

Mike Riemer

School Board President's Report

March 19, 2018

Capital Campaign Last week's Discussion Board Meeting

I would like to take a moment to review a little from last week's discussion concerning the Capital Campaign. Contrary to what people may have heard, my review has made it clear that-- while the results were not what anyone wanted and some mistakes were made along the way-- there was nothing at all inappropriate or improper in the previous dealings with the campaign. I now want to put this behind the Board and, with the whole community, move the campaign to its next (new and exciting) chapter. For the April discussion Board meeting I will be introducing William Moorhead and Noelle Conover to discuss moving this endeavor forward as volunteer leaders.

School Visits

Good evening. This month I continued my visits to schools in the District with a stop at Jefferson Middle and Jefferson Elementary and schools on March 16.

Jefferson Middle School

On my visit to Jefferson Middle School, Principal Kelly Szesterniak and I visited 6th grade classes that included a social studies class where the students took an online tour of various European destinations. In a science class the students were completing a lab on solubility. In math, the students created a box and whisker plot using an estimation of the ages of people on the 1st floor. In English, grammar and punctuation practice were being taught and in literature - Using the party fold technique as a pre-writing strategy.

On my visit to 7th grade classes English students were submitting the final drafts of a charity essay. The winner of this competition will be able to donate all of next week's faculty-student basketball game to their chosen charity. Using google classroom, the teacher and writing clinician can login at any time and give a student feedback. Parent volunteers provide students with additional adult conferences in the hallway right outside of the writing lab.

In Science students were working on a fossil lab and I got to see the class pet, Norman the snake.

I was also able to visit with the teachers from both 8th grade teams.

In Family and Consumer Science class students were planning their culminating meal that they will cook for their family at home. They were using a search engine created by the teacher, as well as print cookbooks. We also shared some examples of the "Reading Buddies" that the FCS Enrichment class has sewn for 1st graders at the elementary, based upon their drawings of their imaginary reading buddy.

Jefferson Elementary School

On my second stop to Jefferson Elementary School, Dr. Sarah Shaw took me on a visit to a 3rd grade classroom where I observed a classroom meeting. I learned that “Class meetings” are part of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in our schools. This particular discussion was about a “person marching to the beat of a different drummer”. The students shared their thoughts about the meaning of that statement - What might this look like? What might this sound like? They discussed how to appreciate differences in friends, how to navigate peer pressure, and what to do if you are a bystander.

I stopped in the reading support classroom during a kindergarten lesson. The students were working on phonics skills using the Foundations resource. We then visited a 4th and a 5th grade math class. In 4th grade the students were collecting and analyzing data. The students explained clusters, median, mode and outliers and why these are important components of understanding data. In the 5th grade classroom, the students were working in collaborative groups exploring relationships between different measures of volume.

A visit to the elementary schools would not be complete without a visit to their Matt’s Makerspace. Jefferson’s makerspace is in the school library, which is a very versatile space with movable, modular tables and stools, a standing workbench, and a green screen. During the visit, children were working on a math enrichment project, where they were required to design and build a scale model of a swimming pool. I also learned about future plans for Jefferson’s Matt’s Maker Space that will introduce more resources and materials for students including a portable whiteboard partitions to provide students with a larger space to design, and a TV to project student presentations.

Extra Mile Award

I am pleased to present our Extra Mile Award winner tonight thanks to a nomination submitted by Ms. Susan Meer, our high school STEM Director and science teacher. Ms. Meer nominated Ms. Peg Grasso Meyers who teaches German at the high school. I would like to read Ms. Meer’s nomination:

“Peg Grasso Meyers’ dedication to her students and our community goes above and beyond what most teachers do in and out of the classroom.

Last spring, Ms. Meyers she told her students about a chance to be fully immersed in German through a STEM competition in Colorado. After choosing 4 students for the team, she met with them on several occasions to prepare for the competition and organized all aspects of the trip. In September of this year, she took the students on this unique experience which was a great success. Her interactions with the students were always professional while displaying a genuine desire for them to succeed. The students know she cares about them and wants their learning experiences to be the best. She is what every teacher should be. Peg’s strong support of her students and the encouragement she gives to them leads one to understand why the German program is so strong here in Mt. Lebanon.

During the month of October she coordinated 20 German students and two German teachers from a high school in Germany to visit our community. She found homes for all of the students, mostly with Mt. Lebanon students studying the German language. She arranged for them to go to the Homecoming Dance with their host students and teachers. She arranged several outings for the German students to learn more about our culture during their two week visit. The entire hosting event takes months of planning and much of her outside time to do. I know Peg does this because she cares for her students

deeply and wants them to experience as much German culture as possible. This cultural exchange benefits all in our community, helping to reinforce the acceptance of other cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

I fully recommend Peg Grasso Meyers for the extra mile award with no reservations. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this recognition.”

Jan Klein’s Award

I want to congratulate our Business Director Jan Klein who was recently awarded the PASBO Award of Achievement. This award acknowledges the creators of successful proposals, practices or publications in all areas of school management and education. Ms. Klein’s submission “Healthcare Plan Changes Saves School and Employees Money” was recognized as an outstanding practice by PASBO.

As part of the PASBO award, I would like to welcome and introduce Mr. Bill Kruck of the Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust who will present Ms. Klein with a check made out to the Mt. Lebanon School District for \$3,000 intended to provide a scholarship to a deserving student in the District.

A School Community Conversation about School Safety

I would encourage all to attend a **School Community Conversation about Safety and Security in the Mt. Lebanon School District** on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. Dr. Steinhauer and Police Chief Aaron Lauth will discuss the safety and security practices the District has in place to keep our schools safe for students and staff. Parents and students will have an opportunity to ask questions and share their ideas and suggestions. It will be a valuable night of information for all.