

DRAFT Until Approved by the UPG Board

United Parents Group Executive Board Meeting – May 11, 2009

Attendees: Paula Barvin, Jim Butt, Cherie Leather, Kate Darwin, Christa Sywulak-Herr, Sherry Hazelwood, Maureen Boland, Marlene Dencker, Danya Glantz, Rhonda Feder, Karen Irgang, Alexandra Drobac Diagne

Welcome & Approval of Minutes:

Paula & Jim welcomed all, then motioned to approve April 2009 minutes. Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Sherry Hazelwood reported that next month UPG will be rewarding 3 scholarships, \$400.00 apiece, to students at Cheltenham High School. Also, UPG will be spending about \$450.00 on the end-of-the year luncheon to be held June 2, 2009.

Presidents' Report:

Jim reviewed the current UPG by-laws and renewed the motion by Rhonda Feder to change the member-at-large- position to be opened to the UPG representatives from each school. Also, Jim indicated that the proposed by-law change would allow PTO board members to also serve on the UPG board. The motion was approved by majority vote. Also, the UPG board voted on the 2009-2010 UPG slate for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Webmaster and Past President. Again, the motion was approved by majority vote.

Jim asked all UPG board members to review the 2009-2010 UPG operating plan to determine whether it is complete. Jim is planning to organize another meeting between now and the next UPG meeting June 4, 2009) to further discuss the operating plan . This meeting would include PTO and UPG leadership and Representative Larry Curry may attend. The agenda will be to review the operating plan established for the current school year, discuss successes and remaining challenges, and then to discuss the challenges that face the collective groups in the hope of developing 8-9 meeting topics for the coming school year.

Guest Speaker:

This month's guest speaker was Dr. Darlene Davis, Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Davis reported that the district is working very hard to improve communication between the administration, the schools, and students/families. Dr. Davis acknowledged that while improvements are being made, much work remains.

Dr. Davis discussed the new Director of Technology Services, Chris Barone, and how he is conducting an internal assessment and will then develop and operating plan. Dr. Davis remarked that because of limited resources and significant infrastructure issues, techno-

logical change may seem slow, but the administration is committed to making changes and hopes to begin communicating with students/families via email, by the fall of 2009. She also said the district would continue with other forms of communication such as using specific information sharing spots on channel 42.

UPG members expressed their enthusiasm for the district's commitment to improve communication through technological advances, but also lamented the lack of consistency among principals, teachers and schools. Several people expressed concern that we cannot wait for the infrastructure issues to be resolved before the administration demands better communication. UPG members cited many instances of poor communication by teachers and/or principals and then proposed that the administration develop a "best practices" guideline to help principals and teachers better communicate. Specifically, the principal at Cedarbrook was noted as an effective communicator who sends out a weekly or bi-weekly update/newsletter. Recipients of this newsletter felt it was efficient and effective and should be a mandate for all principals across the district.

Misc. Announcements:

Christa Sywulak-Herr, Wyncote Elementary School PTO president, said that she spoke with the principal at Wyncote about making improvements in the school lunches for the 2009-2010 school year. Christa also contacted Cheryl Horsey, Supervisor of Pupil Services, and discussed making improvements to the school lunches a priority for the 2009-2010 school year.

Meeting adjourned.