

PISCATAWAY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Dear Piscataway School Community,

As you probably know by now, the citizens of Piscataway approved the 2010-11 school budget in yesterday's election. This morning's **Home News Tribune** reported that "Bucking a trend that saw school budgets fall all across Central Jersey, the township's voters approved a nearly \$107 million education spending plan Tuesday night by a vote of 2,879 to 2,456."

Certainly this was a different budget year. The unprecedented focus on school budgets and the economic crisis within the state created a need for all those interested in maintaining a quality education to try and communicate the needs of the district to a tax-weary electorate.

Several factors contributed to our success. The grass roots efforts of so many organizations of parents, teachers and interested residents created a climate of focus. The Piscataway Board of Education's year-long efforts at community outreach and awareness paid off. Kids Vote was again a unifying educational experience that helped to bring families together to examine the process of democracy. And finally, a school district that has maintained high quality programs with fiscal responsibility was something we think the voters recognized.

But in the end, Piscataway is a face-to-face town. The ball field and neighborhood interactions, the forums, the candidate nights, and frank discussions always work in our favor. For that, my hat is off to each of you.

Now we move on. The spending plan still requires that we scale more hurdles but, as I mentioned to you earlier, that is what we do. We will stay committed to each child and each family.

We also intend to right the wrong inflicted upon us for many years through the school funding debacle. As our many meetings and messages have indicated, part of the reason for Piscataway's property tax burden comes from an unfair approach to state aid. We will continue to partner with North Brunswick, Woodbridge, and Edison to fix this problem. We will need you again – your voices are what made the difference yesterday - and your voices will matter again tomorrow. As a writer once said "decisions are made by those who show up" and you showed up.

But for now, enjoy the moment. Education in Piscataway won and on behalf of the Board of Education and Administration – thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Copeland