



Rochester School for the Deaf

November 17, 2009

Town Meeting #9

Dr. Mowl reminded everyone that RSD has a new communication philosophy as of June, which recognizes both ASL and English.

Dr. Mowl shared various announcements about the school...

- RSD currently has 120 students, with 9 possible intakes to process.
- RSD had a successful Adventures in Education program in October. David Gallo was a wonderful presenter and had wonderful things to say about the students, staff and spirit of RSD.
- RSD will again host its River Ramble on June 5, 2010. The event is still in the early planning stages, any suggestions should be sent to RSD5K@RSDeaf.org.
- For the first time, a deaf team made up of RSD high school students will compete in RIT's robotics competition. They have weekly meetings to discuss their plans and are very excited.
- The production crew for the movie *Hamill*, based on the life of UFC fighter Matt Hamill, came to Rochester to film scenes at RSD, RIT and other various places around town. RSD student, Theo Conley was cast as young Matt Hamill; he thoroughly enjoyed his experience.
- RSD is providing laptops for all middle and high school students this year. This is possible because of the successful completion of the campus-wide network upgrade. RSD is still in the planning stages about installing message boards at three outdoor locations on the campus.
- As you may know, Governor Paterson has proposed a Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP), which includes a \$6 million cut to the 4201 Schools. Parents, Staff and Board members will be receiving a message from the Superintendent's Office asking you to write a letter or make a phone call to our local legislators telling them what a great job we are doing and not to cut our funding.
- The current Board President, Dr. Jerry Walter's goal is to have Board members become more familiar with the 4201 system, by having members visit the various schools seeing how RSD "stacks up" against them.
- Dr. Walter also asks that if anyone has any names of individuals as potential Board members, to please let him or John D'Amanda know. You may contact them at jwalter@rsdeaf.org or at jdamanda@rsdeaf.org.

The floor was opened to discuss any areas of concern or improvement. The following topics were discussed:

- Lack of communication pertaining to job openings and closings. Several suggestions were made as to how to improve this, including make the status of each position known

on the website as well as posting a “welcome notice” in the main office when new staff members are hired.

- The availability of food to non-dorm students in the evening hours. While food is available in the Wildcat Zone, it is not always the healthiest of choices. Non-dorm students are currently not able eat in the cafeteria due to a variety of reasons, including supervision, pre-planning of food availability, and cost. Mr. Di Giovanni will discuss this further with Mr. Bradley.
- After attending a safety workshop at RSD last weekend, there was discussion regarding the school’s evacuation plan. Mr. Di Giovanni explained that RSD has an agreement with the Hawkeye Plant if we need to leave the campus. It was also explained that RSD has in place a plan where all students and staff go to the auditorium where they would wait for further instructions from the Emergency Situation First Responders. Provisions are kept in the auditorium in case this situation ever arises.
- RSD does not have a plan to purchase the houses and property surrounding the campus; when properties do become available staff and the Board discuss it. Dr. Mowl also informed everyone that RSD security is in contact with the local police often.
- There was discussion about parent involvement. The ECC hosts a parent support group every Monday at 1 p.m.; reminders can be found in the e-news digest. Other suggestions were made to encourage parents to get involved, including those who attend meetings to bring a parent friend.
- While SMSD has a culinary arts program for their graduates, RSD has the PRIDE program. RSD also offers many courses in job development and life skills that will help our students discover what they want to do when they graduate and help train them for that.

Dr. Mowl announced that a “send-off” party for Alan and Vicki Hurwitz will be hosted at RSD on December 13 from 2-5 p.m.