

Community Relations and Student Life Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors, January 7, 2013

The Community Relations and Student Life (CRSL) Committee of the Colonial Board of School Directors met on Monday, January 7, 2013 in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m. Present were committee chair Beth Suchsland; committee members Leslie Finegold, Christina Frangiosa and Heather Palmer; Board President Alan Tabachnick; Board Vice President Susan Moore, Board member Mel Brodsky; Superintendent Dr. MaryEllen Gorodetzer; Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Karen Berk; Plymouth Whitemarsh High School (PWHS) Activities Director Charles Forster; Assistant Public Relations Director Kim Newell; Community Relations Coordinator/School Board Secretary David M. Sherman; Board Student Representative Tom Elvins and Linda Doll.

There was no public comment on the agenda.

The committee reviewed trip requests for select PWHS Orchestra, Band and Chorus students to attend their respective Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 11 Festivals, the PWHS Indoor Drumline to participate in a competition in Pennsauken, N.J., and the PWHS 2014 Senior Class Trip to Florida. Mr. Brodsky questioned the fact that a teacher was providing transportation in a personal vehicle for a student to attend one of the PMEA Festivals. Mr. Forster explained that it is not uncommon, and that the individual's car insurance would be used in the event of an accident. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that District vehicles are available to teachers transporting students to events. She added that the administration will check into the practice and current policies and report back. In responding to questions about the 2013 Senior Class Trip, Mr. Forster reported that 281 out of 380 students have made reservations. He stated that the rate of participation is much higher than other area high schools.

Committee members reviewed the list of instructors and classes for the 2013 winter and spring sessions of the Plymouth Whitemarsh Adult Evening School.

The committee reviewed a draft copy of an updated Emergency Guide for parents. Members recommended that the publication be mailed to all parents with a ConnectEd message of explanation preceding its arrival in the mail. There was considerable discussion about school security. Dr. Gorodetzer explained that each school was re-evaluating its own security measures and procedures in conjunction with the District's School Safety Officer and will make suggestions/recommendations to the administration.

Committee members recommended sending a ConnectEd message reminding parents about the January 31 Board Town Meeting. Members wished to make clear that the meeting topic is the budget and financial challenges facing the District. It was reported that the meeting will be held in the District Office General Meeting Room. The request was made to televise the meeting live on CITV.

The committee was informed that Mr. Sherman, Director of Operations Terry Yemm and Business Manager Trevor Jackson have met with three vendors who solicit advertising on behalf of schools. The administration's recommended vendor will be invited to present to the Board's Ad Hoc Advertising Committee in February. The goal is to have an agreement in place by the end of March so that advertising packages may be sold early in the next fiscal year.

The committee was provided an update on the District's three community outreach committees. The Advocacy committee will begin to focus on increased awareness and supports for mental health services. The Fundraising Committee is making preparations for a February launch to the annual fund drive. An ad-hoc committee of the partnership Committee will meet to discuss compilation of a business directory from which students may obtain internships and job shadowing opportunities.

Ms. Newell shared the new website homepage design with committee members, who commented that the design was cleaner and more like a college website. She invited committee members to participate in a focus group to review design options as the process evolves.

Members were advised of changes to the Colonial School District Education Foundation Board of Trustees.

Board members were provided updates on dates for building visits to Ridge Park Elementary School, Colonial Elementary School and Plymouth Elementary School.

It was announced that the next CRSL Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 11, 2013.

Mr. Brodsky brought up a comment he heard during interviews for School Board members that the District's secondary schools do not do a good job of communicating with parents. Considerable discussion ensued on how principals and teachers can be more proactive in reaching out to parents. Dr. Gorodetzer stated that she has discussed the matter with the secondary administration and will continue to do so.

There being no further business or public comment, Mrs. Suchsland adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



David M. Sherman
Community Relations Coordinator
School Board Secretary