



# Citizens For Education



Fall Issue November 2010

**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.**

## Teaching Visual Literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

***"The image survives the subject and becomes the remembered reality."*** - John Szarkowski, Director of Photography, Museum of Modern Art, New York

The Council Rock School District (CRSD) curriculum utilizes Visual Literacy to teach critical thinking skills that allow students to interpret images as they would the text of a book. Visual literacy, introduced as an educational concept in the 1960s, teaches students to interpret and understand visual "texts." These texts are defined as any visual, such as artwork, pictures in books, facial expressions, body language, computer images and web sites, movies and video, TV advertisements, international symbols and more. Visual literacy instruction also educates students on how to create and present materials visually.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Elementary School Parties Get a Nutritious Makeover

Kudos to Mrs. Joy McClendon, Director of Elementary Education, for crafting a new district recommendation designed to promote healthy eating habits during classroom parties in Council Rock's elementary schools. In a letter addressed to PTO Presidents and Homeroom Parents, Mrs. McClendon wrote (in part):

"The district is committed to providing rigorous academic programs for all students. Additionally, the overall wellness of our students is of equal importance. As a district, we must promote healthy eating habits as good nutrition and exercise are critical to the wellness of students.

For these reasons, and to accommodate the increasing numbers of students' medical and food allergy needs, we are promoting a change regarding the three district approved elementary classroom parties.

We are requesting that no more than one sugary/low nutrition food item be offered at classroom parties and that all foods are nut free.

The focus of classroom parties should continue to be on the social, celebratory aspect of the event rather than the food."

Good nutrition affects learning ability in a positive way, and Citizens For Education appreciates the district setting a good example for our children.

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### **Citizens For Education Annual General Membership Meeting**

Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
7:30 pm - 9 pm  
Northampton Library Conference Room

**Please Join Us!!**

**Bob Reinhart**  
**CR's New Director of**  
**Business Administration**

Bob Reinhart joined Council Rock as Director of Business Administration on July 1, 2010, following an extensive and thorough search process that began with 75 applicants. His varied and extensive experience in education, finance, accounting and auditing is sure to benefit Council Rock.

Bob grew up in Bethlehem, PA. After graduating from West Chester University with a degree in Accounting, he worked for a public accounting firm for seven and a half years. During that time, he passed the CPA exam and he specialized in municipal and school district audits. After a short stint at a Delaware accounting firm, Bob "went back home," and joined the Bethlehem School District as Assistant Business Administrator. Two years later, he was recruited for the position of Director of Finance at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, where he worked for over seven years. Over the next decade, Bob held positions in Lower Moreland School District, Mellon Bank (where he attained certification as an investment banker), Salisbury School District and most recently, Business Manager at Pennridge School District for the past seven and a half years.

The position in Council Rock appealed to Bob for many reasons, not the least of which is that his wife has been a teacher in the district for the past 23 years, currently at Maureen M. Welch Elementary School. Bob always "looked at Council Rock as the district everyone wanted to be," so to be a part of Council Rock was very appealing. The timing of the open position in CR coincided well with where Bob's career was at

that point in time. He believed that his very strong accounting background, extensive knowledge of school district business, and his detailed-oriented nature could be an asset to Council Rock.

The recruitment process for the position involved numerous interviews as well as a written paper about how he would handle tax assessment appeals. The process also included various work sessions with staff members and school board directors. In his position, Bob reports directly to Superintendent Mark Klein and has more than thirteen people reporting directly to him, including Supervisor of Operations, Tom Schneider, Supervisor of Transportation, Jack Pinheiro and Food Services. He is also a member of the Facilities and Finance committees.

Bob is taking his time to carefully assess, review and understand all the issues the district is currently facing. He was particularly challenged at the start of his tenure, when Assistant Business Manager Bob Reigel resigned his position just as Bob Reinhart was beginning. (Bob Kennedy has since been hired to fill that position. He will be interviewed in our spring newsletter.) Bob has been systematically learning the details of our district. In the long term, Bob will be focused on the various financial challenges CR faces: PSERS, state revenue, unemployment and real estate issues within the district, and the annual Act 1 index. Bob views these issues as challenges but says, "Challenges are opportunities." Citizens is confident that Bob Reinhart will make valuable contributions to the business of Council Rock. We wish him the best of luck!

**Did you know that the State of  
Pennsylvania provided only  
18.5% of the total funding for  
Council Rock's 2010-11 budget?**

*(Teaching Visual Literacy continued from page 1)*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, when describing visual literacy on its Standards Aligned System webpage, states “few things bring history to life as well as a professionally created educational video or movie. Movies can bring abstract concepts to life for students and provide vivid counterpoint to a teacher’s lesson. Videos allow teachers to bring ancient Egypt, Roman cities, or the inside of a concentration camp to their students. When used properly, with sufficient preparation and discussion in the classroom, video and movies in the Social Studies classroom are a reliable and successful teaching tool.”<sup>1</sup>

In fact, visual literacy is emphasized not only in Pennsylvania state standards and incorporated into CRSD’s course frameworks, but is a core concept for teacher education in universities throughout the nation. Student teachers must show competency in the use of visual media, and with this expertise in hand, younger teachers often mentor experienced teachers in the use of this valuable educational tool.

Research shows that, beginning in infancy, the majority of information that people absorb is collected through their sense of vision. According to The Visual Literacy White Paper<sup>2</sup>, the development of visual skills is important as visual images are becoming a “predominant form of communication across a range of learning and teaching resources, delivered across a range of media and formats. Visual literacy is now crucial for obtaining information, constructing knowledge and building successful educational outcomes.” This is especially true of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner as we live in an increasingly more visual culture.

According to Mary Alice White, a researcher at Columbia University Teachers College, “young people learn more than half of what they know from visual information, but few schools have an explicit curriculum to show students how to think critically about visual data.” In Council Rock, visual literacy is incorporated in all curriculum areas beginning as early as first grade, with Reading/English/Language Arts standards that include listening, speaking and viewing proficiencies. As students have become more computer savvy, Council Rock has introduced PowerPoint and Movie Maker as

early as second grade where students use visual media in their research projects about animals. Both the sixth grade assessment and the senior graduation project have a visual requirement.

Course standards and frameworks require students to be able to critically analyze media by evaluating the accuracy of what they view and making informed judgments. Teachers using these materials have a wealth of resources available to them, from a preapproved “bank” in the school libraries to resources from the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, including web based content and information provided by such outlets as National Geographic and the Discovery Channel.

In their first year, as part of continuing development, new CRSD teachers further develop their skills to effectively reach visual learners. Visual resources are helpful in differentiating instruction in the classroom. While some students retain more information from reading, and others from “hands-on” projects, some learn best through visual sources. These materials are more successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because of the plethora of visual outlets for communications.

All media is approved for inclusion in classrooms per CRSD School Board policy 109 (found on the crsd.org website under the School Board tab) and associated Administrative Regulations regarding supplemental materials. This policy (and all Board policies) must be reviewed by the Board solicitor and approved by the CRSD Board. At the high school level, the use of any films carrying an “R” rating has additional policy requirements, as follows:

- “R” rated material may be shown if it is directly related to a particular curriculum area and is approved according to the district video policy.
- All material will be previewed by the individual teacher. Both the district curriculum coordinator and the building administrator must approve all “R” rated material (approved forms for “R” rated movies can be found on the crsd.org website under the Information tab)
- A letter must be sent home to parents, by the initiating teacher, outlining the purpose of the movie and the teacher’s intent/purpose in utilizing the material.

*(Continued on page 4)*



**Did you know that every year Council Rock buses travel 2.6 million miles, which is the same as circling the earth over 200 times?**

*(Teaching Visual Literacy continued from page 3)*

- Parent permission, in written form, is required for all students prior to viewing the presentation. Those students or parents objecting to a presentation are to be excused without penalty. An alternative assignment will be given.
- No teacher is required to show an “R” rated movie. The showing of “R” rated material would be based on the individual merits of a particular film and the teacher’s professional judgment.

Teachers have the option of using approved movies or videos as excerpts or in their entirety to visually illustrate a concept in the curriculum. Through staff development activities, CRSD teachers are educated about the School Board policies and regulations as they apply to visual media, copyright laws, and best practices in using visual tools.

Visual “texts” are presented via laptops connected to projectors and broadcast on classroom TVs or smart boards. This technology can facilitate a critical analysis of media such as showing clips of movies side by side

with actual events. For example, in one high school course, the conversation between David Frost and Richard Nixon in *Frost/Nixon* can be shown next to the news footage of the actual interview, stimulating a critique of how the movie mirrors the actual televised event.

Through CRSD’s incorporation of visual literacy as an educational tool, state standards are upheld, and students are taught using best practices to engage students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Citizens For Education applauds the district for its inclusion of visual tools to enhance critical thinking skills, and believes that all students should have the opportunity to be taught using the best audio/visual and written texts chosen by professional curriculum supervisors, educators and administrators (see Curriculum article on page 5), to accommodate and enhance the coursework of all classes.

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Education, Standards Aligned System. “Presenting a Social Studies Video.” Web. 20 Oct. 2010. <<http://www.pdesas.org/module/content/resources/390/view.ashx>>.  
<sup>2</sup> Bamford, Anne, PhD. “The Visual Literacy White Paper.” 2004. Web. 20 Oct. 2010. <[http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe\\_visual\\_literacy\\_paper.pdf](http://www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe_visual_literacy_paper.pdf)>.



## Membership Form

Membership funds enable us to produce our newsletter, inform on and advocate for quality public education!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-mail Address (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

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

**\*\*\*Selecting E-mail delivery will extend your 3 year subscription to 4 years!\*\*\***

**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 2013 (3 year membership), or October 2011 (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 (address, phone #, e-mail, etc.)? Please contact [citizens4ed@yahoo.com](mailto:citizens4ed@yahoo.com).

## **Curriculum – Not by Chance**

Curriculum in the Council Rock School District is a complex and ongoing process, accomplished through the collaboration of many staff professionals. To achieve a curriculum that promotes high standards and high levels of achievement for all students involves the due diligence of the administration and approval from the Board of School Directors.

Through its curricular offerings the Council Rock School District facilitates the state directed goal of improving students' achievement as they mature into adults. The Pennsylvania School Code states that the purpose of public education is to prepare "students for adult life by attending to their intellectual and developmental needs and challenging them to achieve at their highest level possible. In conjunction with families and other community institutions, public education prepares students to become self-directed, life-long learners and responsible, involved citizens."

The state statute gives each local district's elected School Board directors the legal responsibility for the oversight and final approval of curriculum, including the cost of instructional materials. The Council Rock School Board adopts courses of study taught in accordance with Council Rock's School Board Policy 107, *Adoption of Courses of Study*, and Policy 108, *Adoption of Textbooks*. Other types of classroom resources, both required and supplemental, are regulated by Policy 109, *Library Resource Materials*, and administrative regulations 109 R, 109 R1, 109 R2, 109 R3, and 109 R4.

The development and adoption of an effective curriculum is carefully planned. The process is outlined in Council Rock's 2006-07 *A Plan for Curriculum Renewal*. It states that "the Council Rock Board of School Directors recognizes the need for the continuous development, review, and renewal of the school curriculum, assessment practices, and instructional strategies." All required curricular materials go through the renewal process and Board approval as do optional instructional materials. For example, if in an English course, every class reads the same three out of four required novels, and the teacher selects the fourth novel, it is a selection from an approved list of optional novels. Therefore, all novels that are read by a class go through the

same curriculum renewal process and are approved by the Board of School Directors.

Supplementary materials are selected or created by the staff and do not go through the curriculum renewal process, nor are they approved by the Board, but are regulated by Board policies. The Board does, however, approve the expenditures for all supplemental resources housed in the school library-media center. Supplementary resource materials could include reference books, audio-visual materials, databases, online resources, maps, library books, periodicals, etc. For the most part, the use of Visual Literacy in curriculum (see article on page 1) is part of a curriculum's supplemental materials.

Before the School Board takes a vote on any curriculum renewal or new course, and/or its related instructional cost, there are many hours of groundwork. Representatives at every professional level within the district are involved, including administrative supervision, leadership from curriculum coordinators, and committees of teachers at the secondary and elementary levels.

Although the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education are charged with the implementation of curriculum development and renewal, there is a bottom-up process that is stewarded by eighteen Curriculum Coordinators who are both experts in their field and teachers in the classroom. A Curriculum Coordinator's academic day is split between interfacing with students and their academic discipline's curricular responsibilities. In this way each Curriculum Coordinator not only experiences how a written curriculum is put into practice, but also has the opportunity to interact every day with teacher colleagues.

Curriculum Coordinators head up curriculum committees that are made up of "secondary and/or elementary teachers representing the respective curriculum under review,"<sup>1</sup> an administrator, and individuals representing the parent community. It is the curriculum committees that put together all the components of a new or renewed curricular offering. The goal of the curriculum committees is "to revise, and integrate the curriculum, assessment, and instruction to meet established standards for achievement and to address the needs of individual students."<sup>2</sup>

(Continued on page 6)

*(Curriculum continued from page 5)*

To assure that there is a continuous cycle of district-wide curriculum renewal, a Council Rock School Board policy states that all “textbooks with copyright dates more than five (5) years old shall be reviewed annually for their continuing suitability”<sup>3</sup> and School Board directive that all curriculum is mandated for renewal after it is in place for 10 years.

A new or renewed curriculum might also be initiated as a result of:

- Changes to PA state standards (even though CR standards are much more rigorous than state standards, any change in a state standard would initiate a CR curricular review)
- PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) testing, if there is a gap between when curricular content is introduced and when questions on the content are part of a PSSA test (for example, a realignment of the science curriculum was triggered following an analysis of PSSA subject matter).
- A Curriculum Coordinator’s research in their academic discipline.
- The curriculum review process (i.e. the change from Consumer Science to Consumer Economics. Although not technically a “renewal” but a change in course title, it also resulted in a change in content, in part on-line, due to a different emphasis suggested by the Economic Development Council).
- Teachers who see a need for a course (for example AP Psychology) or materials that would enhance learning, such as a grammar writing book.
- Parent feedback and concern (parents recently lobbied for two levels of difficulty in a secondary foreign language offering).
- Changing expectations for college admissions (some of the newly added AP courses in music and the arts are benefit-

ing CR students in the competitive college admissions process in these fields).

Developing a “curriculum that is meaningful, articulated, aligned, and promotes high standards for students,” having it approved, and implementing it is a long term process that typically takes four to six years.

Since there are hundreds of different courses, the administration has developed a staggered schedule for curriculum renewal. It usually takes a year of research and discussion to narrow down curricular needs and evaluate choices, and then, once the choices are narrowed down, it takes another year of close examination and discussion to pick a program. All secondary curricular proposals are presented in the spring, a year before approval, to the course scheduling administrator to see how the proposal will fit into the overall scheduling picture. A course framework is written when a proposed curriculum’s associated cost (including a time line for expenditures), staffing, and staff development needs are discerned. It is then placed on the agenda of the School Board’s Academic Standards Committee.

The Academic Standards Committee reviews proposed curriculums and sometimes makes recommendations for the Board approval presentation. The Academic Standards Committee consists of the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, and representatives of the Board of School Directors. They meet once a month before the regular School Board meeting. Meeting dates can be found on the crsd.org website and, although not televised, are open to the public.

After approval from the School Board, the curricular program, materials, and resources are piloted in a limited number of classes, generally for a period of one year. During the first two years of full implementation, the district provides ongoing professional

*(Continued on page 7)*

**Did you know that, for the second consecutive year, the German class has not run at Richboro Middle School as a language option for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade?**



*(Curriculum continued from page 6)*

support, surveys teachers to determine the effectiveness of the program, and communicates with parents and the community. Multiple approaches to new and/or revised assessments are also implemented. Data is collected and analyzed. Curriculum is monitored and adjusted.

“An effective curriculum prepares students with critical knowledge and skills for living in a 21<sup>st</sup> century world”<sup>4</sup> and is an evolving process. Because teachers have more sophisticated tools than a pen, textbook, and lecture, Council Rock curriculum integrates current best practices. The curriculum is being taught in classrooms that have progressed from blackboards to whiteboards to smart boards. Schools have progressed from a facility with one movie projector in the auditorium, to TV’s and computers/projectors in the classroom. The textbook has changed from being one of the few requirements of a curriculum to just one of many learning resources. It is believed that educational textbooks using the printed page will soon be replaced by an online distribution. This and other types of innovation including technology advancements affect not only how the curriculum is delivered, but could also have an effect on the substance of curriculum. As education evolves, Council Rock will be ready to adapt, innovate, and renew its curriculum, because it already has a process in place that utilizes collaboration of all levels of its professionals.

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- <sup>1</sup> Council Rock School District “A Plan for Curriculum Renewal,” Council Rock, Newtown 2006-07. III Curriculum Committees. A. Membership. Print 9.
  - <sup>2</sup> Council Rock School District “A Plan for Curriculum Renewal,” Council Rock, Newtown 2006-07. V Curriculum Renewal Policy. Print 8.
  - <sup>3</sup> Board Policy 108, Council Rock School District, Newtown PA 18940 “Adoption of Textbooks” adopted April 16, 1998.
  - <sup>4</sup> Council Rock School District “A Plan for Curriculum Renewal,” Council Rock, Newtown 2006-07. II The Effective Curriculum. Print 4.



Citizens  
For  
Education

...a voice for our children!

## **Principal Susan Gormley Reflects on Her Path to Wrightstown Elementary**

Citizens For Education recently met with Susan Marie Gormley, principal of Wrightstown Elementary School. After her first year as principal, Mrs. Gormley revealed how her career path led her to Wrightstown, and expressed her continual enthusiasm for the “energy of children.”

Mrs. Gormley grew up in northeast Philadelphia and currently resides in Abington with her husband of 25+ years and two college age sons. In addition to her career in education, she is a singer and cantor in her church choir, and a licensed realtor.

After graduating from West Chester University with a degree in elementary education, Mrs. Gormley began teaching second grade at Saint Katherine of Siena in Torresdale, PA. As her husband’s career in radio broadcasting journalism relocated them to Lancaster and then to the Lehigh Valley, Mrs. Gormley experienced firsthand the notion that “when a door closes, a window opens.” She accepted a position at Lehigh University’s Lab School, known as the Centennial School, for students with emotional or severe academic disabilities. She began as a Teacher Intern, and moved through the program to Master Teacher, where she taught students with severe cognitive impairments. She also earned a Master’s degree in Special Education and became certified as a Special Education teacher.

Mrs. Gormley’s path then brought her to Jackson Elementary School, in the Allentown School District (ASD), as an emotional and learning support/instructional support team teacher. This position brought with it a plethora of knowledge and understanding of the many facets of education due to ASD’s unique ‘site-based council’ which shared the decision making and evaluated its impact on education at a particular site. This council worked in alignment with all of ASD’s committees (curriculum, staff development, safety, etc.) that extended beyond the four walls of the classroom, thus expanding Mrs. Gormley’s knowledge of administrative issues.

Mrs. Gormley next acquired administrative certifications in elementary and secondary education from East Stroudsburg University. In the process, she interned in three different Upper More-

*(Continued on page 8)*

*(Susan Gormley continued from page 7)*

land School District (UMTSD) schools at elementary and secondary levels in one year, extolling the program as exemplary in providing a concrete comparison between “secondary folks vs. elementary folks.” After commuting for one year to UMTSD, her family moved back ‘home’ to settle in Abington. Mrs. Gormley served as Assistant Principal of Student Services for four years at Upper Moreland Middle School and for two years at Upper Moreland High School.

Mrs. Gormley joined the Council Rock School District Administration in October 2005 as a Special Education Supervisor for the ‘South Side’ of the district, which included Churchville, Maureen M. Welch, Rolling Hills, Holland and Richboro Elementary Schools. In this time, she acquired her Special Education Supervisor Certificate from Arcadia University. After being involved with many school districts in different capacities she was “totally impressed with the wide range of services available to special needs kids in Council Rock” which she says is not the case in other districts. She felt the “resiliency in the parents and staff” was commendable.

As an administrator, Mrs. Gormley missed having direct contact with the students and “helping them through their educational journey.” When a position as Assistant Principal of Student Services at Council Rock High School South opened, she returned to the school building. Soon after, she was asked to

become principal of Wrightstown Elementary School.

This was a difficult transition for Mrs. Gormley, because she had been the senior class principal at CR South. She went from shepherding almost 600 seniors through end-of-year activities and graduation to planning a Kindergarten orientation in a week’s time. Now more settled after a year at Wrightstown Elementary, Mrs. Gormley can better express her goals and accomplishments moving forward. She and the staff have a shared philosophy that education should always be child-centered and to use that model when making decisions. She believes that education should be about “not what’s easy, but what’s best.” She is impressed with the knowledge base of the staff and says she fully relies on them with confidence as they are the “first line of defense” and show an astonishing connection between their profession and their students.

Mrs. Gormley, who reports to Joy McClendon, Council Rock’s Director of Elementary Education, feels the level of staff development and resources that help her colleagues become “better professionals” is quite extraordinary. Each month the elementary principals meet to discuss issues, policies and technology, and they are included in the superintendent’s monthly meeting of all administrators.

Citizens For Education thanks Mrs. Gormley for sharing her background and insights and wishes her much success in her tenure as principal of Wrightstown Elementary.

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## **Citizens Public Forum Wrap Up**

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, Citizens For Education hosted an open forum for Council Rock community members at the Northampton Library. The forum provided an opportunity for people in the community to share ideas and concerns related to the school district. In addition, the Officers and Board of Citizens were available to explain more about the organization, its mission, and discuss current affairs of the district.

The forum was successful, and a variety of topics were raised, concerning both the elementary and secondary levels of the district. Some of the different issues discussed were the Foreign Language program at the middle school level, the lack of college counselors at the high schools, and how assemblies are chosen and screened for appropriate content. An ongoing concern was raised about music staffing at the high schools, as well.

Due to the positive experience of airing ideas and sharing information, Citizens will continue to host these meetings a few times per year. In order to accommodate the busy schedules of the community, the forums will be held both during school hours and in the evening. While the forums will be publicized, anyone wishing to receive direct notice of the date and time of the meetings can contact Citizens For Education by email ([citizens4ed@yahoo.com](mailto:citizens4ed@yahoo.com)), and a notice will be emailed directly to you.



## **An Elementary Discussion**

In this time of fiscal constraints and lower elementary school enrollment in Council Rock, a public discussion of our district's plan for elementary facilities is warranted. Evaluation of all factors that drive facility needs, including enrollment trends, school size philosophy, differences in classroom usage, regular education sending areas, and special education assignments may lead to cost efficiencies in educating the district's 5533 elementary students and planning for the future. To aid this discussion, Citizens For Education has assembled a summary of current and planned elementary school facilities (see In the Numbers on page 10). This data includes square footage, number of classrooms, and student enrollment for each of the 10 district elementary schools.

Since Council Rock's Growth Committee, comprised of community members, parents, school directors, staff and administrators first started examining architectural reports and future enrollment projections much has changed. The committee, which was active from April 2005 until August 2008, prioritized eliminating 49 elementary classroom modulars (trailers), renovating to keep buildings warm, safe and dry for the next 20 years, and updating buildings to meet evolving academic standards. Since 2005, the elementary population declined by 458 and the district's regular education students require 12 less classrooms (total sections have dropped from 254 to 242).

Given the low cost of borrowing money and the competitive atmosphere in the building trades, the School Board moved forward with the recommendation of the Growth Committee. In August 2008, the Board approved \$30 million, which will add 18,099 sq. ft. to Churchville Elementary and 17,155 sq. ft. to Holland Elementary. More recently, on April 8, 2010, the School Board approved the schematic design for a renovation and proposed addition of 18,985 sq. ft. to Goodnoe Elementary at a projected cost of \$13 million. These three capital borrowings of \$43 million will add 54,239 sq. ft. of elementary building space and remove 21 modulars totaling 18,144 sq. ft. for a net addition of 36,095 sq. ft.

To economically achieve the district's elementary facility needs and to include the public, Citizens For Education is promoting the following discussion topics:

- Enrollment trends: How do decreased regular education sections, current birthrates, and the housing market affect Council Rock's future classroom needs? (While the loss of 12 sections over 5 years does not remove all the modulars, it could lead to a strategy that reduces the need for some newly constructed classrooms.)
- School size philosophy: Would adopting a school size philosophy bring equity benefits? (Proposed renovations will make Goodnoe, already the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest elementary school, the largest elementary school at 99,959 sq. ft.)
- Classroom usage differences: Would renovations aimed at adding additional small group instruction sized classrooms achieve space and financial economies? (Only Hillcrest, Newtown, and Richboro have more than 5 small or medium sized classrooms, and the district has only 15 medium and 18 small sized classrooms out of 350.)
- Sending area adjustments: Would slight adjustments in neighboring schools' sending areas reduce the need for some added square footage when a school is renovated? (For example, Newtown, Goodnoe's neighboring school, now has 5 less sections.)
- District Special Education assignments: Could District Special Education students, whose instructional classroom is assigned to a specific school, not necessarily in the student's neighborhood sending area, be distributed more equitably in the elementary schools? (Per October 2010 enrollment, populations per school range from 0 in three schools to 74. There are 140 special education students district-wide and 74 are educated at Goodnoe Elementary.)

Since the Growth Committee has not met in over two years, and Council Rock's revenues remain challenging, Citizens For Education would welcome a public dialogue on the above subjects. It is Citizens For Education's hope that this discussion will bring economies to the district's elementary facilities plan. Even if a public dialogue does not result in strategies to reduce the need for capital expenditures to fund elementary projects, the community will have a better understanding of how these decisions affect the operating budget and/or level of taxation.

### In the Numbers

(see accompanying article on page 9)

Elementary Buildings and Classroom Sizes																						
Building Size	Churchville	Goodnoe	Hillcrest	Holland	M. Welch	Newtown	Richboro	Rolling Hills	Sol Feinstein	Wrightstown												
Building sqft	63,588	80,610	62,180	53,552	96,800	83,000	62,158	50,928	76,485	30,899												
Modular rooms sqft	6,048	6,912	6,912	5,184	0	0	6,048	5,184	1,728	4,320												
Additions <sup>1</sup>	18,099	18,985	0	17,155	0	0	0	0	0	0												
Total: Building + Mods	69,636	87,522	69,092	58,736	96,800	83,000	68,206	56,112	78,213	35,219												
<b>Total: Building + Add</b>	<b>81,687</b>	<b>99,595</b>		<b>70,707</b>																		
<b>Classroom Sizes</b>	<b>CES</b>	<b>GES</b>	<b>HCE</b>	<b>HES</b>	<b>MMW</b>	<b>NES</b>	<b>RES</b>	<b>RHE<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>SFE</b>	<b>WES</b>												
Full Sized <sup>3</sup>	25	35	22	23	32	32	22	17	32	12												
Medium <sup>4</sup>	4	0	4	0	0	2	5	0	0	0												
Small <sup>5</sup>	0	3	2	0	2	6	2	3	0	0												
Mini <sup>6</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0												
	#	sqft	#	sqft	#	sqft	#	sqft	#	sqft	#	sqft	#	sqft								
Kindergarten	2	1150	2	872	2	915	1	1128	3	1008	2	959	2	915	1	2300	2	999	2	999	1	1017
Modular	7		8		0		6		0		0	0	7		6		2		2		5	
<b>Total Room Count<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>38</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
2005 Reg. Ed. Enrollment	643	687	561	517	695	802	518	463	777	366												
2010 Reg. Ed. Enrollment	638	759	517	401	655	663	473	416	741	330												
2005 # Reg. Ed. Sections	28	30	24	21	29	33	21	21	30	17												
2010 # Reg. Ed. Sections	26	34	22	19	29	28	20	19	30	15												
# Rms not used for Reg. Ed.	12	14	16	11	8	14	18	11	6	3												
# District Sped. Ed Students	8	74	12	18	16	4	8	0	0	0												

<sup>1</sup> Churchville and Holland additions are in progress. Goodnoe's addition is in the design phase.

<sup>2</sup> Rolling Hills has unconventional classroom space as it was constructed with three large pods, each measuring 70' X 75' or 5,350 square feet each. Each pod has a circular depressed floor in the center (intended for group instruction) which is 20' in diameter. The square footage for each classroom is ¼ of the total area of pod less the circular depressed area. This equates to 1,188 square feet for classes in the pods. These class "rooms" are defined by book cases, cabinets and other furniture and is not being utilized in a true pod arrangement. Included with each pod is a separate area containing cubbies, a learning support classroom and toilet rooms.

<sup>3</sup> Full Sized Classrooms are greater than 660 square feet. The state uses 660 square feet as the capacity number for 25 students

<sup>4</sup> Medium Sized classrooms are 440 - 660 square feet

<sup>5</sup> Small classrooms are 200-440 square feet

<sup>6</sup> Mini Classrooms are less than 200 Square Feet

<sup>7</sup> Room counts are with modulars but before additions and do not include music, art or special use rooms