

Community Relations and Student Life Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors, February 4, 2010

The Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors met on Thursday, February 4, 2010 in the Superintendent's Conference Room. The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. Present were committee chair Mitch Zimmer, committee members Kathleen Oxberry and Tom Sigafos, Board Vice President Susan Moore, Dr. Vincent F. Cotter, Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer, Karen Berk, Charles Forster, John Quinn, Kim Newell, David M. Sherman, Tonia Kaufman, Debby Garnett, Cathy Levin, Tom Davis, Linda Doll, Lauren Stern and Stephen Pepper.

There was no public comment on the agenda.

Mrs. Kaufman reviewed the summer instrumental music program for the Committee and provided information on the Summer Arts Consortium held at Upper Merion High School from June 24 through July 30. She noted that student tuition for the five-week program is \$225 and the cost to the District remains the same as previous years, \$6,300. Mrs. Kaufman noted that participation from District students is down since transportation is not provided.

Mrs. Garnett and Mrs. Levin thanked the committee for the Board's \$5,000 annual donation to the Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS) Post Prom. They also invited Board members to attend the event.

The committee reviewed a resolution in support of music education. Mrs. Kaufman noted that it has been a few years since the Board reaffirmed its support of the music program in this manner.

The committee reviewed five student trip requests. All of the trips occur on an annual basis. They include: the PWHS Class of 2011 Senior Trip, the Colonial Middle School (CMS) Oceanography Club trip to Wallops Island, Va., the CMS Art Club trip to the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, N.J., the CMS/PWHS Technology Student Association state competition in Champion, Pa., and the PWHS Future Business Leaders of America state competition in Hershey, Pa.

The committee was provided information on an annual gift in the amount of \$2,400 from the Deed of Trust for Joshua Morris.

Mr. Sherman commented that Board agendas are posted on the Web as they are received. He noted that minutes are not posted until approved by the Board.

Dr. Gorodetzer updated the committee on research of other districts' tutorial instruction policies. She noted that the Central Bucks policy was restrictive and held tutors liable if students did not show growth. Several other policies were similar to Colonial's in which teachers may tutor their own students during the school year if certain criteria are met. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that principals have indicated teachers are adhering to the policy and very few are tutoring their own students during the school year. Committee members saw no need to amend the current policy. Dr. Gorodetzer noted that the policy will be included in the teachers' handbook.

The committee reviewed suggestions from Board member Beth Suchsland on cutting down on the amount of paper used by the District in Friday Folders and Board agendas. There was considerable discussion regarding Friday Folders, and the committee did not wish to switch to an electronic format. Mrs. Doll stated that, as a parent, she preferred to have a paper copy of the information. The committee agreed that fewer Board agendas should be copied.

Mr. Sherman provided the Communications Plan Update for review. He stated that he and Ms. Newell had discussions with several Web designers and hope to have a recommendation for the committee next month.

Mr. Sherman also distributed a draft of a student achievement publication with the Wow/How theme to follow the Wow/How information campaign distributed through Friday Folders and on CITV. Mr. Sigafos inquired as to the cost of the publication and printing in general. Mr. Sherman explained that the major costs involved in printing were the preparation and desktop publishing, which is completed in-house, and the weight of the paper. Mr. Sigafos questioned whether or not printing and sending such materials to the public was beneficial given the current budget restrictions. Mr. Sherman noted that was the best way to reach the 80 percent of the District residents that do not send children to Colonial schools. Dr. Cotter explained that the District needed to have a comprehensive communications outreach effort in place to be prepared for the inevitability of having to place a budget item on a ballot. He noted that if the District waits until that time occurs, it will be too late. Other feedback was to include more student/alumni testimonials in the publications.

Mr. Sherman distributed Meet and Discuss dates for the committee.

Ms. Newell stated that CITV programming on the Web is getting 40-50 hits per day. She noted that CITV is considering a survey to ascertain the amount of viewership it receives. She also stated that the boys' basketball playoffs will begin airing on CITV in late February.

The committee was provided information on the PWHS Scholarship Fund, vacant Extra Duty/Extra Pay positions and a detailed account of students participation in PWHS activities.

Ms. Stern stated that she received positive feedback from the Board/Student Town Meeting held the previous day at PWHS. She also noted that the annual Student Council Valentine's Day Dance will be held next week.

Mr. Davis disputed Mr. Sigafos' use of the word "deficit" when describing the budget situation. He also asked Mr. Sigafos to clarify whether or not he was in favor of sending the Wow/How publication to the community. Mr. Sigafos stated that he was in favor of that publication but did not wish for the calendar flyer mailing to continue.

There being no further business or public comment, Mr. Zimmer adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



David M. Sherman
Community Relations Coordinator