



June 20, 2008

from the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

PTSA and the Strategic Plan for Parent Engagement: "Shaping a Bright Future!"



Newly-elected PTSA Officers: Elana Levens-Craig, Vice President, DAC; Karen Fleck, Vice President, Membership; Beckee Handrich, President, PTSA; Karen Keene, Secretary; Karen Reinhart, Treasurer and Jennifer Fox, Past President. On the right, officers wear sun glasses due to the bright future ahead!

The bright future is a vision where all parents play an active role in the education of their students – and it is a future where each school and the District office provide quality customer service to our parents. At the same time, strong PTSA membership at each high school will usher in a new era of increased parent volunteerism and activity.

On Wednesday, May 14, a Districtwide PTSA strategic planning meeting was held to discuss policies and procedures for addressing parent concerns. Schools and communities from throughout East County were represented. Here's the direction our parents would like to see for every school:

1. **A customer service plan** that includes a Districtwide theme and brochure outlining the principles of Customer Service in Grossmont. This plan would be accompanied by professional development for staff.
2. **A commitment to a strong, spirited PTSA membership drive in the fall.** This drive will be used as a lever to build a much closer relationship between teachers, parents and administrators. We would like to begin the drive with a "Kick-Off" event that would bring all three together.
3. **Strong participation by the District in the PTA's Reflections Program.** Reflections is the PTA's national art contest that is typically held countywide in the fall of each year. GUHSD has not supported this program in the past but we anticipate being strongly represented this year.
4. We want to **increase significantly the quality of our communications between school and home.** These efforts would include a concentrated effort to inform all parents of the Parent Portal, ensuring teachers maintain their websites and the notification of parents on a regular basis, if their child is in danger of failing a class. Included in this effort would be a commitment to a 24-hour turn around on all parent contacts whether at a school or District office. This is also part of customer service. All too often, parents call for information or assistance and they get transferred from office to office without anyone answering their questions. We want to ensure that staff is trained in how to "own" a telephone call and guarantee that the parent receives proper assistance. The other expectation is that parents receive a return call within 24 hours, even if it is only to say we're working on the issue and will respond by a particular date.
5. **Notification of parents every three weeks if their child is failing.** Parents really do want to know if their child is in trouble and not making normal progress. Therefore, we will ensure we are doing our part by notifying parents on a regular basis.
6. **Implementation of a teen driving program.** Everyone is concerned about the safety of teenage drivers, knowing that the teen years are the most dangerous. We will look at a variety of programs nationwide to select one that will really make an impact on students.

The above initiatives are part of our District's Strategic Plan and are designed to effectively engage all parents in the education of their children. **They are also the right thing to do** for our parents. This includes a real commitment to customer service – treating parents the way we want to be treated. It includes a commitment to ensure that parents know whenever their child is not succeeding. I know that each of us desires to know whenever our child is making normal progress, and appreciate receiving prompt return phone calls. We can make a difference in the quality of our school environments by engaging our parents. That engagement is also a hallmark of a great school district and a "Great Portfolio of Schools."