

GROWING TOWARD GREATNESS

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

DEAR AVON GROVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS,

Avon Grove School District raised the bar in educational innovation during the 2016-17 school year. From the 1:1 Chromebook initiative to the multi-tiered approach to instruction and intervention, AGSD empowers its students by combining a rigorous educational program with a supportive, engaging environment. Together with the support of parents and community partners, AGSD continues to lead its students down a path of excellence.

Sincerely,
M. Christopher Marchese, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

Tracy Lisi, President,
Board of School Directors

Bonnie Wolff, Past President,
Board of School Directors, 2015-2017

Focusing on Curriculum and Instruction



Matching What We Teach to What Students Need to Know

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS MATCHES INSTRUCTION, INTERVENTION TO STUDENTS' NEEDS

Every Avon Grove student has a unique set of educational needs. District schools have begun implementing a new and comprehensive strategy to identify students' needs, provide the matching level of instruction and, if needed, provide additional support.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) was launched at Penn London Elementary School (PLE) in 2016-17 after a year of staff training and preparation. Avon Grove Intermediate School began implementation this year, and Fred S. Engle Middle School is currently undergoing training and preparation with implementation planned for the 2018-19 school year. Additionally, a behavioral component has been added at PLE with a focus on mindfulness.

For students, the program starts with a screening assessment to determine if they are at, above, slightly or significantly below grade level in fundamental skills, such as reading. Students are then provided with additional instruction and support or enrichment activities, as is appropriate. The data is analyzed again after six to eight weeks, and their support is modified accordingly. If a significant number of students are struggling with a particular skill, teachers and administrators evaluate the instruction those students received and make adjustments.

Positive results are already evident, with a significant number of participant students needing less and less intense intervention as the year progressed.

CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING CURRICULUM, K-12

Teacher-leaders, as well as District and school administrators, are continually reviewing curricular implementation to ensure that what is taught in District classrooms best prepares its students in an increasingly competitive world. Avon Grove's curriculum aligns with Pennsylvania state standards, as well as provides continuity in instruction from grade to grade for all students.

The new science curriculum was implemented in the 2016-17 school year, with a greater emphasis on inquiry-based learning. The new curriculum teaches critical problem-solving skills that will help students to succeed throughout their lives. Additionally, this year's elementary school students used science kits to conduct experiments and discover for themselves how things work. Students built their own ecosystems, learned about insects and designed simple machines.

The new social studies and world languages curricula were introduced at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, and the performing arts curriculum is currently under review and revision, to be implemented during the next two school years for students in grades K-12.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

The District began offering full-day kindergarten at PLE in fall 2017. The 298 student enrollment exceeded the District's 286-student projection, illustrating the demand for this program. This is a point of pride for the entire community!



Refining Special Education and Support Services

As part of its mission to meet the unique needs of every student served, Avon Grove School District launched several new initiatives to benefit special education students during the 2016-17 school year.

GIFTED TASK FORCE

The District is reviewing every aspect of its Gifted Education program with the goals of further improving the education provided and insuring that all gifted students in the District are identified.

During 2016-17, administrators reviewed the ways gifted students are served here and visited other regional gifted programs for comparison. During the 2017-18 school year, a group of 40+ gifted stakeholders, including teachers, parents, administrators and psychologists, will compile and study data. Among the questions they will address:

- Does the Gifted Program have the right amount of resources and technology to meet the needs of Avon Grove's gifted students?
- Do teachers and staff know all of the signs that can help them identify more potentially gifted students?
- Do all parents know about the gifted program and how it might benefit their children?

The data gathered by the stakeholder group will be analyzed by the Gifted Task Force, a group that will consist of 10 to 15 experts. The Task Force will create a report and, with stakeholder group feedback, is expected to present a recommended plan of action to the Board of School Directors by spring 2018.

IMPROVED DELIVERY OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND PHYSICAL THERAPY

Changes in the way occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) services are delivered in Avon Grove are giving students and teachers better continuity and more chances to practice essential skills.

Previously, most therapy was provided individually or in a small-group setting. Now, the therapists work in conjunction with Life Skills Support and Autism Support teachers within their classrooms. This means that teachers are learning more coaching strategies, beneficial exercises and calming techniques that they can use to assist students even when the therapist is out of the room.

The therapists' schedules and duties were changed in other ways as well. Previously, eight therapists worked with Avon Grove students, but none were in the District every day. Now, four therapists are assigned to District schools full time. PT and OT therapists are also conducting professional development workshops with District teachers who work in typical classrooms, helping them to more accurately identify when students need PT or OT. The therapists have also attended parent nights, sharing with parents some at-home strategies for helping their children.



Meeting the Goal to Expand Communication and Community Engagement

Student success requires the support and participation of students, teachers, administrators, staff and community members. Knowing communication and engagement are key in achieving such a unified effort, Avon Grove School District has launched a multitude of new initiatives. These include:

Parent Speaker Series. Launched during the 2016-17 school year through a partnership with the YMCA, the Parent Speaker Series offers presentations on topics relevant to students and families. This year's focus is student wellness. Topics include cooking healthy meals, safe teen driving and growing up in the digital age. See the schedule at www.avongrove.org/community/parent-speaker-series.

Padres Latino Group. Developed in 2016-17, the Padres Latino Group meetings are conducted in Spanish and are designed to ensure Latino parents know how to access District offerings and information, including student grades. The District also seeks information from parents about how the District can best support their families. For more information, please contact High School Assistant Principal Natalie Ortega-Moran at (610) 869-2446 or by email at nortegamoran@avongrove.org.

Avon Grove TV and Spotlight on Education. Avon Grove students are enhancing their communication skills and helping to keep the community informed through the Spotlight on Education web series airing on AGtv. Students conduct interviews and create video content that informs viewers of interesting and innovative endeavors and news around Avon Grove. In addition to the Spotlight on Education web series, AGtv also live streams and provides on-demand viewing of sporting events, special events, morning announcements and much more.

Facilities Listening Posts and Publications. The District has invested significant time studying its buildings and other facilities, resulting in a recommendation announced in fall 2017. The recommendation includes building a new middle school at the Sunnyside Road site and renovating the existing high school and middle school into a state-of-the-art high school. The District has created a Facilities Newsletter, issues of which provide the latest information in this on-going process, and has held a series of Listening Posts to gather community feedback on the recommendations. The information gathered through these Listening Posts will be presented to the Board of School Directors who hope to finalize the plan for implementation in spring 2018. Visit www.avongrove.org/facilities to learn more.



► Technology Initiatives

STEM FOR EVERYONE! New Middle School Curriculum Aims to Keep Girls and Boys Equally Interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math



How would you design your future home, and what impact would your choices have on the environment and economy? How do you keep pets at an animal shelter from getting bored?

These are some of the real-world problems Fred S. Engle Middle School's seventh- and eighth-graders have tackled since the new STEM curriculum was introduced in 2016-17. In the classroom, Tech Ed teacher Heather Bolton presents her students with a selection of problems to choose from. The students then use science, technology, engineering and math skills to create a solution using some terrific tools, including a laser engraver, a 3D printer, a dye sublimation printer and a heat press to build a model or bring what they have designed to life.

Nationwide, girls are less likely than boys to take technology courses, particularly in high school. According to the Census Bureau's 2009 American Community Survey, women make up 48% of the U.S. workforce but hold just 24% of STEM-related positions. Avon Grove's Tech Ed program is trying to change this locally by holding girls' interest through middle school. Hiring Mrs. Bolton in 2016 was part of that effort. She conducted a focus group with middle school girls to determine topics that would peak their interests, and she and veteran Tech Ed teacher Mark Schmel wrote the curriculum together.

Architecture and interior design programs allow students to imagine their future homes. Graphic design software, printers and engravers enable them to customize everything from t-shirts to flip-flops to jewelry. Furthermore, students must answer economics and environmental questions about their projects – if a polyester shirt they designed were to be mass-marketed, what jobs would be created? What resources would be used?

Through new partnerships with several local animal shelters, boys and girls are creating toys, treats and feeders for shelter animals, including a cardboard castle for bunnies to chew to bits and structures that keep chickens from running over doves at feeding time.

The classes teach STEM skills and teamwork, and encourage creativity. "In this class, everyone in the room can have a different answer, and everyone can be correct," said Mrs. Bolton.



New Tech Tools – Including Sawyer the Cobot - at Avon Grove High School



Avon Grove High School expanded its already robust tech offerings with some additional 3D printers, a plasma cutter and a collaborative robot, or cobot.

One 3D printer resides in Center Court – the center of the school – in hopes that it will encourage students to take STEM courses.

Students use the cobot, named Sawyer, to assist them with projects requiring sorting or repetitive action – such as placing wood or metal into a mill. Students can manipulate Sawyer's arms to show the cobot what to do, or write instructions in code. One coding project taught Sawyer to make coffee with a Keurig, then serve it.

Penn London Elementary Gets a Makerspace

Avon Grove elementary students are introduced to STEM concepts in their Makerspace. The District opened its second Makerspace at Penn London Elementary School (PLE) in the spring of 2017. A Makerspace is a DIY lab where classes or individual students can create, invent and learn. The District's first Makerspace is located at Avon Grove Intermediate School.

PLE's Makerspace includes Squishy Circuits, which use PlayDough as a conductor to wire a switch that turns on a light or a sensor that turns on a buzzer. Students learn coding with small robots called Ozobots, and they dream, design and build things using interactive tablets and Lego walls. Teachers truly become coaches in these spaces, as the goal is to encourage and support students working solo or in teams to discover a solution or solutions to a given problem.

1:1 Technology Initiative

The District began implementing its 1:1 Technology Initiative in 2016-17, issuing a Chromebook to every seventh- and eighth-grade student at Engle Middle School in the inaugural year. It was a huge success.

More than 90% of the students who received a device took it home nightly, which helps make sure all Avon Grove students have access to online learning at home! The Chromebooks are a gateway to Schoology, the District's digital learning management system. Through Schoology, students can access curriculum and content, including text, video and other resources provided by their teachers. The Chromebooks allow them to use the same engaging materials whether at school or at home.

This year, all sixth-graders received a device. Since last year's eighth-graders are now freshman, all students in grades six through nine are now equipped with District-issued Chromebooks. In 2018-19, all students from grades six through twelve will have a District-provided device. The \$50 annual technology fee required to take devices home covers the cost of insurance, a second charger for home use and online content monitoring designed to keep students safe while online.



Avon Grove School District is Creating an Education Foundation

Avon Grove School District Administration, with the encouragement of the Board of School Directors, is establishing an education foundation.

Much of the legal and procedural groundwork for the Foundation was accomplished in the 2016-17 school year, including writing the bylaws and applying for 501(c)3 non-profit status.

Through the Avon Grove Education Foundation, community members and organizations within and beyond the District will have an opportunity to donate resources to assist students in reaching academic and professional success. The Foundation will bridge the community and the classroom, extending and diversifying learning opportunities. It will award scholarships and grants to teachers, supporting staff and students seeking to maximize their learning and enhancing student achievement through special programs.

This school year, the process by which future Education Foundation Board of Director's members will be chosen was adopted, and applications for board seats were solicited. The Board will consist of a diverse group of people from across the Avon Grove community and will include the Superintendent or his designee, at least one representative from the local Chamber of Commerce, at least one District administrator and at least one District student.

The District's goal is to have the Education Foundation Board seated and the Foundation operational by July 1, 2018. Board members will then establish a calendar of events, the processes by which funds will be raised and the Foundation's mission statement – which will ultimately guide the awarding of Foundation grants.

Facilities Planning to Foster 21st Century Learning

Providing an ideal physical learning environment is key to supporting the success of Avon Grove's strategic plan and its curricular initiatives, thus preparing our students for their futures.

After 16 months of research, the Facilities Input Group (FIG), an advisory committee that includes various community stakeholders, recommended the District:

- build a new middle school and campus for grades six through eight on the previously purchased Sunnyside Road site,
- renovate the current middle school and high school buildings to form a redesigned high school campus, and
- reconfigure the grades at other schools so Avon Grove Intermediate School (AGIS) serves grades two through five and Penn London Elementary (PLE) serves kindergarten and first grade.

This plan would provide the space, flexibility and curricular opportunity to support 21st century learning across all grade levels, for current and projected enrollment. It would also:

- eliminate all portable classrooms,
- allow Avon Grove High School to meet the demand for STEM classes while encouraging creativity and collaboration between teachers and students, and
- allow reconfiguration of grade structures at the middle school, AGIS and PLE.

As presented, the FIG plan would cost approximately \$126 million after a projected \$14 million in state PLANCON reimbursements. The District held a series of Listening Posts to receive stakeholder feedback and hopes to finalize the facilities plan in spring 2018.

Please visit www.avongrove.org/facilities for more details.

► Points of Pride



AVON GROVE HIGH SCHOOL

...was recognized by US News and World Report as one of the best high schools in Pennsylvania.

...had a 2017 National Merit Scholar among last year's graduates – one of just 2,500 winners nationally.

...had seven National Merit Scholarship Program Commended Students and three National Merit Scholarship semifinalists.

FRED S. ENGLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

...Chorus sent eight students to the PMEA District 12 Middle School Chorus Fest. Chorus Fest consists of the top choral students from each school district in Chester, Delaware and Philadelphia counties.

...girls participated in the Girls Exploring Tomorrow's Technology (GETT) Event, spending the day creating chemical reactions, building roller coasters and talking to women who use science and technology in careers ranging from Marine pilot to entrepreneur.

...received the most awards among all Chester County middle schools at the Delaware Valley Science Fair! Among them: two eighth-graders won first place in the biochemistry and computer categories.

AVON GROVE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

...turned a former book storage room into a TV studio, where students learn all aspects of video production and create their own content.

...Garden Program raised 397 pounds of produce for the Bridge Food Pantry and Clothes Closet in the 2016-17 school year! Through this partnership with the Chester County Food Bank, students grew many varieties of vegetables and herbs. They added flowers to raised beds to attract pollinators, researched solutions to tomato and pepper blossom rot and explored the concept of companion gardening to increase crop yields.

PENN LONDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

...changed Family STEAM night to Family STREAM night by adding robotics to the science, technology, engineering, arts and math event.

...Artist in Residence Lore Evans created a beautiful stained glass panel for the main office and worked with students on their own artwork.

...hosted an Author Visit, Literacy Night, Young Author's Fair and a Title I Reading Event to encourage its students to become readers.



ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Avon Grove High School

...ended a 40-year drought in state championships! State championships were won by the Girls Swimming & Diving Team and the Boys Lacrosse Team.

...Girls Softball Team won its first-ever District One AAAA title.

...Cheerleading squad won the Ches-Mont Invitational Tournament, competed in Districts and finished fifth in the state.

...Field Hockey, Girls Volleyball, Boys Basketball and Baseball teams qualified for Districts.

...Boys Volleyball Team won the Independent Volleyball League title for the second time in school history and qualified for Districts.

...Boys and Girls Ice Hockey teams qualified for the Flyers Cup.

...individual athletes won many awards at the District- and State-levels.

...had 25 student athletes commit to continuing their athletic and academic careers at the college level.

Fred S. Engle Middle School

...created an Athletic Leadership Academy. Coaches chose one athlete from each sport to meet throughout the year for discussions on ways to become better leaders, motivators and positive role models. Engle's Academy joined the high school Academy to hear guest speakers and work with Penn London Elementary students on math games.

...started the F.S.E. Middle School Dodgeball Tournament, which raised more than \$600 to purchase a new weight scale and other equipment.

...eighth-grade football coach Don Murphy created Engle's first athletic conditioning camp, inviting athletes from all sports to get in shape before the season.



Avon Grove Intermediate School Third Grade Teacher Helena Lynch Receives 2017 Citadel Heart of Learning Honor

Avon Grove Intermediate School (AGIS) third grade teacher Helena Lynch was honored as a 2017 Citadel Heart of Learning Award finalist, representing the District as one of just 15 finalists from across Chester County honored by the Citadel Federal Credit Union.

"She is able to meet the needs of any student who walks through her classroom doors," said AGIS Principal Jeffrey Detweiler. "Mrs. Lynch's success as a language arts and social studies teacher begins with the relationships she builds with her students. She has built an environment where the kids know she cares tremendously about them," he said. "Her students are challenged to do so much academically, but they don't mind that challenge, because really, they would do anything for Mrs. Lynch."

Mrs. Lynch's lessons often include events that allow students to more deeply understand what they have learned. Black History Month has included a play that her students put on for parents, School Board members and the Superintendent. Dr. Seuss Day is customarily about literature appreciation, but is also part of a lesson in persuasive writing and argument. Students write letters to convince The Grinch not to steal Christmas. The Grinch has even been known to show up in their classroom for a live debate!

"Mrs. Lynch has gone above and beyond putting together these experiences for kids that they'll remember for a lifetime," said Mr. Detweiler.

On-Going Curriculum Review Results Evident in Improving Student Performance

The District has been examining and updating each curriculum as necessary to further align what its schools teach with the Pennsylvania state standards. As a result, Avon Grove students are performing better on state assessments – in fact, their scores on tests taken during the 2016-17 school year exceeded the statewide average scores in all subjects.

DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS OF MATH CURRICULUM

- Full, District-wide implementation of the new math curriculum was reached in the 2015-16 school year.
- Avon Grove students have improved scores on the PSSA tests, while those of their peers across the state have declined.
- Grade three and grade eight performances have exceeded 10% growth over three years.
- The scores of Avon Grove students taking the Algebra I Keystone Exam for the first time have improved by 20 percentage points in three years.

READING SCORE IMPROVEMENTS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE WITH FUTURE STRATEGIC PLANS

- Grade three has had a seven percentage point increase over three years.
- Student cohorts in grades six and eight have outperformed comparable groups during the past three years.
- Future strategic plans are set in place to continue positive growth in student performance.

| 2017 Cohort Average SAT scores | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| AGSD | STATE |
| 1132 | 1073 |

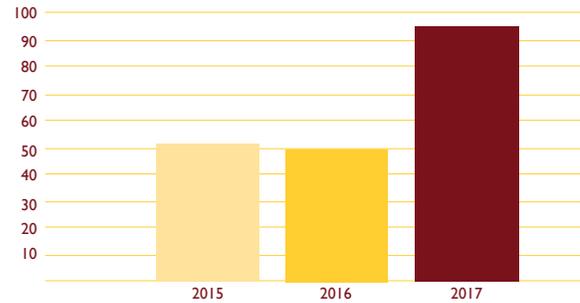
ADVANCED PLACEMENT PERFORMANCE

- Avon Grove High School students took 739 Advanced Placement (AP) tests in 2017 – up from 720 in 2016 and 675 in 2015.
- 77.1% of Avon Grove AP students scored a 3 or above, as compared to 67.1% in Pennsylvania and 60.3% globally.

DUAL-ENROLLMENT

94 students earned 213 passing grades, with an estimated college savings of \$66,500:

Dual-Enrollment Totals



2017 PSSA SCORES

| | Reading | | Math | | Science | |
|---------|---------|-------|------|-------|---------|-------|
| | AGSD | STATE | AGSD | STATE | AGSD | STATE |
| Grade 3 | 74.9 | 64.6 | 73.9 | 54.5 | - | - |
| Grade 4 | 72.4 | 60.9 | 64.5 | 46.6 | 81.6 | 74.5 |
| Grade 5 | 74.2 | 59.6 | 63.2 | 43.8 | - | - |
| Grade 6 | 66.8 | 63.6 | 60.8 | 40.3 | - | - |
| Grade 7 | 74.9 | 59.5 | 62.6 | 37.8 | - | - |
| Grade 8 | 67.4 | 58.9 | 60.5 | 32.5 | 75.6 | 52.7 |

2017 HIGH SCHOOL KEYSTONE EXAMS, 2018 COHORT ADVANCED/PROFICIENT

| Algebra | Biology | Literature |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Avon Grove: 76.0 State: 65.6 | Avon Grove 75.4 State: 63.4 | Avon Grove 82.2 State: 72.7 |

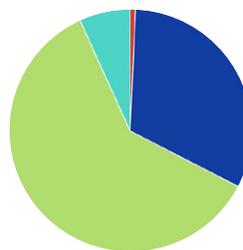
Sound Fiscal Practices Allow Avon Grove to Invest in Student Learning

Avon Grove School District has achieved operational balance with the 2017-18 Budget – a feat accomplished through three budget cycles focused on cost-containment strategies and reinvestment. Between 2014 and 2016, \$4.9 million was reinvested in personnel, curriculum, facilities and technology. The District simultaneously made several cost-saving operational changes, saving \$4.9 million in the same period, so the impact was cost neutral.

These budgetary achievements have allowed the District to begin examining future capital needs through a district-wide facilities study with the hope of creating a plan to bring all of Avon Grove's school buildings and infrastructure up to standards supportive of 21st century learning, fulfilling a strategic initiative.

The 2017-18 budget also funds several other key District initiatives, including the launch of Penn London Elementary School's new full-day kindergarten program and the progression of the 1:1 Technology Initiative, through which students will receive a web-enabled device.

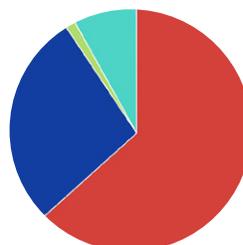
The budget included a modest tax increase of 2.5%, taking the rate from 29.04 mills to 29.77. The tax on a home at the District's average assessment of \$168,000 would pay about \$5,000 in taxes.



WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

Total Revenues: \$93,664,026

- Revenue from federal sources: \$664,869
- Revenue from state sources: \$29,838,166
- Revenue from local sources: \$56,832,977
- Fund balance appropriation: \$6,328,014



WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Total Expenditures: \$93,664,026

- Instruction: \$59,334,851
- Support Services: \$25,572,674
- Non-instructional Services: \$1,176,136
- Debt Service, Transfers & Contingency: \$7,580,365



Avon Grove School District
 375 South Jennersville Road
 West Grove, PA 19390
 610.869.2441
www.avongrove.org

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT



In the Avon Grove School District:

- Instruction, enrichment and support are tailored to meet each individual student's needs **PAGE 1**
- New communication efforts keep the community in-touch **PAGE 2**
- New Middle School curriculum aims to keep girls and boys equally interested in science, technology, math and engineering..... **PAGE 3**
- An Education Foundation will sponsor events and fund teacher and student projects **PAGE 4**
- Excellence in academics, athletics and the arts abounds **PAGE 5**
- Students out-perform the state and nation on key assessments, thanks in part to District curriculum initiatives **PAGE 6**

Look inside to learn more!

| Faculty Profile | Number | 15+ years in AGSD | Fewer than 15 years in AGSD | Bachelors | Masters or Masters Equivalency | Doctorate |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Teachers | 333 | 108 | 225 | 59 | 272 | 2 |
| Guidance Counselors, School Psychologists, Nurses, Home & School Visitor | 28 | 11 | 17 | 4 | 23 | 1 |
| Total | 361 | 119 | 242 | 63 | 295 | 3 |

Congratulations to the Class of 2017!

The 499 graduates of 2017 are already making Avon Grove School District proud!

FUTURE PLANS

- Higher education: 88.7%
- Technical: 4.0%
- Military: 3.0%
- Career: 2.3%
- Undecided: 2.0%

2017 scholarships, excluding high school-awarded scholarships: \$4,340,161

▶ **95.7% of 2017 graduates matriculated to higher learning in college, trade school or the military.**

Avon Grove School District Enrollment

Avon Grove School District serves more than 5,000 students from five townships: New London, London Grove (which includes the boroughs of Avondale and West Grove), London Britain, Penn and Franklin.

ENROLLMENT TOTALS

- Penn London Elementary School: 902
- Avon Grove Intermediate School: 1,534
- Fred S. Engle Middle School: 830
- Avon Grove High School: 1,752
- Total: 5,018

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Asian: 2.11%
- Black: 1.36%
- Hispanic: 24.38%
- Multi-Race: 3.04%
- White: 69.08%

AVON GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS, 2016-17

Charles F. Beatty III
 Jeffrey Billig
 Herman Engel
 Edward Farina
(End of term: 12/17)
 Brian Gaerity, Vice President
(End of term: 12/17)

Tracy Lisi
 Patrick Walker, Ph.D.
(End of term: 12/17)
 Bonnie Wolff, President
 Bill Wood

Congratulations to new board members John Auerbach, Rick Dumont and Lynn Weber, who were seated in December 2017, and to new Board President Tracy Lisi and Vice President Bonnie Wolff.