

**CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Warminster, Pennsylvania**

**MINUTES OF WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
HELD JUNE 1, 1999**

CALL TO ORDER

A Work Session/Regular Meeting of the Centennial School Board was held on June 1, 1999, in the Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Grossi at 7:37 p.m. The following people registered their attendance:

Board Members:

Joseph Faust
Eugene Grossi
Joan Jankowsky
Rose Marie Kautz
John Priadka *
Robert Rosenberger
Kristina Wiercinski

* Arrived at 8:34 p.m.

Administration:

Elliott Alexander
Barbara Fash
Sandy Homel
Dr. Kenneth Kastle
Victor Lasher
Dr. Michael Masko
Eileen Poroszok
Dr. Nancy Reid
Dr. Thomas Sexton
Timothy Vail

Public:

Sean Miller
Donna Sanchez
Ari Gottlieb
Greg Graves
Donna Dunar
Jacqueline Genesisio
Marguerite Genesisio
Janet Marinoff
Jackie Kline
Katie Lucot
Sue Goldsworthy
Harve Strouse

CEA/Teachers:

Dolores McAdams
Craig Shapiro
Maureen Walker
Carolyn Fisher
Tom Mokes
Shirley Kelly
Ed Austin
Matt Sikora
Mary Ellen Donnelly

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Grossi led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Faust noted that Mrs. Huf's absence was due to illness. Mr. Grossi announced that Mr. Reh was recuperating nicely, was doing therapy and would probably be back in early September.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Grossi explained that the first item on the agenda was the fiscal note. He explained that the Finance Committee had reviewed the preliminary fiscal note the previous week. He indicated that the next item on the agenda would be a presentation relative to graduation requirements and then the William Tennent Accreditation for Growth recommendations.

1. Accreditation for Growth – William Tennent High School Schedule/Fiscal Note

Mr. Grossi presented a lengthy report to the Board regarding the fiscal note. His report consisted of five parts.

I. Building Utilization

Mr. Grossi presented information regarding building utilization, with a chart showing how each room was being used. He indicated that there were 75 rooms that were capable of supporting a "full load" of classes and 16 rooms that would support about 10 students each.

Mr. Faust left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

II. Class Size versus Enrollment

Mr. Grossi discussed class size versus enrollment and advised that the numbers needed to be reconciled. He felt that not having the proper computer program was one reason for the disparity in the numbers.

He felt that the staffing shown on the budget was inflated by seven to ten positions. He thought the Board needed to direct Administration to adjust the high school staffing to the appropriate standard, which would require hiring less staff. He also felt that the budget figures provided by the AFG team were not accurate and that the budget data could not be used for the fiscal note.

Mr. Rosenberger left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

III. Base Data

Mr. Grossi presented data to establish the baseline needed to properly review the AFG team's information. He made several recommendations:

- The Board should establish a series of procedures to confirm that policies are being followed.
- Administration must find out why there is such a large difference between the estimated enrollment and the actual.
- The Finance Committee should develop an enrollment profile similar to the one in Mr. Grossi's report.
- The Board should review with Administration the procedures used to assign students and staff.
- Similar research should be conducted for the middle schools.

IV. Cost Evaluations of AFG Proposals

Mr. Grossi presented an analysis of the various AFG scheduling options, including cost of staff, contract issues, curriculum changes and physical plant limitations.

V. Concerns/Alternate/Conclusions

In Part V of his report, Mr. Grossi discussed some of the problems and concerns with the AFG team's proposals and also alternate options and recommended courses of action.

In closing, Mr. Grossi suggested that the AFG team should meet and review the data presented in his report. He also felt that due to the financial risk to the District, the possible contract issues needed to be "signed off" by the union prior to the Board approving any option.

Mr. Rosenberger returned to the meeting at 8:26 p.m. Ms. Wiercinski left the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Dr. Reid thanked Mr. Grossi for all the time he spent preparing this information. She then spoke about the history of the AFG process.

Mr. Priadka arrived at the meeting at 8:34 p.m. Ms. Wiercinski returned to the meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Mr. Faust returned to the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

2. Accreditation for Growth

Mike Devitt distributed paperwork and presented a slide show. He spoke about the reasons for a schedule change and problems with the current schedule.

Ms. Wiercinski left the meeting at 8:49 p.m. and returned at 8:52 p.m.

Dr. Devitt presented scheduling options and indicated that the recommendation was to change to a block schedule.

Ms. Wiercinski and Mr. Faust left the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Ms. Kautz indicated that she would like to hear comments from the staff, parents and students.

Mr. Faust returned to the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Marguerite Genesio of 1455 Estate Lane, Southampton, remarked that this plan tries to put the student first and has been worked on for a long time. She indicated that this plan did not put budget concerns first and felt that to present another plan, there should be the same amount of time and research put into it. She stated that a new schedule would also affect bus schedules, parents' work schedules, etc. and indicated concern that this issue has come forward so late in the school year.

Ms. Wiercinski returned to the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Mr. Priadka left the meeting at 9:27 p.m.

Ari Gottlieb, a Tennent student, spoke regarding the results of a countywide student forum. He indicated that he had served on a committee called "Inside the Classroom," which focused on raising student achievement. Two things that were looked at were qualities that make a teacher effective and scheduling. He stated that students and staff were surveyed and also the committee visited various schools and observed how their schedules worked. It was the recommendation of the committee that block scheduling be implemented.

Mr. Priadka returned to the meeting at 9:36 p.m.

Mrs. Jankowsky asked if there had been a faculty vote taken. Dr. Devitt responded that although there was no formal vote taken, there was about a 30% response on feedback forms indicating that block scheduling was favored by a margin of two to one.

Mr. Rosenberger asked about comments by students. Ari Gottlieb stated that there was a general consensus among students in favor of block scheduling. They felt that it would be easier to focus with fewer courses being taken at a time.

Mrs. Jankowsky advised that she had a copy of an evaluation report from Hatboro-Horsham School District regarding a six-year study taken of conventional scheduling versus block scheduling. The report indicates that test results were higher under block scheduling but not as high as our targets. Mrs. Jankowsky also stated that Central Bucks School District had provided information showing their SAT results were relatively flat.

A study provided by the North Carolina public school system indicated that there were no significant differences in test results between block and nonblock scheduling.

Mrs. Jankowsky also indicated that in a book entitled *Block Scheduling*, the author concludes that the success or failure of block scheduling will be determined by the ability of teachers and administrators to work together to improve instruction. Simply changing the manner in which we schedule does not guarantee better instruction by teachers or increased learning by students.

Mrs. Jankowsky requested that a sunset provision be placed on block scheduling so that the community will not be spending millions of dollars on a system that does not achieve the targets that have been identified.

Dr. Devitt commented that what makes the difference is not the schedule but the AFG plan.

Mr. Priadka asked how teachers felt about block scheduling.

Maureen Walker, a teacher, commented that the students had indicated that they would like block scheduling unless it was all lecture. She also remarked that at a convention she attended several years ago, when teachers were asked about scheduling, they (almost unanimously) stated that they liked block scheduling. She advised that teachers were concerned about what their requirements would be under block scheduling and what the ultimate package would look like. She indicated that, personally, there were many things she felt she could do under block scheduling that she could not do now.

Mrs. Jankowsky stated that while she still had many concerns about the professional development required to make the transition to 90-minute periods, she felt there were many other factors to be considered, including the following:

- Are there contractual obligations?
- Has the Union signed off on this?
- Do we have confirmation on the cost?

She felt that the Board was obligated to have these questions answered, according to the solicitor's opinion.

Tom Mokes, a teacher and Union officer, stated that several Union representatives who had sat on committees and attended meetings regarding AFG had indicated that they did not see any dire consequences as a result of the contract. He indicated that there were concerns that have been addressed. He felt that if the plan was implemented as presented, there should be no major concerns. He did not see complications presented by any of the three scheduling options as presented.

Mr. Faust wondered how block scheduling would fit in with the needs of special education students.

Mary Ellen Donnelly, a parent and special education teacher, stated that there was no difference in mainstreaming special education students with block scheduling. She felt that the advantage would be that there would be fewer classes for the students to deal with under block scheduling. She indicated that the less they have to deal with, the better they do.

Mr. Faust left the meeting at 10:25 p.m. and returned at 10:28 p.m.

In response to questions by Mr. Rosenberger, Dr. Devitt explained how the lunch schedule would work and that there would be no changes required to the bus schedule.

Mrs. Jankowsky asked about the cost. Mr. Vail stated that his analysis of cost was attached to the Board's packet. He stated that an additional 9.5 teachers would be needed and that there would be a \$398,000 additional first-year cost, including salary and fringe benefits.

Mr. Faust asked how this meeting had been advertised. He stated that if it had been advertised as a Work Session/Regular Meeting, then he would like to move this matter for a vote. Dr. Reid advised that it had been advertised that way.

Sean Miller, a 10th grade student, indicated concerns about the "Super 7" block. He felt that there was not enough passing time allowed and had concerns with ending the day at 2:45 or 3:00. That would present a problem for students who played sports. He indicated that with the current schedule, they sometimes needed to be dismissed early from class and that with an extended day they would miss even more if they were dismissed early. He also indicated that it could present problems for students with jobs.

Jacqueline Genesio of 1455 Estate Lane, Southampton, (a student) indicated that she tries to schedule as many higher level courses as possible and that she is also a foreign language and music student. She felt that the block schedule would work out very well for her and a lot of other students. She liked that we would be raising the bar for those students who don't go that far and felt that the needs of many types of students had been considered.

Mrs. Jankowsky asked Mr. Faust to reconsider his request to move this matter. She felt that it should wait until the June 8th meeting.

Mr. Grossi indicated that he had told people that this would be an informational meeting only. He also stated that there was another part of the meeting that involved graduation requirements and felt that there were other issues that needed to be addressed.

Mrs. Jankowsky felt that there were other questions that should be answered before this should be voted on.

Mr. Faust stated that he was confident with the information that had been provided already and felt that if the majority of the Board was prepared to vote, they should do so. He advised that he had spoken to Mrs. Huf on the phone and that she indicated that she was willing to move forward now. He also pointed out that Mr. Reh would not be back until September.

Mr. Priadka remarked that he did not feel that we were forcing the issue. He felt that we must move into the next millenium and that a week would not make a difference.

A motion was made by Mr. Faust and seconded by Mr. Priadka to resolve that the Centennial School Board grants approval for the adoption of block scheduling at William Tennent High School for the 2000/01 school year at an additional cost to the District of \$398,633.30. (The AFG budget impact analysis is attached.)

Mr. Grossi stated that he planned to vote against the motion since he felt it was premature and also that the cost would be more in the neighborhood of \$3 million rather than the amount specified.

Ms. Kautz felt that it was time to move forward and allow everyone to get back to work.

Mr. Priadka requested a roll call vote.

Mrs. Jankowsky requested Administration to generate whatever may have been signed in the transition from junior high school to middle school. Dr. Sexton did not recall any documents having been signed. Maureen Walker stated that there was nothing that she was aware of that had been signed.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Mr. Priadka	Yes
Mr. Faust	Yes
Ms. Wiercinski	Yes
Mrs. Jankowsky	No
Mr. Rosenberger	Yes
Ms. Kautz	Yes
Mr. Grossi	No

The motion passed 5-2.

3. Graduation Requirements

A motion was made by Mr. Faust and seconded by Mr. Priadka to resolve that the Centennial School Board grants approval of the AFG Graduation Requirements.

Mrs. Jankowsky stated that she had previously brought up the possibility of requiring a level two in foreign language study. She indicated that she would like to schedule this as

a topic for the fall Education Committee to generate some kind of information regarding the benefits of level 2 study. She felt that it was inconsistent to require the middle school students to have a level one experience and then not provide for a level 2, 3 or 4 experience in high school. She also felt that there are many benefits to be gained from the study of foreign languages and she hoped that in the future the District would incorporate foreign language study much lower than middle school.

Mr. Faust stated that he did not disagree with Mrs. Jankowsky but felt that something could be added later. He indicated that he would like to move the motion forward since this part had been thoroughly investigated.

The motion passed 5-1 (Grossi opposed/Jankowsky not voting).

OTHER

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Faust and seconded by Ms. Kautz to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie A. Detwiler
Board Secretary