

## **DISTRICT PARENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2004**

### **ROUNDTABLE ITEMS:**

- 1. Through the collaborative efforts of the High School PTO and the Language Arts Committee, the school board approved the addition of a Junior Honors Language Arts elective to be offered beginning September 2004 and a Senior Honors Language Arts elective to be offered beginning September 2005.**
- 2. The school board approved the recommendation to replace Core Enrichment in Grade 7 with an additional period of writing. Honors English in grades 7 & 8 will continue to be offered.**
- 3. Project Democracy:**
  - a. Poll Worker volunteers are still needed for April 20<sup>th</sup> for 2 hour shifts – 2:30-4:30; 4:30-6:30 and 6:30-8:30PM at all polling locations. Please contact Kim Bruno or Judy Hill with volunteer names and/or questions.**
  - b. Volunteers are still needed to make “reminder to vote” phone calls at ETS on Monday evening, April 19<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Sandy Butler or Chris Kley with names and/or questions.**
  - c. PD Parent Letters announcing school questions will be sent out via backpack prior to Spring Break. School Questions should be communicated via Wolf Flash and Dawg Byte at the TMS & HS.**
  - d. PD Parent Letters informing parents about the use of Absentee Ballots will be distributed via backpack prior to Spring Break. Absentee Ballot information should be communicated via Wolf Flash and Dawg Byte at the TMS & HS.**
- 4. Student Directory Meeting:**
  - ♦ A meeting with Administration and PTO representatives will be scheduled after April 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss when, how and who will be collecting student/parent information next year for the purposes of producing Student Directories at each school.**
  - ♦ In addition, a meeting will be scheduled with PTO representatives, prior to the meeting with administration, to discuss and reach consensus on exactly what procedures we would like to propose to administration. Please review the information submitted by Lynn Gustafson regarding student directories sent out earlier this month. This will serve as a platform for our discussion. Judy Hill will send out an e-mail with suggested meeting dates and times.**

## **5. Bullying & Substance Abuse Programs Offered Within Our Schools:**

- ◆ Terry Bolan compiled and distributed information on the programs currently being offered in each of our schools.
- ◆ It was suggested by PDC to the superintendent that a committee be formed to review the effectiveness, and communication of, our current programs and determine if there are any programs we should discontinue and if there are any other programs we should be offering to our students.
- ◆ Nick Lorenzetti will be meeting with Sheryl Stone to recommend that this task be given to the School Sector portion of the Hopewell Valley Municipal Alliance. Terry Bolan will serve as our liaison between PDC and the HV Municipal Alliance. PDC offered to provide additional parent volunteer input and help if so desired.
- ◆ It was suggested that a K-12 'pamphlet for parents' be developed highlighting the programs being offered. It was also noted we should be addressing bullying and sexual harassment via Instant Messaging.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS WITH SUPERINTENDENT:**

### **1. State School Report Cards**

- ◆ Copies of each school's state report cards were distributed. It was noted by the superintendent that not all information contained in the report cards is accurate and that he is working with the State to get it corrected. Such data as class size, number of students per administrator and Internet connectivity are misleading and inaccurate.

### **2. Q&A Booklet Regarding 04-05 Budget**

- ◆ Copies of a Question and Answer booklet regarding the 04-05 budget has been prepared by the School District and will be distributed via backpack at the elementary and middle schools prior to Spring Break.
- ◆ This booklet addresses such questions as: Couldn't you save money by cutting administrative costs? Why do you want to spend so much on technology? If the budget is so tight this year, how could you find money to build a new multi-purpose field at Timberlane? Isn't that extravagant?

### **3. G&T Committee Review**

- ◆ Nick Lorenzetti noted that if the G&T program were not State required, we would probably not have it. There isn't a need for a G&T program if we truly have differentiated learning within the classrooms.
- ◆ In actuality, within our district, probably only about 2.8% of our student population is truly gifted and talented. The other 97.2% could benefit from a better differentiated learning process.

- ◆ Nick Lorenzetti has directed the committee to review their progress to date and make recommendations within the next few months as to how we can identify the truly gifted and talented child, possibly through a John Hopkin's test and teacher recommendations, and devise a way to make individual plans for each of these children through each grade level.

#### **4. Language Arts Review Committee:**

- ◆ A copy of the Language Arts Review Committee's Summary Statement was provided. Nick Lorenzetti has directed the committee to "extract worthy items that benefit our children" and provide a final draft of the LA committee's recommendations by May/June 2004.
- ◆ This final draft should include a statement such as: "There is more work to be done. However, this is what the committee has concluded thus far and this is what we believe is important for our students."
- ◆ More work will continue to be done in the Language Arts area but not in a committee group format. Issues will be addressed by Language Arts supervisors on an ongoing basis. The school district needs to be able to adjust and evaluate programs each and every year.
- ◆ The superintendent noted that we need to have a "history" of a child's writing. The "Best Works Portfolio" is not providing this information well enough. Also noted was the need to refine the "Curriculum Maps."
- ◆ A district goal is: in the school year 2008-09, all students will test at the proficient/advanced proficient level on the state Language Arts' tests.
- ◆ A Reading Intervention Program (working with more than 1 child at a time, with like issues) is being implemented by the "reading recovery" teachers at the elementary level. The traditional "reading recovery" program only allows for one child to be worked with at a given time.

#### **OTHER ISSUES OF DISCUSSION:**

##### **1. High School Games scheduled during Spring Break:**

- ◆ It was noted that parents are concerned that as many as three games have been scheduled for lacrosse, softball, etc. during the Spring Break week.
- ◆ It is understood that this scheduling may not be within our school district's control, however, concern was raised by parents that some coaches are penalizing student athletes for missing games during this week. This is a week typically set aside for family time/vacations and for college visitations by Juniors. Nick Lorenzetti indicated he would look into this issue with the Supervisor/Athletic Director, Kiki Enderle.

- ◆ Concern was also expressed by parents regarding how “team captains” are chosen and whether they should be appointed by coaches or voted on by team members. Concern arose that some team captains chosen may have been involved in substance abuse related issues and whether this would send a mixed message to our students about leadership roles.

**2. Automated Lunch System:**

- ◆ It was agreed that we should invite Diane from Food Services to our next PDC meeting to give us an update on the Automated Lunch System and to review parent concerns/issues.

**NEXT PARENT DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING IS: APRIL 22, 2004 AT 9:00AM.**

**Toll Gate is up next for providing refreshments!**