

RSD Town Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 28, 2010

Dr. Mowl welcomed those in attendance to the meeting.

Dr. Mowl and various staff members reviewed some of the student accomplishments and program highlights as follows:

- ◆ The Patrick A. Graybill Storytelling Festival was a success, with the winners going on to compete in the Rochester City School District Storytelling Festival. RSD students Tim Artinian and Luisa Chastel received first and second place, respectively in their school grade groupings.
- ◆ ASL studies have been very successful in regards to the students' signing skills. The goal of the program is to provide students with a strong ASL base that will bridge to strong English skills.
- ◆ Students in the Middle School program will be traveling to Maine, as an extension of last October's Adventures in Education ocean topic, in June. The group has done different fundraising efforts including selling roses for Mother's Day.
- ◆ A major undertaking for the school is the Forrester Hall renovations. The new design will allow for healthier food preparation and deaf-friendly serving and dining areas.
- ◆ Students from RSD and BOCES joined forces to form the first deaf team for the FIRST Robotics Competition at RIT. The team built a robot from the ground up that could make and block soccer goals. The students truly enjoyed themselves during the experience.
- ◆ RSD has 132 students enrolled, which is more than we expected. Intakes and evaluations are going well and several new students are expected to begin at RSD in the fall.
- ◆ As all are aware, NYS is facing difficult economic times. Reductions were made to various budget centers and the staff was supportive in our efforts to save funds. The students' learning was not inhibited. Next year's budget is still uncertain, but it is not based on the number of students we have enrolled. The State Education Department would like the 4201 Schools Association to consider such funding options called rate-setting; however, none of the Association members are in favor of such a change.
- ◆ A parenting booklet was developed and co-authored by an RSD teacher, an RSD Director and an intern from the MSSD program, to help new parents of deaf children learn about language development and the research that is available. The booklet is available at no cost from the ECC and on the RSD website.

The floor was opened for discussion. The highlights are as follows:

- ◆ The new RSD Communication Policy has lead to some positive changes in the way both English and ASL are valued among the students. There was lengthy discussion on how to better educate the parents as well as the medical community. Some suggestions included a "Frequently Asked Questions" page, including information on the RSD website or *Facebook* page or developing a short video to share at school events.
- ◆ A California law requiring doctors to inform parents with a deaf child that there is a School for the Deaf was discussed. It was also mentioned that there is no enforcement of that law. There was a bill, last year that would require New York doctors to inform parents of the NYS School for the Deaf in Rome, but not any of the 4201 Schools, including RSD. The 4201 Schools Association opposed the bill; it died on the legislative floor. It was felt that this bill should be revised and resubmitted for action.
- ◆ Equal access to all language in the classroom was discussed. The issue is currently a discussion topic for the Language Planning Committee, but no solution has been found.
- ◆ The campus network security was briefly discussed, with the teachers wanting a more lenient internet access to find ASL video material.

Dr. Mowl thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The next meeting will be in the fall.