



Paul Lachenauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
**PANCAKES, ANYONE?...Lance Booth serves pancakes at the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary breakfast held Sunday at the Scotch Hills Country Club. Proceeds benefited the Frazee House.**

## Personalized Learning Showcased at BOE Meeting

By ROBYN ORR-GIOFFRE  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

CRANFORD — Personalized Learning through Competency-Based Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) was showcased Monday night at the regular monthly meeting of the board of education.

Competency-Based learning seeks to advance students from skill to skill based on how competent they are, as opposed to advancing them based on age.

Jill Hayeck's third-grade students from Orange Avenue School gave the board a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the benefits of this program.

The students compared a traditional classroom to one using Competency-Based learning and told the board students in this environment become independent and work with any style they choose. They further commented that students learn and study at their own pace, take tests when they are ready, have increased ability to meet with teachers and peer experts and are able to move forward or stay behind in a skill even if classmates move on.

The program allows for Innovation Hour, a time for students to explore topics of interest during the day and a time for students to meet and discuss ways to be more successful in the classroom.

Additionally, there is Teacher Time, where students can sign up to meet with their teacher, which can be done with a small group of learners instead of just one-on-one. Students also can consult with the Expert Board, made up of students who have mastered a skill.

"I like this way of learning because we are not pushed to learn what we are not comfortable with," third grader Riley McGee told the board.

Orange Avenue School Principal Marc Edery commented to board members that for teachers implementing the new program, "The hardest part is letting go" and letting students take control of their learning.

Superintendent Scott Rubin, Ed.D., gave the students accolades for their presentation, commenting, "I have to tell you, I think our future is in very good hands."

Security issues also were discussed at the meeting. The security audit will take place soon and there is a visit planned for each of the schools in the district.

Community meetings have been scheduled at each of the schools to

address security concerns and social and wellness issues with students, with a presentation and a question-and-answer segment.

Mr. Rubin told the board that, starting next year, he would schedule an annual meeting to provide an update about safety and wellness concerns. He told the board he views security as "a shared responsibility" and expressed gratitude to the PTA presidents for allowing a dialogue with each of the schools, further commenting that, "it's very healthy to have this mutual dialogue and get to see things through multiple lenses."

The board of education will hold a public hearing on the budget in the board room at Lincoln School at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 30.



Fred T. Rossi for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
**WORDS OF WISDOM...Former baseball star Darryl Strawberry speaks to fans young and old at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School on Monday night about his professional triumphs and personal struggles.**

## County Pool

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continue...subsidizing playing golf."

The board also voted to sell property at 502-506 Amboy Avenue in Elizabeth for \$400,000.

Also approved was a resolution proclaiming Tuesday, April 10, 2018, as Equal Pay Day.

"Women on the average earn 79 cents for every dollar men make and for women of color it's less than that," Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski said. She said the resolution shows the board's support "to the idea that everyone who performs an equal task should get equal pay."

Nancy Piwowar of Plainfield questioned a resolution to designate Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth as a Trauma II Level Center.

Freeholder Estrada explained that the New Jersey Department of Health had sought proposals from Union County hospitals that would apply to be a trauma center and Trinitas had applied. He said Trinitas has been making improvements over the past four years including an extension of its emergency room operation "to ensure that it qualified for this process."

He said the county believes it needs a designated trauma center that is closer to its residents.

Ms. Piwowar also alerted the county to damage caused by the recent nor'easters, saying Green Brook Park in Plainfield was "devastated" from storm damage. "That park is heavily used and it (damage) is a public safety hazard," she said.

Freeholder Chairman Sergio

Granados said Freeholder Linda Carter, County Manager Ed Oatman and Mr. Zuber are working on a plan to clean up the park "as quickly as possible."

Mr. Paterson also questioned why Freeholder Mohamed Jalloh is not being given the Democratic organization line on June Primary Election ballots. Mr. Granados cut off Mr. Paterson, saying his comments needed to address governmental and not political issues.

On the issue of the Gateway Project, which includes two new rail tunnels from New Jersey to New York under the Hudson River and a new portal bridge, Freeholder Bruce Bergen noted that legislation approved by the House and U.S. Senate last week includes \$541 million for the project.

"It's just a start, but it's a good start," Mr. Bergen said. "This is not a New Jersey issue, it's not a New York issue, it's a regional and even a national economic issue."

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## Downtown

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A subcommittee of the downtown redevelopment committee will be responsible for drafting the plan and will work with other committee members as well, said Mr. Strowe, who will take part in the plan's writing along with Mayor Alexander Smith, Deputy Mayor Llewellyn Jones, Township Manager Al Mirabella, planners and attorneys along with several business owners and property landlords. The subcommittee's progress will be updated at the redevelopment committee's monthly meetings, and if members of the public wish to provide comments or input at those meetings, they will be able to do so, Mr. Strowe told *The Times*.

He echoed the mayor's hope that by the end of May or early June, the redevelopment plan can be introduced by the township council and, if approved, requests for proposals from developers can be solicited during the summer months. By fall, Mr. Strowe said, he hopes the governing body will be voting on the first downtown projects.

Last week, Planning Board Chairwoman Paulette Coronato noted that the current downtown revitalization efforts had come further than any of the previous efforts, which included over the years numerous consultant reports and the formation of several committees that sought to find a solution to downtown revitalization. Mr. Strowe this week said the same, adding that, "we have to get [the first phase] right and as perfect as it can be."

## Shared Services

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ing corner properties.

"We hope for a unanimous approval. We hope to repeal this onerous revision that was done three years ago to the dismay of many corner property owners," said Ms. Cuccaro.

Councilman Richard McCormack said as a corner property owner himself, he does not feel it is "fair" to collect corner property owner's taxes "like everyone else." Yet, corner properties are entitled to less privacy than other borough residents.

Planning board member Bill Nierstedt said that he could not provide commentary until the ordinance is reviewed by the planning board or "in front of him." Planning board commentary will be provided before the next council meeting addressing the matter, Councilwoman Sara Todisco said.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation has awarded Garwood \$216,000 to "repair various borough streets" in the 2018 calendar year, stated Mayor Lombardo.

Mayor Lombardo said through the Union County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, Garwood has been awarded a \$25,470 Level The Playing Field playground grant.

The Mayor appointed planning board member Kathy Villaggio to the recreation commission and celebrations committee.

"I am excited to help our commu-

nity and give back. Both the recreation commission and the celebrations committee have a lot going on and to achieve. I am glad I can help them," said Ms. Villaggio.

## Forest Rd.

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council, Ms. McElroy-Barker said, "The sound system was purchased for the seniors and can be used by the recreation commission only."

There was some discussion of the borough's summer movie date night events. The commission currently is planning the schedule of movies. The Fanwood Easter Egg Hunt, originally scheduled for March 24, was cancelled over safety concerns following recent weather conditions, and has been rescheduled for this Saturday, March 31. It will take place at Forest Road Park at 10 a.m. Mr. Valente discussed the borough's 5K and said a new website needs to be created for this event.

Mr. Budiansky concluded the meeting with his director's report about the borough's summer camps. Weeks two and three of travel camp sold out quickly on registration day at the beginning of the month. The revenues for Summer 2018 are \$95,026. Mr. Budiansky is encouraging residents to continue to register their children for summer camp.

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