

ISC MEETING, 9/11/12 – Highlights from Dr. McGinley’s School District Update

New Principals

- New principals are on board at four schools in the district: Daniel Martino at Cynwyd Elementary, Jason Potten at Bala Cynwyd Middle School, Dr. Orathia Bradley at Welsh Valley Middle School and Scott Eveslage at Harriton High School.

Key Changes in the Central Office

- Dr. Deitra Spence, who had been in charge of secondary school counseling services and initiatives to address the achievement gap, has taken a new position as the Trenton public schools’ assistant superintendent.
- With Dr. Spence’s departure, Rich Marta has been appointed Supervisor of K-12 Counseling, Testing & Holistic Supports. He has been with LMSD for a year, but previously, he was guidance supervisor for Lower Moreland School District and also in college admissions.
- In mid-October, Christopher Hall will join the school district as Supervisor of Student Achievement. Mr. Hall comes from Mastery Charter School and the Cherry Hill School District. He’ll work with the school Achievement Teams, Achievement Gap Initiations, as well as manage after school and summer programs. He has a strong background in using data to strengthen student programming.
- In October, Brian Cody, from Allentown School District, will become Supervisor of Secondary Instructional Technology and Data Analysis.
- In special education, we have a new supervisor, Kimberly Fraser. Also, Dr. Bobbi Shapiro, Director of Special Education will retire in December and the district is currently looking for her replacement.

Dramatic Growth in Student Enrollment

- The school district has 300 more students this September than it did last June.
- A recent study on enrollment projects unprecedented growth for the district during the next 10 years. For many years, total enrollment has hovered around 7,000 students, but it is projected to rise to 8,600 students within 10 years.
- The most dramatic growth is occurring at Penn Valley and Gladwyne Elementary Schools.
- In time, some school buildings will exceed their capacity. The district is launching a planning process to figure out how to handle the influx of kids. This topic will be discussed at the Thursday, September 20th Facilities Committee of the school board meeting (held at 8 a.m. in the Board Room of the Administration Building), followed by a deeper dialogue at the School Board’s October 22nd meeting. The community is invited to weigh in on the options at the October meeting. For the school district’s recent study of enrollment projects, click [here](#).
- In anticipation of the growth trend, LMSD has purchased the two-story church on a seven-acre parcel adjacent to Welsh Valley Middle School. Plans are still in the works, but the church could be adapted to house eight classrooms. The school district is working with architects now to develop a design that will provide the same team structure and personalized approach for students that Welsh Valley already offers. At BC, internal space is being reconfigured to create new classrooms as well.

Teacher Contract Negotiations

- The bargaining process is under way with the Lower Merion Education Association, which represents all school district employees who are not administrators. The school district is working toward a responsible settlement.

Keystone Exams

- Dr. McGinley updated the group on plans for this year’s Keystone Exams, which are new state-mandated proficiency tests in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology. For details, see the school district [website](#).

- This year 11th graders will be required to take three Keystone exams (even if they've taken one of them before). The results will not affect their grades or graduation, but the Algebra and Literature exams will provide data for the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measures required by the state.
- In the pre-test a couple of years ago, 98% of the kids who took the Algebra 1 exam were proficient.
- LMSD will provide resources and help kids prepare kids for the tests.
- The class of 2017 will be the first group whose graduation will be contingent on passing the Keystone exams.
- Kids can retake the exams (or portions of them) three times if they don't score in the proficient range.
- The Keystone exams should not alter the curriculum content significantly, but the sequence of material may shift or some topics may be covered in greater depth.
- The school district will create a short video to give parents the basics about the Keystones.

School Counseling Services

- Barbara Serratore, College Access Counselor for Lower Merion and Harriton High Schools, is taking a half-year sabbatical. [Several days after the ISC meeting, Harriton school counselor Becky Bowlby was named as the interim college access counselor to fill the role until Ms. Serratore returns.]
- The school district is seeking better access to community mental health and substance abuse agencies. In the past, the district could refer students with problems and expect them to be seen within two days. Now, with cutbacks in state funds and charitable donations, the delay can be two weeks or more. Mike Kelly, Assistant Superintendent, is exploring whether the school district can contract with agencies to provide needed services. Stephanie Brett, the Mental Health and Wellness counselor for the two high schools, helps connect families to needed care.

Sports & Phys Ed

- In response to a question from the audience, Dr. McGinley indicated that the school district does not let students waive Physical Education classes if they are involved in sports. He indicated that PE is about more than physical activity – it includes health, socialization and team-building components. PE teaches kids about training and conditioning, but also gives them exposure to a variety of activities. The schools do make allowances for kids on days they have a game, but overall LMSD sees PE as a beneficial part of the school day.

Arnold Field

- Grass has been planted and is beginning to grow. South Ardmore Park is the home of the LM baseball team (LM does not have a baseball field on site).

Next ISC Meeting

Tuesday, October 9th, Academy Building, 9:30-11

Topic: Health, Wellness and Nutrition

Speakers will include: Terry Quinlan, Supervisor School Health Services; Karen Castaneda, Director Nutritional Services; and Randi Mongiello, Asst. Director Nutritional Services.

Topics will cover: the implementation of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act and how it will impact the school lunch beginning in September 2012; what parents need to know about providing foods for classroom celebrations and for fundraising during school hours (LMSD Nutrition Guidelines); and the district's new medication policy and procedures.