

Parents Council Notes

October 27, 2009

Feature Presentation: Assistant Superintendent Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer and Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Dr. Elizabeth McKeaney reviewed student achievement by comparing data from the 2005 and 2009 PSSA exams, longitudinal SAT and ACT tests and Advanced Placement participation and tests. (See attachment A).

Questions from parents:

How are PSSA exams scored?

Dr. McKeaney explained that the exams are broken down into categories weighted differently depending upon grade level. For example on the math test, the geometry section may carry more weight than the algebra section on the 6th grade exam.

Why is there only one enriched 4th grade class per cluster?

Dr. Cotter explained that with the District's focus on differentiated instruction, teachers make plans for their classes and individual students so that all students are given the instruction and supports they need to be successful.

Are the PSSA scores so high because teachers teach to the test?

Dr. Gorodetzer explained that the District's has a high-quality, rigorous curriculum that is aligned with the state standards and implemented by highly qualified teachers. She added that teachers receive excellent professional development and employ best practices in their classrooms. Dr. Gorodetzer added that in addition to the PSSA, the District measures student performance from local benchmark assessments and classroom performance.

Information Updates:

H1N1 – Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Karen Berk provided an update on District precautions to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus. She also informed parents that a letter and consent form would be sent home in Friday Folders (See attachment B).

Food Allergies – Director of Food Services Lori McCoy provided updates on a parent survey, pre-packaged foods and cross contamination. She also noted that allergy posters will be distributed to all cafeterias by November 30 and that student food allergies are listed on the point of sale screen so that employees can double check student purchases.

Parent feedback suggested the District make sure that substitute teachers are also made aware of student food allergies.

PWHS Swim Coach – Community Relations Coordinator Dave Sherman noted that a male volunteer swim coach had been secured at PWHS. He added that the high school continues to seek a female volunteer coach. Additionally, Sherman noted that the annual report will be mailed in mid-November.

A parent complimented the District for following up on previous concerns

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 24. The featured topic will be technology.