

PRESS RELEASE

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South Hunterdon Regional High School Work Group Passes Charter

The task force established by the three local municipal councils (Lambertville, Stockton and West Amwell) and the South Hunterdon Region High School (SHRHS) Board of Education (BOE) unanimously passed a Work Group Charter at a December 2009 meeting. The Charter provides a complete description of the Work Group mission, goals and approach towards meeting those goals. Furthermore, the Work Group unanimously selected Ward Sanders, a councilman in Lambertville, as Chair and Steve Giocondo, Mayor of Stockton, as Vice-Chair. Dave Beaumont has been selected Work Group Leader through appointment by the SHRHS BOE.

The Work Group was established as a result of negotiations that occurred between the town councils of Lambertville, Stockton and West Amwell and the DOE as a result of failed school budget referendums. During the process many citizens and town councils expressed concerns about the fact that SHRHS per-pupil costs are the highest in the state and substantially higher than any state averages or medians.

The mission of the Work Group is to clearly understand the factors that contribute to the high per-pupil costs at SHRHS. This will require the Work Group to review the SHRHS's budget process with the intent to understand key factors influencing the budget. Additionally, the Work Group shall explore efficiencies and cost-saving measures and make written recommendations to the SHRHS BOE and administration for consideration.

The Work Group is comprised of municipal council members, municipal residents, SHRHS BOE members and administration. Current membership includes:

Lambertville:

Beth Asaro – Councilwoman in Lambertville
Drew Gitomer – Resident of Lambertville
Wardell Sanders – Councilman in Lambertville
Larry Simms – Resident of Lambertville

Stockton:

Andrew Dougherty – Councilman in Stockton
Jim Gallagher – Resident of Stockton
Stephen Giocondo – Mayor of Stockton

West Amwell:

Gail Brewi – Resident of West Amwell
Ken Duer – Resident of West Amwell
Tom Molnar – Councilman in West Amwell
Celeste Mosby – Resident of West Amwell

SHRHS

Dave Beaumont – SHRHS BOE member from West Amwell
Tom Hendricks – SHRHS BOE member from Stockton
Nancy Gartenberg – SHRHS Administration
Judy Marino – SHRHS Administration
Dan Seiter – SHRHS BOE member from Lambertville
Kerry Sevilis – SHRHS Administration

Hunterdon County Dept. of Education

Jeff Scott – Hunterdon County Department of Education

The Work Group has met four times. Topics covered within these meetings included: Special Education, Middle School Program, High School Program, and some comparisons with other districts. Additional topics will include (but not limited to): Extracurriculars, Facility Operations and Personnel. Although originally designed to meet bi-monthly, the Work Group has accelerated the meeting schedule to include monthly meetings through mid-2010. It is anticipated that the accelerated meeting schedule will enhance the likelihood of the Work Group meeting its objectives in a thorough and timely fashion.

Balancing the issues facing SHRHS along with the taxpayer concerns is a key objective of the Work Group. The healthy dialogue undertaken within the first meetings clearly indicates that all Work Group members are committed to this objective.

Attached, for reference, is the Work Group Charter. Please contact Ward Sanders (Work Group Chair, Ward Sanders (wardellsanders@gmail.com) or 609.802.2535) or Dave Beaumont (Work Group Leader, david.beaumont@shrhs.org) with any questions or comments.