



Citizens For Education



Spring Issue

May, 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 Gets Major Overhaul

On January 3rd, 2008, the Council Rock Board of School Directors voted to eliminate their policy regarding class rank. That decision paved the way for the administration to implement a new system of determining a student's placement in comparison to their peers. Prior to the vote, Citizens For Education publicly stated concern for the lack of sufficient and acceptable public engagement in this decision, and requested that the board postpone their vote to allow for more public dialog, feeling that a proper public vetting would mean more ideas and possibly a better system in place for all students. At that time, the administration acknowledged there may be "unintended consequences" to this system, and that careful monitoring will be done to identify them.

Beginning with the class of 2012 (rising 9th graders) a weighted GPA will be implemented and no rank will be reported. Large high schools, such as Council Rock, must have a way to compare a student to their peers and the decision was made to report placement within class, when required, in deciles (top 10%, 20%, etc.) based on the weighted GPA.

According to research conducted by the Council Rock administration, many high schools are moving away from a class rank, however there were many questions raised about how Council Rock is planning to implement the weighted GPA, and what effect that might have on a student's course selection and college admissions. The administration acknowledged, after researching many other high schools, that there is "no right answer" for a weighted GPA.

In the current system, which includes class rank, classes are weighted based on the rigor of coursework. Honors and nearly all AP classes are assigned the highest weight (8), followed by a slightly lower weight for a handful of less rigorous AP classes (7), then Accelerated classes (6), Academic classes (5) and Special Education classes (4).

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COMMUNICATIONS

A "Blueprint for Excellence"

Clear and regular communications with parents, teachers, students and taxpayers in Council Rock is vital for maintaining strong leadership and the most successful school district. In fact, the Council Rock Strategic Plan, approved in the spring of 2006, contains a "Blueprint for Excellence," which "articulates specific initiatives that will align people, processes, and programs around district priorities." With respect to the community, the plan states the following goal:

SUSTAINING PUBLIC TRUST AND COMMITMENT

- Deepening relationships and partnerships with our community
- *Specifically:* Strengthen stakeholder connections through communications and collaboration.

Section 4 of the Strategic Plan, entitled "Engaging the Community," begins with the following introduction: "Because 'schools can't do it alone,' Council Rock's *Blueprint* seeks to build a strong relationship with parents and community partners through consistent communication and engagement that include the following," and then lists seven specific areas where this goal would be focused. (To read the Strategic Plan in its entirety, go to www.crsd.org and look for the Strategic Plan link in the left menu bar.)

Though the Strategic Plan was approved by the school board and administration, and though there are various communications tools available, including the district website (which includes the e-Friday Folder, school/district calendars, and other valuable information), Global Connect (telephone system) and Channel 27 (Comcast)/Channel 44 (Verizon), Citizens For Education believes that the district's communication effort to date has not been successful and is in need of improvement.

On January 22, 2008, the *Bucks County Cou-*

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Citizens For Education Tracks Class Sizes at Both High Schools

In an ongoing effort to track class sizes at Council Rock High Schools North and South, Citizens For Education compiled, from administration provided enrollment data, the following information from a complete list of the enrollment in every class at both high schools (over 212 course offerings) for core courses. The charts reflect data for courses in the five major subject areas: Math, Science, Social Studies, English and World Languages. In English and Social Studies, several electives, often taken by juniors and seniors, were omitted. The quantity of data precluded the inclusion of every class and would have been more difficult to track over time, as electives may change from year to year. The data was evaluated using grades 9-12 and all course levels, from Foundations to AP classes.

At Council Rock South:

	Foundations	Academic	Accelerated	Honors	Humanities	AP
Number of classes	14	117	101	65	13	36
Average class size	15	26	26	28	17	26

At Council Rock North:

	Foundations	Academic	Accelerated	Honors	Humanities	AP
Number of classes	25	120	111	72	12	38
Average class size	15	24	25	25	19	25

At Council Rock South:

Number of sections with enrollments of:	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	Total
19 or less	8 (8%)	15 (14%)	14 (18%)	12 (19%)	49 (14%)
20-25	31 (31%)	39 (37%)	23 (23%)	20 (32%)	113 (33%)
26-29	44 (45%)	42 (40%)	34 (44%)	23 (36%)	143 (41%)
30 or more	16 (16%)	10 (9%)	7 (9%)	8 (13%)	41 (12%)
Total	99	106	78	63	346

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At Council Rock North:

Number of sections with enrollments of:	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	Total
19 or less	18 (18%)	15 (14%)	14 (15%)	14 (19%)	61 (16%)
20-25	41 (38%)	46 (43%)	53 (58%)	22 (30%)	162 (43%)
26-29	43 (39%)	39 (37%)	20 (22%)	34 (46%)	136 (36%)
30 or more	5 (5%)	6 (6%)	4 (5%)	4 (5%)	19 (5%)
Total	107	106	91	72	378

This information will be tracked over the next several years to determine trends in both high schools for a number of factors along with class size. In addition, Citizens For Education will be presenting similar charts for all three middle schools in a future newsletter.

Call to Action

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has decreased Council Rock School District's transportation subsidy by \$845,000, which is retroactive to the 2007-08 school year. These subsidy decisions come 9 months after the district adopted its 2007-2008 fiscal year budget and 4 months after the district was required to submit the initial budget figures to Harrisburg for the 2008-2009 budget year. The district suffered a similar reduction in subsidy two years ago.

The decrease in state funding creates a significant shortfall in this fiscal year. Combined with a 1.5% increase in Education Subsidy and 2% increase in Special Education funding, the state's funding for Council Rock will decrease by \$527,832 for the fiscal year 2008-2009. It is important for the community to know that budget decisions are compounded by unilateral reductions in the state's share of funding for Council Rock. Your voice is important in this matter.

You can help by contacting the Governor's office at 717-787-2500 and ask to delay or eliminate any change in Council Rock School District's transportation subsidy.

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rier Times ran an editorial titled, "Communication Failure." The newspaper editorial board criticized the Council Rock administration for the communication process that took place relative to the changes in class rank and GPA in our high schools, calling it "not right." A healthy debate with the community on this topic could not take place. The primary source of communication was the e-Friday Folder, which, at the high school level, is severely under-utilized and therefore not a reliable communications tool for something as important as a change of policy. While the *Courier Times* editorial specifically focused on the GPA/Class Rank discussion, the communications problems that were present exist in other areas, affecting all the schools in the district and the community at large.

The e-Friday Folder: Purpose

The e-Friday Folder, the district's paperless initiative, was introduced in the middle of the 2006-2007 school year as an optional pilot program. It was assumed that with the start of the current school year, the district would be fully transitioned to this new communications mechanism. Council Rock Superintendent Mark Klein now states, "That was probably ambitious. It will likely take 1 to 2 years to fully transition."

Some believe that the e-Friday Folder was created for the purpose of saving money, but according to Mr. Klein, that is not the case. Mr. Klein reports that the monetary savings, in the big picture, are minimal and the e-Friday Folder was primarily started as a means to better communicate, better archive and provide greater efficiency to the communication effort.

Negative Affects

While the e-Friday Folder significantly reduces paper usage, Mr. Klein acknowledges, "We will never completely get rid of the need for paper." Each building principal makes the decision about when and if paper flyers will be distributed to their school communities; there are no set guidelines. Mr. Klein noted, "Not much is truly necessary to send home on paper." Some elementary and middle school PTOs strongly disagree. Several schools report that earlier this year, events that have run successfully in the

past had to be cancelled due to lack of participation. One PTO President stated, "That (lack of a paper flyer sent home) was the only variable that changed from prior years." Several schools report significant decreases in fundraising efforts since the e-Friday Folder was put in place.

There has also been an impact at the community level.

The Council Rock Education Foundation's (CREF) Teacher/Staff Recognition Program, encouraging parents to honor a staff member by making a donation, began at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, with great success. The main outreach last spring was by paper flyer sent home. However, at 2007 holiday time, this effort was promoted mainly through the e-Friday Folder with much less success and may have been much more productive had it reached a larger audience. The effort will be repeated at year's end with, hopefully, better results.

Representatives from Senior Adults for Greater Education (S.A.G.E.) said that their ballet fundraiser in the fall, that offered significantly discounted tickets to families of Council Rock, had a lukewarm reception largely due to the flyer not going home with students and the e-Friday link not being clearly worded.

Design Issues

The e-Friday Folder initiative also suffers from design issues. There is currently an e-Friday Folder for each individual building, as well as the district administration. For many in the community, this distinction is unclear. Some people visit the district folder, unaware that their school has a similar page, and vice versa. And because not all items in the district e-Friday Folder appear in the individual school folders, gaps in information occur.

When the school year began, schools worked independently and the look and feel of each e-Friday Folder page was different. The individual web pages lacked organization

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and were difficult to navigate. Now, school webmasters meet monthly to dialogue and brainstorm. Sue McDonald, Rolling Hills' webmaster, created a template, currently in use in most schools in the district, that organizes all information chronologically. While the schools are not required to have a uniform design, most follow the same general layout.

Most schools divide their page into three categories: school handouts, district handouts and community handouts. Unfortunately, it is sometimes confusing to know under which category you can find a particular item. Mr. Klein admitted that the distinction between the sub-folders is blurry. "We are still working one flyer at a time and there is no clear protocol set up. At the end of the year, we will look at this entire process and see if there is a bright line test for these various folders."

The e-Friday Folder also has significant formatting inconsistencies. Some schools post items in the month they receive the flyer for uploading, while other schools post flyers in the month where the event being reported will take place.

Some information is posted in a timely manner, while others are not posted until shortly before the event takes place. In some cases, identical items are named differently on different areas of the e-Friday Folder, which leads to confusion. Mr. Klein commented that naming protocols should be established not only to avoid confusion from duplicate files, but to also promote better communication of the document itself.

While every school was receiving the same community flyers to post, each school's community page looked different. There is an effort underway to link all individual school "community links" to the same page, but that is not currently in place at all schools. Mr. Klein believes that by the end of the year, "everyone should be on the same wavelength."

PTO Presidents offered many suggestions to improve the e-Friday Folder (offering a search tool, color coding previously read items, etc.), but the limitations of the web software prevent many of the suggestions from being put into place. Mr. Klein noted that different users look at the e-

Friday Folder with different eyes and acknowledged the need to get user-group feedback from parents.

The Email Connection

Though the elementary schools struggled at the beginning of the year, the transition has improved tremendously as the year has progressed, thanks to the use of email listserv technology. Schools that are reporting more positive experiences with the e-Friday Folder use email in tandem. On a weekly or as-needed basis, PTOs and elementary school principals are "blasting emails" to their school communities with news, information and links to the e-Friday Folder with important information. These reminders seem to be the key to the e-Friday Folder's success.

Unfortunately, email use at the secondary level is much more limited. Two of our three middle schools use email. Both high school PTOs use email, however, their contact lists reach only 20-25% of their school populations, using email addresses they collect on their own. The high school PTO, in particular, is vital to keeping the school community informed. Unlike the elementary schools whose cultures and protocols lend themselves toward being inclusive and aware, communication at the secondary level is much less engaged. During the GPA/Class Rank discussions, the North and South PTOs had the primary responsibility for communicating information about the change to their school communities.

Mark Klein now acknowledges, "It is not the job of a PTO to get district news out."



Education Channel

Mr. Klein recognizes the need for better TV usage. Channel 27/44 is an under-utilized tool. From the perspective of communication and public relations, there are many potential opportunities that exist for TV technology. Unfortunately, there is no one currently on staff that can sufficiently spend time on this work. Mr. Klein expressed the need to hire a media consultant to better use this medium. He also plans to seek volunteers within the community, who may have expertise in the TV field, to help improve the channel's programming.

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(Class Rank continued from page 1)

Below is a chart detailing how the new weighted GPA will be calculated:

	A	B	C	D	F
AP	4.8	4.3	3.3	1.8	0
Honors	4.5	4.0	3.0	1.5	0
All Others	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0

It is widely accepted that the Special Education classes should be at equal weight to the Academic classes. The weighting of the Special Education classes at a lower level than Academic devalues what those students are doing in their appropriate area of study. However the new system of weighting the GPA poses several contradictions to our current system and therefore raises questions and concerns.

Honors and most AP classes are currently on equal footing. In fact, for years, the district has promoted Council Rock Honors classes as being just as rigorous as AP classes. In the new system, however, the formula for the weighted GPA makes that no longer the case. Because grades in AP courses will carry a higher weight than Honors, the message is that AP courses are more demanding and Honors classes are easier, which current and former students widely agree is untrue.



Humanities classes, which are listed as Honors level courses, will no longer carry the highest weight in the new GPA structure. Accelerated classes will not be weighted at all. Creating a system where Accelerated and Academic classes are equally weighted prompted many questions regarding why a student would choose to do more rigorous coursework with no perceived benefit.

Citizens For Education believes that while there may be "unintended consequences," - a problem that could impact a student's acceptance to the college of their choice - there will also be predictable outcomes to this decision.

1. Students will take more AP classes and in earlier years, especially those students toward the

top of the class, because of the perception that they are more "important," regardless of whether it is the appropriate placement. This creates more stress and higher stakes testing for those students

2. Students will take fewer Honors classes, which benefit students in their rigor and depth of instruction but are devalued in the new system
3. Students will take fewer Accelerated classes, in favor of the less rigorous Academic classes, as the "easy A" will boost their GPA
4. Students who do choose to stretch themselves and take Accelerated classes, but receive only one B, could end up in a lower decile than a student who takes the less rigorous Academic path and receives all A's
5. Humanities students will feel pressure to leave the program in favor of the higher weighted AP classes, thus decimating the Humanities program
6. Curricular decisions, and choice of textbooks, will be driven by the new weight system; the Honors classes, and possibly the Accelerated classes will become less rigorous, or "dumbed down" over time to reflect their lower value
7. For the first few years, students, for whom the new weighted GPA will apply, could be in classes with students under the current rank system thereby creating a situation where the younger student's grade would be worth less than the older student receiving the same grade in the same class doing the same work
8. Students who stretch themselves by taking Honors classes, but receive grades of B's and only one C, could end up in a lower decile than a student who takes the much less rigorous Academic or Accelerated track, and receives all A's

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9. The Academic student who currently, with all A's, would have a 4.0 out of a possible 4.0 reported as their GPA, will now have that same GPA reported as 4.0 out of the expected maximum of 4.5, which may affect how a college perceives them as an applicant
10. Students will opt out of World Language classes after level 3 (the generally accepted minimum required for many colleges) in favor of higher weighted AP class options
11. Students may opt out of traditional tracks, such as Physics in 11th grade, in favor of the higher weighted AP classes in Biology or Chemistry
12. If a student chooses Honors classes (including World Language and Humanities) over the AP classes afforded them, the counselor recommendation form that is part of all college applications will not indicate that the student took the "most rigorous course of study," which could hurt top performing students in the increasingly more competitive college selection process

In its presentation to the board, the administration recalculated the GPAs and ranks of the top 10% of the class of 2007 from both high schools, and used the recalculation to demonstrate that the new system would not have moved these students out of the top decile. Citizens requested that the same comparison be done for the other 90% of students. That comparison has not been furnished at the time of this writing.

The comparison of the rank and GPA of the top 10% of students, under the current and new system that was presented to the board, showed that most students did stay in the same decile. There were, however, a handful of students who would have moved from the top 10% to the second 10%, and one student who was listed as #1 in the current system, who would not have reached the top 5% with the new weighted GPA. Since a #1 student cannot reach that rank without taking all Honors/AP full time classes, and having a 4.0 un-weighted GPA, it can be assumed that student chose Honors over AP classes. Had that #1 student made similar course selections under the new guidelines, their movement from the #1 position, to not even placing

among the top 5% of the class, could have had impact at some highly selective colleges. Counselor advice with course selection will begin to play a major role for these students, and any errant choices could have a detrimental effect on a student's college admissions.

Citizens believes that the data on the other 90% of students will show that the change to a weighted GPA will have major, adverse implications for many students, not reflected in a review of the top 10% of a class. We foresee that there will be considerable movement across deciles based on the chart above. Any negative impact in a student's decile could affect their chance of being admitted to the college of their choice.

This topic is a top priority for Citizens. We believe that it is important to study as much information as possible, as soon as possible, to bring concerns to light. Waiting until affected students move through the high school to see the impact of these changes may be too late to help the more than 1,000 students in each grade level of the high school. Citizens will continue to ask appropriate questions and review relevant data so that if "unintended consequences" appear more than likely, we can advocate for change before those consequences adversely affect students. We will continue to report on this topic in future newsletters.

Citizens For Education Officers 2007-2008

President Wendi Thomas
 Vice President Marilyn Scarpa
 Secretary Sue Maseda
 Treasurer Allison MacGahan



Citizens
For
Education

...a voice for our children!

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Outreach

Since 60% of the Council Rock community does not have children in the schools, there is tremendous need for good public relations and communication to taxpayers. Mr. Klein plans to meet with community groups, seniors, teachers and parents to gain insight on how to improve district communications.

The secondary level, in particular, is less engaged in district communication. Reaching this segment is critical to communications success.

Looking Ahead

Across the district, events and processes this year have suffered by being victims of inconsistent communication. Poor attendance at events, cancelled events and unsuccessful fundraising represents the biggest impact felt at the elementary level. At the secondary level, there is an information void, which can directly affect students.

Citizens For Education believes that the communication tools available to the district will ultimately prove successful, but much improvement is needed. The inclusion and validation of the community, and the achievement of the Strategic Plan goal to "sustain public trust", is achievable through a multi-layered communication stream.

Looking ahead, there are plans that will help improve things. Mr. Klein acknowledged, "Blast email would cure many of our (communication) problems." There is currently information on the district homepage directing the community to join the district listserv. There is also a plan to collect email information at Back to School Night next year and to begin using email as a communication tool more consistently.

Citizens For Education believes that email will be an important key to improving communications and commends the administration for acknowledging that and having a pro-active plan to collect addresses for use in the next school year. Citizens would also like to see a better use of Global Connect. While we understand the district must be cautious about over-use of this mecha-

nism, combining both phone and email in the communication process is a more comprehensive approach.

Acquiring feedback about the communications tools used by the district from the end-users is critical to help guide necessary improvements and strategy. Mr. Klein noted, "I would love to be way more pro-active communication-wise," but there are limited resources and personnel. By engaging the community stakeholders, a better, more productive, plan for improvement can be focused. Citizens For Education will continue to monitor district communications efforts and will report news in future newsletters.

What is Happening with the Facilities Plan in Council Rock?

In the summer of 2008 the district will start renovating Holland and Churchville Elementary Schools. The renovations will start this summer and will be completed by the year 2010.

Summer 2008 – Construction starts with removal of all floor tile in both schools.

Winter 2008-2009 - Construction of additions to both schools.

Summer of 2009 – Continuing renovations to both buildings.

Fall to spring 2009/10 - Continue renovations in specific wings of each building. The students will use existing modular classrooms and the new additional spaces.



Summer 2010 - All construction should be completed.

The next projects will be determined shortly, with priority going to schools with aging systems.

Secure entranceways will be installed over the summer at all elementary buildings that do not have secure entrances, except Sol Feinstone.

Sol Feinstone's entrance involves construction and will be done at a later date.

Council Rock Nationally Recognized for Go Green Program



Council Rock School District took the national stage this year when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) named it **"2008 Energy Partner of the Year."** National award winners were selected from the 12,000 organizations participating in the Energy Star program. Energy Star partners commit to improve the energy efficiency of products, homes, buildings and businesses. The winners have attained substantial success in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency.

Critical to achieving such outstanding success, Council Rock educates staff and promotes this philosophy through various media, including newsletters, its website, television broadcasts, committee meetings, and visits to schools. The district has discovered that success in any particular building depends on the active involvement of the administration, the building manager, and custodians. Elementary students have been involved in the program through development of a logo and slogan. Additionally, a scholarship fund was established for middle and high school students who are selected for their energy conservation efforts and ideas. District officials are also committed to promoting the benefits of energy efficiency and acting as a model for other school districts, educating their peers about the district's energy management system.

The program also includes involvement of the students, teachers and community to achieve lasting success. Key accomplishments include:

- Saving more than \$2.5 million in just 2 years, helping to address budget shortfalls while reducing tax increases and preventing educational program cuts
- Achieving a 30 percent improvement in energy efficiency across its portfolio of school buildings by the end of 2007, followed closely by a 20

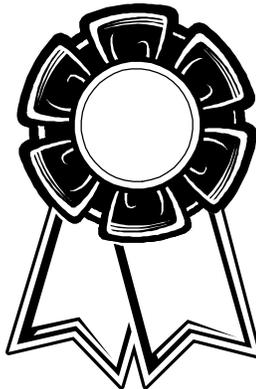
percent improvement in energy savings at the beginning of 2008. Both milestones earned the district recognition as an ENERGY STAR Leader

- Earning the ENERGY STAR label for superior energy efficiency for two schools, Newtown Middle School and Newtown Elementary School

In conjunction with these efforts Council Rock has formed a "Green Team" led by Tom Schneider, Supervisor of Operational Services, and Pat Armillei, Science Curriculum Coordinator. Team members include parents and representatives for each of the buildings in CR.

A contingency representing Council Rock traveled to Washington DC on April 1, 2008 to receive this award. This group consisted of Administrators: Mark Klein, Robert Schoch & Tom Schneider, Newtown Middle School principal Richard Hollahan and Holland Middle school teacher Sara Caruso. Maintenance personnel: Michael Hellmen (Rolling Hills), Ted Quall (Newtown El.), Tom Romeo (Newtown Middle School), and Eric Grove and Gary Sochalski (District HVAC Specialists) attended also.

The District held an essay contest in the middle and high schools titled "Why do you think it is important that our school district be a leader in Energy Conservation?" Five students were selected as winners and four of the students participated in the award ceremony in Washington. They were Marisa Higgins – Junior - CRHS North, Theodore Caputi - Newtown Middle, Sydney Saltzman – Richboro Middle and Alexandria Wheately – Holland Middle. Lauren Tannenbaum was the essay winner selected from Council Rock High School South.



It is up to each and every one of us to make a concerted effort to save energy and protect the planet, and Council Rock leads by being a commendable example.

To learn more, go to the Council Rock website at www.crsd.org (Click: Information; Go Green).

CR Focuses on Autism

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and a continuum of services for each student are the focus of Council Rock's new administrator of the Autism Support (AS) programs.

Approximately one year ago, CRSD chose to be its own administrator of the AS programs, which had previously been operated by the Bucks County Intermediate Unit.

Christine Crawford joined the district in the new position of Supervisor of Special Education, overseeing the 10 AS programs from the Bucks IU as well as 4 other AS programs the district already ran. Ms. Crawford brings a wide range of experience in all aspects of autism education. She has been in the classroom as a teacher of students with autism at the Centennial School at Lehigh University as well as in various consultative and administrative posts, including working for the State of Alaska as an Educational Specialist in the area of Autism.

Her goal at CRSD is to "build a continuum of services for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) from Kindergarten thru 12th grade." Currently, there are 9 AS programs at Goodnoe Elementary School, 3 at Richboro Elementary School, 2 at Newtown Middle School and 2 at CR High School North.

The program is defined as a classroom or independent teacher whose primary function is the education of students with ASD. These programs focus on communication skills, social skills and appropriate behaviors along with regular academic subjects.

There are approximately 180 students with ASD currently attending CRSD schools. Besides her other responsibilities, Ms. Crawford is working collaboratively with other CRSD staff to raise awareness of ASD throughout the CRSD community. She also hopes to continue to develop workshops for the community.

To learn more go to the Council Rock website at www.crsd.org (Click: Administration; Special Services; Autism Facts).

Dennis McMenamin, Council Rock's Newest School Director

Citizens For Education recently sat down with Council Rock School Board's newest member, Dennis McMenamin, and it was clear in the 90-minute interview that the Kirkwood resident is focused on giving back to the community after living here for 20 years.

Mr. McMenamin and his wife Pam, have four grown children, one of whom attended Council Rock schools (Newtown Middle School and Council Rock High School). The couple has three grandchildren currently in the school district. One attends Goodnoe Elementary School and two attend Wrightstown Elementary School.

Mr. McMenamin is the representative for Region One, which includes Newtown Borough and a portion of Newtown Township, all of which feed into Goodnoe Elementary School.

The physical condition of school facilities is a priority to Mr. McMenamin, who noted that one of the things he wants to address is the condition of modular classrooms at the schools, especially Goodnoe. "One of the first things I did after becoming elected was to take a tour of the schools with Mark Klein and when I walked into some of these schools it was like walking back in time," Mr. McMenamin said. "It looked as though nothing had been done in a long time as far as regular building improvements."

He said he will look very closely at the District's facilities management plans and renovation plans and stressed the importance of "the need to strike a balance between new construction and building maintenance."

According to district numbers, Mr. McMenamin said, the elementary population is decreasing. He added that Council Rock taxes are low compared to other districts, but he stressed that if you raise taxes too much it hurts housing prices and that in turn will hurt the school district's revenue base.

Mr. McMenamin equates high standards with money well spent and he recognizes that teachers'

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salaries are the highest percentage of the school budget. "I want to be the voice of reason on the school board," Mr. McMenamain said. "I will look at what happens as a whole, I don't have any specific agenda, just what's best for the whole school district."

Mr. McMenamain serves on the Facilities and Finance Committees, and the Middle Bucks Institute of Technology board.

So far, the experience of School Director has been "eye-opening" and "fascinating" and Mr. McMenamain said he has found Superintendent Mark Klein a valuable resource for information and weekly updates on district activities. "It's a lot of reading, which I don't mind because I like reading, but it's also a lot of common sense," McMenamain said of the workload of a school director. "I talk with Mark on a weekly basis and he keeps me very informed about what's going on."

Citizens For Education is grateful to Mr. McMenamain for sharing his time and wishes him luck and success during his tenure on the Board of School Directors.



Citizens For Education

PO Box #1301, Newtown, PA 18940
Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com

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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.



Read This “We’re Connected”



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C4E can be contacted via email at:
Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com