

To the Community:

We appreciate those who took the time to attend the April 20 board meeting. We want to assure you that although the meeting format did not allow us to answer the questions that were raised, we were listening closely to your comments and questions.

We have realized that we need to do a better job helping the community, and our teachers and staff understand some of the decisions we make and actions we take, along with decisions our superintendent makes. We are sharing the following information as a first step in that process and promise to do more.

We also know that this has been a year of change for our District. When we hired Dr. Hrina-Treharn, we tasked her with several important priorities for the school year. Many of those priorities were put in place quickly and others required changes in the way existing tasks and activities had been carried out in the past. We apologize if we did not clearly explain all the reasons for these changes, but we continue to support Dr. Hrina-Trehan and the work she is doing. Like us, her goal is to make sure the students enrolled in Geneva Area City Schools are receiving the best possible education we can provide.

Here are answers to the key questions we received April 20. As always, if you have more questions after you read through them, you are welcome to contact us at any time.

*Amber L. Metzler*

Geneva Area City School Board President

### **What is the status of the majorette program?**

The majorette program is not being changed. In the past, the responsibilities of majorette advisor have always been a part of the responsibility of the Assistant Band Director. Any time a separate individual has carried out majorette advisor duties that person has reported to the Assistant Band Director and served in an unpaid capacity. There never has been a separate paid majorette advisor position. However, we have heard how important this position is to the community and our students, and we are working with the Geneva Area Teachers' Association to add a formal supplemental position for the role of Majorette Advisor to the negotiated agreement we have with our teacher's union. We also appreciate the suggestions we've received from the community about addressing this position. Unfortunately, both state law and Board policy prevent our staff from accepting compensation from outside entities when they perform work for our schools.

### **What are the District's investigation practices?**

We understand the community's interest in situations that might violate our District's policies and procedures. We also hope everyone understands that these situations often involve highly personal matters and, until the investigation concludes, involve only allegations. It would be unfair to the individuals involved to discuss these matters publicly and it could put our District

in serious legal jeopardy to do so. That is why all investigations are carried out by strictly following the appropriate policies and procedures, including any instances that could possibly trigger a Title IX investigation. In addition, when an investigation concludes, we are required to keep certain details of the investigation confidential and are allowed to share little, if any, information about what was learned or what action was taken. We work closely with the District's legal counsel to make sure we are treating all parties fairly and that we are following all relevant laws and regulations. The District takes seriously its obligations to fully assess, and when necessary, implement the formal investigation procedure under Title IX and/or any other relevant investigation procedure and will continue to consistently apply the appropriate procedures to address any complaints and/or allegations.

### **When will the board fill the open school nurse position(s)?**

There is not currently an open position to fill, as no employee has resigned, retired, or been non-renewed, but we have been working to secure necessary substitute coverage for this position. Even though there exists no open position at this time, the current language in the collective bargaining agreement with our union includes additional requirements individuals must meet to serve in the role of school nurse, so when an open school nurse position does exist, that collective bargaining agreement language limits the pool of available candidates we can consider. As a result, even though no open position currently exists, we are talking with our union to see if we can add some flexibility to our agreements to help us fill open school nurse positions in the future.

### **Has the media center at the high school been closed for use as Administrative offices?**

The Media Center has not been closed or replaced with administrative offices. Some of our administrative offices were moved into the Center after it was determined that the former offices on Eagle Street posed some safety hazards. These offices are now occupying space at the Media Center that was not being used. The library and computer lab at the high school have been and remain open for students and staff to use at any time during the school day. In the meantime, we have hired an engineering firm to help us evaluate our options for a permanent location of the Board of Education offices.

### **Why doesn't the board answer community member questions during meetings?**

The period for public participation at Board meetings is offered as an opportunity for the community to share its thoughts. While we value stakeholder input, it is not intended to be the focus of our meetings, which are designed as a way for the Board to carry out its business in a format that is open to the public. It's important to remember that the Board has adopted a number of other policies and procedures that allow members of the public to address concerns. Our board members value community and stakeholder feedback and will continue to provide opportunities for community feedback outside of Board meetings. And, we will continue to welcome public comment offered in compliance with the Board's current public participation policy during the period for public comment included on board meeting agendas.

**Is the board discontinuing the latch key program?**

The Board is not discontinuing the latchkey program. Based on our evaluation of the current program, we have determined that it is not financially sustainable. Part of this is due to the fact that not as many families have participated in the program as we expected when it was put in place. However, we know this is an important program for a number of families in our community and we are in the midst of finalizing a partnership with a local organization to help us continue to offer this service. In fact, we believe this option will allow for more families to take advantage of these services in the future and we hope to announce details soon.

**How are teachers currently being evaluated by Geneva Area City Schools?**

Most teachers in the state of Ohio are evaluated following the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). The manner in which student performance on state tests is used as a component of the evaluation system is determined based on the requirements set forth in state law, the collective bargaining agreement with the Geneva Area Teachers' Association and Board policy and only represents a small portion of the evaluation system.