Face-to-Face Board Talk A Success

Fostertown ETC School was the site of the NTA and Board of Education’s first Board Forum of the year. The evening opened with President Phil Cordella making introductions and going over the forum’s rules of the evening. He thanked Dr. Saturnelli and Board of Education members for the collaborative environment in which we now work.

In attendance were over 60 teachers and teaching assistants, Board of Education President Runston “Pop” Lewis, and Board members Pamela Resch, Edward Popetti, and David Rein. Representing Central Administration was Ms. Marsha Sobel, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

The first speaker was Steve DeMarco, Vails Gate Math Specialist. He addressed the concerns of many primary teachers over the lack of reading remediation at the primary levels. “If we address these issues in kindergarten and first grade, maybe the intermediate and secondary gaps would not be so large.” The next teacher on the agenda was Donna Liebman, Horizon on the Hudson Art teacher and member of the NTA’s Board of Directors. She addressed magnet themes and disparity of student populations among the elementary schools. The final speaker was Eileen DiLeo, a Fostertown Special Education teacher. She asked Board members if there would be more training for inclusion teachers. Teachers spoke of the training that was promised in comparison to the training that was received. Ms. Sobel responded by telling the audience that she would get teachers more effective trainers and Board members agreed. Participants left the evening feeling that a positive dialog took place and they were energized to address the challenges that lie ahead. The next NTA/Board Forum is scheduled for May 15, 2006 at New Windsor School.

The NTA is proud to endorse the 16 year veteran school board member Runston Lewis. Runston has an outstanding history of support and accessibility, values Newburgh’s quality educational institutions, and, most importantly, recognizes the contributions of its professional staff.

As the sitting Board President during the recent contract negotiations, Runston was instrumental in helping to settle a four year contract for Teachers and Teaching Assistants effective July 2006 to June 2010. Runston continues to advocate for smaller class size and increased parental responsibility. He repeatedly supports a strong and effective code of conduct and lately has expressed his support for a new initiative, where community leaders serve as positive role models to our most neediest students.

Runston is a fixture in our community. He was instrumental in helping to “jump start” the Cast an Energetic “Yes” Vote for a Budget That Makes Sense!

Each spring, NTA representatives and dedicated members stop at nothing to ensure that citizens of our community are well informed when exercising their right to vote on the school budget.

While many neighboring school districts are presently operating under an austerity budget or are facing such a possibility, Superintendent Saturnelli, The Board of Education, and the NTA have proven year after year their ability to work together and get the information out to the taxpayers so they vote “yes” for quality education.

A recent study by the New York State United Teachers of districts statewide ranked the NECSD 518 out of 677 in “Per Pupil Expenditure.” When poverty, Free and Reduced Lunch programs, and English language learners are factored into the “per pupil expenditure” equation, Newburgh clearly emerges as a respected, well functioning District that is getting a great bang for its buck.

Fortunately, the hard work of our local legislators has secured increased state aid for high need districts like Newburgh. This increase in state aid for the 2006-07 school year will actually offset normal operating budget increases, which, in turn, will lessen any tax increase that is normally passed on to taxpayers.

Quality education depends on you exercising your right to vote. Vote “Yes” on May 16, 2006. We are counting on You!
from the cover

NTA School Board Endorsements continued

face-to-face NTA/Board Forums and is truly interested in what teachers are thinking. He is visible and involved, frequently offering encouragement to our staff. These attributes and others have earned him the NTA’s 2003 prestigious Friend of Education award.

When you vote May 16, 2006, please put Runton T. Lewis at the top of your list.

Resch’s Proven Reign of Quality

Businesswoman and community activist Pamela Resch has a long standing history of student support and advocacy for positive change. For 17 years her grass roots style of input often found her in front of the Board speaking. Now, as an incumbent Board member, she serves on the all important Finance, Curriculum, and Policy Board committees. School budgets must support programs and staff. To this end, Pam has been extremely successful. She believes it is the Board’s charge to make policy and to see that it is followed through. She does not believe in micro-managing and believes that a strong curriculum is the key to success.

Pam has a history of supporting public education. Her father is a former teacher and administrator at Westwood, NJ. She is the mother of four children; two in college, one of whom is becoming a teacher, and two attending Heritage Junior High School.

As an outspoken advocate for students and friends, please add Pam Resch to your list as you vote this May 16, 2006 for members of the Board of Education.

Galli Home Grown and Effective

The NTA is excited that Frank Galli, who previously served six years as a Board member, is once again running for a position. Galli repeatedly demonstrated his commitment to quality education as a member of the Board under Acting Superintendent Ralph Pizzo, and, as part of the transition process for former Superintendents Wilson and Johns.

Galli’s community service is equally impressive. He is a member of the Goodwill Fire Department and former member of the Town of Newburgh Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals. Frank’s expertise on building plans and construction will be a great asset as the District approaches its recon- figuration process.

Frank believes in strong student discipline policies, prides himself in being an independent thinker, and feels he can work cooperatively with the current Board to move the District forward.

Lifelong residents, he and his wife, Angel Crisci-Galli, attended Newburgh schools and are pleased that all three daughters and his granddaughter attended Newburgh schools. When casting your vote for Board member, Frank Galli would be an excellent choice.

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What You Said About Your Boss

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The top three ranking criteria from the 39 individual surveys yielded the following information in the Successful Performance category:

- 52% “Treats faculty with dignity, respect, and as professionals”
- 36% “Helps maintain an orderly school environment”
- 29.5% “Genuinely supports faculty in fostering student achievement”
- 29.5% “Adheres to negotiated contract”

In the Fails to Meet Expectations category, the same surveys revealed the following items as the top ranking areas needing improvement:

- 41% “Maintains high students behavior standards”
- 39% “Fosters high faculty morale”
- 23% “Attempts to reduce classroom interruptions”
- 23% “Helps maintain an orderly environment”

Recommendations for the next Administrator Survey have included the use of Scan-tron forms for easier tabulation, graduated responses such as Often, Sometimes, Never, and creating conditions for greater faculty participation. Less than 100% of our teachers and teaching assistants participated, and it has been suggested that this is partially due to the pilot nature of the project and the fact that detailed results for individual administrators are not made available.

The NTA hopes to continue follow-up reports to determine if the NTA Administrator Survey Mission Statement is being realized. While improving student performance, promoting teamwork, collegiality, and collaboration, and furthering professionalism is difficult and will take more time to assess, fostering positive communications between educators and administrators has been overwhelmingly realized. In addition, empowering union members has been a tremendous success as evidenced by the numerous compliments and thanks you that the surveys have prompted.

The NTA would like to thank our members who are working in unity to create better professional and educational environments and to our administrative and professional colleagues who were gracious and receptive in discussing faculty responses and perceptions.