



Citizens for Education



Fall Issue

October 2006

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.

New Administrators Will Lead Council Rock into the Future

The 2006-2007 school year brings many new faces to Council Rock's administrative ranks.

Superintendent Mark Klein has completed his reorganization of the central office and now has in place a Director of Elementary Education, a Director of Secondary Education and a Supervisor of Operational Services. There are also two new elementary and middle school principals. Citizens for Education Executive Board members had the opportunity to meet with these individuals, who will lead Council Rock into the future. We thank them for their time and insights.

Wrightstown Elementary Welcomes New Principal Nicole Crawford

In July 2006, the Council Rock School District welcomed Nicole Crawford as the Principal of Wrightstown Elementary.

Ms. Crawford comes to Council Rock with a diverse background. In her teen years, Ms. Crawford spent several years abroad in Luxemburg, where she finished her last two years of high school at the American International School and her first year of college at an American college in the Netherlands. She returned to the states and earned a teaching degree from West Chester University and received her Principal Certification from Rowan University in 2005.

Ms. Crawford comes to Council Rock with 12 years of experience as an educator. She began her teaching career working in the Jersey City, Elizabeth and Hillside school districts in NJ.

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Act 1, Scene 1: The Latest Property Tax Reduction Legislation

The Pennsylvania Legislature approved the Pennsylvania Taxpayer Relief Act, titled Act 1, in June 2006. This bill, though not widely reported, contains a referendum piece equal to the highly touted—but failed—legislation titled Act 72. It also contains an optional, additional Earned Income Tax (EIT), or tax shift, as the primary means to property tax savings, also like Act 72.

Alternatively, a district can institute or convert to a Personal Income Tax (PIT) that would include tax on dividends and investment income. Gambling revenue adds a small amount of savings on top of the EIT or PIT, when and if the state gaming commission fund reaches \$400 million. The legislation includes an increase in eligibility income for the Property Tax and Rent Rebate program, as well as higher rebates for senior citizens.

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Citizens for Education Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, November 15, 2006
Chancellor Center
Historic Classroom
8:00pm

Experience Brings Tom Schneider to Position of Supervisor of Operational Services

Although Tom Schneider's first official day on the job as Supervisor of Operational Services was May 30, he had already spent several weeks attending School Board and Facilities Committee meetings, educating himself on the specifics of what would be on his plate in Council Rock.

Since Mr. Schneider grew up in Bucks County and currently resides in the District, he was already very knowledgeable about Council Rock. His conscientious preparation and familiarity enabled him to immediately take on the responsibility of all maintenance and capital projects previously planned and approved for the hectic summer months. But more importantly, he brought to Council Rock a wealth of experience.

He received his Associate's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Penn State in 1979, and his Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Spring Garden College in 1982. Tom's first job after college was with Selas Fluid Processing, a petrochemical company. This was followed by employment in carpentry, construction management, and his own business for 6 years. From 1991-96, he was employed at Bucks County Community College as Supervisor of HVAC and boiler-plant operations. During this time, Mr. Schneider was promoted to the Director of Facilities and oversaw two major renovations totaling \$9 million and \$14 million. After Bucks, he worked with K-12 school districts in New Jersey. There he worked with architectural firms and as a project manager, where he gathered expertise in dealing with School Boards, public institutions, state-mandated regulations, and bureaucratic form requirements.

It was this vast and varied experience that led to Mr. Schneider's interest in applying for the position at Council Rock. He knew there would be a lot to be done in the job of Supervisor of Operational Services, and he looked forward to involvement in a wide-range of tasks.

While Mr. Schneider's initial challenge was managing the summer projects, he also met the principals of all 15 schools, getting to know the individual needs of each building, as well as Chancellor Center and the maintenance facility on Twining Ford Road. He also got acquainted with the members and job descriptions of the 42 maintenance staff workers under Supervisor Bill Howell and Foreman Dan Kulp. In June, he reviewed every one of the District's work orders and has already digested the scope of the many items on the district's multi-year capital planning list.

Besides supervising all aspects of the day-to-day operations, Tom Schneider is integral to District development, committees, and projects. He sits on the District's Energy Conservation Management team and interacts with the engineers of Hayes Large Architects, LLP, the firm recommended by the Growth Committee to be hired by Council Rock to do a feasibility study. Both efforts will be integrated into future planning, and have an impact on capital planning priorities. Mr. Schneider has already started to prepare next summer's capital-improvement project list.

Even though he has only been on the job for four months, Mr. Schneider is formulating plans to implement processes that can make Council Rock more efficient with its handling of work orders and manpower.

Mr. Schneider believes that the Hayes Large report will show that Council Rock is no different than most school districts, where the priority is on education, and fiscal responsibility often goes hand in hand with deferred maintenance.

Mr. Schneider proudly relates that in all of his years of experience, Council Rock's Energy Plan is the best he has ever seen, and the first 8 months have yielded cost savings and environmental paybacks. In the spring, the District will team with outside agencies to celebrate its reduction of energy usage, and enhance conservation awareness throughout the Council Rock community.

Although most people have never given much thought to what is involved in the

(Continued on page 3)

Rebecca Grimm Crosses Upper Holland Road to Become New Principal of Richboro Elementary School

Rebecca Grimm did not have to change her work commute very much this year as the new principal of Richboro Elementary School. She went directly across the street from Richboro Middle School, where she served as Assistant Principal for the last two years.

Mrs. Grimm grew up in the area, attending the Centennial School District and receiving a dual degree in Elementary and Special Education from West Chester University. In addition, Mrs. Grimm completed her Master's in Special Education from Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey) and her Master's in Education Administration from Rider University. She is married with two college aged daughters, both of whom attend Rutgers University. She also has pets, including turtles that began as a classroom pet and have grown to a size that required her husband to build a pond in their backyard.

Mrs. Grimm began her love of Special Education as a senior in high school, when she volunteered in a Special Education classroom. She started her teaching career in the Bristol School District and quickly settled into the area of Special Education. For four years, she worked with Easter Seals in Levittown as coordinator of the Early Intervention Program. At that time, Mrs. Grimm became the Director of Joy Bell Pre-School, a position she held for six years. During her tenure, she worked with the Intermediate Unit to develop and implement a Special Education program for Joy Bell, as well as a kindergarten enrichment class.

In 1993, Mrs. Grimm came to CR as a Special Education Resource Room teacher at Holland Elementary School, just before school districts began inclusion in classrooms. She feels that inclusion classes are a good way to bring a tolerance for diver-

sity to students. In 2000, she went to the newly opened Welch Elementary School as a fourth grade teacher. From there she was hired as Richboro Middle School's half-time Assistant Principal (the other half of her time was spent in Special Education). She held this position for two years, the second year as a full-time administrator before becoming Principal at Richboro Elementary School this past July.

Mrs. Grimm wants to spend her first year as Principal getting to know the teaching staff at the school and developing a rapport with them. She wants to develop a team process for solving problems. She will work to ensure that all decisions reflect "what's good for students". Like Mr. Bell (see article on page 4) Mrs. Grimm has the benefit of having worked at the middle school, and observing first hand the transition process from 6th to 7th grade. She will continue to work on making that process as smooth as possible for the outgoing sixth grade students.

One of the committees that Mrs. Grimm has worked on at the district level is the Strategic Planning Committee, and is looking forward to implementing that plan at the elementary school level. Specifically, she believes that it will improve continuity of instruction across grade levels and will help the staff to have a stronger sense of direction. Mrs. Grimm also served on the district Supervision and Evaluation committee, and therefore has a working knowledge of that plan for professional staff.

("Experience Brings Tom Schneider" continued from page 2)

operations of Council Rock, a school district of over 12,600 students, Mr. Schneider is going to make sure that the Facilities Department operates with transparency. His goal is to implement procedures that will result in better efficiencies and communication from the department from the top down. He would like to provide more information and better utilize the website in an effort to "bring all constituents into the fold." Both the CR Energy Plan results and the facilities study will be shared with the public, and Mr. Schneider will improve public access to information pertaining to Council Rock's Operational Services.

Administrator Induction Program: A New District Initiative

Council Rock's new administrators have had the advantage of an Administrative Induction Program since July of 2006. Unlike many other school districts, where administrators from central office to assistant principals are placed in their position without much support or training in a sink-or-swim mentality, new administrators in Council Rock now have a formalized level of support from veteran administrators.

The Council Rock Administrator Induction Program contains layers of assistance for new administrators. Two key elements are:

1. Assignment of mentors to act as a sounding board for problem solving, reflection, new ideas, etc. Mentors are assigned for new administrators as follows:

- * Elementary Principals are mentored by Elementary Principals
- * Assistant Principals are mentored by Principals from High Schools/Middle Schools
- * Middle School Principals are mentored by another Middle School Principal
- * High School Principals are mentored by another HS Principal
- * Central Office administrators are mentored by an experienced colleague or supervisor

2. Implementation of a two-hour After-School Workshop Program. Although this program is intended for new administrative hires/appointments, recent hires/appointments are also encouraged to attend, as well as veteran administrators who would like a "refresher." Some of the topics are:

- * Chancellor Center go-to list and chain of authority
- * Staff Development Model
- * Security and Crisis Management
- * Administrative Supervision
- * Teacher Supervision and Evaluation
- * Technological Resources
- * Discipline
- * Budget Process
- * Special Education Laws and Procedures

Richboro Middle School Principal William Bell Is a 26-Year Veteran in Council Rock

William Bell has just completed his first year as Principal of Richboro Middle School; however, he is no newcomer to our District.

Mr. Bell is a 26-year veteran in Council Rock. He came to CR in 1980 from Pennwood Middle School in the Pennsbury School District. Prior to his new position, he served for 20 years as a Music teacher and 1 ½ years as an Assistant Principal, both at Richboro Junior High, then as Assistant Principal for two years at Council Rock High School South. Mr. Bell returned to Richboro Middle School as principal in July of 2005. He is married with three grown sons.

He spent his first year as principal at RMS concentrating on transitioning students. He realized that there were many opportunities for students in 6th grade to become familiar with the middle school as they move to 7th grade. But his experience at the high school suggested that more needed to be done in the transition from 8th to 9th grade.

Mr. Bell is principal of the only middle school whose students split between CRHS North and South. This presents a unique set of challenges as he tries to ensure that both groups of students are prepared both instruc-

(Continued on page 5)

- * Home & School Policies – relationships with parent groups
- * Community Relations, and others

Citizens for Education is pleased to see this new initiative as it is one more example of how "continuous improvement" is implemented. A goal to have Council Rock's principals and other administrators achieving the highest standards will aid in raising student achievement. Special thanks to David Bollinger, Director of Human Resources, for supplying details of the program for this newsletter.

("Wrightstown Elementary Principal" continued from page 1)

Most recently, she spent six years as a fourth grade teacher in the Cherry Hill School District. While in Cherry Hill, Ms. Crawford did staff development and developed workshops in Literacy, Reading, Lesson Study Design and Collaboration. She offered these workshops within the district, and in the summers presented them to other school districts. With the help of her principal and mentor at Cherry Hill, she learned skills necessary to become an effective principal. She applied to Council Rock seeking the job as principal in part to be closer to the home she shares with her husband in Conshohocken PA.

There were 60 applicants and a long interview process. After four interviews and an onsite visit, Ms. Crawford was hired. She reports to Joy McClendon, Director of Elementary Education. She has found the new Administrator Induction Program in Council Rock a great asset. Her mentor, Dr. Pat Carney-Dalton, Principal at Hillcrest Elementary, and Kevin King, former principal of Wrightstown, have helped her settle in. She says this "support is just incredible."

In May, after accepting the position and in keeping with her philosophy of collaboration, Ms. Crawford met with administration, staff, parents, and students in Wrightstown. Her transition was made easier because of these meetings. Her short-term goals are to learn District and Pennsylvania State policies. She appreciates the learning culture, trust and the community environment at Wrightstown. Ms. Crawford's long-term goals will be to initiate workshops such as Balanced Math Assessments, Lesson Study Design and Problem Solving Techniques. She feels there is a great culture at Wrightstown, and she intends to continue and build on the successes there. She will "solve problems/challenges as a team" and with open communication.



("Richboro Middle School Principal" continued from page 4)

tionally and emotionally for the next level.

Last year, a survey was given to 9th grade teachers asking what concerns they see in the incoming freshman classes. Time-management and organizational skills were mentioned frequently, as well as a lack of independence. Mr. Bell took the results of the survey to heart and made some changes at RMS. He began by lowering the number of homerooms during the homeroom/RA period. This frees additional teachers to be available for instructional or organizational help for students in need. Initiation of this additional help can come from student or teacher referral.

To aid in the development of independent learners, Mr. Bell has encouraged more detailed research and reading assignments in the Reading classes with the aid of a non-fiction reading program "KidBiz". He also has continued a peer tutoring system to help those in need.

Mr. Bell will have 13 new staff members this year at RMS and is thrilled at the cali-

ber of candidates stemming from the District's new screening process for applicants (see article on page 10). He states that the new hires are not rookies; they are young but experienced. He also will have a new Multiple Disabilities Class beginning at RMS in 06-07. This follows on the heels of the Life Skills Class that came to RMS a number of years

ago. These classes give students in the regular education program the opportunity to work cooperatively with disabled students for the benefit of everyone.

On a District level, Mr. Bell reports to Mr. Barry Desko, the Director of Secondary Education. He also serves on the Energy Committee.

Mr. Bell is looking forward to the future and intends to pursue goals within the District's newly designed Strategic Plan.

("Act 1, Scene 1" continued from page 1)

The primary difference between Act 72 and Act 1 is that the Legislature is mandating this, instead of allowing local boards to vote it up or down, thus wresting control over education from local school boards.

Act 1 mandates that each district must form a Tax Study Commission. There is a significant cost to this requirement that is borne by the district; \$20,000 in Council Rock. This commission will meet through December 2006 and make a non-binding recommendation for a ballot question for the primary election in May 2007. This question would take one of two forms: Do residents want to increase the existing EIT or convert to a PIT to fund both property tax relief and district operating cost? The school board will ultimately decide the question to pose.

Act 1 states that a school district's budget increase must be capped at a rate determined by a state formula: the average of the increase in the State Average Weekly Wage and the Employment Cost Index. Over the last 10 years, that rate has ranged from 2.67% to 4.32%. The voters in a primary election must approve any increase in taxes above that rate. Keep in mind that less than 15% of registered voters actually vote in primary elections. This 15% of voters will determine if the District must cut non-mandated items, such as bus transportation, athletic programs, kindergarten, art and music classes. Following cuts to those programs, the core educational programs would be at risk.

There are some exclusions for which a district can petition and, if approved, may negate the need for referenda. Unfortunately, most of the exemptions would not apply to Council Rock. Many exemptions require a certain percentage increase for the exemption to take effect. Large school districts are at a disadvantage using this method. For example, a district must experi-

ence growth over 7.5% in the prior 3 years to claim an exemption. In Council Rock, that would mean an increase of 937 students while in New Hope-Solebury an increase of 109 students would trigger this exemption.

Meanwhile, districts will need to start crafting their budgets for the 2007-2008 school year in the fall of the current year, as they must have a preliminary budget approved by February 2007. This presents many problems, especially the fact that a school district cannot possibly know this early about increases in staff due to growth, or increases in utilities, supplies, transportation, etc. almost a year in the future. This timeline exists to allow for a back-end referendum on the ballot for the May 2007 primary.

New Jersey is our closest neighbor with referendum on school district budgets. This year, 46.6% of districts voted their school budgets down, compared to 29.3% the previous year. It has been shown that referendum does not save taxpayers money; and is certainly the case in NJ, where property taxes are some of the highest in the nation. It has also been shown that failed referenda do, however, cause a reduction in property values, as these are tied to the success and strength of the school district.

The state, in this newest legislation, has tied the hands of local boards, while not accomplishing significant tax reduction.

True property tax relief will only come through the state providing a better school district funding formula and giving local school boards the ability to mesh tax savings with the educational desires of their citizens.

Citizens for Education urges our local leaders and residents of Council Rock to keep pressuring the Legislature to implement real, comprehensive tax relief. In our next newsletter, Citizens for Education will print a follow-up article detailing the monetary impact of Act 1 on the taxpayers of Council Rock.

Joy McClendon Named to the New Position of Director of Elementary Education and Curriculum Services

Superintendent Mark Klein announced in May 2006 that Joy McClendon had been appointed to the newly created position of Director of Elementary Education and Curriculum Services.

Mrs. McClendon came to Council Rock in June 2002 as principal of Richboro Elementary School. She was previously principal of Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, a K-8 school in the Olney section of Philadelphia. She is married with a son and daughter, both young adults.

Mrs. McClendon graduated in 1980 with a Bachelor's Degree from Penn State in Special Education and Elementary Education, then received a Master's of Education in Reading from Arcadia University. She returned to Arcadia for her Elementary/Secondary Principal Certification.

Mrs. McClendon began her teaching career in Philadelphia in 1980. Her original background was in the area of Special Education. Having a relative with special needs prompted her to seek a way to help this overlooked segment of the student population at a time when there were not sufficient government regulations or school district supports. Later, she became certified as a Reading Specialist with the goal of helping special needs students, and subsequently began to focus on Autistic Support.

When Mrs. McClendon became certified as an administrator, she was given a position as Equity Support Coordinator in a Philadelphia Cluster; a grouping of 10 elementary schools, 3 middle schools and 1 high school. In this capacity, she oversaw the English Language Learner (ELL) and Title 1 programs, facilitated placement of Special Education students and supervised the Early Intervention transition process.

This position dealt with programs, not people, and in 1998, shortly after Thurgood

Marshall Elementary opened, she took on the role of principal. This was a new school with a student population that was mostly low-income minorities; a population in need.

After four years, Mrs. McClendon decided to seek employment in a suburban district. Mrs. McClendon, proud of her African-American heritage, felt that many suburban school districts lacked diversity in leadership positions and she wanted to be a positive role model for students.

The Council Rock Director of Elementary Education and Curriculum Services position encompasses two areas. Mrs. McClendon will supervise the Elementary Principals as well as concentrate on the core curricular areas; Math, Reading/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies. She will work in concert with Mr. Barry Desko, Director of Secondary Education (see companion article on page 9). She will direct the Curriculum Coordinators for the four core areas and monitor student progress and new curricular initiatives. Her position will overlap Mr. Desko in the areas of budget, candidate screening, professional development and staff supervision and evaluation. Both Mrs. McClendon and Mr. Desko will oversee the District's Academic Standards committee.

Mrs. McClendon is excited to be a part of the Council Rock administrative team. She has met with most of the curriculum coordinators and, already having a strong knowledge of the elementary curriculum, plans to focus on connecting with secondary level teachers and department chairs.

Mrs. McClendon says her long-term goals will be to align with the 2006-2012 Strategic Plan (a blueprint for the next 6 years). Her immediate goal is to listen, "to learn as much as I can" and apply that knowledge in serving the students of Council Rock.

<i>Citizens for Education</i>	
Treasury report 10/06/05 to 10/03/06	
Opening Balance 10/06/05.....	\$1467.36
Withdrawals- Newsletters.....	\$ 793.15
Deposits- Membership.....	<u>\$1625.00</u>
Current Balance as of 10/03/06.....	\$2299.21

Richard Hollahan Becomes Principal of Newtown Middle School, The Same 'Warm, Inviting Place' He Attended in 8th Grade

Richard Hollahan began in his new position as principal of Newtown Middle School on July 1st, having been promoted from Assistant Principal. Ironically, Hollahan's Council Rock story began when he was an 8th grade student at Newtown Middle School.

In 1978, 13-year old Hollahan's family moved from Northeast Philadelphia to Newtown. His parents' motivation for moving was the Council Rock School District. His memory of his transition to Council Rock was that it was a warm, inviting place, where teachers cared about him and helped direct him onto his ultimate career path. Having excelled in Industrial Arts Technology as a student, it became his major at Millersville University, and he earned an IA Tech teaching degree in 1988.

Hollahan's career began part time at New Hope-Solebury, as a teacher and wrestling coach. During that time, he also spent half his day in the Central Bucks School District. He moved to Newtown Middle School as an IA Tech teacher in 1994, where he also coached wrestling for 10 years. He recalls, "Walking into the building then (in 1994), I found the same warm, inviting place I did as a kid from Philly." Several of the teachers he had as a student were still on staff when he was hired. While teaching, he earned his Master's Degree in Educational Administration, and his Secondary Principal Certification, in 2000. This led to his becoming Assistant Principal in 2002.

His appreciation for the way his teachers and coaches treated him as he grew up is the foundation for how he ap-

proaches his job. "My teachers and coaches cared about me and encouraged me. Now my job is to support the teachers, so they can do the best they can for the kids. My responsibility is for every child and every parent in this community." He encourages his staff to "find out what a kid does well and recognize it."

Hollahan has several goals for the school year. First and foremost, he wants to focus on the smooth transition for himself and the school's new Assistant Principal, Tom Long. Hollahan says that in spite of a new administration, Newtown Middle families and staff "should expect the same level of achievement, care and concern they have had in the past." He is grateful for the warm, nurturing culture that exists at Newtown Middle, which will help him "learn as much as he will be administering." Hollahan's long-term goal is to put the details of the district's Strategic Plan into practice. To that end, he is a member of the district Staff Development Committee and also has participated on the Supervision and Evaluation Committee and the district Literacy Committee. He is also a member of the Transition Committee, which is looking into improving the passage from the middle school to the high school.

In addition to a well-established relationship with his new direct supervisor, Barry Desko, Hollahan enjoys a strong relationship with his Middle School principal colleagues, Bill Bell and Mike Lecker. Lecker will serve as Hollahan's professional mentor. Hollahan noted that the three middle school principals meet regularly to discuss issues and concerns, in an effort to provide consistency between the schools, while still allowing each building their own unique culture.

Hollahan balances his professional life with a busy home life, as the married father of four children, ages 2, 4, 11 and 14.

Barry Desko Named to the New Position of Director of Secondary Education, Student Accounting

When Superintendent Mark Klein assumed his position as the Superintendent of Council Rock, he announced his intention to assign the Administration's organizational functions differently than his predecessor. Last year it was announced that at the top of that tier, there would be Directors of both Secondary and Elementary Education, instead of an Assistant Superintendent, and a Director of Curriculum. Although having a Director of Elementary and another for Secondary Education is neither new to Council Rock or other school districts, the titles are where the similarity ends. The new Directors will have broader responsibilities as well as a more collaborative effort.

Last February, the first of the new appointees was announced. Named to the post of Director of Secondary Education and Student Accounting was Barry Desko, no stranger to Council Rock. Mr. Desko was promoted from Principal at Newtown Middle School to the newly created position, taking over in July.

Barry Desko had been at Newtown Junior High, now Newtown Middle School, since January 1994. He received his undergraduate degree at West Chester University in Health, Physical Education and Recreation. He also attended the College of New Jersey, where he received a Master's in Education and his Principal's certification. He and his wife, Risa, have three children, who range in age from 9 to 15.

Barry has been an educator for 28 years, starting his career in education in the New Hope Solebury School District as a Health/Physical Education instructor for

grades 7 through 12. He remained at that district for 10 years, where he also held the positions of Athletic Director and Student Dean, overseeing the Student Assistance Program. After New Hope Solebury, Mr. Desko went to Pennsbury School District as an Assistant Principal of ninth and tenth grades at Medill Blair.

Mr. Desko was the Principal at Newtown Middle School as Council Rock went through many changes, including four Superintendents (Blatt, Scott, Kirby, and Klein). He was instrumental in spearheading the District's change from a junior high educational set-up of 7th, 8th and 9th grade to a middle school model, where 7th and 8th grade students are divided into educational teams.

Other duties Mr. Desko will oversee along with Joy McClendon, Director of Elementary Education, include the District's Academic Standards Committee and Curriculum Coordinators. Mr. Desko will oversee academic areas that include—but are not limited to—Business, Family and Consumer Science, Health and Physical Education, Industrial Technology, Visual Art, Music, and World Language.

Mr. Desko will also oversee the Student Accounting function for the District. Student Accounting includes attendance and other statistics that affect the state funding formula for the District.

Since assuming his new position, Mr. Desko has been meeting with secondary administrators and curriculum coordinators to listen to their concerns so that he can further define the direction his leadership in his new role will take.

Although at the time of the interview, Mr. Desko was still in the process of acclimating to his new position, he eagerly hopes to assist Mark Klein, whom he respects for his vision for the students in Council Rock.



New Screening Process for Teacher Applicants Creates Large Pool of Candidates

During the 2005-2006 school year, a new process to screen potential teacher candidates was developed, allowing the District to have a cache of candidates on hand whenever a professional staff vacancy occurs.

Thousands of applications were received and over 1,000 teacher candidates were interviewed during the last school year, with hundreds added to the potential pool of teacher candidates.

Citizens for Education has heard from many new administrators about the quality of potential teachers that this process has produced and wanted to share the details of the program with our membership.

This screening/interviewing process is the brainchild of Robert Winters, retired elementary school principal and former Acting Assistant Superintendent in Council Rock. Mr. Winters felt that it was necessary for the District to have a database on hand of qualified, pre-screened teachers who could step into a vacancy in short order and proceduralized this task.

Mr. Winters states that every application is read. Another retired administrator, Christopher Cresswell, former principal of Hillcrest Elementary, is charged with this onerous task. Mr. Cresswell, then identifies acceptable applicants. From there the process proceeds as follows:



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citizens4ed@yahoo.com

- Applicants are assigned a score based on a rubric that includes their GPA, competitiveness of the school attended, difficulty of their major, etc. Applicants are given feedback based on their score.
- The next step is a one-on-one screening interview with an administrator who has been previously trained in the interview process. This interview is scored in two areas:
 - * 12 questions centered around 4 themes
 - * A writing sample administered in the technology lab and scored on the spot by two other administrators
- If the applicant receives a “passing score” on the screening interview, his/her name is placed in the pool of candidates
- When a vacancy occurs at the building level, the principal chooses a minimum of 3 candidates from the pool and each receives an interview. This interview is with a team of staff members from the building.
- The principal recommends a candidate to employ
- The candidate then has a final interview with a central office administrator, prior to being offered the position.

Throughout this process, there are various checks and balances. A passing score on the screening interview was not determined until 4 complete sessions had taken place to develop a comfort level with that number. If an applicant has more than a four-point discrepancy between their score on the interview and the writing sample, Mr. Winters reads over the writing sample himself. This has rarely happened, as all administrators performing the screening interview are trained on the process and what to look for in the writing samples. Having the writing sample administered in the technology lab allows the District to gauge the candidate’s familiarity with technology as well.

All results are tracked to ensure that all interviewers are consistent, creating a high degree of reliability in the process.

Citizens for Education thanks Mr. Winters for sharing the details of this process and will continue to inform our membership as this program progresses.

Dear Informed Community Member,

Citizens for Education was formed over 15 years ago to inform the Council Rock community and to advocate for the students of Council Rock and for public education in general. Most recently Citizens has advocated for the building of CRHS South, Middle Level Education, improvements in college counseling, the addition of Elementary Guidance Counselors, elementary class size reductions, CRHS North renovations and more.

Citizens newsletter and informational flyers are funded solely through membership dues. **Please check the mailing label on this newsletter to find your membership renewal date.** If that date has passed we encourage you to renew your membership. If you would like to update any information we have on file, especially your email address, or if you would like your newsletter to be delivered electronically, please send an email to Citizens4Ed@yahoo.com.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with friends and colleagues, and encourage them to become members as well. Citizens for Education appreciates your support of our efforts to inform the CR community and to advocate for the students of Council Rock.

Sincerely,

Allison MacGahan, President

Membership Form

Membership funds enable us to produce our newsletter, inform on and advocate for quality public education!
(Please check the expiration date on your address label)

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address (please print clearly): _____

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 2009 (3 year membership), or October 2007 (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.



***DON'T MISS THIS SPECIAL
ISSUE ON COUNCIL ROCK'S
NEW ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM***



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REMEMBER TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7TH