

Parent Advisory Committee Report January 28, 2015

I appreciate all of the parents who were able to attend either the morning or the evening session. I also appreciate the parents who were unable to attend for contacting me and expressing regrets. I will make certain that all members have the notes and handouts of the meeting so they can share any comments that they would like me to consider. I look forward to future meetings, conversations, and a sharing of ideas with all of the members.

Mr. Ragon welcomed all parents and then had everyone introduce themselves again, beginning with two Board members in attendance, President, Scott Mancke and Vice-President, Dan DeCaprio. Special Education Director, Renee Karalus attended the evening meeting. After the welcome and sharing of information, Mr. Ragon reviewed the "State of the Schools Address" with the committee, since the majority of the items on the agenda were also contained within the address.

Items discussed included the following;

- 1) Student enrollment increases and future building plans. Mr. Ragon talked about the 10% increase in enrollment in the last 5 years and if the same pattern continues, the district would have an enrollment of 1500 students in 5 years. A new building would likely take 3 years from the beginning stages to student occupation.
- 2) Discussion of enrollment trends at other area LW schools
- 3) Discussion of housing trends in Manhattan and projections for the next year. Mr. Ragon shared that the Village reported 43 new homes the previous year and 48 new homes this past year. Projections are for 50-70 new homes in 2015.
- 4) 2014-15 initiatives included improvements in the network and additional computers for student use. Improvements in the wireless network for 2015-16 and discussing an opportunity for parents to lease/purchase an iPad or laptop through the school district. Also discussed the Curriculum Committee's work, the collaboration between LW210 and other feeder schools on the science standards, and the current focus on the English Language Arts standards by the committee. Mr. Ragon also shared thoughts on the design of the curriculum team moving forward, headed up by the administration with the support of a teacher in each of the buildings. This would be an intermediate step until the district has the student enrollment and financial ability to support a full-time curriculum director. The last initiative Mr. Ragon touched on was communication. The district is always trying to improve communications with parents and the community. Mr. Ragon discusses the new website design and how it is much easier for himself and the administrators to update and make changes to the website. He encouraged everyone to contact him or the other administrators if something was missing or possibly needed to be added to the website. Mr. Ragon commented that he had already received a couple questions that he

was able to answer then edit the site to make information available to other who might have the same questions or need the information. It was commented that the use of Remind101 at the Junior High by some of the teachers has been well received, and that if possible, would like to see more of the staff, or all of the staff at the Junior High use Remind101.

- 5) Mr. Ragon shared the educational and operating expenses per student for Manhattan and for the State Average. Manhattan continues to operate at a much lower cost than the state average as well as a lower cost per student than area schools, while providing a high quality education.

The last part of the meeting was an opportunity for the parents in attendance to express their thoughts on current programs, bring a question or concern to the attention of Mr. Ragon, or to simply listen to others and offer comments or support.

Items presented for discussion by members of the PAC included;

- 1) The length of the lunch periods at Wilson Creek. Some suggestions that were mentioned included the possibility of an additional 5 minutes, scheduling a pool of parent volunteers to assist with the pre-packaged meals that are served, scheduling both a morning and an afternoon snack to be sure that the students are not hungry from having not eaten enough at lunch, and the idea of looking into a suggestion for those that bring lunches – Planetbox.com
- 2) Concerns are still being expressed about the amount of assessment that is taking place. Mr. Ragon explained that some of the local assessment had been scaled back some and that as the year progressed, it would continue to be reviewed to see what could still be done further. This is an item that will continue to be looked at and that the administration would continue to see where progress could be made in this area. Star testing, which is new, would be evaluated and could provide the information needed, in conjunction with AIMSweb, eliminating the need for as much local assessing. Updates on this will continue to be provided.
- 3) A question was raised at both meeting concerning possible reorganization of the LW210 district and Manhattan students attending LW West or the possibility of going from 4 HS campuses down to 3 campuses. Mr. Ragon indicated that he was aware of some of the conversation but that there were no specifics that he was aware of at this time.
- 4) A question was raised about online report cards. It was asked if an email or ConnectEd call could go out the day of report cards as a reminder to parents, and it was asked if there were a method to check and make sure that parents were seeing the reports. Mr. Ragon said that he would check if there was a way of adding a “send/receipt” option to HomeLogic so that the district could run a report to see what parents had not seen the student report card. Mr. Ragon commented that the administration would make this an item for discussion.
- 5) Kindergarten Round-Up Information was asked about. Mr. Ragon provided the dates, and after further discussion, indicated that he would work with Mrs. Maher to get the information onto the district website as well as the

information that is sent out to our current families and provided to local day cares and preschools.

- 6) Indoor Recess – Expressed concerns about students not being able to be active during this time. It was stated that there was certainly an understanding of the limits due to indoor recess, however, would like to have different ideas considered if at all possible, such as board games, exercise videos, etc.
- 7) The last item of concern that was mentioned had to do with writing at the Junior High. One of our parent reps asked about how much writing was required at the junior high because it did not seem that their student brought much home.