

Schools to open before Labor Day in Centennial

By Gary Weckselblatt Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, March 12, 2015 4:30 pm

Centennial will start school before Labor Day this September.

The school board approved the 2015-16 calendar this week, which includes Wednesday, Sept. 2, as the first day for students. The four-day Labor Day weekend will run from Sept. 4-7.

“This was a consensus of opinion from several sources,” said Mark Miller, vice president of the Centennial School Board. Starting school before Labor Day “used to be an obstacle, but that’s no longer the case.”

Miller, also vice president of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, said last winter’s weather, which caused 10 snow days, played a role in the earlier opening.

“Rather than add on at the end of the year, everyone seemed to agree this was a better way to go,” Miller added.

Beginning school before Labor Day puts Centennial on the same calendar as Central Bucks, Council Rock and New Hope-Solebury, the other sending districts to the Middle Bucks Institute of Technology, said Superintendent Joyce Mundy. A later start to the school year might have meant Centennial students would miss MBIT classes and fall behind at the start of school.

“We’re working as a team to try and align our calendars,” Mundy said of the districts. “We’re looking for consistency for our kids. MBIT is such a good program, and we want our students to have every possible advantage.”

Mundy commended the Centennial Education Association for being “very helpful” in the calendar’s planning.

Orientation for new teachers is scheduled for Aug. 26-27, with an in-service day set for Sept. 1. The last day for students is June 15, with teachers wrapping up June 16.

In other district news, Klinger Middle School will have two sections of its facade repaired at a cost of \$23,975. The district has chosen Premier Builders Inc., to do the work.

Centennial is developing a “Comprehensive Special Education Plan,” which can be found during this special comment period at www.centennialsd.org/Domain/1, under “District News.”



The Centennial School District administration building.

Any feedback should be provided to Judith Hengst, director of special education, at hengju@centennialsd.org or by calling 215-441-6000, ext. 11041. The plan will be finalized and presented to Pennsylvania Department of Education for final approval by May 1.

The school board recently appointed two supervisors for special education — Michelle Lockett and Rachel Murray

Lockett began her career as a special education teacher in the Centennial School District in 2004. She is also an adjunct instructor at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia. Lockett holds bachelor of arts degrees in elementary education and special education from LaSalle University and a master of science degree in instructional leadership from Neumann University. She obtained her supervisor of special education certification through Delaware Valley College.

Murray began her career with the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22 in 2004 as a teacher of children with autism and advanced to become the IU's program coordinator for autism services. She holds a bachelor's degree in special education from West Chester University and a master's degree in special education/advanced practice from Holy Family University. She is completing a supervisor of special education certification program through Delaware Valley College.

Centennial is hosting a community meeting, "The Dangers of Drugs and Poor Decision Making," at 7 p.m. March 23 at William Tennent High School in Warminster.

An assistant district attorney will provide information about the dangers of drugs and discuss their impact on decision making. Several videos and public service announcements will be shown to illustrate the devastating toll that heroin addiction takes on those who use it. Questions about should be directed to Ryan Mulford, 12th-grade assistant principal, at 215-441-6181, ext. 12002.

A meeting at which parents can meet the district's leadership team is scheduled for 6 p.m. April 9 in the Centennial administration building, 433 Centennial Road.