

**MONTROSE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
ADMINISTRATION OFFICES
MEETING DATE: JANUARY 26, 2012 7:00 P.M.**

Community Advisory Committee Meeting

26 JANUARY 2012

Community Advisory Committee Members Present: Nick Salamone, Diane Bean, Richard Jordan, and Eric Powers

Administration Present: Mike Ognosky and Jim Tallarico

Board Members Present: Pam Staats, Gloria Smith and Chris Caterson

Visitors Present: Mary Beth Ohmnacht (Director of Guidance)

Meeting commenced at 7:00 PM.

Items Discussed:

- I. Mike Ognosky took the roll and noted the attendance as noted above.
- II. Old Business: The following item was presented under Old Business
 - **Update of 2011-2012 Calendar:** Mr. Ognosky quickly reviewed the status of the current calendar for this year. As of today, we have had 3 inclement weather days (all in the Fall due to the weather) and have made up two of those days to date. Our scheduled last student day is Monday, June 4th with graduation scheduled for Saturday, June 9th. That still allows for 4 inclement weather days in the current calendar.
- III. New Business: The following items were discussed under New Business:
 - **Presentation by Mrs. Ohmnacht regarding guidance services:** Mr. Ognosky introduced Mary Beth Ohmnacht, Director of Guidance. Mary Beth then offered an informational session with the group regarding the services that her department offers to all students in the district as they prepare for the college application process. During the course of the presentation she reviewed all of

the informational handouts she includes with the various presentations and offered an explanation of the information located on each. I have included the packet of handouts with the minutes for your review:

- **(#1) College Applications:** This one page handout is reviewed with seniors early in their senior year and includes important information for seniors when completing the application process. It offers an explanation of services available to them when reviewing potential college choices as well.
- **(#2) Application Clinic:** Every fall the guidance department offers an application clinic for parents and seniors after school hours in the guidance office and computer labs in the high school in which they take families through a hands on online application process.
- **(#3) College Application Checklist:** This two page handout reviews the activities that should be completed by a student in their junior and senior years. It is presented to juniors early in their junior year and again as they enter their senior year and provides a timeline of when each of the activities should be completed in order to provide a smooth transition through the college application process.
- **(#4) Logins and Passwords:** The Guidance Office created this worksheet and distributes it to seniors as a means of tracking the various logins and passwords that are required for the various application forms for each college and/or university to which they apply.
- **(#5) College Entrance Exam Testing Schedule:** This is distributed to all juniors and seniors as well as placed on line on the Guidance webpage and lists the registration deadlines, late registration deadlines, test dates, costs and test locations for all of the SAT and ACT assessments during the year. It also lists the 9 closest test locations and their code information for students.
- **(#6) Financial Aid Night Flyer:** Mrs. Ohmnacht reviewed the program for the annual financial aid night sponsored by guidance and discussed the information provided at this very popular event. It is held in early December each year and she has a local college financial aid officer walk families through the process of completing PHEAA and FAFSA forms.
- **(#7) MASD Guidance Webpage:** Mrs. Ohmnacht utilized the internet to walk everyone through the location of the guidance page on our district webpage, www.masd.info. She also opened up many of the informational links available on the page and addressed questions and concerns from committee members regarding how to get to information. She finished by providing a copy of the page in a handout to all present.

Mrs. Ohmnacht concluded her presentation by addressing any final questions or concerns and the group thanked her for her efforts. **The discussion included brainstorming efforts in which we could get more parent involvement in the college planning process. It was suggested that we consider a course in the Adult School on the subject which was met favorably by all in attendance.**

IV. Open Forum: Items of discussion during the open forum included the following:

- Richard Jordan presented a letter from his son, Thomas, who is current a freshman in college. In the letter, Thomas offers the suggestion that the District focus more attention on the teaching of Algebraic concepts and fundamentals as it prepares students for their futures. Thomas, an excellent student who just completed a Calculus 2 course in college, cited the fact that many of his math concerns focused on that very subject. Mr. Ognosky responded that the administration has reviewed our current testing data and arrived at the same conclusion – a more intensive requirement for all students in Algebra – and made that recommendation at a Curriculum meeting earlier in the evening. Mr. Ognosky reviewed some of the alternatives being considered and will report back to the group at a future meeting regarding plans for next year.
- Nick Salamone seconded the previous discussion and encouraged the District to focus their attention more on the core subject areas and away from the wide range of electives currently being offered. The elective courses certainly serve a purpose but reducing that option slightly in favor of a greater emphasis on core subjects should be attainable.
- Diane Bean asked if the District had considered alternate traffic routes around the current road conditions on Route 29 in the Franklin Forks area. Mr. Ognosky responded that the area, although certainly not of the most ideal road conditions, is still considered safe for bus travel and we have not moved routes to date. The District Transportation Office is monitoring the situation closely.
- Mr. Ognosky presented to the group a resolution that he is considering placing before the board outlining the district costs incurred by cyber charter schools and the terrible negative effect it is having on our budget. The resolution was distributed and discussed and the group gave their full support to presenting the resolution to the board for consideration. If passed, it will then be placed in the newspapers as an informational piece for the public and sent out to all of our local representatives. A copy of the resolution is included with the minutes and reflects that since 2006-2007 the District taxpayers have incurred a cost of \$T2,051,013 in cyber charter school costs.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 23rd in the Faculty Room of the Choconut Valley Elementary School.

Submitted by

Mike Ognosky