

PRESS RELEASE
September 8, 2010

Statements at the August 26, 2010 Public Board of Education Meeting

Several statements were made at the August 26th public BOE meeting by Mr. Robert Anderson, a retired teacher and current Secaucus Education Association President.

His statements, which he has been repeating for several months, are at best a distortion of the facts and in some instances, are entirely without any basis in fact.

In an attempt to avoid any confusion on the part of parents or the public at large, we will provide a very brief response to each of his allegations.

Statement: “Five teachers were laid off.”

This is a gross exaggeration. There was only one, non-tenured teacher whose contract was not renewed, for cause. I would challenge Mr. Anderson to provide the names of the other four teachers he claims were laid off.

Statement: “Promethean Boards (Interactive White Boards) are not an accomplishment because teachers were not trained.”

This is a total fabrication. To date, the district has spent over \$40,000 on teacher training.

Statement: “Safari Montage is nothing new and is just a filmstrip machine.”

Safari Montage is a nationally recognized software package that provides teachers with 1,400 hours of video containing over 70,000 individual clips. While Mr. Anderson's statement is nostalgic, “film-strip” projectors have not seen common use since the early 1980's.

Statement: “2.5% tax increase is no accomplishment. We always went to CAP, so this is no big deal.”

First, the CAP imposed by the state was 4%, not 2.5%. To present the residents of Secaucus with a 2.5% budget, while maintaining all staff positions and programs, following the loss of 100% of our state aid (\$1.7 million) was a very big deal for taxpayers, who passed the budget by a significant margin.

Statement: “The Board did ask teachers for give-backs on the SEA contract.”

Acting under a specific directive from the governor and the county superintendent, the administration presented one request to the SEA.

Statement: “Secaucus High School will not make Top 100 high schools in New Jersey. We are losing students to High Tech HS and to private schools.”

This statement is troubling on several levels. Again, Mr. Anderson is wrong (by 30%) on the number of students leaving our district. In any public school district, a very small percentage of students pursue careers in areas for which the district cannot provide training. In other instances, families decide to send their children to a religious school as guaranteed by the first amendment.

It is more troubling to this administration that Mr. Anderson would minimize the aspirations or abilities of his former colleagues by saying that their school will not get into the state's top 100. We moved up to # 102 this year and are ranked #4 out of 79 schools in our District Factor Group.

It is becoming quite apparent that Mr. Anderson’s continued efforts to fabricate problems, where none exist, are a transparent attempt to perpetuate his position as SEA President. He is out of touch with the mounting educational and fiscal issues facing New Jersey’s classrooms and the teachers that he purports to represent.

Cynthia Randina
Superintendent of Schools