County budget cuts limit school spending

By SID BAJRACHARYA
STAFF REPORTER

With the recent cuts to the School District of Palm Beach County's budget, there is a $6.8 million deficit for the 2009 budget. The proposals and slashes in school funding have left schools including Spanish River without needed funds. Last year, the school earned roughly $1 million from its Advanced Placement (AP) program. The state of Florida gives schools a certain amount of money depending on the scores students receive on AP exams at the end of the year. However, the state cut $400,000 from Spanish River's AP exam revenue in response to budget tightening within the school district. The money from the AP program is typically used to hire new teachers, obtain new equipment and pay off the annual fee of roughly $100,000 for each student to take the exams. Other school programs are now feeling the pressure.

"We were already on a bare bones budget, and now supply money and teacher bonus money has been cut more," principal Dr. Susan Atherley said.

Within SRIHS, clubs and sports programs find difficulties raising the funds they need to run efficiently. School sports and activities such as band do not receive money from the district to cover the expenses of transportation. Most transportation in athletic events must be provided by either the student or parents. Even the money for maintenance and equipment has to be raised by the teams. "The bottom line is, the covering of costs for athletics is now back to the students, parents and fund boosters," athletic director Kevin McEnroe said.

The effects are seen in the classroom as well. The money for new textbooks and materials has become increasingly harder to acquire. One place with this strain is the science department. "The hardest part is raising money for labs and materials and upgrading the equipment," physics teacher Miguel Nelson said.

Even with this year's budget cuts, Dr. Atherley warns that if this trend continues, the strain will hit harder next year.

Environmental Club institutes recycling campaign

By SAMANTHA SHAVELL
NEWS EDITOR

Spanish River High School will be the first school in Palm Beach County to completely "go green" by recycling and the creation of a zero-waste community, which means having no solid waste exit the school.

Environmental Club advisor Stewart Klager believes that this will help "train a whole new generation of leaders to take responsibility for their future." He wants other schools to look at Spanish River as a guide. "This year, we have two main goals with the club," Klager said. "First, we want the school to 'go green' and second we want it to be a platform for education."

"The 'River Goes Green' vision is to involve everyone in the school: parents, teachers, students and administrators. The club hopes to use the revenue from recycled products to buy new picnic tables from one of the sponsors for "River Goes Green," NEXTLIFE, which makes consumer goods out of recycled plastic. Members also hope to reduce the size of Spanish River's carbon footprint. "Our carbon footprint is the measure of the amount of trash we generate on campus," Klager said. "We hope, with the zero-waste plan, to reduce the size of our footprint."* RIVER GOES GREEN continued on page 3

Project chemBOND gives school access to FAU research

By NATALIE DEUTSCH
NEWS EDITOR

This year, Project ChemBOND, the newest partnership between Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and Spanish River High School, will bring resident scientists into chemistry honors for the 2008-2009 school year. The project aims to bring ideas and labs used at FAU to assist students in conceptualizing the material as well as increasing popularity in the field of science among high school students. Spanish River is one of four high schools in Palm Beach County selected to participate in the joint program.

Project ChemBOND originated at FAU, where it was successful in implementing a curriculum designed to improve students' understanding of chemistry. According to The National Science Foundation (NSF), the partnership with Spanish River High School intends to further the success of ChemBOND, by using an inside look into the science world at the university level. "I am very excited to be a part of the program. I have learned so many new things," chemistry honors teacher Meg Leeds said.

FAU received a grant from the foundation in order to pay for the program. Based on the grant, FAU intends to provide all materials involved in the program throughout the year.

Dr. Donna Chamel-Wilk is an Assistant Scientist in the Department of Chemistry at FAU and is one of four faculty members that oversee the project.

* ChemBOND continued on page 3
Chemistry department expands curriculum

*ChemBOND continued from page 1

The grant allows FAU to place Ph.D. and graduate students in the high schools to talk about their research and get students interested in the field of science. This year, at Spanish River, there are two classes participating in the project and one control group, which has not participated in Project ChemBOND. Throughout the year, the classes will complete surveys and take exams provided by FAU to track students’ progress. Some of the labs that will be completed have been tested at FAU, and others have been created specifically for this project.

Graduate students in chemistry participating in the program receive a stipend which helps pay for their tuition. In addition, the program provides practical training in teaching in the classroom setting.

“I have always been interested in medical discovery which is really what got me into science,” resident scientist Vanessa Seamon said. The goal of Project ChemBOND is for students to learn Chemistry in a more hands-on way and to become more aware of the role science plays in the world around them.

“I’m excited because it’s the program is a peek inside the life of a graduate student scientist,” sophomore Grecia Jacinto said. Project chemBOND is expected to enhance students’ understanding of scientific research and will remain at Spanish River for at least five more years.

By TAMARAH STRAUSS
STAFF REPORTER

School reaches adequate yearly progress for first time

For the first time in its history, Spanish River has met 100 percent of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria. According to the No Child Left Behind Act implemented in 2001, all U.S. public schools are required to report student achievement based on test results in math, reading and writing, as well as high school graduation rates. The AYP report for Spanish River breaks down FCAT test results for racial groups, socioeconomic groups, students with disabilities and students whose first language is not English. The school is just one of the schools that met 100 percent of the AYP criteria.

Spanish River’s 2007-2008 goal was to have 52 percent of students in the bottom 25 percent of each grade make gains in reading. According to the 2008-2009 School Improvement Plan, 69 percent of those students improved in reading last year. This year, the goal is to have at least 65 percent of these students make gains in reading. Many teachers are modifying their lesson plans in order to ensure progress for every student.

“In class, I try to incorporate necessary writing and reading skills into our curriculum, instead of handing out additional worksheets,” English teacher Jamie Quevedo said.

Teachers are also taking advantage of the availability of more academic resources such as FCAT explorer SSS diagnostic tests and the use of practice questions.

Campaign benefits environment

The club was started two years ago. In previous years, members only picked up paper, but now, with donated receptacles from a local vendor, Shred Trust, Environmental Club will pick up bottles, cans and old metal products as well. All the recycling goes into the Green Zone, an area in the back of school language for this purpose.

According to Klag, the “River Goes Green” campaign will help beautify Spanish River and reduce solid waste and energy cost. Spanish River will also be rewarded for its progress and will eventually be paid for its recycled products by ShredTrust.

“It is the perfect time to take Environmental Club to the next level,” Susan Stallone, assistant director to the club, and PTA vice president said. There has been positive feedback from students about the “River Goes Green” campaign.

“I think it is a good idea that the school is involved with something other than academics,” junior Katie Westrich said.

The club is expanding its number of members as well as its idea. This year, there will be different committees and committee heads to represent the Green Team school board. One committee, the art committee, was responsible for the new mural painted on the wall outside the 8000 building. Later in the year, they are hoping to design recycled art sculptures.

Samantha Shavel can be contacted at SamanthaShavel@gmail.com

Voices in the Crowd

How do you contribute to the “River Goes Green” Campaign?

“I am in environmental club and recycle every Friday.”
- Samantha Schaeum, 11

“I try and cut down on using plastic water bottles by using water fountains.”
- Lindsey Grecina, 10

“The best way I can think is to ride the bus to and from school to save gas.”
- Muhamad Maghoub, 12