



## *Centennial School District Education Committee of the Board*

**Meeting of November 10, 2008**

### Minutes

#### *Attendance:*

#### Board

Thomas Hezel\*\*  
Betty Huf  
Cynthia Mueller  
Andrew Pollock\*\*\*  
Jane Schrader-Lynch\*  
Joseph Simpson\*\*

#### Administrators

Jennifer Foight-Cressman  
Michael Devitt  
Lisa Follman  
Sandy Homel  
Susan Klyman  
Eileen Poroszok  
Robert Reed  
Terence White

#### Staff

Amy Campbell  
Judy Hoffman

#### Community

Leigh Lieberman  
Barbara Patrick  
Robert Shaffer

\* Chair

\*\* Committee member

\*\*\* Alternate committee member

#### *WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS*

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

Mr. Hezel moved to approve the minutes from October 22, 2008. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved in a vote of 3-0.

#### *BCIT/GWYNEDD-MERCY COLLEGE DUAL ENROLLMENT*

Mr. Hezel removed the BCIT/Gwynedd-Mercy College Dual Enrollment item from the table. Mrs. Homel summarized her objections to the partnership, citing concerns that the proposed courses are not being delivered by a college instructor off-campus, and thus, not in keeping with a true college experience. She also shared Mr. Levin's verbal opinion that the district should not enter into financial transactions with students without a "hold harmless" agreement in place.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch praised Gwynedd-Mercy College's program and expressed interest in seeking additional information about the proposed partnership. School Board Directors requested that Mrs. Homel provide the following information:

- Which other districts are partnering with Gwynedd-Mercy College?
- What are the terms of their agreements?
- Did they obtain a solicitor's opinion? If so, what was the opinion?

Mr. Hezel stated that this was potentially a valuable partnership as earning college credit prior to matriculating can be very beneficial. Mr. Hezel made a motion to table the topic again until additional information was provided by Mrs. Homel. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

#### *POLICY 5.7, REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS*

Mrs. Homel summarized the recommended changes to Policy 5.7, Reporting Student Progress. Administration recommends the following revisions:

- Move to a 4.0 scale
- Weighting of dual enrollment and advanced placement courses
- Addition of *summa cum laude* 3.9, *magna cum laude* 3.6, *cum laude* 3.3
- Eliminate class rank

As he believes students benefit from a competitive environment, Dr. Pollock objected to the elimination of class rank. Mrs. Homel responded that class rank would still be calculated "behind the scenes" and that the valedictorian/the salutatorian would still be recognized. Mrs. Mueller suggested that it would be positive to eliminate competitiveness and encourage team spirit among students. Mr. Hezel enquired as to when the new scale would be put into effect. Mrs. Homel advised that the district had previously sought a legal opinion and that it has been recommended that any changes be made with the freshman class. Mr. Hezel expressed concern about our continuing to send student grade point averages to colleges based on a 6.0 scale.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked Mr. Reed whether Skyward was able to maintain different scales for different grade cohorts of students. Mr. Reed assured her that he would investigate that possibility. Mrs. Schrader Lynch requested that Mr. Reed provide the requested information to the Board. She also asked that Mrs. Homel secure a legal opinion regarding the proposed changes to Policy 5.7, Reporting Student Progress.

#### *SKYWARD STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM PARENT PORTAL*

Mr. Robert Reed provided an excellent overview and comprehensive tour of Family Access, the parent portal to the Skyward Student Information System. He described the adoption of Skyward as being a "quantum leap" in improving and increasing communication between parents, teachers and students. Families separated by distance, such as our military families, divorced parents, or parents who travel on business, can access the child's information no matter where they are in the world through the Internet. Parents can now access information regarding their child's grades, attendance, discipline record, and progress reports. Parents can activate the function that provides monthly, weekly, or daily progress and attendance reports by e-mail.

Access to the parent portal, through the district website, is scheduled to be launched on November 17. The website contains Frequently Asked Questions, a tutorial, a copy of the parent letter, and the parent log-in screen. Information regarding the roll-out of the website will be publicized through our cable channel, website, e-mail, and a formal letter to the parents during American Education Week.

Dr. Pollock recommended that Mr. Stephen Barth, our new public relations specialist, create a press release on Skyward's Family Access feature. Mr. Reed affirmed that he had already initiated that process. Mrs. Huf was concerned that parents have access to assistance in using Family Access in the evening. Mr. Reed assured her that he would staff the helpline through the evening during the initial implementation.

The student portal will be activated in January so that students can access their own information and register for courses for the next school year. Mrs. Huf expressed concern that not all families will have a computer with Internet access. Mr. Reed responded that parents can access the parent portal through any computer with Internet access in the district or at our public libraries. Dr. Pollock wondered what would happen if teachers were not inputting data. Mr. Reed responded that, due to athletic eligibility reports, secondary teachers are required to update their grades on at least a weekly, if not daily, basis.

Mr. Simpson commended Mr. Reed and his team for an outstanding job in rolling out the new Skyward Student Information System Family Access portal. Mrs. Huf requested an update in December regarding the number of parents who have accessed the system.

#### *DISCUSSION OF THE WILLIAM TENNENT HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC SCHEDULE*

Mrs. Homel presented three items for discussion: the change process, time on task, and staffing requirements. Mrs. Poroszok stated that it is essential to keep faculty well-informed and included as part of the process in order to foster community ownership. Dr. Devitt reviewed a time utilization chart comparing four different schedules that contained information regarding: total minutes, passing time, lunch minutes, homeroom, directed study, instructional minutes, announcements, and total actual instructional time.

Before making any decisions regarding schedule changes, Mrs. Huf requested additional data regarding how the six-period day is affecting student achievement. School Board Directors expressed concern that information regarding the former block schedule was never provided. Mrs. Mueller, Mr. Hezel and Dr. Pollock all expressed concern that the 6-period configuration is severely limiting the number of courses our students can take throughout their high school careers. Mrs. Huf requested that the Board consider an all-day program for our students studying at MBIT.

School Board Directors requested that Mrs. Homel and the high school administration provide the following data regarding student performance and the current six-period schedule: PSSA, grade point average, discipline referrals, attendance, grades, dropout statistics, number of electives currently offered, MBIT attendance and graduation rates, and post-secondary acceptance rates. Mrs. Homel promised to include staffing figures for the six-period day in an upcoming Friday Update.

Education Committee Minutes  
November 10, 2008

Mrs. Schrader Lynch requested that a special called meeting of the Education Committee be held on November 24, 2008, to address the BCIT/Gwynedd Mercy College Dual Enrollment agreement and any changes to Policy 5.7 that would affect the William Tennent High School Program of Studies.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked that all in attendance keep Board President Michael Monaghan in our hearts and prayers.

Mr. Hezel made the motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Simpson. The motion passed 3-0. Mrs. Schrader Lynch thanked all in attendance for their attention and participation and adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

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