

October 19, 2006

Dear Parents,

Among the emails I received last week was the announcement of a magnanimous gift--- a list of CSA grants awarded for the Fall 2006. Over \$13,000 worth of items will supplement our curriculum in many ways, and the generosity of the contributors to the CSA extends to all corners of our campus, from classrooms to cafeteria.

These donations sustain our most important work, daily instruction in classrooms. Included among the approved grants are the following: math games and assessment kits, microscopes, textbooks, DVD/VCR players, speakers, new music for band and choral groups, visiting artists, potters' wheel maintenance, reading and writing resources, cafeteria compartment trays, and more. On behalf of the administration, staff, and students, I extend my profound thanks to the CSA for your generosity. Your support makes this learning community vibrant and successful.

Last week's Mosquito reported extensively on our emergency planning for Carlisle Public Schools. Included in the article was a reference to a lockdown drill held last Wednesday. I'm happy to report that the drill went extremely well, and that we received high marks both for our preparation and for the execution of the drill. Students approached the drill in a serious, but not fearful, manner, and teachers followed established procedures to the letter. John Sullivan, Carlisle's Police Chief, was present along with representatives from the State's " School Threat Assessment and Response System." I am particularly grateful to Chief Sullivan as he and his officers have been highly visible on campus this fall. He met with the Administrative Team on several occasions to collaborate on emergency planning. In the light of recent school tragedies in other parts of the country, we are especially conscious about keeping our children safe in all situations.

Two weeks ago I attended an Advanced Leadership Conference at Columbia University. There I spent three days learning and sharing experiences with about 50 superintendents from the Northeast and top professionals from Columbia, Hofstra, Rutgers, and Bank Street College. A panel of retired superintendents, many of whom were commissioners (or former commissioners) of education at their state level, spoke about their superintendency and the mistakes they had made in their first few years. It was humbling and moving to hear the most successful of leaders sharing their trials and tribulations. The former commissioner of education in New Jersey shared his greatest failure: when he left his first superintendency after five years, all of his work, all of his programs, disappeared; he had not built the internal capacity or shared vision to sustain his work. As we talked over the three days, I was struck by this admission, realizing that a shared vision must be systemically embraced by all the stakeholders in order to sustain changes that help all of our children succeed. A challenge for me, as well as other superintendents at the conference, is to communicate with all constituents to develop a truly shared vision.

When asked what I would like incorporated at future meetings, I asked for more time spent on the processes that build teams and communities. One of the facilitators, former Superintendent of the Year in Rhode Island, Mary Conole, works with Rhode Island superintendents on strategic planning and has agreed to come and work with us in Carlisle. That connection alone, given her experience in this area, made the conference very worthwhile.

It has been a busy fall. The teachers continue to provide outstanding instruction on a daily basis while our new administrative team exceeds all expectations for learning about our culture and addressing important issues such as student leadership and anti-bullying. We look forward to a wonderful year working with your children.

Sincerely,

Marie Doyle

Marie H. Doyle, Superintendent