

Notes from the Desk of the Superintendent

Now that the 2008-09 school year has concluded, I want to thank the parents, Board members, staff, and community members who worked so hard to make this a positive year for our students, given the numerous meetings and upcoming changes to our district. We are now preparing for the restructuring of the school district and will devote this summer to curriculum writing and instructional planning for 2009-2010. I want to take a moment to share some of the wonderful year-end activities that took place in June 2009:

The month opened with three days of kindergarten orientation, June 1-3, at Prendergast School. The staff from both Mead and Prendergast, who will be working with the kindergarten children next year, were on hand to meet and speak with the students and their parents, including Larry DiPalma, the new principal of Prendergast and Mr. Goldson, principal of Mead. All-Star Transportation also conducted a bus orientation. It was great to see all of the smiling faces!

The Ansonia High School Pops Concert, which highlights the achievements of our senior music students, was a great program on June 3. An art show in the lobby added to the excellence of the evening. Special thanks to Maria Tangredi and Nancy Bennett-Morgenstern for organizing the program.

The DARE Graduation for fifth graders was held at Mead School on June 5. We thank our partners at the Ansonia Police Department, led by Chief Kevin Hale with DARE officers Sgt. Owens and Off. Lovermi.

That evening, the 21 teacher retirees from our district were feted at a well-attended dinner party. More than 300 people attended what was a very happy occasion for our retiring teachers, who expressed their thanks in numerous e-mails shared throughout the

district. I wish everyone a long and healthy retirement!

The Top 10 Banquet, hosted by the Ansonia Board of Education, was held June 17 in the lobby of Ansonia High. Special congratulations to the following students: John Dearborn, valedictorian; Maritza Montanez, salutatorian; Ikechukwu Umeugo, #3; Paul Efthymiou, #4; Joseph Kraynak, #5; Ewa Januskiewicz, #6; Erika Poquette, #7; James Huber, #8; Melanie DeFrank, #9; and Megan Jones, #10.

Our eighth graders participated in a commencement program on June 19 in the middle school auditorium. A total of 213 students received diplomas. Mayor James Della Volpe and Board of Education President John Lawlor were guest speakers. Special congratulations to the top two graduates: Tobeckukwu Umeugo and Paige Orlofsky.

The culminating event for seniors was graduation, held June 22 at Jarvis Field. Although there was always a threat of rain, it was truly a happy occasion. The speeches given by our top two graduates were very well done, and the class's behavior was excellent. This was a group to be proud of! I presented diplomas to 151 seniors, and I wish all a bright future, whatever they may do.

In order to balance the budget, the Board of Education held a special meeting on June 23 to review proposed cuts to Athletics and to take action on them.

The district's administrators participated in an all-day workshop on June 29, presented by Patrick Flynn, on efficacy.

During the week of June 22, we began screening the applications for open teaching positions. We have instituted a new procedure, which raises the bar on our hiring procedures. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent will screen application packets first before forwarding candidates to the building administrators. They will perform the second screening and conduct interviews. Every applicant interviewed will be required to conduct a demonstration lesson. Candidates will be recommended to the Superintendent, who will conduct the final interviews, with input from the Assistant Superintendent. The Board of Education has the final vote on certified hiring.

A committee of administrators and state consultants conducted interviews on June 30 for new positions, called Teachers on Special Assignment. These new positions are for our three K-8 schools and will help our district build capacity for leadership positions.

As I write this, our four-week summer school program for children in Grades K-9 has just begun at Ansonia High School. I want to remind all students to complete their summer assignments. We'll see you all on Wednesday, September 2, 2009. Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Carol Merlone
Ansonia Superintendent of Schools

