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THE TIMES

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Fifty At Public Hearing On Philosophy Of Education

Does the philosophy of education formulated by an ad hoc citizens' committee include an emphasis on the basics? It depends. Those who formulate the ideas for the new philosophy think it does - in the words, "The foremost priorities are the mastery of these skills fundamental to learning." There is debate on the part of some members of the Board of Education, however. According to Board of Education President Richard Bard, there is agreement on a strong need for emphasis upon the "basics" in education - but the Board members could not agree upon how this emphasis could be incorporated within a philosophy of education.

On Saturday, December 19, the Board listened as about 50 citizens voiced their views on a philosophy formulated by the ad hoc citizens committee named a month ago to provide ideas for incorporation within a philosophy. Bard said the board members will continue to discuss more "specificity" in stressing basics within the philosophy.

Bard said on Saturday that whatever philosophy is adopted by the board must "stand on its own two feet." It should specifically delineate exactly what the basics are, he said. Are basics reading, writing, arithmetic - or does the catch phrase extend to include music, art, etc. Edward Spack, who was chairman of the committee, which rendered a unanimous vote favoring its philosophy, said that "communicative" skills were not limited to reading and writing, but were intended to cover cultural skills.

Board member Robert Carlson triggered discussion when he suggested that the goal of education here should be that every graduate of 12th grade should perform at 12th grade level. Slow learners came under discussion here.

Philip Labasi and Thomas Fallon want to seek more public input before any action on adopting or revising the philosophy from the ad hoc committee.

Chairman Spack felt the lack of public reaction indicates community satisfaction with the results of his committee's efforts. However, Bard felt there is some measure of apathy within the community, and other board members questioned whether the committee philosophy had received enough publicity.

Santa Visits Fanwood Kiddies

The Fanwood Policemen's Benevolent Association made Christmas merrier for hundreds of local youngsters last week when they sponsored "Santa's visit" at the Community House. Patrolman Howard Jarvis played the merry elf to perfection and did a superb job listening to the christmas fantasies of the children. The PBA got a transportation assist from the Fire Department.

The PBA sponsored the event as a community service.

Carpenter Proposes Solution To School Budget Deficit

Police Warn On Gypsies

Scotch Plains Police issued an alert this week regarding gypsies who have been spotted in the area. According to Detective Sergeant Robert Luce, at least one family in Scotch Plains has experienced an attempted entry by gypsies.

Luce said the gypsies customarily travel in groups of three or four. One will attempt to obtain access to a home on any pretext . . . sometimes the gypsy seeking access at the front door will have a child in her arms and will ask to be permitted to diaper the baby, or for a drink of water. Other times, a gypsy might ask to use the telephone, or, if a man answers the door, the gypsies have been known to distract the man with amorous advances. Meanwhile, the other gypsies in the group enter the home by other means, and steal household belongings.

The gypsies are recognizable, for they wear the usual bandanas and gypsy-type clothing. For many years, their presence has been identified in Elizabeth, and during the past summer, they were known to rob homes in nearby communities including Rahway, Westfield and Clark. Police are warning householders not to permit access by strangers.

Proposals Would Include Use Of Reserve Funds And Sale Of Property At Terrill

Superintendent of Schools Reigh Carpenter went to the Board of Education last week with a lengthy list of economies designed to offset unanticipated deficits which have developed during the current school year. The budget deficit has been set up as \$315,000 - and may be \$40,000 or \$50,000 higher, Carpenter said. Carpenter has written the Councils of Scotch Plains and Fanwood, seeking their cooperation in furnishing \$197,000 of the deficit - that figure representing monies which were supposed to have been received from state aid, but have been cut back by the state this year.

Carpenter's suggestions for meeting the deficit included using the reserve fund which has been set aside, pending outcome of the Bomarc law suit against the board - a suit pending over construction at Park Junior High - with \$121,500 set aside; sale of the school property attached to Terrill Junior High, \$21,000; using reserve money which was not needed, for a law suit which has since been settled, \$15,600; and application of \$8,077 in surplus funds from the 1974-75 budget.

The remainder of the deficit would be offset by cuts in spending. Carpenter suggested an \$18,988 cut in overtime for bus drivers and custodians; \$15,000 from textbooks; \$20,000 from operational supplies; \$10,000 from library book; \$9,500 from curriculum and instructional research; \$8,400 from custodial and clerical personnel replacements; \$8,000 from maintenance worker replacement; \$6,000 from new equipment; \$6,000 from replacement equipment; \$5,000 from office of pupil services; \$6,500 from general overtime; \$3,512 from travel; \$2,000 from bedside and supplemental instruction.

Carpenter anticipates revenue increases of \$166,177.

The vote to accept Carpenter's proposals was 6-3. Mrs. Robbie Mason led the opposition. She cited particular opposition to cuts in curriculum instruction, research and textbook accounts, and expressed her view that cuts of the magnitude outlined would endanger accreditation of local schools. "I want full, not conditional accreditation," Mrs. Mason said. She also opposed using the Bomarc reserve, citing problems which could arise if the case were to be resolved against the board before the end of the current fiscal year. Mrs. Mason further registered opposition to revised hiring procedures, which would provide salaries on the first step of the guide for all entering teachers, regardless of experience or education. "All these areas have already been cut," Mrs. Mason said, referring to the \$820,000 cut agreed upon by the

governing bodies of Scotch Plains and Fanwood and the Board of Education at the beginning of the current school year. "Now they are being devastated."

She was joined in her negative vote by Darrell Brownawell and Vincent Shanni. Brownawell favors a referendum, he said.

Shanni also was in opposition, because of the use of the Bomarc reserve.

Carpenter expressed disappointment at the negative votes. The board has worked diligently for five months in an attempt to find a solution to unanticipated budgetary problems, he said. "If there are any other alternatives, I'd like to hear them," he said. Board member Robert Carlson called the use of Bomarc funds a calculated risk, which will avoid having to dismiss 34 teachers. If teachers were to be dismissed to meet deficits, it would require dismissal of 34 staff members, since only one-third of their annual salaries could be saved at this point in the school year. If the court case is lost next year, it would mean dismissal of only eleven teachers to realize a similar amount, Carlson said.

The Board of Education received notification of continuation of the high school accreditation by Middle States. This is a different accrediting agency than the state. Recently, state evaluators decided, after a visit to Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, that they would postpone decision on approval of the high school by the state, arranging for

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Edible Decorations



Christmas is everywhere at this time of year and Terry Lou Zoo in Scotch Plains is no exception. COMET and CUPID are finding out that popcorn strings taste even better than they look.

EARLY CLOSING

For Next Week's Issue

Because of the New Year's Holiday the Times will publish on Wednesday, December 31. All advertising and news copy must be in our office by noon Friday, December 26.