

District trying to boost image

Committee to pitch community outreach plan

By **SAM GALSKI**
Staff Writer

Accentuate the positives.

That's the goal of a recently formed school communications committee that will unveil a community outreach proposal Monday morning to Hazleton Area School District officials, Superintendent Sam Marolo said.

Soon, school directors will have to decide whether to follow through with it.

"The idea is to improve the image of the school district," Marolo said. "There are too many bad perceptions out there."

John Madden, former chancellor at Penn State Hazleton, has been leading a committee of local community leaders that has worked behind the scenes to develop the plan, Marolo said. Details will be released at 11 a.m. Monday at the Administration Building.

Madden attended a school board meeting a few years ago and shared ideas for promoting district programs and other positive developments regarding local schools.

He said the communications plan is merely a proposal at this point, and hopes school directors attend the meeting and opt to move ahead with the concept.

"We're meeting Monday, I hope with some members of the board, to discuss the plan, their views on the plan and their involvement in it," Madden said. "Outreach is part of it. It's not formed

until the school board members themselves approve."

The committee consists of community members and representatives from CAN DO and the nonprofit Luzerne Foundation.

"It's a very good group," Marolo said.

Marolo said he hopes the public makes a strong showing at Monday's meeting. He believes it's important the community is made aware of positives that occur daily at local schools.

"There are numerous things going on every day in the district that never get out to the public," he said. "That affects industry coming in as they read the (news)papers and see local television. It definitely affects people moving into the community."

The goal is to raise public confidence in the district by emphasizing that Hazleton Area is a "safe, clean, high-performing" district that cares about students.

The plan calls for district employees to establish ownership of its goals, positively engage students and parents in education, and build confidence in the district among the community.

The plan includes "communications objectives" and proposes "media training to learn how to deal with commercial media."

No other details about the committee or the communications plan have been released at this point. Marolo said he'll unveil the entire plan Monday.

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5-8-10