



## Mission/Vision Statement

*The mission of Ansonia Public Schools is to provide a learning environment that challenges and motivates all students to attain high standards of achievement and reach maximum individual potential. In a partnership of mutual accountability with our community, parents, board of education and staff, we will prepare all students to become successful lifelong learners in an ever-changing, technological and culturally diverse global society.*

## Notes from the Desk of the Superintendent

The month of February was short due to a week of vacation and several interruptions due to snow, causing cancellation of school on Feb. 10 and Feb. 28 and two delayed openings. As of now, we have had to cancel school three days due to snow, and the tentative last day of school is now June 22.

However, we focused much of our instruction this month preparing our students in Grades 3-8 for the Connecticut Mastery Test and those in Grade 10 for the Connecticut Academic Performance Test. Testing begins on March 2. An after school program for more than 100 students in Grades 3-5 was held in January and February for student needing extra help in math or reading. This program was conducted at Prendergast, Mead, the Tinney Community Center and Ansonia Community Center. In addition, our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant Program called the Charger Club, for 100 students in Grades 6-8, has included CMT-preparation activities in this after school program.

We opened the month with a special meeting of our Technology Council to review bids received for a new Student Information System. Like many other school districts in Connecticut, Ansonia has been researching various systems that will better serve our district. After two meetings, the Technology Council voted to recommend the purchase of the Tyler system. There is money in this year's budget to purchase the new system, and if the Board of Education approves the purchase, training will take place in the coming months and the system will be implemented in 2010-2011.

On Feb. 11, Susan Kennedy and Mike Buckley of the Connecticut Association of Schools visited Mead and Ansonia Middle School to observe the school improvement work undertaken this year. The feedback was very positive; they stated that the instructional data teams and school-wide data teams are up and running well. School climate is improved; walk throughs and instructional improvement work is being highlighted. "Change does take time and we are very impressed with the work [being done] in Ansonia," they stated.

I continued my attendance meetings with members of the secretaries/nurses, food services and paraprofessionals unions. I am meeting with any staff member who has been absent five or more days between September-December in order to bring awareness to their attendance. In March, I will begin meeting with members of the teachers union.

Together with Board of Education President John Lawlor, I

met with Nick Caruso of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education on Feb. 25 to plan for the next steps of the Board's work in the Lighthouse Project, a professional development initiative. We sent out a survey to our entire staff, asking for their feedback on student learning in general and how they could help in our efforts to improve student learning. We plan to use the data from the survey for discussion purposes at the next meeting of Board members and administrators in early April.

A major focus this month was a series of Community Forums held in three of our schools, Mead, Prendergast, and Ansonia Middle School. The weather caused one forum (Prendergast) to be postponed to Feb. 22, and postponed the forum at Ansonia High School, which will be rescheduled in March (date to be determined). Attendance at the Mead and Prendergast forums was impressive, ranging between 100-200. We reviewed the school improvement work that has taken place already and our plans to continue our work for the rest of this year and well into the summer. Our two major initiatives are improved and more frequent Professional Development for everyone, and updated, standards-based curriculum that is being written and implemented. We are grateful to the parents and community members who took the time out of their busy schedules to come out to "find out what our schools are doing."

Finally, we are working on complying with new regulations from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the race and ethnicity for public school students. The federal government has developed a new way to collect and report race and ethnicity, which includes new racial and ethnic categories. We will be sending out letters to all of our parents in March, asking them to complete paperwork - which we will attempt to keep brief and easy to complete!

My next monthly Community Meeting with the Superintendent will be Monday, March 15 from 6:00-6:30 p.m. at Ansonia Middle School. Feel free to stop in and let me know what we can do to better educate Ansonia's children.

Sincerely,

*Carol Merlone*

Carol Merlone, Ansonia Superintendent of Schools