

## **School Board President's Report**

**Michael Reimer**

**February 26, 2018**

### **School Visits**

This month I had the pleasure of visiting Washington Elementary School and Mellon Middle School. I was so impressed with what I observed in the schools that I'd like to share some of my experiences with you tonight.

At Washington, I visited the Matt's Makerspace in the library which is a hub of activity. I was so impressed with the activities for creating projects. One of the activities is a computer tied into a 3-dimensional printer that the students are working on a project that involves computer skills, planning, design and fabrication. In the language classrooms, students were learning firsthand that it is much easier to navigate the world around them when they are equipped with multiple languages.

Washington Elementary is a special school in my heart as this is the elementary school that I attended as a student and where my mother was PTA President. What is interesting is that the classrooms are basically the same but that the learning is much different especially with the newest addition of Matt's Makerspace. The library is certainly a much different library now that it was decades ago.

Whether teaching in the music room, the cafeteria, or the auditorium, I saw how the school's music teachers create the foundation for the world class music education programs in MTLSD. I saw the hallways and classrooms filled with art that represents the creativity of all of our children.

Thank you to the students, staff and Principal Melissa Nelson at Washington Elementary School for a wonderful visit.

On my visit to Mellon, I stopped in a 6th grade social studies classroom where the students were studying the countries of Africa. There were two different

approaches to facilitate this learning. In one classroom, students were using Chromebooks and Google Draw to collaborate and create depictions of their country. In another classroom, the teacher had the desks pushed back and the students engaged in a very tactile lesson where students were analyzing the characteristics of various countries. I had the opportunity to discuss with the students the important work they were doing in examining the countries of Africa. I related to them they may want to pay particular attention to this lesson as I had a similar project in college. They may be revisiting this project again themselves either in high school or college.

The Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) classrooms at Washington and Howe feed into an identical program at Mellon Middle School. It was wonderful to see that our students with significant needs are being educated in such a caring environment and included with their non-disabled peers as much as possible. On this particular day, our middle schools were conducting a "Tuesday Talk", which is a model used around our Olweus program. Given the recent tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida, our teachers took the time to reassure students about school safety by reviewing our ALiCE procedures. With each group of students that I spoke, I reminded them about what they are learning and doing in middle school can have a very positive impact on their future, as it did for my children. It was a very positive visit and the students at Mellon are being well educated. I also want to thank the students, staff and Principal Chris Wolfson for a wonderful time.

## **School Safety and Security**

I want to take a moment to discuss a little concerning the school safety and security. During my time as a Mt. Lebanon Police Officer, school safety was a major priority with the police department. The last five years of my police career I was assigned to the school resource officer program to serve the schools. Again this was another layer in the safety of the schools. Today we have two Mt. Lebanon Police Officers assigned to the schools to educate our children on a variety of topics to include school safety. On top of that the police department regularly patrols the schools both during the day and at nighttime to make sure the schools are safe and secure.

The school district has had extensive training in the ALICE program taught by the Mt. Lebanon Police Department. The acronym ALICE stands for alert, lockdown, inform, counter and evacuate. There has been extensive training on this program with the school district staff, administration and students. The school district has also invested considerable financial resources in the doors of the school to include the installation of a capture vestibule in all the schools and electronic surveillance. There are other security measures in place both in the school district and in the police department that are confidential. I want the parents to know that the safety of our students is and has been a number one priority of both the school district administration, school board and the Mt. Lebanon Police Department.

### **National School Lunch Program**

Since we are approving a new lunch charging policy at this meeting, this is a good time to remind our community of the National School Lunch Program. This important program provides families in need with the opportunity to receive school lunches free or at a reduced cost. Applications for the program are available on the Food Services page of the District website. It's important to note that information about students who receive these benefits is confidential and only available to the food service department, unless the families are willing to share it themselves.

### **Great Alumni Award Nominations**

The Mt. Lebanon High School is accepting nominations for the 2018 Great Alumni Award. This project honors people who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments either personally or professionally after graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School. If you know any alumni who have significantly improved the lives of others, contributed significant volunteer work or public service, or achieved significant advancement in their professional field, please consider nominating them for this award. Nomination applications may be obtained on the District website or by calling the high school Student Activities Office. The application deadline is April 15.

### **PASBO Award**

I'd like to congratulate Jan Klein on being selected for the PASBO Award of Achievement for her best practices submission entitled, "Healthcare Plan Change Saves Schools and Employees Money." The PASBO Awards of Achievement

program is designed to identify extraordinary school management practices, proposals, and publications which lead to the effective use of valuable educational resources. The criteria used for evaluating the submissions include management enhancement, originality/application, measurable benefits, applicable impact, and cost effective implementation.

### **Introduction of MLFE president Natalie Wagner for Teacher Grant Presentation**

I'd like to close my report by introducing Mt. Lebanon Foundation for Education President Natalie Wagner to introduce the innovative grants awarded to Mt. Lebanon teachers through the MLFE.