

Mt. Lebanon School District
School Board President Report – September 19, 2016
Lawrence M. Lebowitz

Well, it is now September 19th and our kids are beginning their fourth week of school. I want to congratulate and thank Dr. Steinhauer, the administration, the teachers and, of course, all of the parents in the District for helping us to have such a smooth transition into the school year. From all reports everything is going well, and we are off to a good start for another great year in the Mt. Lebanon School District.

Although I was unable to attend the meeting, last week my colleagues continued our discussions regarding the possible implementation of air conditioning into our elementary and middle school buildings. We specifically received a report from Trane which, among other things, focused on the ongoing operation and maintenance costs associated with the air conditioning. Both Trane and the engineers assigned to this project will continue to do their work, and we expect to receive final word on the cost of this project by the end of the year. At that time, and provided with all of the necessary information, the Board will make a decision and (if we do decide to proceed) work will begin early in 2017. I again want to thank our community for their much-appreciated input on this important topic.

I next want to make an “official” welcome to Stephan Strotmeyer, our newest Board member. Stephan has now been on the Board for one full month and is already contributing nicely to our day-to-day work and, more generally, the District and community as a whole.

Talking about contributions to the community, I am pleased and excited to announce that this Friday the High School will honor the 2016 Great Alumni. The Great Alumni Award Program was developed by the Mt. Lebanon High School Student Council and the Selection Committee includes administrators, faculty, students and alumni. The recipients of the Great Alumni Award are selected based on exceptional work in at least one of the following areas: (i) improvement in the lives of others; (ii) involvement in community service; or (iii) achievement in a professional field.

This year’s recipients include the following:

- Our own **Mary D. Birks, Class of 1982**. Mrs. Birks’ professional and volunteer work careers have showcased her outspoken and passionate advocacy for children. This has been evidenced by, among other activities, Mary’s many years as a PTA, PTSA and PTA Council Leader along with being a Board member for both the Mt. Lebanon Foundation for Education and, of course, the Mt. Lebanon School District for the past seven years

(on which she currently serves as our Vice President). Mary's professional background includes work for underserved girls throughout Allegheny County while employed at Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania and, currently, as the Executive Director of Outreach Teen and Family Services, a community-based child, teen and family counseling agency. Mrs. Birks was nominated by Ms. Elyse Berkowitz Lattner, a friend.

- **Ms. Ruth Colker, Class of 1974.** Professor Colker is a distinguished university professor and the Heck Faust Memorial Chair in Constitutional Law at the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State University. She is an advocate for disability rights and is one of the leading scholars in the country in the areas of constitutional law and disability discrimination. Her legal writings have, in fact, had a strong impact on a major constitutional decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Tennessee v. Lane. Nationally, Ms. Colker is an active member of the pro bono legal community who advocates on behalf of women's rights, LGBT rights and individuals with disabilities. Ms. Colker was nominated by Mr. Peter DiNardo, a Mt. Lebanon High School Social Studies teacher.
- **Mrs. Gretchen Haggerty, Class of 1972.** Mrs. Haggerty began as a management trainee at the United States

Steel Corporation and 37 years later was its Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. Mrs. Haggerty currently serves as a Board member of the USG Corporation, the United Way of Allegheny County, the Strategic Investment Fund, and the Duquesne University School of Law Advisory Board. In 2012, Mrs. Haggerty was elected as the first female President of the Duquesne Club in downtown Pittsburgh. Mrs. Haggerty was nominated by Mr. Charles Brodbeck, a 2012 Great Alumni Award recipient.

- **Dr. Mark C. Lester, Class of 1970.** As a neurosurgeon and health care system physician executive, Dr. Lester has created clinical care systems at Texas Health Resources (THR) in Dallas, Texas. He serves on the Board of Directors of the American Association for Physician Leadership and is the Executive Vice President of the THR organization. Dr. Lester was nominated by Mr. Harold H. Wilson, Jr., a 2009 Great Alumni Award recipient.

All four of our deserving recipients will be honored at a luncheon on Friday and, again, before the football game on Friday night. Please join me in congratulating all of our recipients and thanking each of them for their contributions to both the District and community as a whole.

Continuing in the “party spirit,” on Friday night (September 23) the District will be hosting the third annual Alumni Tailgate from 6 to 8 p.m. on the Athletic Building Plaza. Tickets are \$20 and include a wonderful barbecue dinner and admission to the football game against Altoona. All alumni and their guests are invited, and tickets are available on line at www.mtlsd.org as well as at the gate that evening.

Finally, I want to extend a warm welcome to Mt. Lebanon High School alumni from the classes of 1956, 1958, 1966, 1971, 1976 and 1981. These classes will return to the High School over the next two weeks to tour the school as part of their reunion activities. As we all know, they are in for a real treat!