

Dear Parents:

The second semester at Fred S. Engle Middle School has begun, which means we are more than halfway through the school year. It may seem hard to believe, but we are actually closer to the end of the school year than the beginning. The adage that “time flies when you’re having fun” is certainly appropriate when describing how students learn here at Engle!

The month of February may be the shortest month on our calendar, but there are many important events that are scheduled. These include our course selections for 8th grade students, our faculty-student basketball fundraiser, and the final preparations for our school play, “Beauty and the Beast”. All of this is happening while we are working very hard in our classrooms, learning more each day and preparing for the state exams that are scheduled for April.

For our 8th grade students, this month begins the transition from Engle to Avon Grove High School. Course selection is a very important aspect of this transition. Avon Grove High School held an open house for parents in January, and Engle’s guidance counselors have been meeting with teams, classes, and students to help prepare them for the move to AGHS. One of our primary goals is to do our best to prepare your child for success next year, and selecting appropriate courses and electives is the first step. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact your child’s counselor. We will be entering selections into our system on February 11 and 12.

The faculty-student basketball fundraiser is also almost here. One of the highlights of our year, February 25th promises to be a memorable night for all students, parents, and faculty. In addition to the high quality basketball played between the students and faculty (both the boys and girls teams will be taking on the men and women faculty), there will also be a variety of baskets up for auction. The basket themes relate to local restaurants, game day at home, summer fun, and others. There really is something for everyone, and we hope to see you there.

Our school play, “Beauty and the Beast,” will be performed at Avon Grove High School on March 5th and 6th. Our cast and crew have been working very hard to prepare a wonderful show, rehearsing several hours each week. They will provide a preview at half time of the basketball fundraiser. The combination of student talent, hard work, and outstanding costumes and sets should make this performance one of our best ever! Tickets can be purchased in advance at a discount, and information is available online.

At the district level, Avon Grove School District, like most other districts in the county and state, is preparing a fiscal plan that will address the needs of our school community in a responsible manner. As part of this process, the Board of School Directors has prepared the resolution included below and provided this to the General Assembly in Harrisburg:

The Avon Grove School Board of School Directors passed the following Resolution at the January 28, 2010, school Board meeting.

A Resolution urging legislative action on school employee pension reform
By the Board of Directors of the
Avon Grove School District
#10-04

WHEREAS, the-Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) has voted to increase the employer contribution to the system for the 2010-2011 school year to 8.22%, a 72% increase over the 2009-2010 rate; and

WHEREAS, the employer contributions rate is projected to increase sharply in the next four years, reaching a peak of 33.60% in the 2014-2015 school year; and

WHEREAS, the employer contribution rate is projected to remain over 30% until the year 2020; over 25% until the year 2027 and over 20% until the year 2032; and

WHEREAS, the projected increases in employer contributions would cost the Avon Grove School District and its taxpayers an additional \$15,628,345 between the 2010-2011 school year and the 2014-2015 school year, calculated as follows:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Contribution Rate</u>	<u>Annual Cost Increase</u>	<u>Cumulative Cost Increase</u>
2010-2011	8.22%	\$552,047	\$552,047
2011-2012	10.59%	\$427,438	\$1,531,532
2012-2013	29.22%	\$3,106,840	\$5,617,857
2013-2014	32.09%	\$676,812	\$10,380,994
2014-2015	33.60%	<u>\$484,214</u>	<u>\$15,628,345</u>
		<u>\$5,247,351</u>	-----

and; WHEREAS, these projections present critical problems that effectively force the addition of significantly higher financial burdens on taxpayers, school districts and the commonwealth and consequently demand both a short-term and a long-term solution; and

WHEREAS, a meaningful solution to these problems must involve the identification of another funding source for PSERS, decreasing or cutting the costs/liabilities of the system, including benefit levels, and deferring the system's liabilities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the board of school directors of the Avon Grove School District calls upon the General Assembly to begin immediate consideration of school employee pension reform with the dual purpose of reducing projected employer contribution rate increases over the next four years and reducing projected costs to schools districts, taxpayers and the commonwealth over the next two decades, while maintaining an appropriate pension benefit for school employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly approve HB 2135 or SB 1185, both of which would make PSERS a hybrid defined benefits/defined contribution system for future school employees, as a potential solution to the long-term cost issues presented by projections in the employer contribution rate.

As always, please contact us at Fred S. Engle Middle School if there is any way we can help you.

Regards,

Michael Snopkowski, Principal