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Center Area School District

160 Baker Road Extension Monaca, PA 15061 724-775-5600

www.casd.k12.pa.us



District Newsletter

Winter 2007

SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Moving Forward



Dr. Daniel J. Matsook

Happy New Year! Now that we have turned the corner on the 2006-2007 school year, heading to close out yet another very productive year, let's review some of our progress thus far. Our curriculum maps for Math, Health and Physical Education, and Technology have been completed and will be posted on the Web site soon. Our K-2 English/Language Arts and K-12 Science curriculum maps will be completed by June, and grades 3-12 English/Language Arts should be completed during the 2007-2008 school year.

On the technology front, our new fiber WAN system is in place, permitting us to more fully investigate on-line offerings for our students at some point in the future. Because Todd Lane Elementary is not electronically connected and with our goal to purchase/implement a new Student Information System next year, our priority to implement EDline, a parent on-line software program, at Todd Lane has been placed on hold. We are on schedule to implement a point-of-sale system at Todd Lane Elementary and eventually district wide. This new electronic system will allow students to purchase lunches through prepaid accounts and allow parents to monitor their children's accounts and menu choices. Expect more information in the spring. Our Web site has been improved, as well as our network for collecting and disseminating news to our constituents. Regular updates on the merger study and the construction are available on the Web site.

Another priority for the year was to develop our Continuous Improvement Plans (CIP) to monitor student progress and facilitate data-informed decision making. Our grade 4 and 5 CIP plans for Math will be implemented during the 2007-2008 school year. The remainder of the district's CIP plans for Math will be developed next year for implementation in 2008-2009.

Aside from the educational goals mentioned above, much of our energy has focused on the completion of our K-2 Primary Center and the renovations on the HS/MS campus. The administration over the next months will begin activity to ready our staff for the move into the new K-2 building for the 2007-2008 school year. **For one more school year (2007-2008), fifth grade will advance to the middle school as sixth graders.** The following school year (2008-2009) will reflect the new grade configurations at Todd Lane as an intermediate building (Grades 3-6). Phasing the reconfiguration over two years will allow the district to plan more effectively for any programming changes in grades 7-8 and prepare Todd Lane for educational programming for grades 5-6.

As for the merger study, the administration has been working diligently with Monaca to complete the simulated merger scenario for the Pennsylvania Department of Education. We should have enough information from our financial consultants by spring to plan another public meeting and to provide information for a sound decision on the potential merger between the two school districts. Lastly, Act 1, The Taxpayer Relief Act, is in effect. Please refer to the related article for important information regarding new regulations.

As the second semester unrolls, renovation activity will continue, PSSA testing will begin, students will begin scheduling for next year, budget planning will be initiated, and there will be a proliferation of student activities on our stages and athletic fields. Soon thereafter, senior week will arrive and commencement ceremonies will follow. Enjoy the ride as we continue to move forward from Good to Great.



L-R: Mrs. Lois Sylvester; Barbara Magnotta, School Wellness Coordinator; and David Ambrose, President, Center Area Education Foundation

Center Area Education Foundation Receives \$100,000

It is with great pleasure that Center Area Education Foundation accepted a \$100,000 donation from the Walter and Lois Sylvester family for the naming rights to the proposed fitness center. It will be called the Walter and Lois Sylvester Center for Fitness. Mrs. Lois Sylvester helped "kick off" CAEF's first major capital campaign with her family's contribution that endorsed teaching our students and community members healthier lifestyles.

Center for Fitness Fundraising Campaign

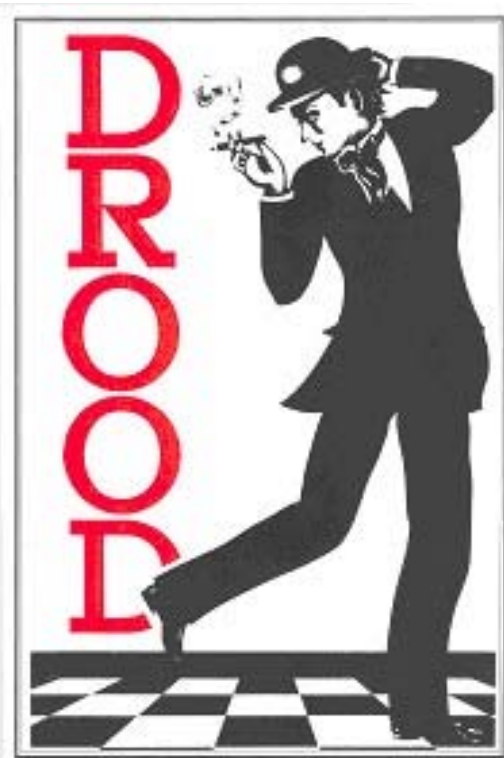
Your support of our capital campaign for the new Walter and Lois Sylvester Center for Fitness is vital to its success. The completion of this facility will mean healthier students who perform better academically and ultimately create a healthier community. The fitness center will be available for our students, staff, parents, and community residents.

Make checks/Money Order payable to CAEF
Mail your tax deductible donation to: P.O. Box 82, Monaca, PA 15061

An Overview of Act 1 The Taxpayer Relief Act

Act 1, adopted by the State Legislature in June 2006, is a very complex law designed to provide property tax relief to Pennsylvania residents. In an attempt to simplify, the law has four main components:

1. **A new budget process and property tax restriction for school districts.** School districts are now restricted to only raise property taxes by an inflationary index calculated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or must qualify for certain exceptions allowed by the law. Any tax increase above the inflationary index must be approved by the voters. In order to meet the timeline of a potential ballot question in a spring primary, schools must prepare budgets earlier or commit to not raise the tax rate above the inflationary index. The Center Area School District is committed to work within Act 1's restrictions and keep tax rates within the inflationary index.
2. **Distribution of gaming revenue to reduce home and farm owner property taxes.** Gaming revenue will reduce property taxes for all home and farm owners when an initial \$500 million is available. Tax relief from gaming revenue probably will not occur until 2008 at the earliest. To receive this tax relief, home and farm owners must file an "Application for Homestead and Farmstead Exclusions" (the form is available at www.co.beaver.pa.us/assessment) with the County Assessment Office by March 1. The Assessment Office will approve all eligible applications. When gaming revenues are received from the State, the Center Area School District will pass on the tax relief dollars to the approved home and farm owners in the form of an assessment exclusion which reduces their tax liability.
3. **Optional tax shifting from property tax to an increased Income Tax.** Act 1 requires school districts to develop a referendum question for the May 2007 election for voters to consider shifting some level of property tax to an increased income tax. In September, the School Board appointed a Local Tax Study Commission, as required by the Act, made up of seven resident taxpayers to study the impact of such a tax shift on all demographic groups in the community. The Local Tax Study Commission presented its findings to the Board in December. The Board will adopt a referendum question in March to be placed on the May ballot. Act 1 requires this ballot question and sets minimum and maximum guidelines for the tax shifting referendum. The referendum is required regardless of whether or not the Local Tax Study Commission or the school district believes any tax shift is in the best interest of the taxpayers. Hence, the referendum question does not mean that the Commission or Board supports the tax shift to be voted on in the May election. The Commission and Board are merely following Act 1 and its requirements of placing a tax shift referendum on the ballot within the minimum and maximum amounts of such a shift set by Act 1.
4. **Expansion of senior citizen's Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program.** Act 1 also provides for the expansion of the existing senior citizen's Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program. For more information on this Rebate Program, visit www.papropertytaxrelief.com.



Center High School's 2007 musical production, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, is a solve-it-yourself musical created by Rupert Holmes. Based on the novel by Charles Dickens, which was left unfinished upon his death, Holmes employs a novel method of determining the outcome of the story: the audience votes on it. Since every audience member differs in temperament, each performance's outcome is unpredictable even to the actors, who must quickly tally the votes and commence with the chosen ending. The cast members, under the direction of Ms. Sandy Reigel, and the student orchestra members, under the direction of Mr. James Rizzo, have been hard

at work rehearsing, and their countless hours of rehearsal are sure to guarantee three wonderful evenings of entertainment.

This wildly warm-hearted theatrical experience kicks off when the Music Hall Royale (a hilariously loony Victorian musical troupe) "puts on" its flamboyant rendition of an unfinished Dickens' mystery. The story itself deals with John Jasper (George Milosh), a Jekyll-and-Hyde choirmaster of Cloisterham who is quite madly in love with his music student, the fair Miss Rosa Bud (Sara Mathieu). Now, Rosa Bud is, in turn, engaged to Jasper's likeable nephew, young Edwin Drood (Kaitlyn Bianco). The plot thickens as Rosa Bud introduces the Landless siblings, Neville (Joey Pratchenko) and Helena (Abby Blankenship). Brother Neville develops feelings for Rosa Bud while Helena hankers after Drood's Uncle John. Meanwhile, the outwardly respectable John Jasper is a frequent visitor to an infamous London establishment run by den mother Princess Puffer (Maria Palombo). It is within these haunts that the villainous side of John Jasper's psyche emerges. On a dark and stormy Christmas Eve, John Jasper plies dinner guests Drood and Neville with spiked wine and then sends them out to the river. Drood disappears, but no body is found. When the Princess Puffer and the mysterious figure of Dick Datchery turn up in Cloisterham, the Chairman (Corey Bisbal) interrupts the action, stating that "Charles Dickens laid down his pen forever" before the audience can learn what they are up to. Was Drood murdered or did he disappear on his own accord? If he met foul play, then whodunnit? Which of the hapless characters will become happy couples? You decide!

Be there to help solve the mystery and vote for the outcome you want on Thursday, March 1 (7:00 p.m.); Friday, March 2 (7:30 p.m.); and Saturday, March 3 (7:30 p.m.) in the Philip M. Kanfush, Jr. Auditorium at Center High School. Tickets will be on sale to the public beginning Tuesday, February 20 in the high school office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Prices are \$7 for adults and \$6 for students. Be sure to purchase your tickets early so you are able to help solve the mystery!

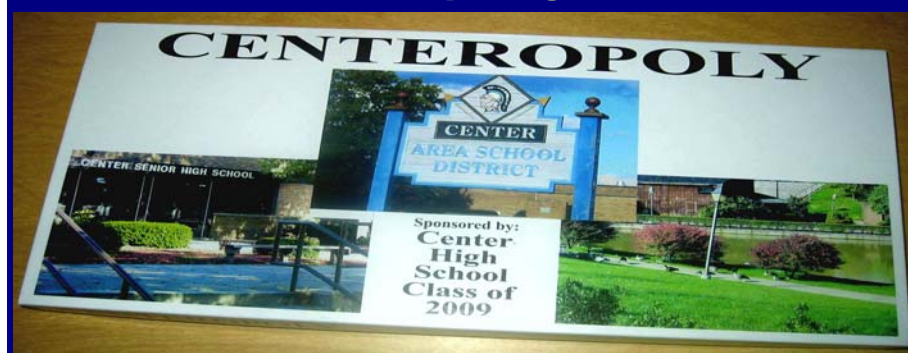
CASD Staff Members Nominated for Teacher Excellence Center Award

The purpose of the Teacher Recognition Program is to honor the region's exemplary K-12 educators by identifying, recognizing and promoting outstanding teaching practices. Full-time teachers working in a participating school district are eligible to participate. This includes classroom teachers, librarians and guidance counselors. CASD is pleased to announce that we have 12 staff members nominated for the Teacher Excellence Center Award. They are as follows:

Mr. Dave Bell - HS Social Studies
Ms. Allison Churovia - HS Math
Ms. Haley Dzumba - HS Math
Ms. Marie Guarascio - TL Grade 3
Ms. Lorraine Jones - HS Social Studies
Mr. Kenneth Kalmar - HS English
Ms. Jennifer Lupinacci - HS Special Education
Mrs. Marilyn Penberthy - TL Grade 1
Ms. Kyra Pucevich - TL Grade 4
Mr. James Rizzo - HS Instrumental Music
Mrs. Judy Rizzo - MS Reading
Ms. Monica Sturm - TL Learning Support

Teachers will receive a copy of the nomination form(s) submitted on their behalf. If the teacher wishes to participate, they must submit a completed Program Application to the Teacher Excellence Center. Criteria are based on the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards policy statement, What Teachers Should Know And Be Able To Do. Teachers with the top 100 scores will be deemed "Honorees" and will be invited to the annual Celebration of Teaching event on April 19, 2007. Honorees with the top scores from four different categories will be deemed "Teachers of Excellence" and will receive a crystal trophy. The school of each Teacher of Excellence will receive a \$2,500 grant.

Centeropoly Sale



The class of 2009 is selling Centeropoly games as a fundraiser. They are \$25 each and can be purchased in the high school office until 3:00 p.m. on weekdays. Centeropoly is our own personalized version of Monopoly. They make great gifts and keepsakes, so buy one while they are still available.



Al Gore Training Project Taps Mr. Craig Whipkey as Global Warming Messenger

Mr. Craig Whipkey of Center Area High School has recently completed a rigorous training program led by former Vice President Al Gore to spread the message about the threat of and solutions to global warming.

“Our volunteer presenters are an outstanding example of the millions of Americans who have been energized by the call to action on the climate crisis,” said Gore. “We are so pleased that he has made a serious commitment to this challenge by coming to Nashville to become part of this unprecedented grassroots effort.”

“Mr. Whipkey will be incorporating the scientific findings into his high school Environmental Science curriculum and discussing how individuals and businesses, schools, and other organizations can be a major part of the solution to the growing crisis of global warming,” continued Gore.

Mr. Whipkey was part of a select group of 1,000 individuals across the nation chosen to receive this important training January 4-6 in Nashville, TN. Each trainee took part in an intensive tutorial about issues surrounding global warming, led by Gore and a team of renowned scientists and environmental educators. In addition, each received technical training to become experienced presenters of a version of Gore’s computer-based slide show, which became the basis of his best-selling book and documentary film, “An Inconvenient Truth.”



L-R: Al Gore and Craig Whipkey



Inductees	Class
Jeffrey G. Druzak	1979
David J. Dzumba	1977
Colonel Scott E. Gilson	1980
Pamela L. Hart	1982
Colonel Edward B. Lucci, M.D.	1979
Corporal Joseph R. Pokorny, Jr.	1978
Joan E. Yasolsky,	1981
Captain Ronald W. Zaperach	1970

Community Help is Needed

The Graduation Project Committee requests a panel of community members to evaluate graduation projects on April 10, 2007. If you are interested in serving on the review panel, please call Roxanne Delon, Graduation Project Coordinator at 724-775-4300 ext. 4072.

School Director Appreciation Month



1st Row: Lesa Mastrofrancesco, Vice President Ladonna Dmitsak, Treasurer Kim McKenzie, Charlene Kosmal, 2nd Row: Solicitor Al Maiello, Superintendent Dr. Daniel J. Matsook, President Michael Rossi; John C. McCracken, Michael Perich, Robert Gradisek

January is “School Director Recognition Month” in Pennsylvania – a time to spotlight the contributions of these valuable citizen-volunteers. Those who serve as school directors truly are public service volunteers.

Public school directors have shown their capacity to inspire dreams and create opportunities through the promise of a “thorough and efficient” system of public education. They oversee multimillion-dollar budgets, deal with taxation and funding issues, negotiate contracts, hire employees, and select a superintendent to guide local district operations. These local school directors stand behind an educational system that is prepared to meet the extraordinary needs of a diverse learning community and prepare students for highly skilled jobs and career opportunities. They set high standards of performance and accountability, provide new choices and options for parents and students, and work to ensure adequate funding and broad community engagement.

By taking the initiative to serve their communities, school directors ensure decisions about public schools are made with the needs of the community and its children foremost in their minds. These forward-thinking individuals are committed to ensuring public schools remain a solid foundation for American democracy, and serve as shining examples for our young people to continue the excellent tradition of volunteerism that is a hallmark of our society.

These individuals are the foundation of our future. Through their outstanding efforts, future generations become productive citizens and excellent leaders. For this, we thank you!

CASD Welcomes Mr. Urtz to School Board

Mr. Peter Urtz has been appointed to the vacant school board position in which Mr. Richard George unseated after 5 years to fill the Center Township’s Supervisory vacancy. Mr. Urtz graduated from Paul Smith’s College in upstate NY in 1983 with an associates degree in Forestry/Surveying. He was employed with Empire Airlines, Utica, NY (1984) and subsequently USAirways, Pittsburgh, PA (1990). He is currently employed as a Flight Dispatcher. He was elected to the Board of Supervisors in Potter Township fulfilling a term that expired in 2005. He served on the board for the Raccoon Boys’ Club for baseball and is currently on the boards for Centers’ basketball and baseball booster organizations. He has also coached baseball at several different levels for both recreation leagues and for our Center School teams. Mr. Urtz and wife, Kelly, have 3 children: Kevin - 11th Grade, Logan - 8th Grade, and Danny - 4th Grade. Mr. Urtz is a resident of Potter Twp.



Peter Urtz

PSBA School Leadership Conference



1st Row: Faculty member and Co-Student Council Advisor Tracy Sloan, students Adrienne Schwartz and Maria Palombo 2nd Row: Board President Mike Rossi, Superintendent Dr. Daniel J. Matsook, and High School Principal Anthony Mendicino

On Thursday, October 12, 2006, Superintendent Dr. Daniel J. Matsook, High School Principal Mr. Anthony M. Mendicino and School Board President Michael D. Rossi were presenters at the 2006 PASA-PSBA School Leadership Conference in Hershey, PA. Their presentation was How to Create a Sense of Direction through Career Development. Over the past two years, Center High School has been committed to enhancing its career development curriculum. By adding additional career components to the Graduation Project requirement, along with providing additional career exploration opportunities within the curriculum and utilizing the dual-enrollment program, the district has created a sense of direction among students and parents as they prepare for life after high school.

Since our high school averages 93% of its graduating seniors attending two-year or four-year colleges or universities, having additional career experiences in high school helps to assist students and parents alike in their preparation for post-secondary plans in order to “get them to the right place for the right reasons.”

Also attending the Leadership Conference were faculty member and Co-Student Council Advisor, Miss Tracy Sloan, along with two of our student delegates, Maria Palombo and Adrienne Schwartz. The students’ primary focus while at the conference was to research and debate certain “Hot Topics” that reflect current issues for school districts and the students that attend. The students participated in small group discussions and prepared a presentation for a mock school board meeting. The mock school meeting involved a combination of students, superintendents, and school board members attending the conference. This activity allowed the students to learn the appropriate course of action for expressing their viewpoints and ideas. Along with the hot topic discussions, the student delegates attended leadership workshops and heard motivational speakers throughout the week. Overall, the week was a rewarding and motivating experience for all those involved.



Center Teachers Train Peers in New Technology Workshops

The Center Area School District recently used the January 15 in-service day to provide technology training to each of its professional and secretarial staff members. Each staff member had the opportunity to attend four specially designed technology workshops facilitated by our own professional staff. Technology content and course material was designed around the needs of our staff. Workshop sessions included courses on the use of educational specific resources available via the Internet, electronic grade book/lesson planners and online parent access to student grades, the use of web based student tutorial packages and software packages that help guide independent reading and math, the effective use of Microsoft Office, and the use of PowerPoint to enhance presentations in the classroom. The day provided teachers the opportunity to utilize the technological resources available in our district and further develop the skills necessary to use these technological resources in their daily instructional delivery. A special thanks to **Mr. Eimiller, Mrs. Lefes, Mrs. Weaver, Mrs. Ursich, Mrs. Zupsic, Mr. Whipkey, Mr. Hufnagle, Mrs. Harden, Mrs. Abrams, Miss Sloan, and Mrs. Yetsick** for facilitating the technology workshops.



CASD Welcomes and Salutes



Colleen Kearns
New Superintendent's
Secretary



Cheryl Vukas
Retired Superintendent's
Secretary

\$2,500 Worth of Grants Received by Center Teachers

The Center Area Education Foundation is very pleased to announce the recipients of five teacher grants and one educational program for the second semester of the 2006-2007 school year. The grant proposals were developed by Center Area School District staff for innovative and creative projects that will enrich their curriculum. The projects and program will be funded by the Center Area Education Foundation.

Congratulations to the following teachers:

Mrs. Julie Zarillo	"Project Heart Smart"
Mrs. Suzanne DiPietrantonio	"Look, Listen, Talk – the Syntalk Method"
Ms. Katie Sosnak	"Look, Listen, Talk – the Syntalk Method"
Mrs. Becky Dostalick	"The Great Grow Along"
Mr. Wesley Chappel	"Project Heart Smart"
Mrs. Sharon Weaver	"Hands on Graphing"
Mrs. Bernadette Mattica	"Black History Month Assembly"



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is educational excellence through partnerships with the student, family and community in a safe, respectful learning environment, allowing each student to maximize his or her ability to function competitively and with integrity in a diverse global society.

Center Area School District

160 Baker Road Extension
Monaca, PA 15061

Visit our Web site
www.casd.k12.pa.us

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Superintendent of Schools

Nicholas D. Perry
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

David R. Yates
Director of Student Services

Scott A. Antoline
Business Manager

Anthony M. Mendicino
High School Principal

Kevin J. O'Toole
High School Assistant Principal

Michael D. McCullough
Middle School Principal

Ronald J. Kitsko
Elementary Principal

Dr. Edward J. Currie
School Psychologist

School Directors

Michael Rossi, President

Ladonna Dmitsak, Vice President

Kim McKenzie, Treasurer

Robert Gradisek

Charlene Kosmal

Lesa Mastrofrancesco

John C. McCracken

Michael Perich

Pete Urtz

Maiello, Brungo & Maiello, Solicitor

Susan Smith, Board Secretary

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Agenda setting sessions are scheduled for the second Thursday of each month, and **voting sessions** are scheduled for the third Thursday of each month. Both sessions begin at 7 p.m. in the Board Room, Center Middle School.

Questions regarding information in this newsletter can be addressed to Roxanne Delon, *On Center* Publication Coordinator.

