

Parents Council Notes

January 26, 2010

Opening Video:

Professional Learning Time

Feature Presentation:

Director of Operations Terry Yemm and School Safety Officer Paul Antal presented a video highlighting the District's security initiatives including electronic hallway security doors, visitor registration and badges, updated fire alarms, background security checks, video cameras and more. Mr. Antal also demonstrated the District's expanded use of motion activated video surveillance cameras, which can be controlled remotely via computer. He noted that video can be stored for up to 40 days on the system. Mr. Yemm distributed the conclusion of a security audit conducted in the spring of 2008.

Questions:

Where does video footage go after 40 days?

Mr. Antal explained that the video is overwritten by newer video. Video can be stored for longer periods if it is saved to a disc.

Can video of my child end up online?

Mr. Antal explained that video cannot be removed from the system, or stored on disc, unless it goes through his office.

Are students and parents aware of the cameras?

Information on the cameras is included in the PWHS handbook and has been featured in the District community newsletter and annual reports.

Other highlights:

- There are no cameras in bathrooms
- Video on school buses is not connected to this in-District system. Video is pulled from the bus company if an incident needs to be reviewed.
- Bus video does not include audio.
- The District camera system is used mainly as a deterrent and to corroborate investigations.
- Considerable discussion centered on education of staff on how to recognize and respond to student issues.

Information Updates:

Superintendent Dr. Vince Cotter noted that the administration and School Board are preparing the 2010-2011 District Budget. The Board will act on the Proposed Preliminary Budget in February. Currently, the Preliminary Budget includes a seven (7) percent real estate tax increase. Dr. Cotter stressed that this is a **preliminary** budget. He noted that the District plans to seek allowable exceptions to the Act I legislation in order to raise the budget above the 2.9 percent state index.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Gorodetzer discussed the Technology Education Department renovation at Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS). She noted construction is scheduled to begin in February. She also reported on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's participation in the Race to the Top Grant program. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that the District will not participate in

the program at this time, as program requirements would restrict or curtail initiatives already in place within the District.

Director of Human Resources Richard Hartz reported on the search for a new principal at PWHS. He noted that 30 resumes were received. He stated that the District was not satisfied with the overall quality of the candidates and noted that the search will be reopened. Responding to a question regarding internal candidates, Mr. Hartz stated that all candidates are being considered.

Mr. Yemm reported that no problems were anticipated in regards to radon testing at the schools. He updated parents on the status of the Victory Field lighting project and noted that the District will add a “comfort station” in the area per request of Whitemarsh Township. Responding to a question, he noted that the District is still working through the approval process with the township and, if all goes well, installation may begin in April. Mr. Yemm reported that the project to install windows at Colonial Elementary School will begin next week.

Chief Information Officer Drew Boegly reported that desktop computers in computer labs are being replaced with laptops. He added that his department was looking to consolidate the two different parent conference registration software programs at PWHS and Colonial Middle School so that they are consistent from building to building. Mr. Boegly added that two females had enrolled in computer programming classes at PWHS.

Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Karen Berk reported on the Pupil Services Review Committee and the review of the District’s counseling services.

Community Relations Coordinator Dave Sherman stated that the Proposed Preliminary Budget is online. He reminded parents that notes from Parents Council meetings are also posted online. Mr. Sherman added that a trial evening Parents Council meeting will be held on February 2 and will have the same agenda as the current meeting. Dr. Cotter noted that the evening meeting will not replace the morning meetings.

The next meeting is Tuesday, February 23 at 9:30 a.m. in the District Office General Meeting Room. The featured topic will be a review of the District’s language arts program.