

**Good evening. Thank you for joining us this evening for this presentation of the Tentative Final Budget for 2013-14.**

**Although our Business Manager, Mr. Ed Smith, normally gives the presentation at these events, it is important that I take a few moments to share with you how the public's input through the Penn Project for Civic Engagement has had a huge impact in making the recommendations that we are making tonight. Following my presentation, Mr. Smith will give you the details of the entire budget.**

**As a snapshot overview of our presentation on how we propose to overcome the nearly \$9.7 million dollar shortfall that we face, I will begin with this slide that shows \$2,381,000 in reductions based on the Penn Project Worksheets, \$1,177,830 of other expenditure reductions that Mr. Smith will explain, \$1,420,666 of Revenue Revisions, the use of**

**\$2,600,000 from the Fund Balance, and a proposed tax hike of 2.94% that will generate \$2,097, 973. Combined, this will give us the \$9,677,469 that we need to balance the budget for the upcoming school year.**

**Before I begin to show you the recommended reductions based on the Penn Project Worksheets, I feel it is important to share with you the guiding values that came out of the forums that we used in making our decisions.**

**First, it is evident that there is tension in our community between property values, the quality of our schools, and what people can afford. This is nothing new here. Yet we all know that there is a direct correlation between property values and good schools. Poor schools drive down property values.**

**Second, Dr. Harris Sokoloff stated in his recent presentation that there was a mistrust of the Penn process from the community participants. Although we recognize that costs on the sheets were rounded up or down and that there could have been more items with more specific action and impact statements, the values that you presented were key in this process. I hope you will leave this evening feeling that we applied those values to the reductions that are being proposed and that this process gave you a voice unlike ever before in the budget decision-making.**

**Values three, four, and five on this slide echo similar sentiments. We get it loud and clear that in making all of these recommendations that the students should come first and that we should especially not make cuts to those programs that we hold so dear in this community: kindergarten, the arts, music, and sports. I am pleased to say that all of these areas will**

**remain intact for our students for the upcoming year!**

**Moving to our next slide, Value 6 asked that we “insure equity” in our decision-making. Indeed, as you see some of our recommendations, equity is a key goal.**

**Value 7 recommends that we redesign for efficiency, effectiveness, and savings. As you will see, this value is evident throughout many of our recommendations.**

**Value 8 asks that we work with others to reduce costs and improve savings. This will be an ongoing effort. However, I am proud tonight to announce that Martha Menz and I met yesterday with Barbara Bassett from the Philadelphia Art Museum, and she informed us that thanks to a grant that we jointly applied for from the Ethel Sargent Clark Smith**

**Memorial Foundation, all of our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will have their bussing and admission to the Philadelphia Art Museum provided for free for the upcoming year. This is a savings for the taxpayers of this community and helps to maintain our fine tradition of exposure to the arts for our students.**

**In addition, I want to thank our regular school board meeting participant, Dr. Carlton Orchinick, for connecting us to another local resident, Dr. Suzanne Rocheleau from Drexel University regarding the *Visiting Scholars Program* at Drexel. Last week, the Upper Darby High School Guidance Department and I met with Dr. Rocheleau to form a partnership that will enable our top flight students to be able to accumulate college credits in sophomore, junior, and senior years of high school by taking college courses with college students at Drexel each term of Drexel's school year, or four terms per year. The incredible fact about this**

**partnership is that outside of a \$75 registration fee, these courses in the *Visiting Scholars Program* that stretch across all aspects of Drexel's major areas of study will be free to our students. It is our hope that we can continue to foster relationships with other partners that will both bring savings for our taxpayers as well as opportunities for our students.**

**Value 9 asks that we “minimize the impact on those adults with the fewest resources.” We took that to mean both our taxpayers as well as employees whose salaries are the lowest in our workforce. You recommended using attrition wherever possible as opposed to laying people off. This value is reflected in areas throughout our proposal as well.**

**Finally, Value 10 recommends that we “focus on the long term, not just this year.” Although the presentation this evening will not address long term planning, preliminary discussions are already**

**taking place as to probable areas for investigation for next year and beyond.**

**With these ten values in mind, let me begin by going through the recommendations that you, the public, made through the forums. Please keep in mind that no group reached the goal of 100 points, so some very difficult decisions had to be made in addition to yours to balance the budget.**

**We will begin our reductions by looking at those areas voted as “Low Hanging Fruit” and “Shared Pain.” Once again, as Dr. Sokoloff made very clear, the sentiment among the groups was that there is no such thing as “Low Hanging Fruit.” Everything was painful. We agree.**

**The area receiving the highest number of group votes for “Low Hanging Fruit” was #22, The Office of the Superintendent. As you can see at the top of the**

**slide, eleven groups, with each group consisting of 20 to 30 participants, considered this to be an easy one as “Low Hanging Fruit.” Beneath that is the description from the Penn Project for Civic Engagement Worksheet, and beneath that is the Administration’s Recommendation. We support this recommendation to reduce secretarial help on the Superintendent’s floor of the Administration Building through attrition and a redistribution of duties there. This will save only \$54,000, but every bit helps.**

**The next highest vote getter was #28, Transportation, where 10 groups found this to be “Low Hanging Fruit.” In an effort to support the value to “redesign for efficiency, effectiveness, and savings,” we recommend one instead of two late busses at the middle and high school levels and the redesign of district bus runs so that a minimum of three bus runs are eliminated. The new software for**



**Transportation is expected to improve efficiency as well. Although there will be a reduction in budgeted field trips, we hope that the partnership with the Art Museum that I mentioned earlier as well as our Upper Darby Arts and Education Foundation grants will help to keep these field trip opportunities strong. Mr. Smith projects a savings of \$294,000 in this budget line.**

**Third on the list of “Low Hanging Fruit” from the forums was #1, Elementary Classroom Teachers.” The proposal from the Penn Project for Civic Engagement was to reduce 10 elementary teachers. Our recommendation is to reduce the elementary teaching force by only 7 teachers so as to impact class size as little as possible. However, to “insure equity” and “efficiency” in class size across the district, some forced transfers may have to take place. This will bring a savings of \$840,000.**

**Seven groups voted to eliminate the positions of the Coordinator and Secretary of Instructional Media, #17. Both of these positions do not deal with students directly, and are therefore less valuable according to the values expressed by you. We support your recommendation and plan to redesign these roles for “efficiency, effectiveness, and savings.” Many of these responsibilities will be picked up by our Coordinator of Public Information and others for a savings of \$211,000.**

**Receiving the same number of group votes was #23, The Office of the Principal. The Penn Worksheet recommended cutting that staff by 5%. Although on the surface, this would appear to be an easy decision, those who know the increased demands on our school secretaries due to mandated state reporting as well as the volume of paperwork and calls due to our large school sizes would not recommend this action. In addition, two high school**

**secretaries have been reduced within the past two years without fanfare due to attrition in order to create “efficiency and a savings.” Therefore, the administration does not support a reduction here.**

**The next recommendation from the public with 2 groups voting for 5% and 7 groups voting for 10% was #19, reduction in the administrative staff overseeing Instruction and Curriculum. For those members of our community who are participating in writing our new Comprehensive Plan, you have seen in detail how the new State mandated appraisal system for both teachers and principals will make it nearly impossible for our district administrators to meet their responsibilities. Currently, Upper Darby has the largest ratio of administrators to teachers and administrators to students in the county. A January 2013 study by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association showed that the average administrator to student ratio**

**across the state for school districts of 4, 351 students or more is one administrator to 196.7 students. In Upper Darby, the ratio is one administrator to 276 students, 80 students higher than the State average. The past two budgets have cut four administrators and forced redesign of roles for “efficiency, effectiveness, and savings.” However, further cuts will impact the quality of instruction in the classroom through diminished supervision, mentorship, and monitoring of teachers, thus impacting negatively upon student learning, a value that we were asked to keep in mind. Therefore, we cannot support this recommendation.**

**Next, 5 groups voted as “Low Hanging Fruit” to reduce the secretarial support by 5% in the offices of the Business/Fiscal Services or the first floor of the Administration Building. Once again, attrition will be used to eliminate two positions and to create**

**more “efficiency and effectiveness” for a “savings” of \$88,000.**

**As you can see as we move along through this process, fewer groups are able to identify “Low Hanging Fruit.” The decisions are becoming more difficult. Now we are at the point that only 4 groups found our next highest vote getter, #7, reducing High School Teachers by 10 positions to be a relatively easy choice. As an Administration, we believe reducing 10 positions would have too much of an impact upon instruction. Therefore, we are recommending a more modest reduction of 4 positions through attrition. With the use of our new scheduling software, it is anticipated that more balanced class sizes will be created across the day to “insure equity” that will have minimal impact upon student learning. This will bring a savings of \$480,000.**

**Our next slide, shows the shift from pure “Low Hanging Fruit” to more of a “Shared Pain.” Only 2 groups voted to eliminate Elementary Lead Teachers as “Low Hanging Fruit” while 5 groups could accept this cut as “Shared Pain.” Knowing the size of our large elementary schools where the Lead Teachers are located, the administration believes that there would be a negative impact on everything from student safety to management of the educational program if those Lead Teachers were eliminated. In other districts, schools the size of our large schools have assistant principals at a much higher financial cost. The Administration believes that the current Lead Teacher model is both “efficient and effective” in our elementary schools and should not be cut.**

**(Next slide)**

**The Administration feels similarly about the recommendation to cut Middle School Lead Teachers where a reduction had taken place previously. Our School Capacity Task Force has identified our middle schools as the schools of most concern about size. Reduction of Lead Teacher leadership in those buildings could have an adverse effect upon the management and efficiencies of those buildings.**

**(Next slide)**

**However, an analysis of the Lead Teachers at Upper Darby High School has yielded some support for a reduction. Although the Penn Project for Civic Engagement suggested cutting 2 Lead Teachers at the high school, and the public had 2 groups vote for it as “Low Hanging Fruit” and 3 groups as “Shared Pain,” the administration supports a “redesign for “efficiency, effectiveness, and savings” by**

**eliminating 1 Lead Teacher through attrition. The remaining 3 Lead Teachers would work as a team across all four grades to handle lower-level discipline offenses. Knowing that discipline is significantly reduced in Junior and Senior years, the “redesign” of Lead Teachers working as a team rather than in isolation should actually bring relief to those who are Lead Teachers in Freshman and Sophomore years. This would bring a savings of \$120,000.**

**The next area that the public recommended that we consider is the elimination of Computer Lab Assistants at the Elementary Schools. Three groups found eliminating the Computer Lab Assistants as “Low Hanging Fruit.” Upon discussion of this recommendation, the Administration looked at inefficiencies that needed to be addressed in our elementary schools. One area that stood out due to the reduction of elementary librarians last year is**



**the integrity of our elementary school libraries in the checking out of books, collection of books, and restocking the books in the proper areas. Our district has invested a great deal of money into these book collections, and they deserve to be kept intact. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the Administration to shift the role of the Computer Lab Assistants to the libraries of their schools to maintain the integrity and order of the book collections.**

**The last two slides in the area of “Low Hanging Fruit” are areas that we have already mentioned.**

**The first is the Fund Balance. 5 groups voted as “Low Hanging Fruit” to use \$2 million dollars of our Fund Balance this year. Although we agree that the less we use of the Fund Balance now, the better footing we have for the future, we also have to keep in mind the value expressed in the Penn forums that**

**we “minimize the impact on those adults with the fewest resources.” It is a delicate balance trying to maintain quality schools with low taxes. Therefore, we are recommending the use of \$2.6 million dollars from the Fund Balance for this budget. Mr. Smith will speak more to this later in his presentation.**

**This leads us to the Property Tax increase. We had 9 groups between “Low Hanging Fruit” and “Shared Pain” recommend a tax increase at the index of 2.4%. We had 5 groups between “Low Hanging Fruit” and “Shared Pain” recommend our tax increase to go up as high as 4%. Although by law, we could raise taxes as high as 6.6% without going to referendum, we are recommending a 2.94% tax increase that falls in between the two levels recommended by the public.**

**(Next slide)**

**The final two slides leave us having to choose from those areas that the public listed as “Gut Wrenchers” or “No Way, No Hows” so we can make our budget balance. Remember, none of the forum groups were able to make it to 100 points, so please bear with me as I present these two proposals to you. Due to modifications the Administration has made in the Action/Impact statements in the Penn Worksheets, I believe that these revised proposals will be much more within the “Low Hanging Fruit” or “Shared Pain” areas for you.**

**(Next slide)**

**The first area was to Reduce Maintenance Staff by 2% by laying off a maintenance worker, to reduce contracted repairs, and to delay necessary repairs. Luckily, once again through attrition, we are able to reduce our maintenance staff by one person.**

**However, not doing the needed repairs to our buildings either through outside contractors or our own staff is not wise. We have long prided ourselves on keeping our buildings well maintained despite the age of some of those buildings. We do not want to turn our heads on them now. Instead, Mr. Smith proposes a more “efficient and effective” ordering and use of supplies to bring the savings that we need. These two moves should save us \$114,000 in maintenance costs.**

**The last slide that I will present to you tonight was listed in the Penn Project Worksheets as #34, Band, Choral, Theater, and extra pay for extra duty including intramurals, clubs, detentions, bus duty, cafeteria coverage, etc. For the general public, this area of Extra Pay for Extra Duty is a catch-all budget line that includes all kinds of teacher extra pay at all of our schools, yet the duties vary from school to school. First, let me say that the recommendation**

**from the Administration WILL NOT, let me say that again, WILL NOT touch extra pay units for Band, Choral, or Theater, nor will our proposal eliminate any Middle School or High School sports teams for any of our students. There will be a reduction, however, in three assistant coaches, one each for boys and girls lacrosse and one for wrestling at the High School level. All three of those teams will have another assistant coach as well as the head coach. These three reductions should have a minimal impact on the nearly 50 sports teams that currently exist and will remain for next year. The bulk of the cut in extra pay units are for areas that the principals felt were not being used “efficiently” or were inconsistent with what other district schools were doing. In making these decisions, we tried to keep “broad support of students” in mind as you had asked. It is expected that a savings of \$180,000 can come from this budget line and will enable us to**

**reach our goal of balancing the budget for the upcoming school year.**

**In conclusion, no school district programs will be cut, no employee will lose a job, and kindergarten, art, music, and sports will all remain intact while still reaching our goal of \$9.7 million dollars.**

**I want to thank each and every one of you for your time, expertise, and passionate commitment to our children and our community in helping to shape our decisions for this budget. It is my sincere hope that you found this exercise with Penn as valuable as we did in allowing your voice to be heard so we can move TOGETHER into the future.**

**And now, Mr. Smith.**

