

INTERSCHOOL COUNCIL

General Meeting – March 9, 2010

The Academy Building

Opening Remarks

Beth Johnson, ISC co-president, welcomed the group and thanked Merion Elementary School for providing refreshments.

Nominations for ISC Board for 2010-2011

Beth announced that the ISC is accepting nominations for three board positions: co-president, treasurer and luncheon chair. By March 19th, 2010, ISC members are asked to recommend candidates. The slate of nominees will be announced at the general meeting on Tuesday, April 13th, and a vote will be taken on Tuesday, May 11th.

ISC Luncheon

Marilee Wolf, ISC luncheon co-chair, reported on plans for the annual luncheon that thanks school district principals, administrators and staff for their work on behalf of students and families. This year's luncheon will take place on Thursday, May 13th at Main Line Reform Temple. Home and school associations are invited to contribute funds to cover the purchase of food and supplies for the luncheon. ISC reps from each school should find two volunteers to bake desserts for the luncheon. If anyone has questions, ideas or would like to volunteer, please contact Marilee at marileewolf@prodigy.net

ISC Mini-Grant Program

Jennifer Bale-Kushner, ISC Mini-Grants Program chair, reported that she has begun to receive applications for funding so far. Jennifer will send an email to all teachers to remind them that their schools can apply for funds, through March 26, 2010. For details about the program and an application form, go to the ISC section of the Lower Merion School District website.

Update on the High Schools – Going Green

Pat Guinnane, Director of Operations for the school district, provided an update on the two new high schools. Harriton High School has been open since September and features many innovative facilities, including: arts studios, physics lab, green house, black box theater, family and consumer science lab, and music keyboard lab. Harriton’s playing fields and parking lots should be finished within a year.

The new Lower Merion High School will ready for students in September. The building is now completely closed in; all work is now taking place inside the building.

Mr. Guinnane reviewed the layout of the new four-level school:

- Ground floor -- cafeteria, gyms, locker rooms and main entrance for buses.
- First floor – main entrance, auditorium, art rooms, classrooms and some labs.
- Second floor -- classrooms (all have daylight) and lower level of the two-story library.
- Third floor – library upper level, classrooms (including science classrooms) and greenhouse.

Both Lower Merion and Harriton High School feature “green” design – that is, they have features that make them environmentally responsible and resource efficient. These include:

A white roof to reduce heat

- Effective storm water management systems
- Water efficient landscaping so the school doesn’t need to irrigate
- Rain water collected from 64% of building roof area and used to flush toilets throughout the building
- Energy systems that provide heating and cooling only when needed
- Recycling program (98% of all construction waste is recycled, and building uses material with high recycled content)

- Maximizing use of construction material manufactured within 500 miles.
- Using less harmful chemicals for cleaning
- Shades on windows (which can be opened and closed)/

Joey Rider-Bertrand, Science Supervisor for LMSD

Joey Rider-Bertrand is the school district's new Supervisor of Science and Technology Education. Ms. Rider-Bertrand came to LMSD in November, and brings experience in elementary education and high school science teaching. Currently, Ms. Rider-Bertrand currently is pursuing a doctorate in STEM education, which strives to integrate teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and focuses on the natural connections among these topics.

Ms. Rider-Bertrand will bring STEM concepts to Lower Merion schools. Her overall goal is to assure that students find science learning exciting and meaningful. Ms. Bertrand-Rider has several priorities for her work across the school district:

1. Revising elementary curriculum and submitting an "investing in Innovation" grant proposal.
2. Developing co-taught sections of biology, chemistry and physics. (This will replace "active science" classes geared mainly to students in special education. The new classes will assure that all students learn science with the same high expectations.)
3. Auditing the kindergarten through 12th grade science curriculum.
4. Aligning the curriculum to meet revised Pennsylvania Academic Standards.
5. Establishing a science data team.

6. Establishing a laboratory safety board.

7. Smoothing the transition from 8th to 9th grade science classes (right now, there can be a big jump in the intensity of classes from one year to the next).

On March 19th, LMSD teachers will have an opportunity to attend the National Science Teachers Association conference, which is taking place in Philadelphia.

Ms. Rider-Bertrand welcome parents' questions and ideas. Contact her at 610-645-1913 or riderj@lmsd.org.

Upcoming Meetings

- Tuesday, March 16, 9:30 a.m. – ISC Presidents Meeting, Welsh Valley Middle School
- Monday, March 22, 8:00 p.m. – School Board Business Meeting, Lower Merion High School Library
- Tuesday, April 13, 9:30 a.m. – ISC General Meeting, Academy Building