

**CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Warminster, Pennsylvania**

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING  
HELD SEPTEMBER 13, 2005**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Centennial School Board was held on September 13, 2005, in the Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Lynch at approximately 7:30 p.m. The following people registered their attendance:

Board Members:

Sina Baranski  
Marie Brzezinski  
Joseph Faust  
Rose Gold  
Betty Huf  
Joan Jankowsky  
Jane Schrader Lynch  
Cynthia Mueller

[Note: Due to Mr. Grossi's resignation from the Board, there were only eight Board members.]

Public:

Donna Siegfried  
Karen Risch  
Steve Gresh  
Norman Pfeiffer  
Marsha Camson-Grubb  
George Clark  
Walter McGrosky  
Ellen McGrosky  
Sarah McCulloch  
Wayne McCulloch  
Bob Vegetabile  
Patti Vegetabile  
Jerilyn Bowler  
Lisa Forlini  
Barb Preedy  
Kevin Puls

Administration:

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

CEA/Teachers/Principals:

Eileen Poroszok

Mary McComsey  
Shari Glauser  
Sue McGrooey  
Ellen Lynes  
Jeff Lynes  
Susan Banns  
Rona Note  
Kenneth Yates  
James Phillips  
Daniel Kostrzewa, Jr.  
Melissa Zajdel  
Marryann Rafferty  
Colleen Hartman  
Edward Kreibick  
Beverly Kreibick  
Kathleen Lipinski

Public (continued)

Steve Brod  
Mary Brod  
Patti Zuzelo  
Eileen Phillips  
Amy Ciment  
Al Ciment  
Kim Spence  
George Conroy  
Joanne Cloak  
Ken Cloak  
Sue Medland  
Glenn Medland

Doris Walsh  
Candace Shiffer  
Tom Reinboth  
Colleen Matthews  
Ann Anderson  
Francine Cook  
Patricia DiMaria  
Tricia DiMaria  
Jesus Caballeo  
John Van Note, Jr.  
Gwen Mueller

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mrs. Lynch announced that the Board had met in Executive Session prior to this meeting relative to a personnel issue.

Mrs. Lynch stated that any other announcements would wait until later in order to accommodate everyone present.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Student Calendar Artists

Dr. Sexton spoke briefly about the history of the calendar and what was included in the calendar this year. He indicated that this was the first year since about 1988 where the calendar has so much color. The calendar is full of student artwork, showcasing the art of over 40 students.

Dr. Sexton introduced some of the students who had artwork appearing on the calendar and they were presented with certificates.

Mrs. Lynch complimented the students for their beautiful work on the calendar.

**GOOD NEWS**

None.

Mrs. Lynch indicated that they would try to eliminate items in order to allow enough time for members of the audience to speak.

## **REPORTS**

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

Matt Manning, President of the Senior Class, indicated that there was currently a petition circulating to maintain block scheduling. He also gave a rundown on the standing of the various sports teams.

### **MBIT**

Mrs. Lynch indicated that it was her understanding that a student representative from MBIT had not yet been appointed.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

None

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE FINANCE & LONG RANGE BUDGET COMMITTEE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

Mrs. Lynch indicated that these reports would either be given at the end of this meeting or at the next meeting.

## **COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

Mrs. Lynch explained that everyone would have the opportunity to speak. She pointed out that the subject of high school scheduling was not an agenda item or an action item for this meeting. She outlined the Board's policy on allowing public comment.

Mrs. Lynch indicated that the Board would be listening to and digesting everyone's concerns. Any questions would be recorded and answers would be communicated to the speaker after this evening's meeting through Mr. Blatt. She stated that the Board appreciated everyone's attending this meeting and thanked them for their concern.

Tom Zuzelo, a student government officer and Junior at Tennent, introduced himself and Adam Camson, Junior class president, indicating that they were there to represent the interests of the student body. He indicated that they were very concerned about the elimination of block scheduling and the negative effects it would have on opportunities for students. On the first day of school, they distributed a petition to students and asked them to sign it if they agreed. They collected petitions for one day and received 1,246 petitions, which was a little over 60% of the student body at Tennent. Mr. Zuzelo also indicated that they collected 687 parent signatures in just one morning.

Adam Camson indicated that they also sent surveys to teachers to get their opinions. He stated that he was there on behalf of all the band and chorus students and indicated that because of the new schedule being in place in the 2006-2007 school year they would not have the same opportunities to take the band and chorus classes they have now. With a six period day the opportunities to take AP classes, business classes and music classes would be much more limited. He thanked everyone for coming.

Emily Duffy, a student, spoke on behalf of the artistically inclined students at Tennent. She explained that the recent decision to change the schedule back to a six period day has crippled many students in their pursuit of graduating having taken varied courses. It has crippled her as an art and academically gifted student. Without block scheduling she is forced to sacrifice two credits of classes each year and is constrained to choose between art and academics. Fortunately, she is a Junior and is minimally affected by this change since she will only have this schedule for one full year. However, other students will be denied eight full credits, which is equivalent to one full year of block scheduling. The choices students make will affect them in college and, in turn, in their adult lives. Block scheduling allows students to leave options open and permits them to be exposed to a wider range of subjects. The six period day makes students choose at a much earlier stage what subjects they wish to pursue. They may not be ready to make such choices at such an early age.

Tina George, a Junior, indicated that she participates in the internship program. This program allows students who have an interest in healthcare to experience the day-to-day activities of a hospital firsthand. Under block scheduling they have a big block of time to attend the program. If the schedule changed to a six period day, she felt it would be impossible for the internship program to exist because there would not be enough time.

Brenda Caballero, a student, spoke about the benefits of block scheduling for ESL students. She felt that the longer periods allowed students to get instructions in English and also to get help with other subjects. It allowed ESL students a greater opportunity to develop their skills. She felt it also benefited ESL students by allowing them to have a fewer amount of classes at one time.

Leighton Rodrigo, a Junior and student at MBIT, stated that with a six period day a student at MBIT would not be able to complete all their requirements for graduation at Tennent. In the year 2000, MBIT students missed a half course of Science and a half course of Health, and had no PE instruction in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades. With a six period day, that would happen again. He also indicated that with a shorter class time, there is more of a transportation issue because if the bus is late, more class time is missed. Also, with a six period day students who want to go to MBIT have to double up on classes in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which can be a problem because some classes have a prerequisite, meaning that you could not take them in the same year.

Grant Gaudry, a student, stated that he missed some graduation requirements last year so he had to come back this year and take some classes. Since he only has to go two semesters, he will be able to go to college in the spring. He also indicated that he was able to take many more AP and Honors courses with the block scheduling than he would have been able to take otherwise.

Mrs. Lynch thanked the students for all the time they had put into this and how well they had spoken.

Terry Urbanek of 444 Hawthorne Street, Warminster, thanked the Board on behalf of all the parents for the opportunity to speak. She indicated that at first she was not a supporter of block scheduling at all but she is now. Her daughter had the opportunity to take AP and Honors classes that she wouldn't have had the opportunity to do otherwise. She stated that she was proud of Tennent's students for their test scores over the past two years.

Lucy Ann Centafont of 1345 Curtis Road, Southampton, stated that she was skeptical about block scheduling at first but once she saw how her son did after the first year she felt it was a win-win situation. She felt it brought out the best in both students and teachers. Block scheduling gives the students more opportunities but also gives the teachers more opportunities to be creative in their teaching methods and to incorporate technology. She indicated that both of her children have told her that they prefer block scheduling. There is more time to be focused on each subject and more time to participate in school activities. She indicated that she would be extremely sad and deeply disappointed if her 8<sup>th</sup> grade daughter is not afforded the same opportunities to achieve under block scheduling as her brothers.

A woman then addressed the Board, indicating that she was disappointed with the decision to discontinue block scheduling. She felt that the block scheduling motivated the students. They can learn more under a block schedule than with a traditional six period day. She has heard that certain areas will be cut back in the move to a six period day. This was a big disappointment. She felt that the decision to terminate block was purely financial and not educational. She asked the Board to reconsider its decision to terminate block scheduling.

Barry Grimm of 448 Nicholas Drive, Southampton, stated that his concerns mirrored what most of the people present had already spoken about. He pointed out that if the District moved to a six-period day, the number of offerings would be reduced. He asked the Board to reconsider changing to block scheduling, which was what he considered the best scholastic choice.

Joanne Cloak of 140 West Bristol Road, Ivyland, stated that she felt that block scheduling allowed children the think deeper. With six periods, you can only scratch the surface and it is difficult to teach technology with a six-period day. She indicated that she had asked her daughter about the benefits of block. Her daughter felt that students were not as rushed, had more time to review and that it was a more effective way to learn. Mrs. Cloak hoped that the Board would reconsider.

Ellen Lynes of 869 Central Avenue, Southampton, read an e-mail she had received from her daughter, who had graduated from Tennent. She felt that block scheduling was good and beneficial, that it allowed students to take more classes, to reach AP level classes faster, and to have more time to interact with teachers and have questions answered. She felt that block scheduling helped her in college.

Jerilyn Bowler of 241 Kent Road, Warminster, indicated that she had taught at Bensalem High School for over 20 years. They have block scheduling and she hoped that they never change it.

She has the opportunity everyday to reach every one of her students with all the questions they have. She really hoped the Board would reconsider their decision and possibly overturn it.

Tiffany Collins, a Sophomore at Tennent, indicated that she had an A average and was in the top 30% of her class. She felt that with two extra classes there was much more homework, which is more stressful for the students. She felt that block scheduling was more beneficial to the students.

Patricia DeMaria of 1366 Barness Drive, Warminster, indicated that she had two students at Tennent, both gifted. She felt that block scheduling had given them the opportunity to explore. She explained that in the previous school year her daughter had missed a lot of school due to a medical problem and that without block scheduling she would not have been able to make that up. She asked the Board to reconsider their decision.

Ellen McGrosky of 1150 Strathmann Drive, Southampton (parent of a Senior and Freshman) spoke about the number of higher level courses her daughter took and how she was also able to challenge herself academically. She has been able to do many extracurricular activities. The six period schedule would not allow her as many opportunities. Also, a six period day does not allow teachers to present the varied concepts that they can in a block schedule. Mrs. McGrosky also discussed the results of the PSSA tests and stated that the success could be at least partially attributed to block scheduling. She requested the Board to keep block scheduling.

Edward Kreibick of 860 Decker Lane (parent of a graduate and a Freshman) addressed the Board regarding the transportation policy with respect to the walking limits. He asked about what criteria was used to measure the distances. He indicated that he had called Mr. Robinson, who wasn't too clear on how this is done. Mr. Kreibick indicated that according to Map Quest the distance to Decker Lane is 1.58 miles, which is over 1.5 miles. Therefore, he asked how they would go about establishing transportation for the students on Decker Lane.

Mrs. Huf indicated that there would be a meeting regarding transportation on September 27<sup>th</sup> and that anyone should feel free to attend.

Mr. Kreibick asked what they should do in the meantime since there was no transportation for their children, which was a problem.

Mrs. Lynch explained that the way Mr. Kreibick was doing his routing made it longer than the way Mr. Robinson had set. She indicated that Mr. Robinson would call him tomorrow and that if there was a problem after that, the Transportation Committee meeting would be on September 27<sup>th</sup>. She indicated that they would do what they could to help.

Stephanie Ross, a professor, stated that the issue of block scheduling had to do with only one thing, which was quality in education. She indicated that she would find it extremely difficult to teach in a 45-minute period. She felt that we need to remember that the details are important to make the generalizations meaningful.

George Clark of 238 Street Road felt that with block scheduling students had lots of opportunities. He indicated that he was in a nursing home and that he was being served his meals by Tennent students. He would hate to see these students lose opportunities over \$500,000.

Patty Russo of 1308 Sloane Road, Warminster, stated that, as a supporter of the District, she found it difficult when the Board made the decision to get rid of block scheduling. She did not understand why the Board would decide to go backwards and require less credits to graduate. She felt the Board was willing to accept mediocrity and asked them to consider changing their decision.

Mrs. Lynch called for a short break at 9:10 p.m., indicating that everyone who wished to speak would have an opportunity to do so.

The meeting resumed at 9:25 p.m.

Mary McComsey of 1125 Victoria Road, Warminster, thanked the students who put together this grass roots effort in a very short time. She indicated that her son would be graduating with four years of block and that it has been wonderful. She has older children who tell her what they missed by not having block scheduling. She felt that one of the biggest problems that had been cited regarding block scheduling was the cost but that she had not heard data to support that. Since this would only be the second class to graduate under a full block schedule, she felt that was a very limited core group to make such a big decision on. If this decision goes through, it would be the third major schedule change in a short period of time. She felt this would cause a lot of upheaval.

Jayshree Deshmukh of 868 Phillips Road, Warminster, stated that because of this change her daughter would not be able to take all the courses she planned on, which would have a negative effect. She felt that block scheduling helped both students who were struggling and students who were doing well. All students would be affected by a change. She asked that if the thoughts of the parents and students were taken into consideration before this decision was made.

Mrs. Lynch explained that when this was put into place in 2000, most of this Board was not here. It was put on with a sunset provision that it would be reviewed in five years. The Board met at the end of June, which a lot of people attended. At that time, the Board voted to go to the six period day.

Eleanor Tarnoviski of 1031 Carousel Drive, Warminster, stated that her family moved here because they knew it was a good school district. She indicated that she was in opposition to removing block scheduling. She spoke about how block scheduling has benefited her children and asked the Board to consider what everyone had said.

Barbara Preedy of 882 East Maple Drive, Southampton, asked the Board to reconsider their decision. She suggested that the improvement in test scores was a credible means of supporting block scheduling.

Doris Walsh of 1140 Northfield Circle, Warminster, indicated that she was a former teacher and was asked to speak by one of her former students. Both of her children loved block scheduling. She felt that the block schedule can work better with standards and No Child Left Behind. She felt that with block a teacher could employ many teaching strategies and that it helps give teachers more time to do an effective job.

Kevin Puls of 911 Rozel Avenue, Southampton, thanked the students for getting everyone to the meeting. He stated that he felt that having extra courses and credits and having extra classroom time gives children time to pursue what they are interested in.

Donna Siegfried of 667 Dick Avenue, Warminster, stated that was she confused because she thought the school Board represented the best interests of the students. She felt that it was obvious that she was wrong, that the School Board represented political interests. She was present at the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, at which there was no deliberation prior to the budget. She never heard anyone say the six period block was a better plan and has seen no action taken on the modifications to the block schedule. She felt that the Board had wasted everyone's time and misled them into believing the possibility that the block schedule could continue. She felt that, financially, the Board was not going to let it continue. She had not heard one member of the community thank the Board for saving money. She felt that the Board had conflicts of interests and had betrayed the students. But now was the opportunity to turn this around. She asked the Board to think about what everyone had said.

Maryann Rafferty of 345 Patton Drive, Warminster, indicated that her son needed the extra time that was afforded with block scheduling since he was not a top student. She wants him to graduate and indicated that that was all she was asking – that he be given that opportunity.

Patti Zuzelo of 68 Hamilton Drive, Warminster, thanked the Board for allowing everyone the opportunity to speak. She felt that her request reflected the sentiment of hundreds of parents, students, taxpayers and voters. She requested that the Board return the issue of block scheduling to the agenda as an action item for a new vote and to continue to implement the 4x4 block schedule, not only for the college-bound students who take AP courses but for everyone. Parents of students of varying ability have stated that their child was able to get the help they needed with block scheduling. The evaluation committee, teachers, parents and students have identified that block scheduling works for Tennent. Over 1200 students have asked that block scheduling be returned. These are not just gifted students but students of varied abilities. She felt that the question was: Who doesn't like block scheduling? She believed that the senior citizens were willing to pay for quality education and that we get out of the system what we put into it. She pointed out that the primary focus seemed to be financial. She stated that they are committed to making sure this matter stays in the forefront of issues.

Candace Shiffer of 211 Colonial Drive, Warminster, stated that she was a firm believer in trades and felt that the kids should be able to get a trade and be able to go to college also. She did not know what they would do if her son had to make a choice between the two.

Janet Marinoff of 51 Fern Road, Southampton, spoke about the requirements under block scheduling and pointed out that the requirements under the six period day were less. Block

allows students to be more competitive when applying for college and be more successful in their college work. She asked the Board to reconsider their decision.

Eric Goldsman of 188 Hogeland Road, Southampton, indicated that he was speaking as a teacher and as a community member. He pointed out that the students got over 700 petitions back in one day in support of block scheduling. Students could not take all the classes they wanted in a six period day since there are eight less classes. What he was concerned about was what was best for all the kids. He felt the Board would reverse their decision because of all the taxpayers present who indicated they wanted that. He felt that when you change your mind, you show how strong you are. Mr. Goldsman complimented the students on handling this with respect and class.

Gene Grossi of 1393 Butternut Drive, Southampton, (former Board member) stated that much of the 30 years that he was on the Board was spent in evaluating various programs and delivery schedules. Out of all of them, block scheduling was the most interesting. He indicated that he supported the program financially with his vote consistently. He spoke about the importance of competing with surrounding districts. He felt that it was time for the Board, the community, Administration and staff to face the fact that basic skills are on the decline again and that we are not reaching the majority of students. He felt that the data indicated that the schedule fails the fairness test and that none of the goals were met; therefore, it is time to move on.

Steve Gresh of 441 Citation Lane, Warminster, pointed out that what he heard over and over this evening was the word “opportunity.” This is a country of opportunity. He would like to give his three sons the opportunity to get higher scores. He felt Board members should look at what they have, reconsider the budget and re-evaluate their positions. He indicated that he would like this to be put on the agenda for reconsideration.

Mrs. Lynch stated that this was not on the agenda for action this evening.

Mrs. Jankowsky felt that a point of clarification was in order. She explained that although some Board members did not support block scheduling, they voted for every tax increase that was requested by Administration to support block scheduling once it was in place.

Mrs. Huf thanked everyone for coming and stated that the students had done a great job. She requested that this be put back on the agenda for the next Work Session for a reconsideration of the vote on block scheduling.

Mrs. Lynch indicated that according to policy, this would be on the agenda for the Work Session and that the public would be welcomed back. The Board welcomed their comments.

Mrs. Huf left the meeting at 10:50 p.m.

Mrs. Brzezinski explained that she had a son at Tulane University, who had left New Orleans in the middle of the storm. He has lost his house and during the course of the storm lost contact with his two roommates. He returned to New Orleans to look for them, and Mrs. Brzezinski lost contact with her son for several days. She stated that she received over 400 e-mails during this

time from her son's friends from Tennent. She felt it was wonderful that former Tennent students showed so much concern for a friend and former classmate.

At this point, Mrs. Lynch requested the Board's permission to abbreviate the agenda.

## **REPORTS**

No reports were given.

## **MINUTES**

None.

## **OPERATIONS AND POLICIES**

### Initial Distribution:

The following policies were included in the Board's packet for initial distribution:

- 1.2 – Centennial School Board Meetings
- 2.12 – Personnel Records

## **FINANCIAL**

*A motion was made by Mr. Faust and seconded by Mrs. Brzezinski to resolve that the Centennial School Board accepts the:*

- *Schedule of Bills – August 2005*
- *Investments – August 2005*
- *Cafeteria Fund Budget Report – August 2005*

*and approves the:*

- *Fund Profiles/Treasurer's Report – August 2005*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **PERSONNEL**

*A motion was made by Mrs. Mueller and seconded by Mrs. Baranski to resolve that the Centennial School Board approves the following Personnel items: Resignations/Retirements/*

*Leaves of Absence; Authorization to Employ; Change of Status; Mentors; Saturday School Proctors; Curriculum Resource Team Members; Per Diem Substitute Teachers; Title I Tutors; Support Staff Substitutes; Kindergarten Bus Aides; and Co-Curricular.*

*The motion passed 7-0.*

**COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

None.

**BOARD DISCUSSION AND COMMENT**

Mrs. Gold indicated that the Education Committee meeting had been changed from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Faust stated that a Finance Committee meeting was scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup>.

**SCHEDULE OF BOARD MEETINGS/CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Mrs. Jankowsky and seconded by Mrs. Gold to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Vickie A. Detwiler  
Board Secretary