

Join your child for lunch was a tasty success

By Michaela Kennedy

Parents met their children in the Melrose Avenue School cafeteria one day last week to enjoy lunch together and to sample the new food services menu. Superintendent Marcia Lukon reported at the Oct. 19 school committee meeting.

The group of 54 adults gave good feedback on the meal provided by Sodexo Food Services. Sodexo's goal is to serve lunch to half of the student population. The service, in place for a little over a month, has sold about 200 lunches a day, noted Lukon. "They are close to their goal," she said. Sodexo's animated star mascot "Lift-Off" was on hand to entertain diners.

In the superintendent's report, Lukon said the school received notification from the fire chief that inefficiencies have been taken care of and the district is now in compliance with fire codes. The superintendent voiced concern about the school's crisis plan, however, and said the plan was "high on my priority list to complete." She scheduled a training session on Nov. 15 for administrators and representatives of the police and fire departments to learn about school emergency preparedness.

Also in the report, Lukon said 35 responses were received to impact aid inquiries that revealed the number of school parents in the military. "It looks like we may qualify," Lukon added, referring to the federal Impact Aid program. The national fund compensates local school districts for lost tax revenue or increased burdens resulting from federal activities.

Lukon discussed a meeting she recently attended for the Rhode Island School Superintendents Association (RISSA). The forum reviewed 2007 legislation impacting elementary and secondary education, and previewed legislative priorities for 2008. Lukon noted that the association included talks about continued advocacy for a funding formula and for pension reform to lessen the impact of increasing pension costs on school districts.

In the principal's report, co-principal Carrie Melucci said that results from the upcoming School Accountability for Learning and

Teaching (SALT) self-study would be shared with teachers and school improvement teams (SIT), and also used to update action plans.

Melucci announced that the eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C. was slated for next spring, June 14 to 17.

In committee reports, Melucci mentioned the SIT teams were preparing for the self-study, analyzing data from the New England Common Assessments Program, and focusing on math skills instruction in both schools.

William "Bucky" Brennan suggested doing a facilities tour as part of the self-study. He added that the facilities committee was in need of new faces. "We're looking

for more members, for anybody who wants to join," he said.

In other business, the committee read and unanimously approved the finalized draft of the Policy on Reporting of Communicable, Environmental and Occupational Disease.

The committee also approved by unanimous vote a request for home schooling.

Brennan asked if all home-school families had submitted a curriculum. Robert Fricklas, Director of Student Services, noted that all responded to the school's request.

In a discussion of upcoming meetings, the committee agreed to wait for the North Kingstown

School Committee to set a new date for a joint meeting. Committee members in Jamestown were surprised that North Kingstown blamed them for the cancellation earlier in the month, as was reported by high school liaison William "Bucky" Brennan.

School Committee Chairwoman Cathy Kaiser announced agendas for the Oct. 25 school committee retreat and the Oct. 29 joint work session with the town council. The Thursday retreat, to be held at Rhode Island College, is slated to focus on annual goal setting. The joint meeting with the council will review the current budget, as well as look forward to next year. The discussion will highlight the bud-

get draft for building use. Lukon asked for guidance on allocations. "I want to make sure we get it right," she added.

In correspondence, the committee received a brochure from GenerationMax, offering information about healthy snacks. Candies, M & Ms and Snickers for example, were modified for higher nutritional standards. They also received an invitation from the Rhode Island Broadcasters' Association for parents to register free for notifications by e-mail or text message of school cancellations, delays and early dismissals.

Committee members David Dolce and Julie Kallfelz were absent.

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