquehanna County. Districts with high poverty rates lost a higher per pupil funding amount than districts with low poverty rates. Please contact your state legislators to express your dissatisfaction with the governor's proposed budget reduction formula that takes more dollars per student from low-income districts than from high-income districts.

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***News from the High School Principal...*** The proposed state budget for the 2011-2012 school year reflects a one-year pause in the development and implementation of the Keystone Exams. The Pennsylvania Department of Education remains committed to the new system for high school graduation but is delaying the use of Keystone Exams for the 2011-2012 school year.

This means that the current 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will not be taking end of the year Keystone Exams next year in English 9 or in Algebra I. The exams will be delayed by one year according to the current information received from the Department of Education. We do not know what the impact will be on current 8<sup>th</sup> graders for the following school year, 2012-13. When additional information becomes available, I will be sure to pass it along.

We will still be participating in a Keystone Exam pilot test in English Composition for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and the Algebra 1 operational exam. These exams will be given in May of this school year. Our current 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Algebra 1 will be taking this exam. Both exams will be given online and each exam will take approximately two hours to complete. The future still calls for the replacement of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA by the Keystone Exams in 2013-14. Also, all school districts will have to adjust their current graduation policy to reflect the use of the Keystone Exams as an end of course requirement.

***News from the Elementary Principal...*** The Susquehanna Community Elementary School, through a committee process, has ranked Reading Street from the Pearson Scott Foresman Publishing Company as the top choice for its new Reading series. Reading Street was ranked the highest of three different series that were reviewed.

The Susquehanna Community Elementary School will be changing its grouping structure for Reading next year. An Inclusive Reading Structure, whereby all regular education students will be heterogeneously mixed, will be implemented in 2011-12. Under this system of grouping, learning support students will be taught within the regular reading curriculum, with the addition of some type of support from a reading specialist, special education teacher, or aide. Learning support students will be mixed into Reading groups according to their reading abilities. Additional supports may occur during whole group core instruction time, during core flex grouping time, or during intervention/enrichment time. Special education students with major reading disabilities will receive reading instruction in an alternative reading curriculum.

The new Reading series will be purchased mostly with funds left over from the Title I ARRA Stimulus Fund. If anyone would like more information about the Reading Program, or any other program at Susquehanna Community Elementary School, you may contact Mr. Robert Keyes, Elementary Principal.

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***News from the High School Assistant Principal...*** Susquehanna Community School District held its annual Mocha Moose on Friday March 25, 2011. As usual the Mocha Moose was a huge success. The Mocha Moose emphasizes the talents of our students, the generosity of community members and the donations submitted by small area businesses. Susquehanna takes pride in their students and the many talents which they have. This year's Mocha Moose had a Carnival theme selected by the student body. Just to name a few activities that were featured at this year's event were musical performances by our students, carnival games, clowns, fortune tellers and an internationally known illustrator who donated his time to draw caricatures. Susquehanna Community School District is proud of its students and supports any opportunity they have to shine!