

April 19, 2010  
Central School

## PT Council Minutes

Meeting was called to order by President Cindy Habig at 9:25am.

I. Central School Presentation (Carol Houseknecht and Joanne Hindley)

a. Hot topics at Central that shouldn't be hot:

- i. "Great Schools" website rated Central School a "5" out of "10." This is a web site that rates schools nationally based on specific criteria – primarily test scores. Given the diversity of the students (including a high percentage of students in the special education program), the test scores are not an accurate measurement of the school. Carol does not want the focus to be on the rating – but instead on the wonderful students, faculty and spirit of the school. In an effort to provide accurate data to those concerned parents, they have disaggregated the data (taking out the scores from those in the self-contained special education classes) and the scores are similar to the other schools in the district.
- ii. There have been some issues regarding class size in the co-curricular areas (i.e., music, art, etc.). Due to mainstreaming some of the special education students, class sizes have exceeded the guidelines. There are 4 self-contained classes (approximately 45-50 students out of the 500 students at Central) and it is an issue when mainstreaming into the co-curricular classes, often due to space and timing. Carol and Joanne are bringing together teachers, administrators and others to help address this issue, look at all the options and determine how to improve the situation.

b. Topics at Central that should be hot:

- i. Curriculum Conversations: Assistant Principal, Joanne Hindley, runs a Tuesday morning staff meeting where the teachers get together to talk about curriculum. Typically around 10-15 teachers come, representing all grades and all types of teachers (veteran teachers and new teachers). It's a casual

work group and has really created excitement among the staff. The topics covered so far this year include:

1. Strategy Group Instruction (regardless of level)
  2. Writing in Response to Reading
  3. Talk about Reading (i.e., book clubs, etc.)
- ii. CNN (Central News Network): an interactive web site where the kids are involved and report on on-going events. There are news stories and a blog called News Flash designed to engage the students (the first one was just released on yoga in schools) and get them excited about their school.
- iii. Value Math: Create an environment that shows students that the school supports and values math. Over the next several months they will work to make math part of everyday life all over the school (i.e., post math facts, create murals relating to numbers, etc.).
- iv. Talk in the Classroom: Working with educational consultant, Lucy West, to improve students' ability to express their thinking – how to form questions and articulate what they understand and don't understand. It also helps with active listening and getting students to respond to each other more effectively. The program crosses all curriculums and grade levels – even the structure of a room can affect this. There is a study group after school that teachers (including Hommocks teachers) can participate in and learn about the program.

## II. Legislative (Rina Beder)

- a. There was a meeting with State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer on April 16<sup>th</sup> so that she could express her feelings on certain issues (i.e., Triboro Amendment) and let the district know that community legislators are paying attention to what is going on. She has also expressed interest in talking to PT Council, however, due to limited time, it may be done via a "Q & A" or interview and then we can disseminate that information to the broader school community.
- b. Point of Interest: Florida Legislators, in a strong showing, voted to eliminate tenure, but the legislation was vetoed right away by the Governor.

### III. Superintendent Paul Fried

- a. High School Principal Search: The position was advertised in the New York Times (2 weeks). There will be a meeting to discuss the involvement of the high school community (parents, focus groups, etc.) in the search process. Dr. Fried will be actively involved in the search as will Dr. Shaps. If all goes well, they hope an announcement will be made by mid-June.
- b. Fund Raising: As budget cuts have forced reductions across the board (sports, programs in the arts, etc.), parents have been inquiring about the ability to raise funds for some of these activities. Dr. Fried is currently working on a set of criteria to consider when accepting funds that will be shared with the board on Tuesday.
  - i. PACE: Money has already been raised to restore two PACE shows. The board will have the option to accept these funds or not.
  - ii. Donations will have to be brought forth without individual names.
  - iii. Class Trips: individual schools can raise money through their own fund raising efforts. Inequity across the schools is no longer really an issue since money has been restored to all the schools evenly.
  - iv. We need to post the fund raising rules so that all parents are familiar with the process
- c. Parking Issue at the High School: New athletic field construction will be starting soon. The maintenance building that houses the large equipment will be removed so that equipment will need to be stored somewhere else. Currently the only option for that is the visitor's parking lot at the high school. This will unfortunately make parking even more difficult there.
- d. MTA Concessions: As we have read, the Board of Education could not accept the MTA offer that was made last week. While the MTA expected a counter-offer, after careful analysis (and considering other district's concessions), the BOE realized that there were no scenarios that would really work at this time. The BOE wanted to release a joint press release as to why the district couldn't accept the proposal, but the MTA was not willing to do that. Subsequently the MTA has cancelled all upcoming meetings with Dr. Fried (including their monthly meeting and meeting on tenure). Dr. Fried will

continue to try to reestablish discussion with them. It will be important going forward to educate the community on the negotiation process with the teachers, including next year's contracts.

IV. District Calendar Process (Debbie Manetta)

- a. There was a slight delay with the district calendar, so the draft version of the calendar will be open for on-line input next week (probably 4/28). Debbie will send an email with instructions, etc. when it is available. Print Craft will be printing the calendar for next year.

V. Board Updates (Rick Marsico)

- a. Dr. Shaps will be officially appointed on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. Following the board meeting there will be a reception (starting about 8:30) for the community to meet Dr. Shaps.

VI. Budget

- a. If there is anything on the budget that is going into a school newsletter, please send it to Debbie before it is released so she can check it for accuracy.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Herbsman

In Attendance:

PTC: Cindy Habig, Co-President, Melany Gray, Co-President; Kristine Budill, Treasurer; Lori Herbsman, Secretary; Jean Meyerowitz, Communications; Rina Beder, Legislation/Teacher Institute

Central: Jennifer Malherbe, Pam Buchmueller, Co-Presidents

Mamaroneck Avenue: Jennifer Vaccaro, Lisa Boren, Co-Presidents

Murray Avenue: Ann LoBue, Tracy Owen, Co-Presidents

SEPTA: Cecilia Absher, Amy Lieberman, Co-Presidents

District: Debbie Manetta, Director of Communications

School Board Liaison: Rick Marsico

Guests: Carol Houseknecht, Joanne Hindley

Approved: 4/30/10