

## **Key Communicator December 14 Meeting Summary**

The key communicators of PISD had their second meeting of 2009-10 on December 14, 2009. The discussion focused on the PISD K-9 Unit, District Health Services, PTA, and the Plano ISD Education Foundation.

### **PISD K-9 Unit**

PISD K-9 handlers Charlette Gabriel and Emmett Smith were present with their dogs Chara (explosives dog) and Kaki (drug & alcohol dog). Ms. Gabriel spoke about the responsibilities of their unit. She stressed that they are not police officers. Some of their job responsibilities are presenting programs to the 5<sup>th</sup> graders throughout the district and making random visits to district campuses to check for explosives, drugs, & alcohol. The team averages 4-5 schools a day and visits each school 5-6 times a year, concentrating on secondary schools. A short video was shown on the dogs and how they react when they detect explosives, drugs, or alcohol. The K-9 Unit's office is located at Haggard Middle School. Their website is <http://k-12.pisd.edu/canine/k9website.htm>.

### **School Health Updates**

Sandra Fida, Coordinator for District Health Services spoke on school health updates. She stressed the importance of parents bringing their child's medications to the school clinic, particularly controlled substances. She also explained clinic procedures when a student visits their school clinic. The state-mandated screenings include vision, hearing, spinal, and Acanthosis Nigricans. These screenings are done by the school nurse in the following grades:

Vision: Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and new students

Spinal Screening: 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and new students

Acanthosis Nigricans: 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>

Informative websites for parents are: [www.immunizetexas.com](http://www.immunizetexas.com) and [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org).

### **PTA**

Cara Mendelsohn, Plano ISD Council of PTA's President, explained the function of the Plano ISD Council of PTA is to support the PISD campus PTA's. PTA membership supports a commitment to excellence in education and to the health and welfare of children. To be put on the email list to receive the PTA Council newsletter, individuals may email: [newsletter@planopta.org](mailto:newsletter@planopta.org). Ms. Mendelsohn also announced about an upcoming Poverty Simulation Program on January 14, 2010. PISD has over 53,000 students on 68 campuses. Approximately 24% of PISD students are low socioeconomic. The Plano ISD Council of PTA's supports local control of the school calendar. If parents would like to have some input into when your child starts school they may go online to sign a petition at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/txschoolstartdate/>.

### **Plano ISD Education Foundation**

Monica Shortino, Executive Director of the Plano ISD Education Foundation stated that the Foundation generates private support for priority projects identified by the school

district for which tax dollars are not available. Donations are tax deductible. The Foundation has given \$70,000 in grants to teachers, 5<sup>th</sup> grade camp scholarships, middle school Algebra program, and working on middle school and high school science programs. The Foundation raises money through individual donations, corporate donations, Ski Plano, 5K Run in the spring, and private foundations. Less than 10% of the money received by the Foundation goes toward administrative cost. Teachers can apply for awards from June 1 through the end of September. Awards are given out in November.