

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## The No. 1 issue

The Pottstown School District is working on a three-year comprehensive plan required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The district could do the plan itself, but decided to hire a California consultant, Performance Fact Inc., to “facilitate” the process for \$79,690.

The district recently conducted a three-day planning exercise at Sunnybrook Ballroom with about 60 members of the Pottstown school community (district teachers were paid to attend).

All participants were given a thick binder containing more than 150 pages of arrows, circles, graphs, and bullet points with such labels as “Student Learning (equity principals),” “Instructional Effectiveness (four pillars — building blocks)” and “Empowering Infrastructure (leadership for results).”

Two educational experts from Performance Fact lectured with Power Points and guided discussions on a wide range of pedagogical topics.

There were copious amounts of test data and demographics (one chapter was entitled, “Lens Data Analysis Protocol”) to go over.

Just what the participants absorbed from all this I can’t say.

But the greatest issue in our lifetimes — climate change — was not even mentioned.

The world is heating up, and we’re entering a new era with life-altering impacts on today’s students as they reach adulthood.

Last month, temperatures in Oregon, Washington state, and western Canada reached unprecedented highs. It was 115 degrees in Portland, Lytton, Canada, 85 miles north of the U.S. border, reached 121 degrees, the highest temperature ever recorded in Canada.



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton

Meanwhile, a years-long drought continues to dehydrate the West from Oregon to Texas. Lake Mead, Nevada, the nation’s largest reservoir, has dropped to its lowest point since it was created by the Hoover Dam in 1935.

Last year, more than 4 million acres of California — an area larger than Delaware and Rhode Island combined — burned in wildfires.

Worldwide, the loss of tropical forests, which play a critical role in keeping carbon out of the atmosphere and in maintaining biodiversity, actually increased in 2020.

There are more disastrous changes to come. Coastal cities from New York to Tokyo underwater. Frequent, violent storms. Wildfires. Species extinction.

In 2018, the Pottstown School Board and Pottstown Council adopted a joint Sustainability Plan. It’s been sitting on a shelf.

So far, the comprehensive planning process has been “business as usual.” That must change.

**More Thursday.**

*Tom Hylton is a member of the Pottstown School Board. However, the views expressed are his alone and not the board’s.*



**THE EARTH IS HEATING UP well beyond anything humans have experienced in more than 5,000 years of civilization. Today’s students will have to deal with the consequences. Unfortunately, that didn’t come up in a recent three-day Pottstown School District planning seminar.**