

# Centennial eyes academic, arts recognition to match sports

By Gary Weckselblatt Staff Writer | Posted: Friday, November 28, 2014 12:30 am

If Andrew Pollock, of the Centennial school board, has his way, graduates of William Tennent High School will be recognized for their academic and artistic accomplishments in much the same way as achievements in sports, which has an athletic hall of fame.

Pollock brought up the issue when the board was considering revising guidelines to the high school athletic hall of fame.

“At this point, I cannot support this,” said Pollock. “It’s not that I don’t feel it should happen. My problem is about four to five years ago approximately, this board decided and I made the motion to expand the athletic hall of fame to include an arts and academic hall of fame. I don’t disagree with having an athletic hall of fame. I feel we should have a hall of fame encompassing three different things.”

Pollock said he was a superintendent in the Benton Area School District in Columbia County, which had halls of fame for academics, arts and athletics. “And we weren’t the only ones,” he said.

Board member Charles Kleinschmidt agrees that former students should be recognized in all three areas.

“All three play a critical role in student development,” he said. “It just creates a more well-rounded individual. It’s great that this is moving forward again.”

To illustrate his point, Pollock pointed to a large plaque that hangs on the wall behind board members. Under the title “Centennial Schools,” it reads, “A diverse learning community where students succeed through academics, athletics and the arts.”

“I cannot support just doing it for athletics,” Pollock said.

The board debated the issue, with Vice President Mark Miller saying he didn’t want to “interrupt the very successful program that’s in place. Let’s modify this and use it as a model to cultivate (a hall of fame for academics and the arts).”

Steve Adams explained why Pollock’s proposal in late 2009 didn’t move forward. “We went through three superintendents and a new school building,” he said of the new William Tennent High School, which opened in 2011. “This idea wasn’t just brushed aside.”

Pollock agreed. “We went four to five years with changes in leadership and building a new high school,” he said. The idea of developing a hall of fame for arts and academics “fell through the cracks,” he said.

To get the ball moving again, board President Jane Schrader Lynch appointed Pollock and Superintendent Joyce Mundy to head a committee to develop a plan to recognize graduates in the world of arts and academics. Residents interested in joining the committee should contact Mundy.

The first meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m. Wednesday in the administration building.

“We’re going to make sure it gets done,” Pollock said. “I don’t like to let things sit.”