

Town Meeting #4
Rochester School for the Deaf
Thursday, April 26, 2007

Moderator: Ken Finton

Interpreters: Dave Gratzer, Lisa Zalar

Mr. Frank Kruppenbacher, Director of Public Relations at RSD, presented on behalf of the Advisory Committee for Effective Communication. The Committee was established in the spring of 2006 with the understanding that they are not a decision-making body; however, they can listen to issues and provide feedback. Mr. Kruppenbacher explained how the committee handles each issue raised and showed the spreadsheet used to track the issues. Highlights from the presentation are:

- ◆ RSD decided to make the Signs for All program free for families on a trial basis for one year. This will be revisited this summer.
- ◆ There has been increased visibility and accessibility to the Board of Directors, and other staff members at RSD.
- ◆ The PSA is working on developing a blog to discuss parent topics. There will be a link available on the RSD website.
- ◆ There has been a request for a student directory. This is a work in progress.
- ◆ One issue raised was regarding signed videos on puberty and other health topics. Dr. Stern provides some signed videos, but will not cover the desired topics. The RSD Outreach Center hopes to provide workshops to parents on children's health issues.
- ◆ Mr. Kruppenbacher is working on modifying the RSD newsletter, *Building Bridges*, to meet the request for an internal newsletter. The newsletter will include sections for the different constituencies including, the Board, the PSA, the RSDAA, and the different departments within the school.

Dr. Mowl announced that RSD will conduct another survey in May. The survey will go out to the same groups with the same questions as last year. This is being done so an accurate comparison can be made.

Dr. Mowl discussed the current and proposed Communication Philosophy Statements. Dr. Mowl had distributed a memo in March asking for feedback regarding the two statements, and only 2 people responded. The comments held the same concerns of the statements being hard to implement and how does the school decide which language is considered primary, ASL or English. Dr. Mowl's memo was redistributed to the audience, who was given time to read the handout. Dr. Mowl explained that all of the feedback received will be compiled into a report for the Board of Directors to review and discuss. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the use of the bilingual-bicultural (bi-bi) approach. The PSA President announced that she spoke with Dr. Mowl about a presentation regarding the bi-bi approach; a date for this is not set yet.

Another concern raised was the high number of students graduating this year. Dr. Mowl informed the group that even though we are graduating 17 students, we welcomed 27 new students this year.

Mr. Finton thanked everyone for coming.