

# CORE

Community Organized to Rescue Education

## NOW YOU KNOW

FOURTH EDITION, September 7, 2008

"What's the difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull? **Lipstick!**"

Sarah Palin, Governor of Alaska

## CORE LOGIC

Higher SAT/ACT scores, fewer dropouts, more accountability, less waste, more say-so, less stress, less conflict, uncertain and difficult family economics, less courtroom drama, more representation, less politics, more respect. The list of parent "wants" goes on and on.

From the other side, the want list includes fewer unfunded mandates, more predictable revenue sources, more parental responsibility, less criticism, more understanding. The list of administrative "wants" goes on and on.

The fact of the matter is that schools systems, kids, and parents are all caught in the tug of war, a proverbial two-headed llama situation. The political positioning over voucher-based education is growing more heated, the fall-out more disruptive to children and families as voters, educators and politicians wage ideology wars that have big consequences. Amendments 5, 7, and 9 have been tossed off the ballot. But, months ago, the very prospect of those amendments passing may have had something to do with the huge concerns expressed by the school board and the budget decisions like the schedule flip that were made in anticipation of future cuts.

It stands to reason it's in the best interest of children - dependent, non-voters - that we, the responsible adults in their lives figure out how to pull in the same direction - delivering the best product possible (education) to the consumer (child) - until the great debate is resolved.

Children deserve better than to be caught in the middle, as they do not suspend their need for a viable education until the political debate is over. Let the campaigns for and against property tax reductions and school vouchers be waged in public debate forums and in the halls of the local and state legislatures - as far away as possible from the classroom door. Children deserve our mutual best effort to create a safe, stable, supportive, encouraging learning environment - in the meantime.

CORE, (Community Organized to Rescue Education) does not exist to stir the pot of "us against them." CORE is the same group of parents that had a vision of fostering in Orange County a community that works together - no matter what the circumstances - to achieve a shared goal of excellence in education. CORE still envisions engaging the entire community in the exercise of exploring ideas and innovative solutions, gathering opinions, engaging in problem resolution, fostering best practices - and setting an example for our children of how earnest and continuous communication among all stakeholders sets the stage for continuous improvement.

Sounds a bit naïve, idealistic, unrealistic.....maybe. But as long as the memory of Michael Phelps going for the *most* gold is still fresh in our minds, why not set our own sights high? Excellence is never achieved by lowering the bar of expectation.

## IMPORTANT DATES

**SEPTEMBER 9** School Board Meeting 5:30 p.m. **Public Hearing & Final Budget Approval**

**SEPTEMBER 10** **Evans Replacement High**, 9th Grade Center, 2751 Lake Stanley Rd.  
6:30 p.m. Last hearing.

**SEPTEMBER 18** ELC Building, 4:30 p.m. Rezoning Workshop. New school opening: Summerport, Keene's Pheasant Dr. **Existing schools impacted - Sunset Park and Whispering Oak Elem.**

<http://www.orangecountycore.org/>

Jump on. Register. Visit all the links. Use Paypal to donate. It's pretty slick, and it is your place to contact CORE. We are in the process of converting from our community e-mail circles to a common database and a common community forum for current news, information you can use, educational information from around the county, state, and the nation. We will be adding to the website as we go along...CORE, like Rome, wasn't built in a day!

**Give us your input! E-mail us at [info@orangecountycore.org](mailto:info@orangecountycore.org).**

### **NEW BROCHURE AVAILABLE**

We are in the process of distributing our new brochure. If you are able to help with this, please let us know by clicking on the link above and e-mailing CORE. Let us know the best way to get them to you for distribution in your area. There is a membership drive underway and gaining momentum!

***"The purpose of public education is to ensure universal access to good schools, to prepare children for success in private life, participation in public life, and, we hope, to build tolerant, harmonious communities."***

Andrew Coulson, Cato Institute  
Quoted in the Washington Post 4/6/08

### **LEGAL BRIEF**

Just to bring you up to date....the administrative hearing scheduled for August 27 was postponed.

After a series of negotiations between Mr. Self and the attorneys at OCPS, it looks like the earliest the administrative hearing will take place is early November.

Mr. Self is also preparing arguments in the concurrent civil case. The way things are structured, the civil case cannot be addressed until the administrative hearing is completed.

Anyone who has had any dealings whatsoever with the court systems, let alone the administrative judicial system, has experienced the frustration of delays in court dates. Our case seems to be no exception. More information will be published as it is available. In the meantime, thanks for your patience and support of these efforts.

### **ALSO IN THE MEANTIME: SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION RESULTS!**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO VICKY BELL, New school board representative for District 4.** As with all the candidates, Vicky promised to work to reverse the flip and be a representative involved with the community.

**RUN OFF IN DISTRICT 7.** Christine Moore Curtis and Laura Keller have also promised to work to reverse the flip. They will be squaring off in the November election. Be involved with the candidate of your choice, support her and be sure to vote.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Excerpt from <http://www.collegeboard.com/>

"Colleges care: The good news is that colleges pay attention to your life both inside and outside the classroom. Yes your academics probably come first, but your activities reveal a great deal about you."

The article names several areas college admissions representatives look at. Among them, passion and commitment to an area of outside, non-academic interest; consistency of involvement over the long term; and work experience in the field of interest. All contribute to the overall snapshot of the grade-qualified student under consideration for admission.

Advice from the most recent Florida Prepaid College Board mailer advised college bound students to make sure their course selections from middle through high school qualify them for enrollment in AP and honors classes. And repeat the advice to "get involved" with clubs, sports teams, and service organizations because colleges like to see students involved in both community and school.

The '08-'09 Orange County college-bound juniors and seniors have been given a difficult road to travel. Some have made painful choices between school, jobs, sports, and extracurricular activities. Many of the protests from the students over the flip had exactly to do with the students' desire to be involved and the knowledge that the flip might compromise their goals.

The available literature is pretty clear. Admissions are highly competitive, and while grades matter, so do the extra's. Orange County students are competing for college admissions with students from all over the state and the country. To be successful competitors, they need a level playing field - the opportunity to compete.

**There are some great research hounds and mavens out there....send information you would like to see included in the newsletter to**

**[info@orangecountycore.org](mailto:info@orangecountycore.org)** / Newsletter is published about every two weeks - hurricane delays notwithstanding.