

For immediate release

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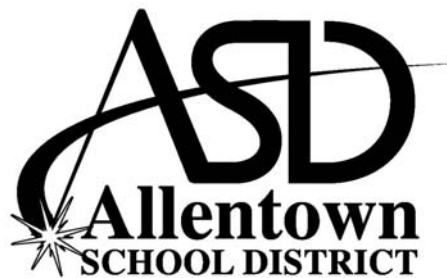
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**ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
CANCELS CLASSES ON ELECTION DAY TO ENCOURAGE TURNOUT AND
MANAGE VOTER TRAFFIC**

(Allentown, PA, October 25, 2004) – In order to encourage voter turnout and minimize both vehicular and pedestrian traffic congestion, Allentown School District is canceling student classes on Tuesday, November 2. The day will be declared a Staff Development Day, with all ASD staff required to report to their respective schools.

There are 145 polling locations within Lehigh County. Fifty-eight of them are located within the City of Allentown; eleven ASD schools plus the ASD Administration Center are part of the City's mix of polling places. Those schools with voter locations are William Allen High School, Dieruff High School, Harrison-Morton Middle School, Raub Middle School, South Mountain Middle School, Jefferson Elementary School, Lehigh Parkway Elementary School, Sheridan Elementary School, Union Terrace Elementary School, Lincoln Early Childhood Center and Midway Manor Early Childhood Center.

“After giving careful consideration to the increased interest in this election and after consulting with election officials from Lehigh County and our own principals, we have decided to not have

students attend school Tuesday, November 2, 2004 and to instead, use that as a professional development day for staff,” stated Dr. Karen S. Angello, ASD Superintendent. “All of Allentown’s public schools will be closed on Election Day. Letters are going out Tuesday, October 26, 2004 to all parents and guardians to inform them of ASD’s plans and to encourage parents who are voters to bring their children to their polling places to see democracy in action. This will allow them to see a very important part of our democracy in action. As a District, we want to assume our civic responsibility to contribute to an election day that maximizes our citizens having access to the polling places.”

According to Lehigh County voter registration records, there are currently 18,000 new registrations. Allentown alone has over 6,000 new registrations. More than 12,000 citizens are registered to vote in polling places in the ASD schools. Lehigh County, overall, employs 26 schools as polling locations throughout the County. Of those 26, 11 are in ASD schools and one in the ASD Administration Center. There is a major increase in voter registration and this increase has impacted the polling sites with the need to have more voting machines, expanding the number of poll workers and volunteers, and accommodating the Democratic, Republican and state representatives who will be monitoring compliance to election. Enforcement of the Help Americans Vote Act (HAVA), a new federal law since the 2000 election, has placed more scrutiny on the election process.

Security and safety was a consideration when weighing the cancellation of classes. “Everyone in Allentown School District is committed to keeping all our students safe and secure, and that is always our number one priority,” says Ralph Daubert, Executive Director of Community and Student Services at ASD. “ASD schools remain secure, with regulated limited access and electronic surveillance at point of entry for every school at all times. But what became clearer in our decision-making for November 2 was that vehicular and pedestrian traffic in and around the schools could become very troublesome. Plus, some of our schools have voter locations that would be problematic with students needing to move through the schools and voters needing to have access to the polling location in the schools.”

As the fourth largest of 501 districts throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Allentown School District educates approximately 17,200 students in 23 pre-school, elementary, middle and high schools located throughout the City of Allentown.

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