

Mt. Lebanon School District
School Board President Report – July 2015
Lawrence M. Lebowitz

Good evening. I hope that everyone is enjoying their summer and our kids are having fun and resting up for another great school year (which, believe it or not, begins six weeks from today).

July is always a very good time to reflect on both what has transpired during our recently-completed (and very busy) academic year as well as what lies ahead. As to the former, we really have accomplished a lot both as a District and as a Board over the past several months. First, and with a lot of hard work from a lot of people, we passed a budget which represented what we believe to be the best possible balance between doing what was necessary to financially support our children/programs while at the same time minimizing the tax burden on our residents. Additionally, and very importantly, we successfully negotiated a new three-year contract extension with our teachers. The significance of this cannot be overstated. The men and women who are in the classrooms every day with our children are performing an incredibly important role and doing so at the highest levels which (in conjunction with the work of our administrators) enables our District to continue to achieve incredible results. We needed to, and did, continue to compensate them accordingly. At the same time, though, we were able to do so in a manner that was not overly burdensome on our

residents and, again, enabled us to reach the necessary balance between spending money where necessary and being fiscally responsible. Finally, and as we just heard this evening, we are getting closer and closer to the completion our High School project. All of the academic spaces are not only complete but spectacular. This is, again, attributable to the incredibly hard work of so many people not only now but for the past many years. Although there are certainly others, I want to remember the hard work of predecessors (and, I should say, visionaries) on this School Board who (despite vocal opposition at several stops along the way) were undeterred in their desire to provide our students with the type of High School that they deserve and our community needs.

While important to reflect upon the past, it is perhaps more important to see what lies ahead and, while (as you know) I certainly like to focus on the positives, we have many challenges ahead of us as well. For example, and while we have made much progress (and are almost near completion), there will inevitably be construction-related issues with our High School which arise and that will need to be addressed. Second, and once again largely driven by our increased required contributions to PSERS, we must continue to be vigilant in reducing our costs whenever and wherever possible while, again, continuing to provide the best education possible to all of our students. Believe it or not, our administrators are already beginning to work on next year's budget so as to put us in the best possible position to achieve the same

balance next year that we did this year. Finally, and most importantly, we need to continue to do everything possible to ensure that our academic, fine arts, athletic and all other programs maintain the same standard of excellence which we have achieved over the past many years.

As to excellence, I am pleased to announce that the Association of School Business Officials International has informed us that the Mt. Lebanon School District has received ASBO's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for our 2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. This is the District's 30th consecutive year to receive this award which clearly is a true reflection of the District's commitment to fiscal integrity. To receive the award, the District must satisfy specific guidelines for effective, high-quality financial reporting recognized by school business officials. I would like to congratulate our Business Director, Ms. Janice Klein, and her staff on this outstanding recognition.

I wish all of you an enjoyable rest of the summer and thank my fellow Board members, our administrative team and the community for their ongoing support for our very important efforts on behalf of our children.