



# Citizens For Education



Fall Issue

October, 2008

**The objectives of Citizens For Education are to ensure a quality education for all students of the Council Rock School District, to better inform the Council Rock community of educational issues, and to increase the involvement of the community in the decision making processes affecting the quality of education in Council Rock.**

## Class Rank and GPA in Council Rock

It remains a priority for Citizens For Education to monitor issues in the high school, including the changes approved last year to class rank and GPA and the implications of those changes relative to the college application process. Upon last year's change, the administration acknowledged that "tweaks" to the system may be necessary and there may be "unintended consequences" that could adversely affect students. With these issues in mind, Citizens has questioned the administration in several areas.

### Review of Past Data

At the time of last year's Board approval, the administration presented data for the top sixty students in North and South's Class of 2007, demonstrating their GPA's and class ranks, in both the old and new systems. At that time, Citizens requested the data be run for the entire classes of both high schools, as a study of just the top 10-15% of students may not present a full picture of the implications of the change.

A review of this data received from the administration yielded many findings. **For the top 200 students in both schools, virtually all GPA's increased when converted to the new system.** This is expected since the new system weights an "A" in Honors as 4.5, and in AP classes as 4.8, as opposed to the current 4.0 limit for both Honors and AP. Many of the top students' courses include Honors and/or AP classes.

**However, for the bottom 20% of the population, the majority of students have a GPA either unchanged or actually lower under the new system.** The following table provides the breakdown of the changes in GPA for the students currently ranked in the bottom 100 of the class:

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## Council Rock's Most Used Asset The Pool

Citizens For Education applauds the Administration and School Board for initiating and approving the long overdue renovations to the community's most utilized Council Rock asset - the school district's one and only pool. The Council Rock pool, housed at Council Rock North, will resume providing education to students, important programs to the community and value to those of all ages, in late November.

### The Pool as an Educational Station

It is a little known fact that the Council Rock pool is the most used teaching station in the district. It is an integral part of the Physical Education program for students at CR North, and special education students from every school in the district. For educational purposes, the pool is in continual use from 7:30 AM until 2:15 PM everyday.

North students are required to take a swimming course for one marking period during their four years. This is designed to improve skills in those who know how to swim and to introduce the basics of swimming and survival skills to those who are beginners. North Students can also elect physical education classes in Lifeguarding, Water Games and Adaptive Aquatics. Students who elect and pass the Red Cross Certified Lifeguarding Class can use their school learned skills to save a life or for future employment.

The elective, Adaptive Aquatics, gives high school students an opportunity to be a mentor to students with developmental disabilities. North students benefit from interaction with special needs students, who are based

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## Jill Kingston New Leadership for Churchville Elementary

Mrs. Jill Kingston, Churchville Elementary School's new Principal, has proven to be flexible and resourceful. This summer, due to construction beginning at Churchville Elementary, she found herself in a modular classroom instead of setting up her new office in the main building. She took this in stride and even felt that it made for a good way to meet the staff!

Mrs. Kingston came to Council Rock with a varied background. She grew up in Buffalo, New York and graduated from Daemen College in Amherst, New York. After getting married, she moved every couple of years due to her husband's career. She was a substitute teacher in Sandusky, Ohio for a time, while she was working for Mattel Toys as a sales representative. She quipped that she had the perfect job; she was able to play with Barbie's and Matchbox cars for a living. From Ohio, Mrs. Kingston moved to Dearborn, Michigan where she decided she missed and wanted to go back to teaching full time. Luckily, her husband changed careers and they moved to Pennsylvania permanently, where she has lived for 11 years. She currently resides in the area with her husband and 5 English Bulldogs.

Prior to coming to Council Rock, Mrs. Kingston held positions in the Central Bucks School District. She taught for 7 years in 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms at Kutz Elementary. Her principal at the time suggested she pursue an administrative certification. While she attended Delaware Valley College, gaining an Educational Leadership degree, the Kutz Principal provided administrative leadership opportunities for her.

This experience allowed Mrs. Kingston to move to an Assistant Principal position at Cold Spring Elementary. After a year, the Kutz Principal left on a one year sabbatical and Mrs. Kingston returned to Kutz as the Acting Principal, with the caveat that she would return to Cold Spring after

that year. Once she returned to Cold Spring she realized that she enjoyed having her own building, and sought the Principal position at Churchville Elementary.

As a new administrator in Council Rock she has been assigned a mentor, Rolling Hills Principal, Mr. Joe MacClay, who, interestingly, had the same Assistant Principal position at Cold Spring while Mrs. Kingston was Acting Principal at Kutz for a year. She also has the opportunity to attend workshops covering the staff supervision plan and building budgeting. She finds the district to be a "fantastic resource" and all questions she has had have been addressed very quickly and thoroughly.

Mrs. Kingston has found the Churchville population, from students to parents and staff, to be like a family. She says that they have welcomed her and that "everyone is so positive." Mrs. Kingston says that the relationships are "family-like" and the school district puts family and community first.

She is happy with the paperless communication initiative in the district and said that Churchville's PTO uses not only the E-Friday folder, but also a listserv to alert families to new information as it is posted. Mrs. Kingston is building her own listserv, and feels that this, in conjunction with the E-Friday folder and the Global Connect phone system, will go a long way toward better communication.

Mrs. Kingston thinks the biggest challenge she faces is the next phase of renovations at Churchville, which will run from Spring 2009 until September 2010. Since construction will occur while school is in session, she wants to ensure student safety and a smooth process. She is very pleased that staff have been integral in the planning for the renovations, ensuring the educational soundness of the construction plan.

Her short term goal is to establish herself in

*(Continued on page 4)*

## A New Chapter Begins at Hillcrest Elementary

A new chapter begins at Hillcrest Elementary School, with the hiring of Nakia Jones-Tate as principal, replacing Pat Carney-Dalton who retired at the end of the last school year. The quote below, one of Mrs. Jones-Tate's favorites, gives a keen insight into her style and perspective.

"The mediocre teacher tells.  
The good teacher explains.  
The superior teacher demonstrates.  
The great teacher inspires."  
William Arthur Ward

Mrs. Jones-Tate grew up as a "military brat" and was educated mostly in Eastern Montgomery County. She spent her high school years at Wissahickon High School where she met her husband, who is a police officer in Whitmarsh Township. She received a Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education from Cheyney University and a Masters Degree in Multicultural Studies and Administrative Certificate from Eastern University. She and her husband have three children, one girl and two boys, ages fifteen, nine, and five.

Mrs. Jones-Tate began her professional career in the Baltimore City School District teaching first grade. She and her family later moved "back home" to Montgomery County, where she taught kindergarten in the Colonial School District and first grade in the Norristown School District. Mrs. Jones-Tate later took a position as a middle school assistant principal in the Norristown School District.

When the Hillcrest Principal position became available last winter, she saw a great opportunity to return to her solid background and roots in elementary education. She describes herself as a child advocate, child-centered, and both compassionate and pas-

sionate for quality public education. Her desire to come to Council Rock was reinforced by her belief that the district has the best teachers in Pennsylvania, who share in her passion.

Her goals include increasing technology initiatives, providing better technology, creating smart rooms in every classroom, and also expanding "courtesy matters." This year, students will be rewarded for being courteous by a partnership brokered with Applebee's. She hopes to keep these rewards fresh and new each year. More globally, she finds it worrisome that education is being directed more and more by the "top of the hill." Regulations, as well as decisions, are based on saving dollars vs. increasing educational value.

When asked of her impression of Council Rock so far, she replied it is "one big happy family" and repeats what she was once told: It feels like she "has died and gone to Council Rock". "The Council Rock Community is so fortunate to have teachers working in their district that aim to inspire children daily." When pressed for what she found disappointing in Council Rock, Mrs. Jones-Tate replied that the school was not air conditioned. She was also surprised that there were so many "learning cottages," as her colleague Jill Kingston calls the trailers. That is something Citizens For Education has in common with Hillcrest's new principal, right off the bat!!

Citizens extends best wishes to Mrs. Jones-Tate for many successful and rewarding years here in Council Rock!

**Vote for  
Kids' Sake**



## The Transition to High School

Transition is an issue the district is always trying to improve. Two years ago, the two high schools surveyed all students and asked about their transition from middle level to high school. The results have been analyzed but have not yet been released to the community. However, we have asked Mr. Klein for an overview of the results. The following details some highlights:

- 80% of 9-12 graders agreed that the transition to high school was easy. Mr. Klein stated, "Interestingly, the highest agree rate, when the data is disaggregated, is from 9th grade students – reflecting, I hope, the district's efforts to work on transition."
- 76% of the students felt they were academically prepared for high school.
- 85% of students said they feel comfortable in their school.
- 84% of students said they feel accepted in their school.
- 74% of students said it is easy to meet new friends at their school. Interestingly, among ninth graders 81% agreed.

Mr. Klein explained that when the data was analyzed by sending school, there were no significant differences between students coming from Newtown, Richboro or Holland Middle Schools.

Hopefully new transition activities that are being employed by the district (see article on the Kick-Off Mentoring Program on Page 11) can improve percentages and we will begin to see these positive trends go even higher. The district plans to re-administer the survey, to gather the same or similar information, this year.

*(The Pool Continued from page 1)*

from almost every school in the district including CR South. The pool's buoyancy provides mobility for the special needs students, some of whom, during the rest of their educational day, are confined to wheelchairs. The new ramp being constructed into the pool will facilitate pool use for special needs students.



### The Pool as an Extra-Curricular Site For Both High Schools

The pool is also the site of Council Rock North and South's extra-curricular team use, for Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving teams. This takes place during the school year from 5:45 AM until 7:00 AM, and again after the regular school day.

Since Council Rock South was built without a pool, both schools teams have to split available practice time and lane space. This

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*(Jill Kingston continued from page 2)*

the community, getting to know staff, students and parents. To that end, Mrs. Kingston has been going into each classroom and reading to students. She chooses books that are appropriate to establishing proper school values. Her long term goals, in addition to the construction and safety concerns, are to improve communications and to see an increase in student achievement.

Citizens For Education welcomes Mrs. Kingston and wishes her the best of luck as she builds on Churchville's successes and navigates the construction process.

(Class Rank and GPA continued from page 1)

When GPA was converted from the old system to the new system:	New GPA is lower	New GPA remains the same	New GPA is higher
North	38%	45%	17%
South	31%	51%	18%

According to the administration, the impetus for the change to this weighted GPA system was to allow our students to be more competitive in the area of college admittances, and was following trends of school districts across the country. While the change may be favorable for some students, Citizens is concerned about the implications of GPA reduction for students in the bottom 20% of the class, which could have a negative impact on their ability to get into college. Citizens questions how *any* GPA can be lower under the new system than the old system. We hope that the administration will analyze these findings for the purpose of determining whether “tweaks” to the system are needed.

Citizens will continue to study the data the administration provided to see if other notable findings are evident. We are particularly interested in analyzing the implications of not offering any additional weight to accelerated classes, a decision Citizens strongly disagrees with.

### **Program Planning**

Each January, the high schools host a program planning night for current 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade parents. The purpose of the evening is to assist parents with course selections for their child. Citizens For Education is concerned about how information will be presented, since at the January 2009 Program

Planning Meeting two grade levels, current 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade families, will be working within one system (the current, which includes class weights and student rank), while the current 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade families will be working within an entirely different system (no course weights, no reported rank and a weighted GPA).

Given this disparity of approaches, Citizens asked the administration if two separate program planning books would be printed. Barry Desko, Director of Secondary Education, stated that there would be only one program planning book printed, and terminology within the book would articulate the two different approaches.

The administration acknowledged that the program planning process needs some “polishing.” Attendance at the Program Planning Night is overwhelmingly represented by rising 9<sup>th</sup> grade families, while the presence of families with upper class students is typically small. Citizens suggested two separate program planning nights, or separate programs on the same night, one geared toward rising 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and the other toward rising 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The upper class session would include more information that is relevant to these older students, especially the college planning process.

(Continued on page 6)

*(Class Rank and GPA continued from page 5)*

The administration said it would consider these ideas.

### **High School Profile**

A profile is sent to every college a student applies to and serves to provide background about Council Rock to college admissions departments. The profile is a tool to help understand a student's transcript and high school experience in the context of what a school offers. According to the College Board website, a high school profile should "accurately portray the uniqueness of your school," including "the available academic programs, special diplomas, tracks, or nontraditional or unusual curricula."

Citizens For Education was disappointed to learn that the current profile (which has been in use for many years) does not mention the accelerated level of course offerings at all. In the description of curriculum offered within Council Rock, the profile simply reads, "Advanced classes are identified as 'Honors and/or AP' on the scholastic transcript."

The administration acknowledged that the omission of accelerated classes was an oversight. Superintendent Mark Klein commented that there is no way of knowing to what degree, if at all, this omission has affected our students' admission to the colleges of their choice but said, "I won't risk that one kid would be hurt by this," and corrective measures will be put into place immediately. The administration will compose a supplement to the profile that better states Council Rock's class offerings, to be included with the transcripts of current seniors. The administration will also direct Nicole Ventresca (South) and Tim Rothrock (North) to instruct the counseling staffs at both schools to specifically comment on accelerated course offerings for any letters they are writing for current students who have taken accelerated classes. The current profile will be revised for the next two years (while the current rank/GPA system is still in place). Citizens

commends the administration for employing these immediate remedies.

Beginning with the current 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Class of 2012, a new profile will be written, reflecting the system in place for these students and all subsequent classes. A committee that includes counselors, administrators and professionals will convene. Mark Klein shared that Peter Van Buskirk, a former Dean of Admissions at Franklin & Marshall College and a speaker who comes to Council Rock annually to talk about "Winning the College Admissions Game," will also be consulted. There will be opportunities for community feedback as well.

### **College Recommendation Forms**

Citizens expressed concern regarding the approach counselors use when completing the school report that accompanies all college applications. Within the form, the counselor is asked to rate the level of rigor the specific student has taken during his/her years at a Council Rock High School. The Common Application Secondary School Report includes the following question: "In comparison with other college preparatory students at your school, the applicant's course selection is: most demanding, very demanding, demanding, average, or below average." (Students applying to schools not using the Common Application would have a similar question posed on the specific school's application.)

In the current system, students who had taken all 8 weight courses and 6 weight alternate day electives would receive a "most demanding" designation. However, there have been no standards for the counselor to use when a student is taking a mix of class levels. Two counselors could theoretically be presented with the same transcript that includes a mix of course levels, and one counselor could choose "very demanding," while another counselor could choose "demanding." Citizens is very concerned

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*(Class Rank and GPA continued from page 6)*

about this possible inconsistency.

Barry Desko said that the district has a plan to work on this problem. Counseling staff will contact a range of colleges to get a fuller understanding of what colleges expect from these designation levels. Mr. Desko commented that Council Rock does not want colleges questioning our counselors' responses. Feedback from college admissions offices will help clarify expectations at each level and ensure that choices made by counselors fairly represent a student's class choices and will have relevance to success in the college setting. Counselors will then be informed of the guidelines so that parity among the counseling staff, with respect to how these forms are completed, will exist. Mr. Klein agreed that this information is critical and will be available to parents in January at the time the course selection process begins.

### Curriculum Realignment

With the change to a weighted GPA, because the new system does not correspond to the current course weighting system, the issue of curriculum realignment arises. According to Barry Desko, "The curriculum coordinators will be developing a rubric by which all new courses will be measured to determine their title. After this is completed, current courses will have the same rubric applied to ensure they are titled correctly, honors, accelerated, academic."

Council Rock is unique in the way it differentiates course rigor. The administration has always understood that with a combined population of over 1000 students per grade, it is necessary to group the students' ability to learn into more than two clusters. To that end, there has always been Honors and AP offerings for top students, academic and foundations courses for average and special

needs students, and accelerated classes for students in between. At the accelerated level, many classrooms use the same textbook as the commensurate Honors class, merely going a little slower, or not as in-depth into the material as the Honors classes. In fact, most students who take largely Honors and AP classes, also, at some point in their high school career, take one or several accelerated level classes. It is interesting to note that last year, **29% of the classes offered at both high schools were designated as accelerated.**

Citizens applauds the administration's recognition of the importance of providing every student with an appropriate level of academic challenge. According to Barry Desko, two of the intended outcomes of the change to the new system are "to have a fair and equitable method by which we should evidence the rigor of our high school program and student achievement" and "seek to understand a student's achievement measured against the district's curriculum." Citizens believes that these outcomes cannot be achieved without applying weight to accelerated level classes.

### Looking Ahead

Citizens For Education will remain focused on all of the areas outlined above, as well as other important high school issues including the training and role of counselors and better parent communications. These are integral parts of the changes that need to be made with the elimination of class rank and the new weighted GPA.



Citizens  
For  
Education

...a voice for our children!

### Citizens For Education Tracks Class Sizes at Three Middle Schools

In the spring newsletter, Citizens For Education had an article concerning class sizes at the high school level, creating a baseline graph, which charts the class sizes using a variety of parameters. An evaluation was done, in a similar manner, for the three middle schools: Richboro Middle (RMS), Newtown Middle (NMS) and Holland Middle (HMS).

The chart below reflects the number of sections, and the enrollment of those classes, in core subject areas. It is a baseline chart, which can be used to track trends over time. The core subject areas include Math, English/Language Arts (including Literacy in 7<sup>th</sup> grade), Social Studies, Science, and World Languages in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The chart below is a baseline, from which trends can be tracked over time. It should be noted that there is a strong variance in the class sizes at NMS and RMS. For example, in 7th grade, 60% of classes at NMS in the core subject areas have over 25 students, compared to 14% at RMS. Since every elementary school, with the exception of Sol Feinstone, is less than 7 miles from RMS, it might behoove the district to determine if the RMS building is being underutilized, and consider a different middle school sending pattern for the elementary schools that currently feed to NMS. This may have the effect of creating school size parity throughout the middle level as well.

Grade	RMS		NMS		HMS	
	7	8	7	8	7	8
<b># of Classes</b>						
<b>&lt; 19 students</b>	26	12	14	16	14	22
<b>% of classes</b>	52%	24%	17%	19%	19%	31%
<b>20-25 Students</b>	17	16	19	14	22	24
<b>% of classes</b>	34%	31%	23%	17%	31%	34%
<b>26-29 Students</b>	7	14	27	22	29	22
<b>% of classes</b>	14%	27%	32%	27%	40%	32%
<b>&gt; 30 Students</b>	0	9	24	31	7	2
<b>% of classes</b>	0	18%	28%	37%	10%	3%
<b>Total Classes</b>	50	51	84	83	72	70

	Foundations	Academic	Honors	Humanities
<b>RMS</b>				
<b># Classes</b>	5	60	32	4
<b>Avg Class Size</b>	12	22	23	13
<b>NMS</b>				
<b># Classes</b>	9	104	44	10
<b>Avg Class Size</b>	14	27	27	14
<b>HMS</b>				
<b># Classes</b>	11	83	38	10
<b>Avg Class Size</b>	12	25	24	11



## Council Rock by the Numbers

Citizens For Education intends to publish a new feature, "Council Rock by the Numbers," in each of its newsletters. In this first installment, you will find the size and occupancy of each building in the district. Not including grounds, the district maintains over 1.8 million square feet of building space for more than 12,000 students and 1,500 staff.

### **CR BUILDING & OCCUPANCY NUMBERS**

<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Building Sq. Ft.</u></b> <sup>1</sup>	<b><u>No. of Trailers</u></b>	<b><u>Trailer Sq. Ft.</u></b>	<b><u>Total Sq. Ft.</u></b>	<b><u>Student Enrollment</u></b>	<b><u>No. of staff</u></b>
Chancellor Center	35,000	0	NA	35,000	0	79
Twining Ford Maintenance	14,000	0	NA	14,000	0	16
CR High School North	349,800	0	NA	349,800	2259	225
CR High School South	360,000	0	NA	360,000	2119	219
Sloan School	1,200	0	NA	1,200	25	6
Holland Middle School	142,272	0	NA	142,272	726	80
Newtown Middle School	133,900	9	7,776	141,676	894	103
Richboro Middle School	85,440	5	4,320	89,760	454	64
Churchville Elementary <sup>2</sup>	63,588	7	6,048	69,636	660	73
Goodnoe Elementary	70,617	8	6,912	77,529	811	102
Hillcrest Elementary	62,180	7	6,048	68,228	534	72
Holland Elementary <sup>3</sup>	53,552	6	5,148	58,700	494	70
Maureen Welch Elementary	96,800	0	NA	96,800	680	81
Newtown Elementary	83,000	0	NA	83,000	687	83
Richboro Elementary	62,180	8	6,912	69,092	478	77
Rolling Hills Elementary	50,928	10	8,640	59,568	426	57
Sol Feinstone Elementary	76,485	2	1,728	78,213	789	82
Wrightstown Elementary	30,899	5	4,320	35,219	356	42

<sup>1</sup>. Because each building has varying percentages of auxiliary spaces (gym, library size, etc), these numbers are not an indication of capacity.

<sup>2</sup>. After renovations and added footage, Churchville will be 79,000 sq. ft. Trailers will be removed.

<sup>3</sup>. After renovations and added footage, Holland will be 70,000 sq. ft. Trailers will be removed.

*(The Pool continued from page 4)*

means sometimes there are as many as 10 swimmers doing laps in one lane. South's Aquatic Teams are bused to Council Rock North for practice, and both high schools use the pool for their home meets against other high schools.

### **Community Aquatic Usage**

In addition to hosting educational programs during the school year, Council Rock's pool is the site of a variety of valuable programs for varying abilities. Classes are available for swimmers, from toddlers to seniors, in the evenings, on the weekends and during the summer. The community aquatics program provides a funding stream that not only covers the cost of coaches, lifeguards, instructors, CPR supplies, and community lesson textbooks, but it also takes in some surplus revenues to offset other operational expenses.

Children ages 2-11 can take lessons to learn to swim, or better their swimming skills. Lessons are offered on Saturdays in the fall and spring and at varying times in the summer. Competitive Swimming Stroke Clinics and Diving Instruction are offered in the spring to children in the entire community.

Adult beginner lessons and adult lap swimming sessions are offered on Monday and Wednesday in the fall and spring. Lifeguarding & Water Safety Instruction is held in the fall and spring, and provides an important resource to those who are interested in getting the Red Cross certification necessary to obtain a pool job in the community.

Council Rock's Swimming and Diving Club teams, where swimmers and divers compete against other school district's club teams, practice September through March from 7-10 PM. This is the feeder program for the Varsity Swimming and Diving teams.

Inexpensive recreational swimming is open to the entire CR community on Friday nights

from February to May. The pool is also in continual operation from 7 AM – 3:30 PM four days a week during the summer.

### **Visit The Web Site**

It is because Council Rock's pool is the busiest facility in the district that Citizens For Education is pleased to see it getting the attention it so richly deserves!

For more information on Council Rock's Community Aquatic Programs with detailed schedules, registration information and cost, visit the website at:

<http://www.crsd.org/503401111101715/site/default.asp>

At the same website you can click on "Council Rock North Pool Renovations." to get updates and see pictures of the pool's construction.



## Kick-Off Mentors Council Rock North Pilots New Student Mentoring Program

Each year Council Rock initiates new ways to make transitioning easier for incoming freshman. This year Ms. Pat Wargo, the C.A.R.E.S. coordinator at Council Rock North, was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the Council Rock Education Foundation for a comprehensive transition and mentoring program to be piloted at Council Rock North. Kick off Mentors (KOMS) is a professional mentor training program that establishes a core group of upper class student mentors who will make a positive impact on the school and change the lives of many of the incoming students.

This program provides an interactive orientation day right before the start of school and year-long connections between mentors and new students. At Council Rock North, volunteers were asked to apply for these mentoring positions. Each student who was approved had to meet certain criteria. There are 114 mentors and 19 adult leaders who volunteer to oversee the program. Each advisor and mentor signed a contract that they would be present on all training days.

The goals of the Kick-Off Mentors program are to:

- Provide new students with continued reinforcement of positive values
- Provide a continuing source of information as new challenges are encountered
- Maintain the mentors in a position to be positive role models
- Provide a positive atmosphere that will encourage students to stay in school
- Monitor progress and act as a safety net for new students
- Create liaisons between teachers, counselors, and administrators

The program began with an intense, one-day seminar in which professional KOMS Trainers trained the Kick-Off Coordinator Team on all of the logistics needed to implement the program. The trainer then came to CR North for a day in August to train the mentors. This was an exciting and interactive day, full of fun leadership and team building activities, and exercises to develop the skills needed to effectively work with the new students. The training session included:

- Understanding and developing school goals for the mentoring program
- Leadership training and problem solving activities
- Team building activities for student and teacher mentors
- Activities to improve listening skills and other mentoring skills
- Discussion of some of the legal and ethical issues involved in mentoring
- Developing and rehearsing activities for the Kick-Off Orientation Day
- Discussing the year-long mentoring sessions

Students also met for an additional half-day session and came in to decorate the freshman homeroom doors just before school started.

Mentors are each given five to seven students and work within teams. They run summer tours at the school. They go to homerooms during school and are also available to the new students as needed. Mentors will also tutor new students and will work in the school store to earn money to cover additional costs for the program.

The first day of school, groups of mentors, in their bright orange KOMS tee shirts, had several events scheduled to help new students navigate the layout of school building, locate lockers, follow their schedule, and find the offices of key staff members throughout the building. The day included a scavenger hunt, to familiarize new students with the building, and a pep rally.

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*(Kick-Off Mentors continued from page 11)*

Positive results were evident; there were far less students getting lost following their schedule, less students in the wrong classrooms and less locker problems.

Information on the program is being shared with CRHS South as the program is perfected during this pilot year. The program will be evaluated and key data will be collected including:

- Attendance
- Discipline referrals
- C.A.R.E.S. referrals
- Activity participation
- Grades

The program will also look into the benefits that being a mentor may provide a student.

They can become involved, learn leadership skills and become more responsible citizens. Time spent with the program outside the school day can accrue L.I.N.C.S. hours.

Next year, flyers will be distributed to 8<sup>th</sup> graders with their report cards, to let them know about the program, and mentors may be asked to go into the middle schools and explain the program to incoming freshman.

Citizens For Education applauds Mrs. Wargo, the KOMS Team and the Council Rock Education Foundation, for providing this program as a key transition to the high school. For more information about the program visit the KOMS website at [www.koprogram.com](http://www.koprogram.com).

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

*Citizens For Education*  
**Annual Membership Meeting**  
 will be held at 7:30pm on  
**Wednesday, November 12, 2008**  
 Historic Classroom #2  
 The Chancellor Center

### Citizens For Education

Treasury report 10/09/07 to 10/09/08

Opening Balance 10/09/07	\$2151.06
Withdrawals- Newsletters	\$ 470.82
PO Box	\$108.00
Deposits- Membership	<u>\$780.00</u>
Current Balance as of 10/09/08	\$2352.24

Three Reasons to send your email address to us at  
**Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com**

**1. Timely Communications** -The nation's financial crisis is also having an impact on Council Rock. The school district is already receiving less than projected revenues. This shortfall could lead to financial cuts that may impact quality education. Through email, Citizens For Education can better inform you of related educational issues that might come up between Newsletters.

**2. Improving Involvement** – In line with our mission statement, Citizens For Education uses our e-list to inform and encourage pro-active involvement in administrative or school board discussions that could affect quality education.

**3. Sharing Concerns** - Citizens For Education appreciates any feedback our readers may have on any of the articles contained in this newsletter. Please send your questions and comments to Citizens For Education at [Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com](mailto:Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com). Having your e-mail address will help us to respond to you individually.



# Citizens For Education

PO Box #1301, Newtown, PA 18940

[Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com](mailto:Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com)

## Membership Form

Membership funds enable us to produce our newsletter advocating for quality public education!

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Indicate your preference for receipt of our newsletter**  **mail**  **E-mail**

Please send a check, made payable to "Citizens For Education", for the total amount chosen to:

### Citizens For Education

**PO Box 1301**

**Newtown PA 18940**

- **3 Years for \$25.00 (or 1 year for \$10.00) \***
- **Additional Donation (indicate amount) \_\_\_\_\_**

Circle one:

**New Member**

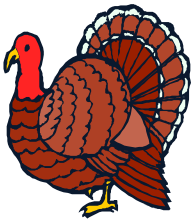
**Renewal\*\***

\* Joining now entitles you to membership through October 2011 (3 year membership), or October 2009 (1 year membership). Membership entitles you to receive our newsletter published semi-annually and voting privileges at our general membership yearly planning meeting, held in the fall.

\*\* Already a member, but need to update information (current address, phone #, e-mail, etc.)?

Please contact [Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com](mailto:Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com).

Citizens For Education is a non-profit, non-partisan community group whose objectives are to insure a quality education for all students of the Council Rock School District, to better inform the Council Rock community of educational issues, and to increase the involvement of the community in the decision making processes effecting the quality of education in Council Rock.



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