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SPF High School Wins Accreditation Renewal

Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, a prestigious private accrediting agency, has renewed accreditation of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

The renewal was made on the basis of a written report, and not upon a visit to the school. This fall, evaluators from the state Department of Education visited the school for a day, and subsequently issued a report stating that the evaluating team was withholding approval until next spring, when another visit would be scheduled. An April 26, 1976 visit has now been set. The state report listed 21 areas of "concern" which have, in turn, caused considerable concern within the Scotch Plains-Fanwood community.

Middle States evaluators visit schools every ten years, and consider renewal of accreditation at a mid-point between visits, every five years. In contrast, state evaluators visit once every five years. The state team used the written report prepared by school administrators as one basis for its judgement, but interviews with teachers and students and personal observations were additional bases.

The Middle States renewal included a request for another report by May of 1977, describing changes and developments which may occur by that time, according to Dr. Terry Rie-

gel, principal of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Dr. Riegel said the request specified information on effect of budget cuts, home economics program and library needs.

Dr. Reigh Carpenter, Superintendent of Schools here, has repeatedly expressed his concern over the state team report. Carpenter, while noting the "most creditable expertise" of the evaluating team, questioned their failure to point out the positive aspects of the high school - the outstanding programs and course offerings, and the quality of instruction. Carpenter said it is most unfortunate that the community interpretation of the report reflects concern out of proportion with the severity of the problem and results in an impression on the part of the public that little of worth is being done at the high school.

Dr. Riegel sees the "concerns" listed in the state report a guidance toward helping the school improve. The school has "lost ground" in the past five years, Riegel said, but only in comparison with itself. Riegel called the school "still one of the finest schools in the state."

Board Of Ed Will Study Future School Closings

The Board of Education plans to authorize the school superintendent to prepare a study on the long-range impact of projected enrollment declines and related possibilities of future school closings. Dr. Reigh Carpenter will be asked to complete such a study by June 30. During the Board agenda-setting session last Thursday, the Board members discussed approaches to such a study, particularly the possibility of utilizing a volunteer citizens' committee for gathering of required information. Several years ago, a citizens' committee prepared an

Carpenter acknowledged the need for such a study, but he cited difficulties with manpower. He will outline for the board his views on what would be required to undertake such a study and possibilities of meeting a June deadline.

Carpenter noted that he is also facing a mandated "mammoth" study of all districts school facilities and population trends, to be turned over to state authorities by July of 1978.

Thomas Fallon, a board member, asked for a clear determination of goals and objectives of such a study. Fallon feels intent of the study should be made clear - whether the study will be used for information-gathering and future planning, or as a basis for possible closing of specific schools.

The Board of Education will officially consider tonight adoption of a new philosophy of education, or recommendations prepared by an ad hoc committee which has studied the philosophy issue. The board members voted in agenda session, 4-3, to post-

pone a vote and/or introduction of a new philosophy until they have heard public input from tonight's meeting. Robbie Mason, Henry Schwiering, and Darrell Brownawell favored an immediate vote on the philosophy suggested by the citizens' committee, which was made up of broad-based representation of the citizenry, from names suggested by all board members. The three felt the philosophy formulated by the citizens' group was a fair representation of community views.

In the view of board member Frank Festa, one of those favoring public input before a board vote on a new philosophy, automatic acceptance of the philosophy prepared by the committee (which was forwarded to the board with a unanimous approval of the committee) would start a "dangerous" precedent of allowing an ad hoc committee to write the philosophy. Board members Philip Labasi, Vincent Shanni and Thomas Fallon favored more community input before action on any philosophy.

Concerned Citizens May Threaten New Plains Tennis Courts

Mayor Griffen Irked, Says Action May Delay Consideration Of Grant For Tennis Courts

Obviously very irritated, Mayor Robert Griffin announced Tuesday night that actions taken by Concerned Citizens, a flood-problem-oriented group here, may delay and may even negate entirely the consideration of a state-level Green Acres grant for four new tennis courts at Kramer Manor Park. Scotch Plains joined many other New Jersey communities in submitting applications for development projects in parks and public areas, under a new Green Acres program which provided matching funds for such undertakings. Scotch Plains sought \$120,000 for four additional tennis courts, and other improvements - \$60,000 of which would have come from Green Acres, while the other \$60,000 would come from township funds.

The application, sent to the Green Acres group early this month, required an environmental impact study, which was prepared by the Township engineer in conjunction with the township Environmental Committee. Despite the fact that this study was submitted, the Committee of concerned Citizens wrote to Trenton authorities on their own, without the knowledge of township officials, asking that consideration of the grant be held up until further environmental impact studies could be made.

This week, the township received an announcement that consideration will be delayed. The state is now asking for approval by the State Environmental Commission and for another Environmental Impact statement.

The Concerned Citizens claim in their letter to the state, that they want runoff from tennis courts into the stream measured and determination made that plans and specifications will not increase the flood problems. Griffin said Council feels this has already been adequately demonstrated. "We tried to measure runoff, it couldn't even be measured," Griffin said. There are already four tennis courts at Kramer Manor. The new four would provide eight at the site.

Griffin said the delay could be four to six months. "By that

heating directive only lowers the temperature two degrees below last year's recommended level. It was also revealed that many of the problems with the equipment which prohibit the maintenance of 65 are due to lack of preventative repairs over the years.

Reports that temperatures in some schools went as low as 55 degrees were reviewed by the school custodians who reported that these claims were unfounded. At a meeting last week, Carpenter told the Board of Education that the job would be worked on at all times with all available men so that the situation could be remedied.

Students Ask More Heat In Classrooms

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Reigh W. Carpenter, replied this week to a petition forwarded to him by the staff of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, complaining about temperatures in the building. In a one page memo, dated December 12, 1975, Dr. Carpenter indicated to the staff that it is his desire to maintain temperatures of 65 degrees in all schools in an attempt to reduce fuel costs this year. Carpenter stated, "It is certainly unfortunate that we have had to economize in the use of utilities. Every effort has been made to consider alternatives in order to meet our deficit of \$315,000. It has been the superintendent's position that such efforts should be made for economy so that the need to reduce staff during the school year would not have to be considered to meet this deficit."

Projections for the deficit on gas, oil, and fuel ran as high as \$20,000 and an additional \$49,000 for electricity.

The Superintendent did acknowledge that despite relatively unseasonable weather, and his directive to keep temperatures at 65, some classrooms in the high school have fallen below that level. Carpenter stated that building and grounds supervisor, Gerald Cuffman, has been notified that this is a top priority job, and work is being done to remedy the situation. The problem appears to be that some of the thermostats in the school are out of calibration and parts to the heating system need to be replaced. Reportedly the major problem is in the new "pod" additions to the school.

Cuffman is also attempting other possible solutions including reducing the velocity of air exchange at the discharge grills; reducing the velocity of the main blower in the roof top unit; reducing the fresh air intake from 25 - 10%.

Carpenter also noted that building principals have now been assigned the responsibility to take whatever steps necessary to keep the heat at 65 degrees. He noted that each principal has jurisdiction to direct custodial and maintenance staff to periodically adjust thermostats in rooms should the heat fall below the recommended level, replace and repair equipment as necessary, or adjust controls as outside temperatures and solar heating shift.

Carpenter also stated that the

time, all the other communities may have gotten their Green Acres grants. It is entirely possible that the funds may have run out," Griffin said.

Underlying the arguments about flood impact has been a suggestion that those concerned with flooding feel that no township funds should be directed toward recreation until flood problems are cleared up. Griffin said on Tuesday that the township has already approved a multi-million dollar capital plan for flood control over the next six years. For instance, \$700,000 is planned for Green Brook programs in 1977, \$900,000 will be spent for detention basins in 1976, and \$30,000 more for engineering services to review all piping into detention basins. In addition, Scotch Plains selected flood control as its focus in applications for HUD funds now available to Union County communities, with the local community asking for \$90,000 for flood relief.

Charles Doyle, an activist with Concerned Citizens, took issue with criticisms of the group. "Our position is - and we've been after it for a few years - that we feel flooding should be the top priority, not recreation." He criticized Councilwoman Ann Wodjenski for favoring recreation projects, claiming she promised in campaign time that she was favorable to flood relief. "You say we knocked down something," Doyle said, insisting that what he seeks is redirection of funds from recreation to flood control.

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EARLY CLOSING
For
Next Week's Issue

Because of the Christmas Holiday the Times will publish on Wednesday, December 24. All advertising and news copy must be in our office by noon Friday, December 19.