

# Newsletter

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOLS

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Winter 2012

## Three New Board Members and Three Incumbents Sworn Into Office

The Exeter Township School Board reorganization meeting was held on Tuesday, December 6. Three incumbents and three newly-elected members were sworn into office by Berks County Judge Arthur Grim. Incumbents were James Brady, Joseph Staub, and Dr. David Bender. Newly elected board members sworn into office were Dr. Kathleen Muzevich, Patricia O'Brien-Pieja, and Andrew Yawger.

Dr. Kathleen Muzevich is currently an Assistant Professor of Education at Alvernia University. She has previously served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, reading

supervisor, and assistant superintendent. She decided to seek a seat on the board because of her extensive background in education and the desire to serve the community. As a board member, Dr. Muzevich wants to listen and be responsive to the concerns of the community. She also wants to examine all budget items to determine what is absolutely essential and what can be eliminated without negatively impacting the instructional programs.

Patricia O'Brien-Pieja, a retired educator and a life-long advocate for public education, holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from Kutztown University. She and her husband are long-time

residents of Exeter and all three of their children are Exeter graduates. She became a candidate for the board because she felt the status quo needed to be challenged. As a school director she wants to help provide for a thorough and efficient education for all students while keeping the district's fiscal house in order. Ms. O'Brien-Pieja hopes to use her knowledge and skills to improve the educational environment for students.

Andrew Yawger has lived in the district since 1996, and he and his wife are the parents of a 2011 Exeter graduate and a ninth grader. Andrew is a senior operations instructor at the Lim-

*(continued on page 2)*

## Lobby Murals Leave Lasting Legacy of Art Teacher



*Students in Becky Krommes' kindergarten class walk by one of the two colorful murals in the Jacksonwald School lobby painted in 1990 by Luanne Lancaster. Ms. Lancaster, an art teacher at Jacksonwald and M.L.Lausch Schools for 29 years, passed away this past year.*

## Registration for 2012-13 Kindergarten

ETSD parents who have children turning age 5 before September 1, 2012 are eligible to register them for 2012-13 kindergarten. All the necessary information and forms to register can be obtained by going to the district website [www.exeter.k12.pa.us](http://www.exeter.k12.pa.us) and clicking on "Kindergarten Registration" under the "Shortcuts" section. Any questions about registration or requests to have this information mailed, should be directed to Charlene Benner at 610-779-0700 ext 1029 or [CMBenner@exeter.k12.pa.us](mailto:CMBenner@exeter.k12.pa.us)

Completed forms are turned in during "Registration" which is scheduled for February 15 and 16 at Lorane, Jacksonwald and Owatin Creek Elementary Schools from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The average time necessary to register is 15 minutes and an appointment is not necessary. Children do not need to accompany their parents.

## Board Reorganization

*(continued from page 1)*

erick Generating Station. He believes the curriculum should be upgraded, specifically including additional history and civics courses. As a board member, he hopes his understanding of the educational process and business applications will be helpful in making board decisions. "I care about education. It's better than gold. It's paramount that we maintain the focus on education," he said.

During the reorganization meeting Robert Quinter Jr. was re-elected as president for a second term and Dr. David Bender was elected vice president. Mr. Quinter is beginning his 12th year on the board and Dr. Bender has served for 28 years.

In November the district thanked and said farewell to two board members whose terms expired. Jack Linton served on the board for 12 years; three as president and seven as vice-president. Sharon McLendon served one year, filling the unexpired term of Andrea Sandusky. Also in November, J. Ken Hart, who was a board member for 17 years, announced his resignation. Ken was thanked for his years of service, many of them chairing the Business Functions Committee. The board appointed Dr. David Bender to fill Mr. Hart's unexpired term.

The public is welcome to attend board meetings, which are held in the district administration building. In most months, the first Tuesday is dedicated to committee meetings, the second Tuesday is a workshop session (except July and December), and the third Tuesday is the voting meeting. In addition, videotapes of workshop and voting meetings are available on the website.

## Charter and Voucher Catch-Up; What's the Score?

*Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association*

In our first article about cyber schools, charter schools and vouchers, we defined the players and explained the difference between the types of schools. Now we are ready to move on; or to move backwards, really. To fully understand the issue, we need to discuss why legislators and some advocacy groups are calling for these changes to our public schools. Why do some people believe we need school choice?

The easy answer is that some of our public schools are failing. Test results and graduation rates in some of our schools are unacceptable and as a state we are failing these students. They deserve better. Unfortunately, however, during the debate over school choice the performance of all schools has become very unclear. In order to make the best decision about how to improve our schools, it is important to understand the current performance of both the public and charter schools.

### **Here are some facts about the performance of Pennsylvania's 501 public school districts:**

- Currently 463 PA districts, or 89%, are making Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind Law.
- Pennsylvania students have made eight straight years of improvements in math and reading.
- Approximately 75% of Pennsylvania students are now on grade level based on the PSSA scores in math and reading, and 78% statewide are graduating.
- The *Quality Counts* report ranks PA at 7th in the nation for K-12 achievement.
- The number of Pennsylvania public high school students taking and testing in an Advanced Placement course continues to increase each year.

### **Here is some information about the performance of the state's charter schools:**

- Currently 66% of Pennsylvania charter school students are making Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind Law.
- A 2011 Stanford University/CREDO study found that although charter school students at more than a quarter of the state's charter schools made greater academic gains than their peers at traditional public schools, those at almost half did worse.
- Nationally, a RAND study of charters in eight states showed no significant improvement in charter school students.
- Another national study by Stanford University/CREDO study looked at charter performance in 15 states and the District of Columbia covering more than 70% of the nation's charter school students. It found that only 17% of charters had academic gains better than traditional public schools; 37% were worse and 46% showed no significant difference.

The school choice debate is meant to be answering the question of what can we do to help our students in failing schools. The current legislative answer is suggesting moving a small number of students and their taxpayer funds from failing public schools to charter or private schools. As you review the issue and make your decision on where you stand, the performance of all types of schools should be a factor. From the information above, it seems safe to say that currently charter schools are not outperforming our public schools. Does that make charter schools the right choice?

## M.L. Lausch (now Jacksonwald) Students Perform Well on PSSA

Principal Joseph Schlaffer, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Warren Mata, recently reported that our 2010-11 third grade students scored in the top ten percent of the state on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in Mathematics. This is indeed an accomplishment that warrants recognition and accolades to our entire school community for a job well done. In this district we are fortunate to have a supportive Board of Education and administration that afford our schools with the opportunity to provide an outstanding educational experience in a friendly, child-centered environment. It starts with our parents and guardians who send their children to school prepared to learn, and it ends with a dedicated faculty and staff who make the difference. Congratulations and thanks to the school community at M.L. Lausch/Jacksonwald for the hard work.



**Patricia Dahl**



**Maura Meiser**

## Meet Two New Assistant Principals

Two new individuals assumed assistant principal roles this fall. In the early weeks of the school term, Patricia Dahl began as the assistant principal at Reiffton to replace Christy Haller who became the Lorane principal. In November Maura Meiser was hired as the 10-month senior high school assistant principal to assume the duties of William Cain who was named principal this summer.

Ms. Dahl previously worked at 16<sup>th</sup> & Haak Elementary School in the Reading School District as an Assistant Principal/Instructional Supervisor. Prior to that, she was a principal intern, instructional support teacher, fifth grade teacher, and teacher of gifted learners in the Radnor School District. Ms. Dahl earned a B.A. in Psychology from Randolph-Macon College in Virginia, a M.S. in Elementary Education from Cabrini College, and K-12 Principal Certification from the University of Pennsylvania. She and her husband, Matt, live in Phoenixville. Patty loves to read and enjoys watching theatre productions both locally and in New York City. She is an avid Philadelphia sports fan and loves to attend Phillies games with her dad.

For the last four years Ms. Meiser was a seventh and eighth grade communication arts teacher in the Northern Lebanon School District. Maura received a B.S. in Education from Shippensburg University, a M.S. in Education from Penn State, and her Principal Certificate from the University of Scranton. She and her husband, Bill, are the parents of a 16-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old son. After working in the district for two months, she said “The administration, staff, students, and parents have been extremely supportive in my transition into the high school. I truly see a student body who is striving to excel in all areas of their high school time, as well as faculty who continue to have high expectations to help in their success. I feel very at home in Exeter and look forward to continuing to build strong relationships with all parts of this community. Thank you to everyone who has made my start a truly successful one!”

## Academic Hall of Fame Inducts Four

Four individuals were inducted into the ETSD Academic Hall of Fame in a December ceremony. The 2011 inductees are alumni A.S. (Amy Sarig) King and Fredrick Noecker II; former teacher Susan Fritz; and John Walters, a community volunteer.

A.S. King (Amy Sarig), a 1988 graduate, is a critically-acclaimed and internationally-published novelist. Her work has won many awards, including the prestigious Michael L. Printz Honor, an Edgar Award nomination, and an ALA Best Fiction for Young Adults award. She has been honored with Kirkus Reviews Best Books and Junior Library Guild selections.

Fredrick F. Noecker II, class of 1992, attended Lehigh University and graduated Cum Laude with a B.S. in materials science and engineering. After graduation he was commissioned in the USAF, working as an aircraft maintenance and munitions officer at Whiteman Air Force Base. Later he accepted a NATO assignment in Italy. In 2007 he earned a doctorate in materials science and engineering and is currently working for Exxon/Mobil Development Company as PNG LNG Materials project coordinator.

Susan M. Fritz faithfully served the district from 1968 to 1999 as a dedicated elementary classroom teacher. As long as she can remember, Susan wanted to teach and still jokes that when she was a young child, her dolls were some of the smartest! There was no greater reward for her than seeing children’s eyes light up when they learned something new. She was always eager to utilize new techniques to motivate her students.

John D. Walters was always eager to help in any way that he could. He volunteered at sporting events, May Days, Community Prevention Partnership events, Boy Scout functions, and many more. His greatest contribution to the district came when he volunteered as a hall monitor/greeter, where he earned the respect and admiration of staff and students. His greatest joy was working with people “who made things happen,” especially when it involved the youth of the community.

## 2012-13 Calendar

The newly approved 2012-13 school calendar can be viewed on the district website. Go to “District Information” and click on “District School Year Calendars.”



**Exeter Community Education Foundation  
Enhances Learning in Many Ways and You Can Help!**

The Exeter Community Education Foundation (ECEF) is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 to support projects which enhance the learning experiences of ETSD students. The Foundation's goal is to raise funds to finance educational initiatives and projects that fall outside the scope of the school district's annual budget.

During this school term, ECEF has provided \$5,500 to fund 11 mini-grants applied for by teachers. A few of these mini-grants include providing senior high students with the opportunity to perform "virtual" dissections, assisting kindergarteners with language arts skills, and allowing fourth graders to participate in a distance learning "Space Travel" science experience. The foundation also purchased three I-Pod Touch carts each containing 30 I-Pods at a cost of \$22,000. In the spring, \$2,000 in scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors.

Throughout the year, the ECEF holds a variety of fundraising events. Grocery Gift Cards for Giant and Redners supermarkets are sold with 5% of the proceeds going directly to the ECEF. Other annual fundraisers include the Duck Race in the spring and the Golf Outing in August. The "Gift with a Future" Program allows anyone to show appreciation to an ETSD staff member (teacher, coach, bus driver, etc.) who has made a positive contribution to a child. Recipients receive printed notification that a gift was made to ECEF in their honor. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. ECEF is a 501(C)(3) entity. For more information on how you can support the foundation, visit the district website.

**Giant A+ School  
Rewards Program**

The Giant Food Stores are sponsoring the Giant A+ Rewards program in which Exeter Schools receive money for purchases made by customers using their Giant Bonus cards. This program operates through March 31, 2012. Consumers may choose a school to sponsor by signing up for the Giant rewards program by going to: [www.giantfoodstores.com/aplus](http://www.giantfoodstores.com/aplus)

The I. D. numbers for the Exeter Schools are:  
 Jacksonwald 04225    Lorane 04226  
 Owatin Creek 05857    Reiffton 05840  
 Exeter Junior High 04228  
 Exeter Senior High 04221

We encourage members of the community to help with this endeavor and thank you for your assistance.



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The Exeter Township School District is an equal opportunity educational institution and in compliance with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The district will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, disability, or handicap. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact Mrs. Betty Weber, Compliance Officer, 3650 Perkiomen Ave., Reading, PA 19606.

**BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS**  
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 Dr. Kathleen Muzevich • Joseph Staub • Andrew Yawger  
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 Questions, suggestions, and/or information concerning the NEWSLETTER should be directed to Don W. Cramer, Editor, in the Instructional Support Services Office.

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**EXETER TOWNSHIP  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**