

Parents Council Notes

February 23, 2010

Opening Video:

Teachable Moment “Information Literacy at Whitemarsh Elementary”

Feature Presentation:

Curriculum Supervisor Kathleen Hamill highlighted work that has been done as a result of the review of the District’s English and Language Arts curriculum. She provided background on the review and provided specific actions recommended for each grade level. She distributed copies of the Balanced Literacy Resource Book that was created to provide teachers with a tool to ensure optimal delivery of the balanced literacy framework. She also shared the Essential Eight Instructional Routines that provide teachers with a tool to model common instructional routines in all content classrooms. Ms. Hamill also played the CITV-produced Teachable Moment “Literature Circles Engaging Readers and Writers at CES and CMS.” Finally, she outlined the next steps for the continuous improvement in the program. [Click here to view the Power Point.](#)

Questions/Comments:

A parent thought the reading program was fantastic stating that she has first and fourth graders who are reading well.

A parent expressed disappointment that the presentation did not focus on foreign languages. She hoped that teaching languages would start earlier.

Dr. Cotter and Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the challenge is to find instructional time during the school day.

Information Updates:

Assistant Superintendent Dr. MaryEllen discussed summer literacy programs and the secondary summer programs. She noted that the Colonial Middle School program will be expanded to provide extended learning time for those students who need additional instruction, not just for those students who need credit retrieval. She also stated that the high school credit retrieval program will follow a new model.

Chief Financial Officer Joe Bickleman reported on the 2010-2011 Preliminary Budget that was approved by the School Board on Feb. 16 and includes a 7.0 percent real estate tax increase. Mr. Bickleman noted that the District will file for exceptions to the Act 1 index of 2.9 percent. He stated that the exceptions are for special education costs and the retirement contribution.

Questions:

Will the budget go to a vote?

Mr. Bickleman stated it will not.

What happens if the exceptions are not approved?

Mr. Bickleman stated that the District will have to go back to the drawing board with the budget.

Is there a chance the District will find a happy medium between 7.0 percent and 2.9 percent?

Dr. Cotter stated that he thinks the final number will be less than 7.0 percent.

Director of Human Resources Richard Hartz provided an update on the search for a new principal at PWHS. He stated that a selection team is being compiled to review applicants. He also addressed a request for extended coverage in the PWHS library. Dr. Sullivan stated that there is a

rule that kids should not be in school without supervision. Additional staff is needed to accommodate students who wish to use the library after hours.

Director of Operations Mr. Terry Yemm provided updates on the Victory Fields lighting project and the Angus Tract.

Chief Information Officer Drew Boegly stated that the next Technology Review Committee meeting will be held on April 7 from noon until 3:00 p.m. He also addressed issues related to the Power School program.

Questions:

Is there an option to change your password in Power School?

Mr. Boegly stated that secretaries have the ability to change passwords.

Mr. Boegly also reported that the District does not have security software on any of its laptops and no anti-theft software is needed since the computers do not leave the buildings.

Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Karen Berk stated that the Pupil Services Review Committee will hold quarterly meetings, the first of which is March 18 at 2:00 p.m. She also discussed the program “Thursday’s with Cathy” featuring Cathy Grayson on the topic of autism. The next date is March 4 with sessions at 3:15 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. The topic will be conversational skills for kids with autism.

Community Relations Coordinator Dave Sherman promoted the District Art Show to be held March 9-12 in Colonial Elementary School. An evening reception will be held on March 10. He also promoted the District’s annual blood drive to be held on March 22 from noon to 6:00 p.m. in gym north of the high school.

The next meeting is Tuesday, March 23 at 9:30 a.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room. The featured topic will be Differentiated Instruction.