



Principally Speaking...

Sherry L. Gross

Dear Highlander Families:

Happy New Year! I hope that this newsletter finds everyone rested and ready for all that 2008 brings to us! As usual, you will find enclosed much information regarding McKean success stories and a calendar of upcoming events we hope you are able to attend.

As most of you are aware, the Red Clay School Board approved an Operating Expense Referendum vote for February 28. I am hopeful that you will read on for information relative to the importance of this referendum.

I have been an administrator in two different districts over the past five years. I am proud to be a part of the Red Clay Consolidated School District and specifically, McKean High School. I am a product of the Red Clay School System (Heritage, Forest Oak, Warner, Stanton and Dickinson High) and I am thankful for the opportunity to be principal of McKean. Since starting at McKean last fall, I have had a wonderful experience, and we have been most fortunate to hire excellent teachers and have the resources needed to improve our school. I can tell you, based on experience, that lack of resources spells disaster in the school setting. Not being able to have the resources (people and

money) to run a school is not good for anyone, especially your children. Knowing what I know, I fear that if we do not have a successful referendum, we will head down a very slippery and very uncomfortable slope. Each year with insufficient funding will create a snowball effect, and teaching will become exponentially more difficult without the resources we need.

The reality is that it takes money to run the business of education – more money than we have with our current funding. As costs of products and services rise (benefits, salaries, energy, supplies), we need to be able to afford these necessities. Unless the referendum passes, within one year, we will not be able to keep up.

Being a principal of a school is a difficult and challenging job (even with resources),; not having the resources to run an effective school and keep the quality of staff that we continue to experience at McKean will make it an impossible job. Having had the experience of leading a building with few educational resources, I can tell you that is not something I wish on anyone.

Consider this: I lived most of my Red Clay academic career in a development off of Kirkwood Highway (DelPark Manor). When I looked up

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**Don't Miss
our Referendum
Q&A Section!**



Principally Speaking (Cont.)

the assessed value of my childhood home, I found the assessment value to be \$55,900 in a development where homes are selling for approximately \$200,000. In performing the math to calculate how much of a tax increase would be over three years (using the proposed referendum model), I found the following:

Year 1 (\$.15 increase per \$100 of assessed value) is \$83.85

Year 2 (\$.5 increase per \$100 of assessed value) is \$27.95

Year 3 (\$.5 increase per \$100 of assessed value) is \$27.95

Total tax increase by the end of year 3 is \$139.75

I lived the last two years of my high school career in Hockessin Hunt (located across the street from North Star Elementary). When I looked up this home, I found the assessment value to be: \$141,700 in a development where homes are selling for nearly \$500,000. In performing

the math to calculate how much of a tax increase would be over three years (using the proposed referendum model), I found the following:

Year 1 (\$.15 increase per \$100 of assessed value) is \$212.55

Year 2 (\$.5 increase per \$100 of assessed value) is \$70.85

Year 3 (\$.5 increase per \$100 of assessed value) is \$70.85

Total tax increase by the end of year 3 is \$354.25

I ask that you please try to clear your minds and hearts of dollars, cents, anger, and distrust and have your minds and hearts more aligned with the outcomes for our children, their future and your future. We need to make decisions on things we have control over, our children's future and the resources that will be afforded to them depending on your vote. We really need our McKean families to come out and vote. Your actions can speak volumes on February 28 and

change the past!

Come to McKean on the following dates to learn more specifics of the referendum. A member of the Steering Committee will be available as well as our Superintendent, Dr. Robert J. Andrzejewski:

Tuesday, February 19 at 6pm

Thursday, February 21 at 6pm

Tuesday, February 26 at 8am

Lastly, our opening night of *The Wiz* is on February 28. This is the largest cast McKean has produced. We are excited about the efforts our staff and students are putting forth for this production. It will surely be a fun performance to watch!

And, as always, thank you for continuing to send us your very best! Please allow us to continue to give you our very best!

Sherry L. Gross, Principal

Freshman Advisory Program a Continuing Success

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz

The Freshman Advisory Program continues to be successful! The Student Leaders have been busy preparing and facilitating weekly lessons on topics that include improving memory and organization, goal setting, throwing away the failure, tutoring help, taking responsibility for themselves, active listening and negotiation skills, decision making skills and relaxation techniques. Freshmen were asked to take a survey at the

end of the 1st marking period regarding how they felt the new program was going so far and they had this to say:

"I have lots of fun!"

"The student leaders can relate to us and help us."

"[We] can express ourselves and our feelings."

"[We] learn things about other people and each other."

Freshmen can look forward to lessons focused on career and college exploration, the rewards of staying in school, communication styles, anger management, and much more!

Highlander News

Scheduling for the 2008-2009 School Year

Submitted by: Lisa Ueltzhoffer

It is time to begin the course selection process for the 2008-2009 school year. Students are encouraged to work closely with their parents, teachers and guidance counselors to request courses for the next school year. Although teachers, guidance counselors and administrators play an important role in this process, students and parents are the most integral part of the equation. We strongly encourage parents to discuss academic and career goals with their children, communicate with teachers and guidance counselors, and adhere to the scheduling deadlines. In preparing for any of life's paths, it is important for students to take advantage of the most demanding curriculum available. Progressing to a good job requires the same academic skill sets that are important for entry into college.

As McKean moves forward in the restructuring process as required by No Child Left Behind, we will be moving to an A/B block schedule. A block schedule will allow students the opportunity to earn eight credits per year toward the goal of 24 credits for graduation, teachers the time to provide rich learning experiences for all learners, and a flexible schedule to support a school-wide advisory program, enhancing the personalized learning experiences for all students. A sample schedule may look like this:

A Day	B Day
1 English	5 Science
2 Math	6 Social Studies
3 PE/Health	7 World Language
4 Biotech	8 Elective

On February 21, guidance counselors will visit English classes to explain the scheduling process and distribute the course selection book. Please review the course selection book and encourage your student to ask teachers for input regarding course selections for next school year. Course requests will be completed in English classes beginning February 25th and ending March 20th. During that time frame English classes will be scheduled to meet in the library. All guidance counselors will meet with their students in a one-on-one setting. When meeting with students, guidance counselors will use the following data to assist students with making decisions regarding appropriate course selection: current transcripts, attendance, MAP and DSTP scores, and AP potential. Students will be given a computer-generated listing of their course requests that same day. Please ask your students to share their requests with you and contact your student's guidance counselor with any questions or

concerns. In the end of April we will mail home a copy of course requests as well.

We are working diligently to create a master schedule that will provide optimal educational opportunities for all students and to best utilize our staffing resources. Accurate course requests are imperative to the success of this process. We appreciate your help in advance to ensure that your student's course requests are accurate. Please understand that we are taking great care in attempting to accommodate all students' learning needs. Requests to make changes to a student's schedule in the fall will only occur for valid educational reasons and only after consultation and approval of parents, counselors, teachers and administrators. We are enforcing this policy in an attempt to maintain the integrity of the master schedule.



Highlander News

Communities in Schools News

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz

Last October, 13 students were invited to attend a four-session college course sponsored by Delaware Technical and Community College. SSS 105 is a one-credit College and Life Skills Course focusing on college life and expectations, critical thinking and study skills, identifying learning styles, career development, and identifying the differences between high school and college. On December 14th, 11

students graduated the program after completing their course work, taking a final exam and submitting research papers to the professor. Students were treated to a catered lunch and ceremony to congratulate their efforts, as well as receiving one credit towards college. The students **Dwight Snead** (gr. 10), **Shawnikqua Brown** (gr. 10), **Ernest Evans** (gr.11), **Durrell Brady** (gr. 11), **Shamyra Miller**

(gr. 12), **Shaquanna Mays** (gr. 12), **Shannon Power** (gr. 12), **Deasha Barrett** (gr. 12), **Katie Cloud** (gr. 12), **Ade Polack** (gr. 12), and **Brad Scheib** (gr. 12).

Similar opportunities will be available for students in the spring. For more information about Communities In Schools programs and services, please email Katie Kravitz at katie.kravitz@redclay.k12.de.us

After-School Program Grant Approved!

Submitted by: Steven Schmidt

The Department of Education has just confirmed that McKean High School's Innovative After School Program grant proposal has been accepted. Starting this month, McKean is adding 20 credit recovery slots to its Twilight Program, held on Monday and Wednesday each week from 2:30 until 5:30. To date, there have been only five slots available for students to use after school with a waiting list of about 40 students still in need of these services. Program coordinators Katie Kravitz and Shalina Spurlock will work with the 25 students after school to make sure they complete the course work as quickly and effectively as possible to receive credit. Students who wish to be put on the waiting list for these services should speak with their guidance counselor ASAP.

AWR (Absence Work Recovery) Program

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz

What? The AWR Program is a work recovery program designed to allow students to make up missed assignments from an unexcused absence from class. (Example: You missed Period 1 because you overslept – this is unexcused. In order for you to receive credit for the work you missed, you must attend AWR to complete the work.)

Who? Students who have an unexcused absence from a class can make up assignments in order to receive credit for missed work that they missed.

When? The AWR Program will be held on Wednesdays from 2:35 – 5:30 pm. Bus transportation will be provided at 4:30.

Where? AWR will take place in B45.

How? Students that need to make up assignments for unexcused absences from class need to:

- Talk to their teacher once they return to class from their unexcused absence and request any missed work.
- Attend AWR on their scheduled date (to be worked out with their teacher).
- Turn work into AWR | coordinator who will give the assignment(s) to the appropriate teacher in order for the student to receive credit.



Highlander News

Your Voice, Your PTSO

Submitted by: Betsy Flanagan

I know you have heard it a lot this year, but it is so important to keep your voice active in your school. A referendum is coming on February 28th. This is the time to show your students, their peers, teachers and the community that you support public education. Many mistakes have been made, but with more oversight, the budget has been balanced. There are many ways to correct past errors, but don't take it out on the teachers and students. The cost to our staff and students has been deep, and without a "yes" on 2/28, it will be even harder to give our McKean family what they need to produce a bright future for all of us. Yes, this generation is our future, just as our parents shuddered at the thought!

There will be meetings on February 19th at 6 pm, February 21st at 6 pm, and February 26th at 8 am (food and childcare will be provided at the last one) for everyone to find out all the details of the referendum and ask questions. Don't be misinformed. The more input and interest, the better our schools can be. The rest of the PTSO meeting schedule is as follows: February 27, March 19, April 30, and May 28. All start times are at 7pm in the library. If you would like to be on our email list, let me know and you will have monthly updates on the happenings at McKean. Thank you for your support.

Betsy Flanagan

PSU78de@aol.com or 633-6875

Celebrations and Achievements

The Wiz is easing on down the road at McKean High School! On February 28, 29, and March 1, McKean will present the Broadway production of *The Wiz*. Starting at 6:30PM, the show will star a different Dorothy and Scarecrow each night, so every performance will be unique! Come on out and enjoy this year's musical and support McKean and our growing Arts Program.



McKean senior **Emily Zeisler** performed the senior solo at the Allstate Orchestra Concert on Saturday, January 27 at the University of Delaware's Mitchell Hall. She played the first movement of Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto. Emily is the first Strings player from the Red Clay School District to win the solo since 1998! She got involved with the cello in the third grade through the Red Clay strings program run by Gwen Fuller and continued by Bonnie Ayers. Congratulations Emily! We are proud of you!!!



Our winter pep rally raised over \$400 worth of canned goods for Emmanuel Dining Hall (for the indigent)

The Family Career and Community Leaders of America of McKean High School is sponsoring the PENNIES FOR PATIENTS drive to fight Leukemia and Lymphoma. This drive will run from February 4 – February 22. Look for some special events but feel free to drop your loose pennies in boxes that will be in every homeroom. A penny may not seem like much to you and me, but through the years, this national drive initiated by a family in Delaware has raised thousands of dollars towards the fight for the cure for these horrible diseases. Do your part and let's make McKean a major contributor!



On January 8th, several McKean English teachers attended a motivational resource presentation for the 11th and 12th graders entitled "The Art of Communication" here at McKean. It is sponsored by YTI Career Institute of York, Pennsylvania. This presentation employs a great deal of student involvement while providing practical advice for the making of educational and career choices. The presenters also focused on the skills of listening and verbal communication.

Highlander Athletics

McKean Football Season Ends with a BANG!

Submitted by: Michael Simmonds

The Highlander football team ended the season on a high note, winning their last two games. In the ninth week they soundly defeated Mount Pleasant on Senior Night at Randy White Field and then crushed arch rival Dickinson 32-12 to bring home the Backyard Brawl trophy.

The team banquet was held December 10th in the cafeteria and was very well attended. Coach Ryan unveiled the yearly high-

light video, and special recognition went out to the following players:

Co-Offensive MVP – **Derrick Robinson**

Co-Offensive MVP – **Demetrus Richardson**

Defensive MVP – **Nick Neal**

Work Hard Play Hard – **Eric Dickson-Peppler**

Most Improved – **Mark Dallas Flakes**

Red Hat Award – **Mike Druss**

Sportsmanship Award – **Joe Prosceno**

HIGHLANDER AWARD – **Damian Flowers**

The team has already started preparations for next season and looks forward to getting in the weight room.

On the Court

Submitted by: Mike Simmonds

Boys' Basketball

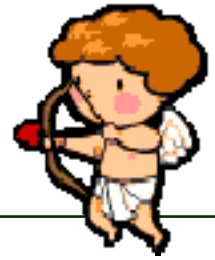
What a season this has been so far! The McKean team has set a goal to reach the Bob Carpenter Center, and with a record of 13 wins and 2 losses, it surely seems possible! With our version of the big three, **Demetrus Richardson, Orron Sullen, Christopher Redd**, a balance attack of role players and new and improved defensive system, the McKean Boy's Basketball team is shooting for the stars. The two losses came at the hands of last year's Flight B Champions, the Hodgson Silver Eagles. The box-and-one defensive plan that Coach John Kulesza mapped out for last Friday's game against Hodgson was executed very well by **Christopher Parson, Atwaiyn Smalls, and Derrick Robinson**, but we couldn't keep Hodgson's players off of the boards. With six games left, the boys' team is looking to end their season with a record of 19 wins and 2 losses and hopefully will secure a great seat in the playoffs. Good luck to Coach John Kulesza and his team. Let's go McKean!

Girls' Basketball


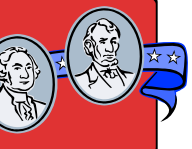
After winning the Dickinson Invitational, the girls' team has been experiencing some rough times. They have collected a few great wins and some real tough losses. They have lost to Concord, Brandywine, and Hodgson. At the current time they are holding strong with a record of 9 wins and 6 losses. Seniors **Kyra McGriff, Shannon Powers, Janai Brister, Deasha Barrett, and Marissa Jamison** are still playing strong in hope of getting back to the playoff for their senior year. In order to accomplish this task, they must win the remainder of their games. Coach Shawn Addison has a good feeling about this team and winning the rest of the season. Please come out and support the girls' basketball team in their efforts to complete another winning season. Let's go Team!



February 2008



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1	2
3	4 In Service: No School	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 	15	16
	18 Presidents' Day: No School	19 Referendum Q&A: 6pm	20	21 Referendum Q&A: 6pm	22	23
24	25	26 Referendum Q&A: 8am	27	28 Vote! Referendum	29	

Remember: DSTPs begin March 5!