

MONTROSE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER
MEETING DATE FEBRUARY 4, 2010 7:00 P.M.

Community Advisory Committee Meeting

4 FEBRUARY 2010

Community Advisory Committee Members Present: Richard Jordan, Diana Bean, Connie Burgh and David Plank

Board Members Present: Mary Homan, Kathy Mordovancey, Gloria Smith, Doug Wilcox, Pam Staats and Chris Caterson

Administration Present: Mike Ognosky and Jim Tallarico

Teachers Present: John Koloski and Eric Powers

Meeting commenced at 7:00 PM.

Items Discussed:

I. Mike Ognosky took the roll and noted the attendance as listed above.

II. Old Business: The following item was presented under Old Business

- **Concerns from the November Meeting:** Mike Ognosky reviewed the minutes of the November meeting and the concerns that were brought to the administration and board on that evening. He commented that there had been a concern regarding the “walker” path for evening hours in the high school, but there has been communication with the maintenance staff on duty at that time and the situation has been remedied. He also addressed the concern regarding the benches in the boys’ team locker room and explained that Mr. Clapper has ordered new pedestals for the benches that will allow for recessed screws and eliminating the physical concern to students. The pedestals will be installed as soon as they arrive. Mr. Ognosky updated the group on the successful completion of the H1N1 clinic that was held at the Junior-Senior High School on January 4th and 7th. Students, pre-school aged children, parents and community members were able to receive the vaccinations at no cost. Mr. Ognosky also updated the group on the monies received from the district from the recent gas

leases. That money is currently in our general fund as it is the best rate of return available to the district (2 % guaranteed). Also, he updated the group on the status of the seismic testing. The testing has not yet initiated and isn't expected to happen within the next 60 days.

III. New Business: The following items were discussed under New Business:

- **Review of proposed changes in the Advancement Placement Program:**

Mr. Tallarico reviewed the concerns that we currently have with the Advanced Placement program at the Junior-Senior High School. Those concerns included:

- The current method of student selection for the various Advanced Placement courses and the resultant class sizes. Currently, the criteria for selection into an Advanced Placement course are vague, and the process for selection is not delineated.
- There is a very small percentage of the students taking the Advanced Placement examinations and the reason for not taking the exam is not always financial.
- There are a number of students who take a multiple number of Advanced Placement classes in a given school year and their ability to handle that course load is not always at the level required to have success in those classes.
- The students who typically take Advanced Placement courses are “high motor” students who are involved in many other extracurricular and co-curricular activities. That sometimes results in excessive absences for school activities.
- There is a need for cross-curricular discussions among the Advanced Placement teachers. They have much in common with each other in regard to the concerns and issues they face and they have requested to have a Department Chairperson for the Advanced Placement Department with the same functions of the other Department Chairs.

Mr. Tallarico then offered proposed remedies to address the concerns listed above:

- There is a need for an organized, structured selection process in order to develop the enrollments for the Advanced Placement classes and that process must involve the students, parents and teachers of the Advanced Placement courses. To that end, the teachers proposed an interview process of prospective candidates that have been nominated for consideration by their teachers from the previous year.
- During that interview process, the teachers would convey the Advanced Placement philosophy of the District as well as the classroom guidelines regarding attendance, grading, etc. that a student would have to abide by in order to enroll in the class. The students, in essence, would be “contracted” to be an Advanced Placement student and agree prior to enrollment to those

- stipulations. During the interview process, the teachers would gather information from the nominee and a determination would be made as to which of the Advanced Placement courses would best fit their future plans.
- At the mid point of the course a meeting would be held involving the student, teacher and parent to discuss the potential of taking the examination for that Advanced Placement course. Taking the exam would not be a requirement of the course – many of the teachers present have attended national seminars in their course area and there was a strong consensus that not all students should be required to take the examination and the interview process would “find” those students who should take the examination. Financial concerns will not be a hindrance for the scheduling of the examination.
 - For those students who then schedule to take the examination, flexible options for additional tutoring time will be developed in order to assist the student in preparation for the examination.
 - The process will be reviewed annually by the administration and Advanced Placement teachers and changed as recommended.

Following the presentation, there was a lively discussion that included feedback from Mr. Tallarico, Mr. Koloski (Advanced Placement English Teacher), Mr. Powers, and the members of the committee.

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

- Mr. Jordan asked a question regarding the school performance on the recent PSAT examinations. Mr. Ognosky checked with guidance and the individual test results have arrived and have been disseminated to the students who took the PSATs, but the school follow up report has not yet been completed – according to Mrs. Ohnacht (Guidance Director) it typically does not arrive on hand until the late Spring.
- Mr. Jordan asked at which of the local banks the district conducts its business. Mr. Ognosky responded that the District has depository agreements with a number of local banks. At our May, 2009 meeting we approved a board motion to appoint Pennstar Bank, Community Bank and Trust Company and Peoples National Bank as school district depositories.
- Deb Beal asked a question regarding the structure of the Senior Project. Mr. Powers, who is the coordinator of the project for the High School, was on hand and provided a brief explanation of the process. Mr. Ognosky will invite Mr. Powers to a future meeting to discuss in more detail the project and provide examples of past projects. The discussion led to a parent information night for sophomores in regard to the project, preparing for the college decision, etc. and it was suggested that a program be planned, and offered, to parents of sophomores.
- Mr. Ognosky asks that members who have in mind a specific area of interest or concern should contact him and he will do what is necessary to have a presentation to address that issue. He explained that he has many resources

across the district available in order to address any area of interest and would be happy to bring them to a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 25th in the Faculty Room of the Choconut Valley Elementary School at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by

Mike Ognosky