

**WARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

To: Dr. Norbert Kennerknecht, Director of Building and Grounds
From: J. Hugh Dwyer, Assistant Superintendent *Hugh*
Re: Concerned Citizen's question about SG/WAEC playground equipment
April 25, 2005

Dr. Kennerknecht:

At the April 19, 2005 Physical Plant/Facilities Committee meeting a citizen asked about a WCSD \$5000 expense in support of the Warren Area Elementary Center playground. The citizen wondered why a similar expense had not been made in support of the Sugar Grove Elementary School playground. I told the Committee that I would respond.

On September 28, 2004 the Warren Area Elementary Center principal and the South Street Early Learning Center principal made a presentation to the Physical Plant and Facilities Committee regarding the establishment of playgrounds at the two schools. Mrs. Nelson's plan requested that the WCSD assume the \$5000 surround timber expense since it was "not practical to move the relatively new playground structures at Jefferson Elementary and North Warren Elementary" and that the "district should help our parents and community provide these facilities for our students." She argued that the JES and NWES parent organizations had paid for and installed their playground equipment before the Board decided to close their schools. Central Attendance Area parent organizations have raised \$79,000 for new equipment to be installed at the WAEC and SSELIC sites.

In the Sugar Grove situation, new playground equipment was installed at the parent organization's expense of \$60,000 on the same site as the old equipment. Of course, no school closures or relocation of the playground were involved.

The Board members of Physical Plant and Facilities Committee approved the principals' plan on September 28, 2004.

The citizen stated that the \$5000 WCSD expense was contrary to District Policy. I am unable to identify a District Policy regarding playground equipment purchase and installation. Policy 5210 addresses the components of projects involving the donation of buildings and grounds improvement by volunteer organizations. Policy 4101 describes the circumstances authorizing the Buildings and Grounds Department to undertake the type of expense and work that might be involved in the surround timbers project. The District has a longtime tradition of not purchasing or installing playground equipment. Parent organizations have generously donated funds and time for these projects.

Please forward my response to the members of the Physical Plant and facilities Committee.

I have attached Mrs. Nelson's letter of September 22, 2004 that led to the committee presentation on September 28, 2004.

September 22, 2004

Warren County School District
185 Hospital Drive
Warren, PA, 16365

Dear Dr. Dwyer:

A committee, representing South Street Elementary, Market Street Elementary, North Warren Elementary, Pleasant Elementary, Home Street Elementary, and Jefferson Elementary Schools, has met during the summer and reviewed playground designs and structures. Following the September 9th meeting, the members voted to recommend the purchasing of playground equipment from Landscape Structure Inc. We ask that the Board of Education approve a Lease/Release Agreement for the two playgrounds: one to be constructed at the South Street Early Childhood site and one at the Warren Area Elementary School.

The primary playground, for use by students in kindergarten and first grade, will be located in the area of the existing structure at South Street Elementary School. It will be handicapped accessible. A drawing of this design numbered 34000 is included with this request. Student capacity will be fifty to sixty students. Cost of this playground is \$27,410.00.

The intermediate playground, for use by students in grade two through five, will be located at the site of the Warren Area Elementary School. It will be fenced in for safety with fencing currently available through the school district. A track ride, presently on the playground at Jefferson Elementary, will be incorporated into the new structure. Student capacity will be ninety to one hundred students. Cost of this playground is \$44,058.00.

It is the hope of the playground committee to also install freestanding swings appropriate for each grade level. The cost for the swings ranges from \$1650.00 to \$2475.00.

Planning for this project has been completed with the approval of principals Ms. Ann Buerkle and Mrs. Rhonda Decker, representatives of the parent groups, and myself. The expected expense for this project is \$75,600.00 and will be assumed by the parent groups. Installation of these structures will be done with community support and coordinated by Curtis Bischof from Landscape Structures hopefully in late summer of 2005.

We are asking the district to provide the surround timbers at an estimated cost of \$5,000.00. It is our feeling that since it is not practical to move the relatively new

playground structures at Jefferson Elementary and North Warren Elementary that the district should help our parents and community provide these facilities for our students. We are excited to begin this huge project and are willing to work to raise the funds, but we request the district recognize this effort and agree to help us by supplying this part of the project.

Enclosed are diagrams of the general layout, the plans, and the costs for the new structures.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ruth Nelson, principal at Jefferson Elementary and Home Street Elementary
Ann Buerkle, principal at South Street Elementary and Pleasant Elementary
Rhonda Decker, principal at Market Street Elementary and LEC

Committee Members:

Karly Cohan, South Street Elementary
Chris Mechling, South Street Elementary
Amy Mechling, South Street Elementary
Tracey Morgan, Jefferson Elementary
Andrea Sedon, Jefferson Elementary
Jane Beardsley, Jefferson Elementary
Tammy Swanson, Market Street Elementary
Sam Bailey, Market Street Elementary
Tawni Betts, Market Street Elementary
Wendy Meighen, North Warren Elementary
Lynn Waterfield, North Warren Elementary
John Spencer, Home Street Elementary
Jennifer Lindell, Home Street Elementary
Christin Borger, Home Street Elementary
Katrina Massa, Pleasant Elementary
Sheryl Citro, Pleasant Elementary

Cc: Dr. Kennerknecht