

Governor Phil Murphy

Press Pool Coverage: Governor Murphy, Senator Bramnick, and Assemblywoman Munoz Visit Chatham High School

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CHATHAM TOWNSHIP — Chatham High School students filled cafeteria doorways waiting for the governor to arrive shortly before 10 a.m. on Friday.

One student shouted to another signing in late, “did you see the governor? We’re going to be on tv!”

Sen. Bramnick and Assemblymember Munoz arrived first, as an announcement over the loudspeaker directed students to remain in their classrooms for the remainder of the 3rd period block.

“Guys, inside” one teacher directed curious students lingering in the hallways to return to their classrooms.

Acting Education Commissioner Angelica Allen McMillan arrived next, “feels good to be in a school again” she said.

Murphy arrived at 10 a.m. and saluted Bramnick.

All four officials took turns patting the large mosaic cougar statue in the entryway.

The group walked through the halls headed to the first classroom stop. Students along the way gasped and pointed as the party passed.

“Oh my god hi!” one student shouted.

First stop was an American Sign Language class, “everybody good? I’m lousy at sign language” Murphy said.

The governor asked the students what year they were in and where they would be attending college. He gave two thumbs up to a girl who said she would be attending Rutgers.

A student invited the governor to their production of Anastasia later.

“I actually used to act in high school so I’m going to sing a few songs,” the governor said.

Leaving the classroom Murphy said “that was cool.”

The governor and other officials then entered the auditorium where students were seated on risers on the stage.

“I did a lot of musical theater in middle school, high school and college but never Anastasia,” Murphy said.

The governor, citing his Allbird shoes, told the students “I don’t have my tap shoes but I do know how to tap dance.”

“I was trying to get a union to support me when I was running for governor the first time,” Murphy told the students “They said ‘what did you do in high school and college’ I said I was an actor but I’m not an actor, I thought about doing that for a living but I don’t do it anymore. And the guy said to me ‘how do we know that?’”

His comments were met with laughter.

Someone asked Murphy what parts he played. He said in college he was in the Hasty Pudding theatricals in Harvard, “so those were original shows” but during high school and summers the governor said he acted in Camelot, No, No Nannette and The Sound of Music.

Murphy then headed to an algebra classroom.

“I’m starting to get nervous just walking in,” Murphy said.

The officials entered a classroom where the walls were covered in whiteboards with equations. The desks and tables had whiteboard tops as well.

“Can I go back and tap dance?” Murphy asked.

“Sup?” Murphy waved and thumbs-upped one student.

The governor then asked to borrow a white board marker and signed one of the tables “Wow!!! Phil Murphy!”

Someone commented that the signature is erasable. “There are a lot of people in this state who’d like to erase it,” Murphy said.

The governor then visited a physics class, asked one student if he “got a lot of heat” for wearing an Eagles sweatshirt. The student said “no.”

“How’s it going?” Murphy asked one student at another lab table.

“Tiresome,” she said.

The student talked about how she found the class difficult but rewarding, then Murphy saw her sweatshirt which advertised the Anastasia show the school would be putting on and asked her if she was part of the cast and crew. The student said she was in the ensemble.

"I love that. STEAM!" Murphy said.

Leaving the final classroom, Murphy and School District of the Chathams Superintendent Michael LaSusa discussed the changing demographics and enrollment trends in the district.

Standing in a separate gym that had been converted into a lunchroom, the governor remarked "lunch is in 15 minutes? But it's 10:40 in the morning."

LaSusa explained that it's halfway through the school day.

Murphy, LaSusa, Bramnick and Munoz then discussed the popularity of the idea to push school start times back later.

"You're probably the most popular guy in town if you push the start of school back," Murphy said.

"Half the town, the younger folks maybe not as much" LaSusa said.

"I suspect—the high school you're man of the year" Murphy said.

"Well, we'll see, I don't know" LaSusa said.

Murphy and the officials also discussed that every town in Bramnick's district would be seeing an increase in school aid due to the ongoing redistribution of state aid under the S2 reforms of the school funding formula.

The officials took photos.

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POLITICO

VIDEO

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