

School Board Trustees Report to the Eastern Property Owners' Association

October 14, 2014

The Garden City School Board normally meets on Tuesday evenings and tonight is no exception. Tom and I are attending the School Board meeting which is held tonight at Homestead School. Last year the Board began the practice of holding meetings at several school buildings. Prior to each meeting, there is a tour with special emphasis on the work financed by the 2009 construction bond and the improvements to our buildings with an Energy Performance Contract (EPC).

As reported earlier, the District experienced a smooth opening at all school buildings. Enrollment totals show 3,886 students in our 7 district school buildings. The School District website was completely revamped over the summer. The new site is more informative, easier to navigate, and user friendly. We have received great positive feedback regarding these changes. All residents can access school district information and announcements as well as the complete school district calendar and parent guide.

At the September work session, Superintendent Feirsen led the presentation and discussion of District goals for the 2014-15 school year.

The current year goals are as follows:

- Initiate curriculum review in world languages
- Investigate new STEM initiatives
- Implement district-wide security initiative
- Refine and enrich our definition of "College and Career Ready"
- New technology initiatives, and
- Develop plans to address any potential for students leaving their buildings without permission during the school day. (Elopement)

As most of you are aware, our Garden City Schools perform well when compared to our peer school districts in academics, music and arts, and of course athletics. The Board and Community are understandably proud of this long standing record of achievement. Last spring, a group of High School students took part in an International assessment of student performance. High School students in 65 countries participated in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This assessment provides schools a previously unavailable benchmark, both with schools in the United States and Internationally. The questions are designed to test the student's ability to synthesize information and the PISA is thus a tool for learning and improving, not accountability.

Some key results for Garden City show that the mean performance levels of our students far surpassed the levels attained by students in US "public schools" across the country. Our students actually performed at a level commensurate with similar US "private schools", a finding

consistent with results in the various annual tests taken by our students at all grade levels. While these results are not surprising, it is extremely gratifying to receive these excellent results.

Equally impressive were the results for the assessment of the School's learning environment. A series of questions related to school climate, student-teacher relationships and student motivation and self-efficacy were included as part of the assessment. Garden City students reported that the classroom climate is excellent. Students feel confident in their abilities to handle demands in reading, mathematics and science. The Board and the School Administration are extremely gratified to learn of the constructive and nurturing environment in the High School.

The full OECD Test for Schools presentation is posted on the Garden City Schools website.

BOND / EPC:

At this week's construction meeting, Con Ed Solutions reported that ALL punch list items have been addressed for all school buildings except for Middle School and High School. It is anticipated that all work at the Middle School, including graphics will be completed by the end of the month. As the Bond/EPC contract approaches completion, Con Ed is working with the Facilities Department to complete all training as it pertains to the BMS. (Building Management System)

SECURITY INITIATIVE:

The district wide classroom door lock replacement project has begun. The installation of new lockable doors for the all purpose rooms at the primary schools led the way. Work in other areas is scheduled to begin in mid-October. We anticipate that the project will be completed by mid-winter.

BOARD CALENDAR:

- October Regular Meeting: October 14th at Homestead School, 7:00pm Tour and 8:15pm meeting
- Saturday October 25th : Homecoming Parade 1:00pm
- November Work Session: Wednesday, November 5th at 8:15pm in the High School Library
- November Regular Meeting: November 12th at Stratford School, 7:00pm Tour and 8:15 meeting

As always, you are invited to attend the monthly School Board meetings and we thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Martin and Tom Pinou