

School board rushes to spend \$100,000

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

DALLAS - The school board has \$100,000 in its pocket and two months to spend it.

At the August 7 committee-of-the-whole meeting, the board discussed ways to use the money, left over from a bond issue, which must be spent on capital improvements by September 30. It has already upgraded all district facilities to comply with the federal Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires all public facilities to give persons in wheelchairs and facing other physical challenges free access.

Superintendent Gerald Wycallis said repainting certain areas, installing a new drainage system at the tennis court and buying portable bleachers were several options. He asked the board for more suggestions for its August 14 meeting.

The board also discussed coach Jay Pope's request to send the girls' softball team to Florida for a spring training camp during Easter break. Each girl would pay for her own travel and expenses. The team's 20 members would miss two days of school, while Pope would miss his parent conferences.

"It's a concentrated program, with the girls playing two games a day against teams from all around the country," Wycallis said. "They would encounter pitching styles different from anything they have seen here in the Valley."

Ellen Nagy noted the students today have "a level of sophistica-

tion, travel and worldliness" and don't simply want to go anywhere for training.

"Wait a minute!" broke in Clarence Michael. "First you want to go around changing the students' schedules to give them more time in class and increase their educational fervor. Now you want to let them miss two days of classes by sending them to softball camp. Is this a truly valuable educational experience? What ever happened to classroom time? If this is such a good thing, I'll volunteer chaperone the soccer field trip to Canada!"

"That's during the summer, not during school," someone piped up.

The board decided to allow Pope's request, providing he re-schedules all his parent conferences before he leaves.

Wycallis also outlined several grant proposals which the teachers submitted to him and asked the board to review them.

A suggestion from the elementary school proposed hiring two full-time aides to work with students to improve math skills, Wycallis said. Two suggestions for high school advanced placement courses involved buying more graphic calculators and adding a fall field trip for the American Literature classes. Two other suggestions dealt with gadgets - setting up a language lab, which Wycallis said would run way over budget, and setting up a multi-media room with FAX machines and more Internet connections in the high school.

Teachers

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icki, who refused further comment.

The high school teachers foresee several problems in implementing a four-period day. In order for it to work properly, they would all be required to undergo special training, Wagner said.

"You simply can't lecture at the class for 85 minutes. You need to use other teaching methods," he said. "You have to vary what you're doing in order to keep their (the students) attention."

According to Wagner's calculations, science students could lose at least 50 hours of subject material per year.

His biology students presently meet six periods per week for the entire 36 weeks of school, for a total of 180 hours. With the four-period day, all students would meet five 85-minute periods per week for 18 weeks, for a total of 127 1/2 hours, losing 52 1/2 hours of classroom instruction. A student taking one science course per year could lose 210 hours over four years.

"We'd have to sharply reduce the amount of material we're teaching," Wagner said. "The other teachers told me they would be able to cover only 75 percent of the material they're presently working on. We could never cover all the material required for the advanced placement courses. It would be like teaching from a video or the Cliff notes instead of covering an entire novel or play."

"I think we should discuss it logically with the teachers and address their concerns."

Joseph Kunec
School board member

With such a total change looming in their students' futures, high school teachers want more concrete information to consider before deciding for or against intensified scheduling, Wagner said.

They want to know how it will help the students develop marketable skills, how will it affect college placement test scores and how it will affect low level ability students.

"The board doesn't have any concrete data to back up their claims of success," Wagner said. "We'll be glad to consider more information on the subject, but haven't been given any yet. If I approached the board with an idea and no concrete data to back it up, you'd laugh at me. We need more reasons than 'the students like it' or 'we have a bigger Honor Roll.' You can have a bigger Honor Roll without intensified scheduling - all you have to do is make your tests easier."

At a committee-of-the-whole meeting August 7, Wycallis said he has "documented evidence" from Wassowe, Colorado, the first school district in the country to use intensified scheduling.

"It was featured on television,"

he said. "The teachers interviewed said they would never go back to regular scheduling. I also distributed some magazine articles to the board."

Wycallis describes the four-period day as "having great potential."

"It's a great opportunity for the staff to energize themselves, to vary their classroom activities and maintain the students' interest."

The one key component which makes intensified scheduling work is the application of theory to practical use, Wycallis said.

"That's concept versus content," Wagner said. "A concept is that depending on how complicated a life form they are, different animals' body structures and systems will be different. The content is how animals' body structures and systems look, work and differ from one another. If a doctor works on me, he had better know what my stomach looks like, not just that I have one and it's different from a bird's."

Several board members at the August 7 meeting strongly favored intensified scheduling, while others still had questions.

John George wanted to know how many area districts have implemented it.

Wycallis rattled off a list - Wyoming Valley West, Hanover Area and Pittston Area - who were considering it for next year. Other than West Side Tech, which uses a modified intensive schedule, no other local district has it, he said.

Ernest Ashbridge and Ellen Nagy liked what they have seen on visits and at a special board meeting at which guidance counselors from Hatboro-Horsham and Towanda school districts described their schools' intensified schedule in glowing terms.

"I think anyone who saw them would be impressed," Ashbridge said.

Nagy suggested the board should discuss intensified scheduling and vote on it at the August 14 meeting. She added she was "disappointed" to learn so many teachers are reluctant to implement the four-period day.

"I think we should discuss it logically with the teachers and address their concerns," said Joseph Kunec, a board member who is also a retired teacher.

The board should vote on it as soon as possible because implementing it would require a full year's preparation, Galicki noted. He will ask all department heads to contact their teachers this week and ask their views on the four-period day. He will report to the board at its August 14 meeting.

Kingston Township issues 39 zoning permits

Kingston Township zoning officer Ben Gorey issued 39 permits and collected \$2,235 in zoning fees during July.

The largest project is a home valued at \$132,779 at 19 Maple Leaf Drive, built by Mack Con-

struction. Three permits were issued for home additions to D. Laity at 99 Davis St., valued at \$27,985, to J. McAndrew at 89 Village Drive, valued at \$34,210, and to D. Federici at 81 S. Pioneer Ave., valued at \$30,000.

Intersection

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and concrete islands defining both right turn lanes will also be added. Fritsky expects to have all road work finished by the end of October, weather permitting.

The final step, installing the traffic light, could come as early as the beginning of November or as late as next spring, depending on when the signal is ready. Each signal is custom-made, Fritsky said.

Because most of the work will be done on the side of the highway, Fritsky expects very few new traffic patterns at the intersec-


tion. This phase of the highway improvement project is estimated to cost \$383,017.

Other work, which hasn't been scheduled yet, will add new traffic lights and turning lanes at the intersections of Route 309 with Hillside Road, Carverton/Church Road, Franklin Street, Main Road at Offset Paperback and Center Hill/Upper Demunds Road and Route 415 at East Center Hill Road at Pickett's Charge and Dallas Corners.

Lake Twp. recycling center open Aug. 12

The voluntary recycling drop-off center for Lake Township will be accepting recyclables August 12, from 10-12 noon at the township building.

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