

2002 PARSS Annual Meeting
“PARSS: PROVIDING REAL LEADERSHIP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION”

Thursday, April 25, 2002

7:30 - 9:00 A.M.	Registration	Room - Atrium
9:00-9:15 A.M.	Welcome Mr. B. Allan Schoonover, PARSS President, Penns Valley Superintendent Dr. David Monsour, PARSS Conference Chair, Brookville Area Superintendent Mr. Joe Bard, PARSS Executive Director	Room - Nittany
9:15-10:15 A.M.	Session 1 - General Session “Two-Year Post Secondary Education for Rural Students” Speaker: Ms. Patricia A. Krebs, Executive Director (Retired) Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges	Room - Nittany
10:15-11:00 A.M.	Break and Visit Exhibits Sponsored by Computer Resources	Room - Atrium
11:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.	Session 2 - General Session “The State System of Education and Rural Students” Speaker: Dr. Jessica S. Kozloff, President Bloomsburg University of PA	Room - Nittany
12:00-1:00 P.M.	Lunch <i>Sponsored by Foreman Architects Special Music by Port Allegany Choir</i>	Room - Atrium
1:00-2:00 P.M.	Session 3 - General Session “Report of Children in Rural Pennsylvania” Speaker: Ms. Joan Benso, Executive Director Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children	Room - Nittany
2:00-2:15 P.M.	Break <i>Sponsored by Buchart Horn/Basco</i>	Room - Atrium
2:15-3:30 P.M.	Session 4 - General Session “Rural Children and Early Childhood Education” Moderator: Dr. Jane Daschbach, Director Early Childhood and Early Literacy Harrisburg City School District Panel: Dr. Fay Glosenger Professor of Early Childhood Education Juniata College Ms. Diane Robbins, Principal Early Childhood Learning Center Titusville School District Mr. Tim Potts, Executive Director Pennsylvania School Reform Network	Room - Nittany
3:30-3:45 P.M.	Break - Sponsored by Quad 3	
3:45-5:00 P.M.	Session 5 - General Session “Cyber Schools - The Legal Front” Speaker: Mr. Louis Rosen, Esq. Levin Group	Room - Nittany
5:00 P.M.	Visit Exhibits	Room - Atrium
6:00-6:45 P.M.	Reception <i>Sponsored by Arthurs LeStrange and Company, Inc.</i>	Room - Atrium
6:45-9:00	Banquet <i>Sponsored by Parker Hunter and Turner Construction</i>	Room - Atrium
8:30-9:00 P.M.	“Scholarships for Rural Students” Speakers: Mr. Andrew J. McKelvey, Chairman, TMP Worldwide, Inc. & Monster.com. Mrs. Dena L. McKelvey, President, McKelvey Foundation	

Friday, April 26, 2002

8:00-8:45 A.M.	Breakfast <i>Sponsored by PEMCo Educational Furniture & Equipment</i>	Room - Atrium
9:00-10:15 A.M.	Session 6 - General Session “Legislative Update” Speakers: Mr. David Dumeyer, Executive Director, House Education Committee Mr. David Broderic, Executive Director, Senate Education Committee Mr. Chris Wakely, Executive Director, House Education Committee (D) Mr. Al Ferguson, Assistant Executive Director, House Appropriations Committee (D)	Room - Nittany
10:15-10:30 A.M.	Break	Room - Atrium
10:30-11:45 A.M.	Session 7 - General Session “The Politics of Education” Speaker: Dr. G. Terry Madonna, Chairman Department of Political Science and Director of the Center for Political Affairs Millersville University of Pennsylvania	Room - Nittany
11:45-12:00 P.M.	General Membership Meeting	Room - Nittany
12:15-1:15 P.M.	Lunch <i>Sponsored by: L. Robert Kimball & Associates</i>	Room - Atrium



APRIL 2002

“Quality education for all children of Pennsylvania”

VOL. 16 NO. 2

DOING THE MATH...THE NEXT 16 MONTHS
(This article was submitted by Timothy J. Shrom, PRSPA)

It is no secret that the large majority of school districts will face an extremely tough 2002-03 budget year. However, 2003-04 does not look much better and districts need to be planning accordingly. Districts and LEAS need to take a hard look at fiscal implications over at least the next two years, set priorities and be prepared to do all of the three R's. That is “Reduce” spending through cuts and deferrals, “Raise” real estate taxes, and “Raid” fund balances (if you have any) to help soften the needs of the previous two. The proposed Basic Education subsidy increases as outlined in the state budget represent less than \$100,000 for 440 school districts (87%). To put that in perspective, we can look at a simple math model for the next two fiscal years.



Step one: The largest part of any budget in any school district is payroll. The goal here is to simply multiply payroll by the percentage cost factors we can identify. If we project what is already known and reasonably estimate year two, you can see the need for two year planning and discussion. For July 1, 2002, assume a 3.5% payroll increase for staff (or whatever your current contract(s) stipulate); assume a 2.82% increase in the retirement rate; convert the average hospitalization increase of

13 to 18% into a % of payroll (in my case approximately 1.7%); and add in the required social security cost to your higher payroll number. You will get a percentage number somewhere between 8 and 10%. Now move on to year two.

Step two: Repeat the same sequence above. I again used 3.5% for staff increases. In the second year I used and additional 3.5% increase for the retirement rate and 1.6% for

hospitalization, and added in social security. The retirement rate calculation factors in loses and gains over a three year period. Only 1/3 of the current years investment losses are reflected in this years rate change. Next year the second third will be added in. An increase of 3.5% as noted for next year is pretty much a done deal, and may even be a little short. From March of 2002 to July 1 of 2003, it is fair to say
(continued on page 2)

Big Changes

In the recent history of public events in this Commonwealth, there have been relatively few changes that can match the importance of those that impact on the way the people think about school funding change. As with most such changes there is little or no recognition that these things are taking place. This is because of the large, generic scale of the changes, and because they are proceeding at a near geologic pace. When we speak of change that needs to occur, the mental image is of a mountain to climb. When we look back at change that has occurred we see a long, gradual slope behind us.

For many years, indeed decades, the question about school funding reform was, “Will it happen?” For the nearly 10 years that the PARSS equity lawsuit toiled its way through the

judicial process (culminating in the Supreme Court's “nonjusticiable” non sequitur), there was always a feeling that a negative outcome meant that funding change would not come about. The same sense pervaded the early days of discussions with members of the General Assembly about whether or not they would take the issue up as a serious legislative issue.

Thus it very significant that today the discussion is couched in terms of “When and how will it occur”. The reasons for the change are several: the creation of the PARSS-ASDEE-PLUS proposal, Senator Rhoades assumption of leadership of the issue, the passage of H.R. 42, spiraling property taxes, as well as a general sense on the part of many that the issue had to be dealt with.

We are now seeing a second change take place. It may take some
(continued on page 3)

PARSS 2002 PROGRAM IS BEST YET (see pg. 4)



JOE SAYS...

A Sense of Belonging

PARSS has a "rolling membership", so it isn't really possible to say exactly how many members we have at any given time. Over the course of a year there are at least 200 school districts that belong. That is very good, and we are proud of that number, but we are always seeking to broaden that base. Most of our members have been with us for a longtime, and we believe that loyalty is an endorsement of the kind of representation and service PARSS strives to provide.

The fact remains that, counting only those that can be considered rural, or small, about 260 of Pennsylvania's 501 school districts are potential members. Why aren't they? There are no definitive answers, but our experience gives us some insights as to why this is the case. First; not all districts are interested. Second; for some, any money spent that does not result in a human or material product is beyond their ken. Third; over the last several decades, because of the state's shameful failure to properly fund public education, and the brainless move from six year board terms to four year (allowing the replacement of a majority every two years), there is a lot of instability in the way many districts are governed. This does not lead to the fostering of long term relationships.

Fourth; some realize that, insofar as our efforts to represent the interests of a large segment of public education to the legislative and executive branches of state government are concerned, we are serving them whether or not they join. It is a bit like your local public radio and television station: you get to listen and watch to your heart's content even if you don't give them a dime. Besides, those funding drives are SO damn annoying!

We have also been our own worst enemy, in this regard. We regularly get calls, emails or visits from superintendents or board members of districts that don't belong to PARSS, and have no intention of joining. This doesn't prevent them from asking for our help on some problem or other that they are having with the legislature or bureaucracy. We have never, to my knowledge, failed to try and help them out. My use of the plural pronoun is a little shaky, because Arnie Hillman is our PARSS Good Samaritan. I'm not as nice.

Because the membership of PARSS is the primary audience of this newsletter, I know I am preaching to the choir, but it is still worth telling you this if it brings us even one new member. The additional funding

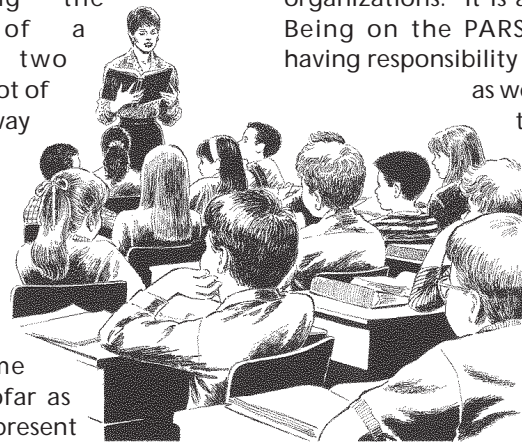
brought by new members is great, as PARSS' major source of revenue is the dues you pay. But, like you have to do with your schools, we get a lot from relatively little. For example, our office is the third floor of my home, which I had the foresight to locate just a few blocks from the Capitol.

Also, those of us who are the staff of PARSS do what we do as a labor of love, not because it is a great way to earn a living. But don't play us any violin music. Since our PARSS' work follows full careers in public service, we aren't exactly starving. In addition, our board is different from that of most organizations. It is a working board. Being on the PARSS board means having responsibility for specific tasks, as well as carrying out the traditional policy making and committee service roles.

The major reason for us to try and build the membership is that we are all, as educators and citizens, involved in a number of critical battles for the future of public education, and by extension, the future of our children. If it is powerful for us to tell legislators and others that we represent 200 school districts, how much more powerful is it for us to be able to say we represent 260?

A second reason is that as more and more informational, technical and support services disappear from the Department of Education, the greater the need for alternate sources of help. There really is a kind of underground PDE that responds to the cries for assistance. We are part of that network, but can't offer services at the level of demand that is out there without building in better delivery, consistency and structure. This takes money, and it is increasingly apparent that those who pay PARSS' annual membership fee should be the recipients of the services.

As you probably guessed, this is the time of year when we send out invoices for membership. Please send yours back promptly (check enclosed), and tell your colleagues who don't belong that it is time to ante up.



(Doing the Math...Continued from page 1)

that every district faces expenditure budget increases ranging from 17% to 20% of their largest budget, payroll. All other increasing cost factors such as new debt service, additional staff for growth, special education, transportation, technology, utilities, insurance, etc., enter from that point.

Other factors:

It is realized that all is not quite that simple but it is a good starting point. Yes, part of the retirement increases come back as revenue. But we all have lost interest earnings, PURTA funds, and a reduction in grant opportunities. The retirement rate reductions over the past several years have reduced district capacity to absorb the current increases while they served to mask the increasing costs of health care. As both now continue to rise, it will be common to see benefit costs (as a percent of payroll) well over 30%, and growing. With the state budget in a deficit position, including a substantial hit to the rainy day fund, I believe it is unlikely that any significant relief will be found in next years state budget. Districts need to do all they can to adjust to these factors and plan accordingly. Districts should be wary of handling the 2002-03 budget problems with "one year fixes". If you plan to strap yourself in for year one and hope for relief in year two, please do the math and be sure you can hold on.

(Big Changes...Continued from page 1)

time, but .far less than it took to get past "Will it happen?" One of the most difficult things we have had to deal with over the years was people's assumption that their school funding problems were fixable by their local board. It is very hard for folks to grasp that the leaking roof at their school is a state issue.

We are now seeing people all Pennsylvania responding very differently. They are asking their elected state officials what they are doing about school funding and local taxes, and there is a feeling that this is just the tip of an iceberg.

Again, there are several reasons for this change. Among them are the water on rock effect of PARSS work over the years; the excellent work of the Pennsylvania School Reform Network, which has worked hard to bring editorial attention to the problem; the State Board of Education's study, and subsequent report; Representative Mario Civera's Select Committee's hearings all over the Commonwealth and; the emergence of Good Schools Pennsylvania which is teaching community people about school funding and organizing them as a grass roots political force.

We congratulate, and celebrate, all of those now working to provide our children better learning opportunities through improved funding. Welcome!

Order The 2002 State of the Child in Pennsylvania: Available March 19, 2002

The first place to look for the facts on child well-being

The State of the Child in Pennsylvania: A 2002 Guide to Child Well-Being is the definitive resource and planning tool for educators and school administrators. Published by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, *The State of the Child* features:

- Detailed profiles on every Pennsylvania school district, including data on student performance, enrollment, elementary class sizes, attendance, dropouts, revenues and expenditures, school violence, and poverty.
- County showings on 19 critical health and well-being indicators.

Single copy: \$32, plus:

- \$4.25 postage & handling for each item (book or PC-compatible CD-ROM).
- \$2.18 state sales tax for each item. If tax exempt, include tax-exempt form with order.

Find an order form at www.papartnerships.org, or send name, title, address, and check, made out to Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, to PPC, 20 N. Market Square, Suite 300, Harrisburg, PA 17101-1632. Questions: Phone 717-236-5680.

RURAL STUDENTS AND COLLEGE PERSISTENCE

In a study done by Dr. Wenfan Yan of Indiana University of PA, the outcomes of why rural students chose to go or not go to college rested on the family. In families where college was "never" spoken of, most rural students did not attend. There is a correlation between science courses taken and going on to college. Rural students who dropped out of college were less likely to major in math and the sciences and were more often health care or business related majors. This study is available from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania 717-787-9555.

CYBER SCHOOL CHANGES?

At a recent meeting of the Senate Education Committee, Senator James J. Rhoades suggested three changes to how cyber education might work here in Pennsylvania.

- Charters for Cyber Schools should be issued by the Commonwealth
- A uniform payment structure should govern school district obligations to cyber schools
- Cyber schools should be accountable to state government
- The Commonwealth should participate in the payment of these fees

Secretary Charles Zogby, in a Senate Education Committee meeting on Cyber Schools, largely concurred with the Senator.

Pennsylvania Rural and Small School News

is published by the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools (PARSS) www.parss.org

President: B. Allan Schoonover
Penns Valley S.D.
R. D. 2, Box 116
Spring Mills, PA 16875
(814) 422-8814
FAX: (814) 422-8020

Executive Director
Joe Bard
22 S. 22nd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17104
717/236-7180
FAX: 717/236-5840
e-mail: jfbard@home.com
e-mail: arnold@parss.org

Printed by TransAmerica Printing

**PARSS 2002 LEADERSHIP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS
ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 25, 26, 2002
RAMADA INN
STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA**

WHAT: A variety of session topics will be covered: early childhood, cyber schools, school funding, legislation, current political affairs, and legal issues

WHEN: Beginning: Thursday, APRIL 25, 2002 at 9:00 A.M. Concluding: Friday, APRIL 26, 2002 at 12:00

WHERE: All sessions will be held at the RAMADA INN in State College. Accommodations are available at the RAMADA INN. Accommodations are not included in the registration fees. Phone number for reservations is as follows: 814-238-3001
* *Please specify PARSS Conference when making reservations.

If you are unable to secure a reservation at the RAMADA INN, you may call:
Toftrees Resort- 1-800-252-3551
Atherton Hilton- 1-800-832-0132
Nittany Lion Inn- 1-800-233-7505
Best Western Inn 1-800-635-1177

REGISTRATION FEE: \$125.00 EACH FOR FIRST FOUR PERSONS AND \$40.00 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON
\$155.00 EACH FOR NON-MEMBER SCHOOLS, FEE INCLUDES 2 LUNCHESES, 1 BANQUET, 1 BREAKFAST AND BEVERAGE BREAKS

Mr. Andrew J. McKelvey, Chairman of TMP Corp. (monster.com) and Mrs. Dena McKelvey, President of the McKelvey Foundation (scholarships for rural students) will be the Banquet Speakers.
Each attendee will receive a complimentary PARSS conference kit
Please send in your registration and make your hotel reservations as early as possible
Be a nice person and bring a board member, business administrator, teacher, or community resident

----- (Please Tear off and return with payment) -----

SEND REGISTRATION TO:

Dr. David Monsour
PARSS Conference Chair
Brookville Area School District
P.O. Box 479
Brookville, PA 15825-0479

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____ **Member/NonMember**
(circle one)

REGISTRATION FOR: (NAMES) (please put titles, Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr. and Position)

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____ (Make out check to PARSS) _____
Phone No. _____ Email _____

(Registration will also be conducted the morning of the conference from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.)
Please FAX cancellations to Dr. David Monsour, Brookville Area School District at 814-849-6842 prior to April 5, 2002. Refunds will not be made after that date.

**PARSS 2002 LEADERSHIP FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS
ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 25, 26, 2002
RAMADA INN
STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA**

WHAT: A variety of session topics will be covered: early childhood, cyber schools, school funding, legislation, current political affairs, and legal issues

WHEN: Beginning: Thursday, APRIL 25, 2002 at 9:00 A.M. Concluding: Friday, APRIL 26, 2002 at 12:00

WHERE: All sessions will be held at the RAMADA INN in State College. Accommodations are available at the RAMADA INN. Accommodations are not included in the registration fees. Phone number for reservations is as follows: 814-238-3001
* *Please specify PARSS Conference when making reservations.

If you are unable to secure a reservation at the RAMADA INN, you may call:
Toftrees Resort- 1-800-252-3551
Atherton Hilton- 1-800-832-0132
Nittany Lion Inn- 1-800-233-7505
Best Western Inn 1-800-635-1177

REGISTRATION FEE: \$125.00 EACH FOR FIRST FOUR PERSONS AND \$40.00 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON
\$155.00 EACH FOR NON-MEMBER SCHOOLS, FEE INCLUDES 2 LUNCHESES, 1 BANQUET, 1 BREAKFAST AND BEVERAGE BREAKS

Mr. Andrew J. McKelvey, Chairman of TMP Corp. (monster.com) and Mrs. Dena McKelvey, President of the McKelvey Foundation (scholarships for rural students) will be the Banquet Speakers.
Each attendee will receive a complimentary PARSS conference kit
Please send in your registration and make your hotel reservations as early as possible
Be a nice person and bring a board member, business administrator, teacher, or community resident

----- (Please Tear off and return with payment) -----

SEND REGISTRATION TO:

Dr. David Monsour
PARSS Conference Chair
Brookville Area School District
P.O. Box 479
Brookville, PA 15825-0479

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____ **Member/NonMember**
(circle one)

REGISTRATION FOR: (NAMES) (please put titles, Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr. and Position)

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____ (Make out check to PARSS) _____
Phone No. _____ Email _____

(Registration will also be conducted the morning of the conference from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.)
Please FAX cancellations to Dr. David Monsour, Brookville Area School District at 814-849-6842 prior to April 5, 2002. Refunds will not be made after that date.