



Board of Education
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**Summit
Public
Schools**

Nathan N. Parker, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents,

We are all aware of the tough economic times that New Jersey public schools are facing. In Summit, we have just come through a difficult budget process in which we had to cope with the loss of all state aid – more than \$2.5 million for the upcoming school year. The financial struggle will continue, and more and more we will have to rely on the generosity of the Summit community to help us provide the level of education that our students deserve and the community expects. We cannot be satisfied with less.

At the board of education's reorganization meeting held May 13, the board presented Resolutions of Recognition to a number of organizations that maintain as their mission the financial support of our programs: the schools' **PTAs and PTOs**; the **Summit Athletic Boosters Association**; the **Summit Music Parents Association**; the **Summit Performing Arts Resource Committee**; and the **Summit Educational Foundation**. All of these organizations work diligently to encourage donations from community members and to manage those funds to best serve our programs. We are deeply grateful for the commitment of these groups and for the generosity of their benefactors.

I would like to tell you a bit more about one of these organizations and of the widespread impact it has had on the educational experiences of all Summit students. The Summit Educational Foundation – more popularly known as SEF – was developed in 1986 to provide funding for programs that could not be supported by the district's regular operating budget. SEF contributes to the school in the form of grants, proposals for which are submitted by school staff and then reviewed by SEF grants committee and myself and approved by the board of education.

SEF is a diligent and effective fundraising organization. This school year alone, the Summit community donated \$326,000 to the SEF. And over the SEF's 24 years of operation, more than \$2.5 million in grants have been made to the Summit Public Schools, reaching every grade level and every academic discipline. During this school year, \$407,719 in SEF grants have enriched our curriculum.

Here are only a few of the more than 50 SEF funded programs being implemented in our schools this spring: two nights of **Family Science and Math** at each elementary school for students and their families; the purchase of SmartBoards for the third and

fourth grades in the elementary schools; a third year of **Mandarin Chinese** at Summit High School; a **science research program** at the high school; and provision for a full-time **studio manager/teacher** at the high school's new media literacy broadcast studio. *(The complete list of SEF's spring grants can be found on the district website – www.summit.k12.nj.us)*

In addition, SEF is providing more than \$80,000 to fund the new eighth grade cycle program that will go into effect at Lawton C. Johnson Summit Middle School next year. The current six 30-day cycle classes per year are being changed to four 45-day cycles, and students will have a choice in selecting two of their four classes. Six new cycle classes have been developed for the eighth graders; the two required courses are **Digital Newsroom** and **Artist as Student**. Students may then choose two additional courses from **Whodunit?** (an introduction to forensic science), **Innovative Design Challenge**, **Today's Talk** (how to create a talk show); and **G.L.E.E.** (an introduction to the entertainment field). We are all looking forward to this new program, and we're sure the students will be excited to participate in these cutting edge classes that focus on 21st century skills and global connections.

However, if it were not for SEF and the contributions of the Summit community, innovative programs such as these would not be possible. Furthermore, the funding provided to our athletic, music, and performing arts programs has been a vital component of our schools' success in **athletics** - two state championships this school year; **music** – students accepted to all state vocal and instrumental groups and top scores in multi-state competitions; and **performing arts** – eight nominations for Summit High School's production of "The Producers" in this year's Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star competition and the fifth consecutive year the SHS musical has been nominated for "Best Overall Production."

It has been said that "it takes a village" to raise a child, and the Summit community has confirmed that concept. I want to express our thanks on behalf of the thousands of students who have benefited from this community's generosity. We ask that you continue to support SEF and the other organizations. Your help is needed more than ever.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nathan Parker