

**CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Warminster, Pennsylvania**

**MINUTES OF WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
HELD NOVEMBER 27, 2001**

CALL TO ORDER

A Work Session/Regular Meeting of the Centennial School Board was held on November 27, 2001, in the Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Huf at 7:30 p.m. The following people registered their attendance:

Board Members:

Scott Avery
Joseph Faust
Al Hertenberger
Betty Huf
Joan Jankowsky
Harve Strouse
James Wybar

Administration:

David Blatt
Sandy Homel
Dr. Michael Masko
Jean Rollo
Dr. Thomas Sexton
Timothy Vail

CEA/Teachers:

Marie Belcher
Woody Martin
Mick Sander

Public:

Penny Bristow
Nena Smith
Anna Marie Yondura
Robert Purdy
Miranda Purdy
Diane Bernosky
Sheldon Katz
John Van Note
Amy Campbell
Donna Marie Saul
Alda Lizzi
Marianne Whiting
Kathy O'Neill

Barbara Moskow
Linda Greenberg
Susan McGorrey
Stephen Biddle
Michelle Nunn
Laurie Ross
Eileen Phillips
Debbie Oswald
Cynthia Mueller
Debbie Salomon
Denise Schwartz
Chantel Farrello
Holly Ullrich

Public: (continued)

Liz Watts
Terry Baldrige
Tom Baldrige
Nicolle Watts
Vicki Boruta
Annamarie Arnold
Marianne Escobar

Jeffrey Lucas
Katie Freeman
Colleen Rauchot
Jen Ostrander
Sina Baranski
Jane Strawley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Huf led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Huf announced that there had been no Executive Session prior to this meeting.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Blatt announced that there would be a surprise presentation. At that point the William Tennent Marching Band entered the room. Mr. Blatt explained that the band wanted to come to the meeting and publicly thank the Board and the community for their support.

The band played The Star Spangled Banner, then thanked the Board for providing them with new uniforms.

Mr. Blatt explained that this was something the students and Mr. LoVecchio wanted to do.

Mr. Blatt explained that Mrs. Huf asked him, as an informational item, to review several meetings and initiatives that had taken place since the last meeting and that would take place in the next several days in connection with the examination of the middle school schedule. He did so, indicating that on December 3rd an informational meeting would be held with the Education Committee. No action or vote would be taken at that meeting.

GOOD NEWS

Mrs. Homel presented the Goods News Report (see attached).

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Miranda Purdy, a student, of 35 Snowflake Road, Huntingdon Valley, addressed the issue of block scheduling at the middle school. She indicated that the athletes and the music students at the school were upset over the concept of block scheduling. They did not want to lose the opportunity to pursue sports and music. A lot of the students are involved in both and the proposed schedule would eliminate choices for them. She felt that if classes were longer,

students would have trouble concentrating. She asked why the schedule could not be kept as it was. She felt that it was fine..

Stephen Biddle, a parent, of 235 Waverly Road, Southampton, stated that he had a 3rd grader and a 6th grader in the District and that he has been very satisfied to date. However, he indicated that he was very upset about the potential move to block scheduling. He stated that he had not seen a clear statement of what we are trying to accomplish. He felt that there would be some benefits but also plenty of costs and risks associated with the new schedule. Also, he had not seen a cost analysis. As a parent, he was not convinced that a new schedule would be better.

Susan McGorrey, a parent, of 1137 Rozel Avenue, Southampton, asked if the Board had received a copy of the letter she and her husband had written. Board members indicated that they had. Mrs. McGorrey indicated that she had training in middle school philosophy and implementation. She discussed the fact that children of middle school age are very different from both elementary and high-school age students. More choices for them is a relevant developmental issue. She felt that going to a block of five or six periods would cut down a lot on their choices. At present, all of the fine arts are represented very strongly at Centennial. She did not see that continuing under block scheduling. She urged the Board to do some research into child development in this age group. She indicated that from everything she had studied, she found that more choices were better, not less.

Donna Marie Saul, a parent, of 589 Lowell Road, Warminster, stated her feeling that the public needed to be very wary about what was happening. She felt that the Board would accept 6-period block as a compromise, which would be very similar to a junior high school. She cautioned parents to be very wary of what the Board did.

Christopher Smith, a WTHS Music student, of 834 Roberts Road, stated that since block scheduling was instituted at the high school, participation in music had dropped. He felt that his participation in the music program in the middle school had really helped him to find himself. He questioned why the Board would want to take these programs away and “rip the heart out of what makes this District.”

Nena Smith, a parent, of 834 Roberts Road, spoke about the energy and enthusiasm of the students when instruments and uniforms are received. She felt that the Fine Arts program was not the “icing on the cake of education” but that they formed the choice. She indicated that music training was transferable to other fields. She did not feel that block scheduling would raise test scores, but that encouraging students to explore their passions might.

Julie Phillips, a student, of 473 Silver Avenue, Southampton, felt that there were both good and bad things about the proposed schedule. She felt that block scheduling in the middle school would prepare students for block scheduling at the high school and that block scheduling would cut some “useless” enrichments. On the negative side, she felt that classes would be too long under block scheduling and that students would not be able to pay attention for that long. Another disadvantage was cutting sports, music and the tutorial period. She also felt that the swimming education classes were unimportant because most of the students already knew how to swim.

Cynthia Mueller, a parent, of 228 Gravel Hill Road, Huntingdon Valley, distributed copies of documents which she hoped the Board would take the time to read. She had visited Cherry Hill School District and obtained this information regarding their programs. Their philosophy was to look at each student as a whole person, not just the curricular part. She indicated that when we look at our test scores, we need to look at demographics also.

Stephen Ullrich, a parent, of 323 Belair Road, Southampton, asked when the entire Board would receive the presentation that Mr. Blatt indicated would take place at the public meetings.

Mr. Blatt indicated that the presentation would be made at the December 3rd Education Committee Meeting. Also, there might be another presentation to the Board on December 11th, although that was not set yet.

Mr. Ullrich questioned whether a decision would be made on the 11th. Mrs. Huf stated that she couldn't comment on that at this time.

Mr. Ullrich then distributed a statistical analysis of the PSSA scores. He indicated that there were no statistics given to show that Centennial was 16th out of 16, as stated by Mr. Grossi at the previous meeting. He indicated that that was why he did this analysis. He found that Centennial was not at the bottom of the barrel and felt that the problem was not at the middle school level.

Diane Bernosky, a student, of 1814 Lafayette Drive, Southampton, felt that the change to block scheduling would be for the worst. She felt that there were many disadvantages, including making the students choose between sports and music and taking away the tutorial. She also felt that the students should have been informed of the proposed change.

Chantel Farrello, a parent, of 550 Winchester Road, Warminster, advised that she had been a resident of the District for the past two years and that she had been very happy with the education her children were receiving. She indicated that she felt block scheduling would result in a loss of exposure to different aspects of life and that children do not learn well in large blocks. Also, she wondered if the teachers would have ample time to change their lesson plans if this was to be implemented in September. She felt that it might be better to adjust the existing schedule rather than change everything. She also indicated that the teams were wonderful.

Liz Watts, a parent, of 1015 Springview Drive, Southampton, stated that she had children in all three levels. She did not feel that change was bad because otherwise things became stagnant. However, she questioned whether the changes that have been made over the past few years had had enough time to be evaluated before more changes are made. She felt the tutorial should not be eliminated because it could mean the difference between some students passing or failing an entire course. She stated that having to choose between programs should not be necessary, that it would not create well-rounded students. She did not see the need to rush this through and questioned why it must be implemented next year.

Nicolle Watts, a student, of 1015 Springview Drive, Southampton, thought that it was unfair that parents and teachers make all the decisions for the students. She felt they should have some say.

She indicated that music and sports programs acted as anti-drugs for students and questioned why the Board wanted to take them away.

Terry Baldrige, a parent, of 823 Phillips Road, Warminster, stated that she felt block scheduling was fine at the high school but not at the middle school. She felt middle schoolers did not have the necessary concentration. She also did not feel that taking away the teams or the tutorial period would be beneficial since some of the children were not able to stay after school because of family situations. She stated that when students do other things, their schoolwork improves. She also felt that the students loved their teachers and were known by them. In taking away the teams, students would merely be names on paper.

Marianne Escobar, a parent, of 50 Sunshine Road, Southampton, indicated that she had 5 children but that this was her first year dealing with public education. She spoke about the varied experiences her 7th grader (her youngest) has had that her four older children had not. She felt this was a full, diverse, challenging education. She did not hear how the I.B. program would fit into the curriculum, nor did she hear why a curriculum change was necessary.

John Van Note of 526 Fisher Lane, Warminster, congratulated the students who had spoken at this meeting and given their views on this subject. He was concerned that in 12 years when the band uniforms needed to be replaced again, that there would be no band left.

Colleen Rauchut of 463 Hardman Lane, Warminster, stated that most of the students were in some type of activity, either sports or music, and that the new schedule would make them choose between them. She indicated that it was proven that students who participated in these activities did better in school and didn't do drugs. She felt the pressure would be too hard for a lot of the kids, so for the health and well-being of the students, requested that the schedule not be changed.

Steve Gresh of 441 Citation Lane, Warminster, felt that it was a good thing that so many parents had come to this meeting. He felt that children who do well would probably continue to do well with any schedule. However, he wondered how the children would do that were already struggling. He was concerned about giving the children less choices. He wished that some of the Board members would ask to have this matter tabled so there could be more time to consider it.

Katie Freeman, a student, of 1715 Steamboat Station, Southampton, stated that if enrichment was taken away, choices and experiences would be taken away.

Mrs. Huf thanked everyone who came out to the meeting. She stated that the Board was listening and suggested that everyone attend the presentations to be held at the middle schools.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Strouse and seconded by Mr. Faust to resolve that the Centennial School Board accepts the Minutes of the Finance and Long Range Budget Planning Committee of October 22, 2001.

The motion passed 7-0.

POLICIES

Discussion:

5.5 – Materials Section

Mrs. Jankowsky stated that this policy dealt with the process the District uses for choosing textbooks and software programs. She asked to what degree assessments were considered in choosing these materials.

Dr. Masko responded that assessments were playing a major role in the selection of materials and that they underwent a lot of scrutiny.

Mrs. Jankowsky stated that she did not see that reflected in the policy. She felt it should be incorporated. Dr. Masko stated that he would look into it.

6.2 – Facility Use

Mrs. Jankowsky suggested a “housekeeping” modification in Section 6.2A regarding categories of users.

7.19 – Weapons/Explosive Devices and Caustic Substances

Mr. Strouse asked if counsel had reviewed Section IV. B. 2. of this policy since it had been changed significantly since the Board last reviewed it. Dr. Sexton responded that it had been discussed with the solicitor and that he felt this was the appropriate language.

Mr. Strouse felt that in Section IV. B. C. 1. the language, “under the provisions of Policy 3.8” should be eliminated. Also, in C.1., he felt that a change should be made at the end of the last sentence to reflect the proper Section (2 rather than 3 and 4.)

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2000/01 Audit Report

Mr. Strouse stated that this report had been reviewed and accepted by the Finance Committee. Mrs. Jankowsky asked Mr. Strouse to mention the auditor’s comments.

Mr. Strouse explained that as we make progress in moving our financial statement toward a new reporting standard (GASB #34), we have changed some presentations in the financial statements. There is some information here that now gives us what is called a “clean opinion.” In the past, where the opinion was qualified, that qualification has now been eliminated.

Mr. Strouse went on to explain that as the auditors go through the process of auditing the books and records of the District, they normally come up with a management recommendation letter indicating where they may have seen some accounting and procedural deficiencies. This year, there were no matters noted.

Mrs. Jankowsky commended Mr. Vail and his staff for a job well done.

Mr. Faust advised that there was discussion at the Finance Committee meeting about the possibility of having Mr. Vail review the option of implementing the GASB #34 procedures a year early as a test run to “get the bugs out.” Mr. Vail will evaluate this and get back to the Finance Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Strouse and seconded by Mr. Avery to resolve that the Centennial School Board accepts the 2000/01 Financial Statements and Single Audit as submitted by Stanley Booz and Company for the year ended June 30, 2001.

The motion passed 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

None

PERSONNEL

Mr. Faust requested a brief biography of the new Coordinator of State/Federal Programs and Business Partnerships. Dr. Sexton reviewed her experience and qualifications.

A motion was made by Mrs. Jankowsky and seconded by Mr. Strouse to resolve that the Centennial School Board approve all Personnel recommendations.

The motion passed 7-0.

OTHER

Grade 9-12 Technology Education Planned Course Revision for 2002-03

Dr. Masko stated that the curriculum revision at the high school involved three revisions to technology for 2002/03. He explained the revisions, per his memo dated November 20, 2001, and included in the Board’s packet. He commented that while they were not totally new and did not require Board approval, he would like the direction of the Board as to whether they would like these to be presented formally or whether they could proceed with the changes.

Mrs. Jankowsky asked if State Code required Board action. She felt that if it did not, that this was extensively discussed at the last Education Committee meeting so she felt that no further Board action would be required.

Dr. Masko indicated that he would check the Code.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. Jankowsky and seconded by Mr. Faust to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie A. Detwiler
Board Secretary