

Community Relations and Student Life Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors, September 2, 2009

The Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors met on Wednesday, September 2, 2009 in the Superintendent's Conference Room. The meeting was called to order at 9:44 a.m. Present were committee chair Mitch Zimmer; committee member Kelly Jowett; Board President Gary Johnson and Board Vice President Susan Moore; Dr. Vincent F. Cotter; Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer; Karen Berk; Drew Boegly; Charles Forster; John Quinn, Kim Newell and David M. Sherman.

There was no public comment on the agenda.

Mr. Sherman discussed the 2009-2010 Communications Plan highlighting new efforts including the promotion of Parents Council, the development of a Business Advisory Board, a District presence on social media sites and an upgrade of the Web site. Mr. Boegly showed members improvements that have already been made to streamline the navigation of the Web site at the building site level. Members offered several suggestions regarding the development of the Business Advisory Board including a framework for the board and several suggested contacts.

A list of suggested dates for the Board to informally meet with each building staff was distributed to Committee members for feedback. The suggestion was made to confirm a minimum of four (4) Board members per date before confirming the meeting with the building principal.

Mr. Forster reported on the success and positive feedback of the Plymouth Whitmarsh High School (PWHS) freshman orientation which was held prior to the first day of school for the first time. He estimated that more than 300 students attended the session, as well as many parents. Mr. Zimmer stated that he was impressed with the way that the student activities and clubs were presented. He also noted that he received positive feedback from a parent of a PWHS alumni who was impressed with the continuous improvement in the school. Mr. Forster reported that the PWHS staff is already looking at ways to improve the individual classroom presentations for next year. Dr. Cotter noted that Colonial Middle School (CMS) also held an activities fair for incoming sixth graders to introduce them to the opportunities at CMS and also address bullying and harassment.

Committee members reviewed a Colonial Foundation grant application for seed money to re-open the school store at PWHS. Mr. Forster explained the plan of business teacher Megan Carragher to offer a broader line of merchandise and to make the school store a place that students would like to visit. She surveyed students and staff to ascertain what items they would like to see in the school store. After considerable discussion, members agreed that the Board should fund this initiative and agreed to transfer \$3,500 to the PWHS activity fund to cover the start-up costs. Mr. Zimmer stressed that Ms. Carragher be informed that the goal is for the store to become self-sufficient and not have the start-up costs allocated each year. The request was also made for Ms. Carragher to provide a quarterly report on the school store's operations for Committee review.

Mr. Forster also put forth a request to begin a Water Polo Club at PWHS. There was considerable discussion as to how the club would operate, whether or not it would function independently of the school and whether or not it would compete interscholastically. Mr. Forster said Water Polo was not a Suburban One Conference sport. He was asked to compare how Water Polo may be consistent with the origins of the Hockey Club at PWHS and report at the next meeting.

Mr. Forster asked what the District's position was on the planned September 8 speech to students by President Obama. Dr. Cotter stated that the District had received no firm information from the Department of Education regarding the speech and there was no indication of how the message may or may not align with the District's curriculum. He also expressed concern that the speech was scheduled during student lunches. Dr. Cotter said the District would tape the speech and make it available to teachers to use as they felt that it aligned with the curriculum.

The Committee was provided an update on current initiatives in the Communications Plan.

Ms. Newell reported that the "Above and Beyond" Update on Technology is now airing on CITV and a feature on Professional Learning Time will air shortly. She noted that the airing of fall sports begins on Friday and an episode of Colonial Conversations with Dr. Cotter is scheduled to shoot next week. Mr. Quinn showed the District's opening video and noted that CITV students have been asked to serve as escorts for the upcoming local Emmy Awards program. Ms. Newell and Mr. Quinn described how CITV has become more involved with the Student Emmy Award process during the past two years.

Mr. Zimmer confirmed that the next meeting of the CRSL committee will be on Thursday, October 1 at 5:30 p.m.

There being no further business or public comment, Mr. Zimmer adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



David M. Sherman
Community Relations Coordinator