

## Advisory Board

An Advisory Board has been organized for the Bilingual Student Services by Director Zeny Schmidt and Community Development. Zeny has a great passion to help immigrant students to get a higher education. Her drive comes from being a refugee from Cuba in the 1960's as a 12 year old struggled to learn the language and adapt to her new life in the United States; her well-educated parents had to work cleaning homes to support her and her 5 siblings when they came to the United States. With great effort from her parents, she and all her 5 sibling achieved a college education as they were raised to believe in the importance of a higher education for a bright future. This experience inspired her to become a teacher and later a principal at Indian Trail Junior High. In 2004 the Bilingual Student Services Department was created and Zeny Schmidt was selected as the director. A great partner is the Community Development Department directed by Jim Smith who has more than 20 years of experience in the Olathe district as a teacher, coach, and principal. In 1996, he assumed responsibilities as the Business / Community Partnership coordinator and became director of Community Development in 2000. He serves as the district's liaison to the community and is involved with many community organizations for the benefit of Olathe district students; along with his Assistant Director Ruth Nelson who joined the district in 1976 at its vocational school (now Millcreek Center). In 1996, she began working on business partnerships and was named manager of Community Development in 2000 and assistant director in 2004. She assists with the development and promotion of partnerships and works with team members to implement and coordinate Community Development projects. She is also involved in the community, including the local and state-level Optimists International, and the board of the Kansas Partners in Education.

The Advisory Board intends to be responsive to the Students and Parent needs by coming up with solutions on scholarship and post-high school education funds for those students lacking legal status and identifying resources to get federal grants or loans. The advisory Board meets once a month for a breakfast meeting, where possible sponsor and possible public relations are discussed. The biggest dream of all members is to raise enough money to send outstanding students to college with a partial or complete scholarship, providing help to obtain uniforms for sports and the initiative to help poverty and health to our Hispanic population by seeking donations from community and involved companies willing to help our youth.

The advisory Board supports the District Bilingual initiative and will serve to identify resources for support of our Bilingual Population.

If you have further questions on how to be part of our board please call Jim Smith at (913) 780-8201.