



Centennial School District Education Committee of the Board

Meeting of February 9, 2009

Minutes

Attendance:

Board

Thomas Hezel**
Betty Huf
Mark Miller
Michael Monaghan**
Cynthia Mueller
Thomas Reinboth
Jane Schrader-Lynch*

* Chair

** Committee member

Administrators

Michael Devitt
Jennifer Foight-Cressman
Lisa Follman
Sandy Homel
Maryanne Ormsby
Eileen Poroszok

Staff

Albert Catarro
Carolyn Fisher

Community

Ian Adam
Steve Adams
Joseph Faust
Leigh Lieberman
Ellen Lynes
Janet Marinoff
Barbara Patrick
Robert Shaffer
Karine Simpson

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mrs. Jane Schrader Lynch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

Mr. Michael Monaghan moved to approve the minutes from January 5, 2009. Mr. Thomas Hezel seconded the motion. The minutes were approved in a vote of 3-0.

WILLIAM TENNENT HIGH SCHOOL (WTHS) STUDENT PRESENTATION

Mrs. Carolyn Fisher, WTHS Business, Computers and Information Technology teacher, introduced her student and protégé Ian Adam, a current WTHS junior, who has developed a new WTHS website during his independent study in network design. Ian Adam provided a tour of his beautifully designed website. Ian's innovative work received highest praise from our Directors, administrators, and community members.

Mr. Mark Miller requested that the Technology Department determine whether WTHS student Ian Adam's work using Dream Weaver on the WTHS website is able to be migrated to School Wires.

WILLIAM TENNENT HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE PARENT SURVEY DISCUSSION

The Education Committee reviewed the seventy parent responses that Mrs. Poroszok received to her second parent survey regarding the current schedule. School Board Directors recognize the constraints of the six-period day and are looking at a variety of schedules to remedy the current situation. Mrs. Mueller encouraged administration to create a hybrid, modular schedule that permits 30-, 60-, or 90-minute periods, depending upon the discipline. Mrs. Homel advised the Board to reach a decision by June of 2009 in order to make changes for the 2010-2011 school year. Mr. Hezel

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requested that WTHS administration develop various coursework pathways to ensure that no students would be harmed by introducing a schedule change. Dr. Pollock cautioned that any schedule be evaluated to ensure that there is no loss of instructional time. Mrs. Mueller recommended that world languages, science courses with a laboratory, and mathematics courses be scheduled for a full year. Dr. Pollock agreed and added that Advanced Placement (AP) courses should also be full-year courses. Directors charged administration with developing a modular schedule, with departmental input, that assigns different time periods (30, 60, or 90 minutes) depending on discipline.

UPDATE ON WTHS SCIENCE PSSA PLAN TO IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

In January, Dr. Devitt, Mr. Philip Vinogradov, Science Lead Teacher, K-12, and Dr. Foight-Cressman met to create a plan to address the student performance levels on the high school science PSSA. The plan includes the following:

- Dr. Devitt will communicate to the Science Department the high stakes nature of the examination and the level of Board concern over the Science PSSA. He will also stress the importance of explicitly and implicitly communicating to every student that he or she is encouraged and expected to demonstrate his/her best performance.
- Mr. Vinogradov will work with the Science Department and with classes of students to raise the profile of and deepen student investment in the exam.
- Benchmarks will be created by Mr. Vinogradov to be delivered the last week in February. The benchmark will be based on PDE released items. Feedback will be shared with science teachers using the WTHS Benchmark Process on a Professional Wednesday.
- Earth and Space items will be integrated across science classes, grades 9-11, to refresh student memories of middle school course content.
- Mr. Vinogradov will develop clicker-based PowerPoints to review PSSA eligible content and release items in all science classes.
- WTHS juniors will be assigned to science classrooms with science teachers as proctors. The total Science PSSA testing time is approximately 190-235 minutes. The test will be administered over two days from 7:30 a.m-10:45 a.m.

UPDATE ON READING AND MATHEMATICS INTERVENTIONS FOR MIDDLE BUCKS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MBIT) STUDENTS

Dr. Devitt, Ms. Follman, and Dr. Foight-Cressman reviewed the current reading and mathematics interventions that are being provided for our students attending MBIT. MBIT students who have not yet demonstrated PSSA proficiency have the option of returning early to home school for a period of mathematics or reading instruction or staying an additional hour after school from 2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m. Students are appreciative that they have a choice in when to attend the intervention sessions.

UPDATE ON GIFTED SERVICES, K-12

Dr. Foight-Cressman reviewed the information regarding the changes to the gifted program that she will be presenting to the parents of the gifted at the February 17 William Tennent High School Parent Forum. Mrs. Mueller expressed concern regarding the rigor of the 6-12 English program, particularly in the Honors courses at the high school and the gifted courses at the middle school. Dr. Foight-Cressman informed the committee that Ms. Mary Corcoran, English Lead Teacher, 6-12, and she

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were working with the English faculty as part of the curriculum renewal and materials selection processes to address these concerns.

DISCUSSION TO INVITE STUDENT FEEDBACK ON WTHS EXPERIENCE AND PREPARATION

Mr. Hezel elaborated on his request that WTHS invite the top twenty students from each graduating class over the past four years to the May Education Committee Meeting in order to receive feedback regarding their high school preparation. Dr. Pollock and Mr. Miller expanded upon that idea by commenting that it would be preferable to take a cross section of each class in order to get a range of experiences. Mrs. Mueller encouraged administration to put the survey out to every student to see what kind of response we receive. Mrs. Homel commented that she believes that WTHS guidance already conducts such a survey and that she would make further inquiries.

WTHS ACADEMIC AND ARTS HALLS OF FAME

At Dr. Pollock's request, there was a lively discussion regarding the creation of Academic and Arts Halls of Fame to complement the existing Athletic Hall of Fame and to honor distinguished alumni. Mrs. Homel suggested that American Education Week would be a superb time to honor notable academics, while the Fine Arts Festival presents an excellent opportunity to honor alumni artists, actors, and musicians. Mrs. Mueller emphasized the importance of inviting current students to the award events so that they might be inspired by the accomplishments of the award winners. Dr. Pollock requested that a space be designated in the plans for the new academic wing to house the displays for the new halls of fame. Mr. Monaghan suggested that the new halls of fame be inaugurated to coordinate with the opening of the new academic wing. Mrs. Homel agreed to convene an exploratory committee consisting of Mr. Joseph Faust, Dr. Andrew Pollock, and Mr. Steve Adams that would develop criteria. Dr. Pollock pointed out that administrators should "not reinvent the wheel" and directed the committee to the Benton High School website that contains excellent documentation. Mrs. Schrader Lynch requested that Mrs. Homel and Ms. Ormsby return to the April Education Committee Meeting to update Directors regarding progress on this project. Mrs. Schrader Lynch thanked everyone for their enthusiasm and willingness to work on recognizing our alumni.

Mr. Monaghan made the motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Hezel. The motion passed 3-0. Mrs. Schrader Lynch thanked all in attendance for their attention and participation and adjourned the meeting at 9:40 p.m.