

**ISC General Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday October 13, 2009**

Attendees: List available upon request from ISC Secretary.

**Welcome** by Beth Johnson

Thank you to Lower Merion High School for Refreshments

Introduction of attendees name and child's school

Top 10 Great Things about New Harriton High School read by Phil Matilla,

Assistant Principal, Harriton High School:

10--Music Lab--Orchestra and Choral Rooms

9--The seating in the lecture halls

8--Auditorium the cool modern look

7--All the equipment and spin bikes in the fitness room

6--Openness and warmth of the main lobby

5--The focus on being green

4--The feeling of being in a new building

3--Easy access to student services, main office and help center all in one area

2--Food in the cafeteria as well as the high tables and booths to sit at

1--They pulled out all the stops, everything is state of the art, the green house, engineering lab, TV studio, art rooms, science labs and cooking room.

**New Business:**

**Speaker: Dr. Christopher McGinely Lower Merion School District Superintendent**

Main themes and comments from Dr. McGinely's presentation at the ISC General Meeting:

**Construction:**

Comments acknowledging the new Harriton High School.

Update on Lower Merion High School construction--on schedule.

**Strategic Plan:**

LMSD Website for document.

LINK: <http://www.lmsd.org/sections/about/default.php?t=distinfo&p=mission>

Some goals required by State of Pennsylvania.

Student Achievement complete continuum.

There are specific goals regarding the achievement gap.

IEP students have the largest gap. There's a new Supervisor of Autistic Support.

11th grade gap widens between African American and Caucasian students.

Discussed strategies to support the improvement in achievement.

Curriculum: Developing new elementary curriculum cycle.

Communication Goals: global and specific goals.

Facilities: Energy consumption and management.

### **Elementary School Update**

--2 new principals Belmont Hill and Penn Valley.  
--Math Replacement Unit for Measurement and Geometry because PSSA testing in this area is not as strong.  
--Being a Writer--structured writing program that develops common language for 3,4,5 graders.  
--Writing scores have not been as strong as other testing scores.  
-- No longer have the DARE program. Research not demonstrating DARE as effective as thought. Second Step is in all elementary schools to encourage healthy behavior. There are new materials for the program. LMSD police officer assigned to school-- Officer Haunge.

### **Middle School Update**

Bala Cynwyd--new principal and new assistant principal.  
Welsh Valley--new principal and new assistant principal.  
Adding new thematic programming at Welsh Valley.  
Looking at how the middle schools can be better aligned but not identical.  
Spring 09 Open House at BC for parents whose children were not enrolled in District.  
Saw some enrollment increase.

### **High School Update**

Phil Matilla Harriton High School is the new assistant principal.  
Harriton HS enrollment is 890+ for school year 09/10  
Lower Merion HS 1400 anticipated for school year 09/10. Overall high school enrollment is up.  
LMSD has more 9th graders this year--approximately 30 new students.  
There is to be course parity in the major 4 content areas. Electives are still diverse between the two schools. Develop elective parity as the schools have the talent and teachers to support it.  
Provide choice of seminar option at both high schools to give experience of a larger classroom/lecture hall and with break out sections to provide a college level instructional experience.  
Minor grading change in policy for this year--dropped the E in the grading scale.  
Larger changes coming in 10/11 school year.  
See LMSD website search "grading."  
Link:  
[http://www.lmsd.org/sections/news/default.php?t=today&p=lmsd\\_anno&start\\_id=30&id=868](http://www.lmsd.org/sections/news/default.php?t=today&p=lmsd_anno&start_id=30&id=868)

Answered group questions regarding new grading policy.

### **Overall District Information**

Audit of guidance program scheduled for October 25. A national team of experts will do an onsite evaluation of Guidance Program using National Audit Protocol. Wanted "independent" gauge of program. ISC is also doing an evaluation.

State audit of special education will be more about compliance for both gifted and special education students. Parents randomly selected for survey as well as student files. Scheduled for February 2010. Report on quality of the program. Last audit Gift program had directives and will probably see again.

Long term leadership nurturing and sustaining for LMSD administration enhances quality of school district.

Budget cycle will not be easy. Real estate tax revenue declined and interest income declined so budget cycle will be challenging. State has cap on school district budget and cap with exception (health care and construction). 2.9% cap therefore not permitted to raise past that except construction and retirement (health care is not an exception this year). 1.6 million in cuts 09/10. This is also the last year for the current contract with teachers expiring June 2010.

H1N1 cleaning is done everyday. Monitoring absence by school everyday. The Health department collects attendance data. Not testing for H1N1. There are hand sanitizers in school cafeterias.

Answered varied questions from meeting attendees.

### **ISC Business:**

**Secretary:** Juli Gruber-May--Directory Update, sign in, minutes are being posted to the website.

**Treasurer:** Karen Cosentino--Approved Budget Distributed.

**School Board Observer Report--**Summary read by Beth Johnson  
Submitted by Nancy Pasquier

The first item discussed was the new Lower Merion High School Honor Code. About two years ago, a group of students (Honor Council) with the assistance of Marcy Hockfield and Lynn Freeland (Faculty Sponsor for Student Government) began thinking about an Honor Code for LM. There had been a general policy in place but the goal was to formalize it. The students looked at other schools (Haverford College, Radnor High to name two) to determine how they wanted to begin. The goal was that the code be easy to understand and that it take into account the personality of LM. The Code was written and addresses plagiarism, fabrication (lying about anything including being sick), facilitation (giving info to friends about a test taken earlier in the day for example), and cheating.

The Honor Council made a video about the new Honor Code that was shown to students during advisory at the end of September. The students were also encouraged to sign a banner of support. The Council will now help educate the school population.

Although the ultimate determination of outcome in honor violations will be made by administration, the Honor Council will make recommendations. The Council is made up of 7 students plus two alternates (2 Sophomores, 3 Juniors, 3 Seniors). Each February, the group will review the Code and make amendments if there is adequate support. In March, students will be allowed to apply to be on the Honor Council for the following year. The existing group will evaluate applications.

The second item was a presentation by the Lower Merion School District Green Council. They wished to share what they have been doing with the Board and also to encourage the Board to support their efforts by word and deed. The two goals of the Council are to make LM as green as possible and to reap the economic benefits from this, and also to work with other groups in the community. The Council is a grassroots organization started about ten years ago to address the (lack of) recycling in our schools. They have made great progress in many areas and are particularly proud that there are now 'Green Champions' in all schools - individuals who represent the council in each school.

The top goal for this year is solid waste management. Two schools have started compost piles and the Council is looking at ways to reduce waste in the cafeteria. They are also interested in energy reduction and a plan will be circulated in this school year that addresses ways to reduce energy consumption at each of our schools. They would also like to limit the need for recycling which is considered the last resort in environmental stewardship.

They also stated that the goal is silver status for the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation for both high schools. They have been able to use a number of the environmental design features in the curriculum at Harriton. Building features that have been used for study in class (or will be used) include soil erosion measures (landscaping around the school), passive lighting (design reduces the need for artificial light), water drainage, sun & shadow patterns, wetland and habitat protection (with plant material), water conservation, energy conservation, recycling materials (including the removal of the old high school) and air pollution control (from paints, carpets, floor coverings and cleaners).

Upcoming Meetings were announced.

**Next ISC Joint General and Presidents Meeting is Tuesday November 10, 2009 at the Academy Building beginning at 9:30 am. Jerry Novick will be speaking on the Keystone Exams.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

Minutes respectively submitted by:  
Juli Gruber-May

ISC Secretary