

Flexible Scheduling: Carlmont Controversy

Return Times ~~the~~ 3-11-1970

By BILL SHILSTONE

There is no limit to what a student can learn at Carlmont High School — IF the student has the maturity and self-discipline to take advantage of the school's golden opportunities.

There lies the beauty and the beast of the controversial educational technique of flexible scheduling, which Carlmont is pioneering this year in the Sequoia Union High School District.

While Carlmont struggles through its first year with the new program, the debate goes on among parents, students and teachers:

Can high school students shoulder the burden of responsibility for using their unscheduled time (40 per cent of a school week) to their best advantage?

Chinney Corners (the student union) is full every minute of every day and students are constantly wandering into and out of the scenic hills behind the school, but in the classrooms, labs and resource centers students are escaping the bonds of traditional scheduling and learning things they couldn't learn in the old system.

— There is a student who takes basic German one module (an 18-minute period) a week in independent study with a language teacher. He does it during his unscheduled time, in addition to his regular course of study. He will get little, if any, school credit for it, but he is interested in living in Europe and wants to know a little German.

— Another student who is a track athlete and a German student works out instead of going to his afternoon German class and does the missed class work during his unscheduled time (all with the blessing of the teacher).

— Several courses which couldn't be offered in a traditional schedule are taught in independent study by co-ordination of teacher and student free time. Italian, Economics, Chinese History and African History are examples.

— Because students only go

to physical education three times a week, the P.E. facilities are open for a variety of intramural sports. Swimming, dancing, golfing, volleyball, tennis and gym facilities are available during school hours for students with unscheduled time.

— Baseball Coach Jim Liggett holds batting practice in the morning for some of his players who need it (and who have free time and who DON'T need to be conferring with a teacher or doing an assignment).

— English literature students didn't just read "The Miracle Worker," they drew illustrations for it and built stage sets for it in unscheduled time projects which don't fit into the tight traditional schedule.

— "Miracle Worker" students also heard a talk by a representative from the Foundation for the Blind (the play is about Helen Keller, who was deaf and blind since infancy, and her teacher). Flexible scheduling's large group instruction made it possible. The representative spoke to every student in just two periods; last year he would have had to talk to eight different classes.

— Four students in Leo Campey's electronic class have made radios in the shop during their unscheduled time. On the old schedule, those radios wouldn't have been made, because the facility would have been tied up all day with classes and so would the students.

— Science students delight in having laboratories virtually to themselves for two hours (of unscheduled time) at a time. They can get a lot done when they don't have to answer the bell every 50 minutes.

— Students who are shy in class about saying they don't understand something everybody else seems to have grasped visit their teachers individually for private enlightenment. Teachers set aside time each day when they are available for individual conferences and independent study in their offices adjacent to the resource centers.

— Team teaching and large group instruction let a U.S. History class become the U.S. Senate on the eve of the outbreak of the Civil War.

The teachers at Carlmont seem to be divided into three camps. All three agree that the idea of the flexible schedule — each student free to progress at his own rate with the sky the limit — is a good one.

One group believes the system must be modified to make it work. Another believes it isn't practical and should be abandoned. The third thinks the good outweighs the bad and the system should continue.

A member of the third group is language teacher Robert McCormick, who has been on the Carlmont faculty for 15 years.

"I voted against it last year, but now I wouldn't want to go back to the old system," he said. "I thought it wouldn't help the average student and that it would hurt the below average. It does hurt them in a way — those that don't take the opportunity to use the free time — but I've concluded they aren't doing that much worse than they used to.

"The advantages to the good students far outweigh the disadvantages. If a student isn't motivated, there isn't much you can do under any system. Maybe thrusting responsibility on a student is good.

"The old routine got dull after a while. With this schedule, you know tomorrow will be different.

"Most of the teachers think the system is advantageous, I think. In the language department, one of the six is opposed to it."

The "modified flexible schedule opinion" was expressed by several teachers.

"Something has to be done about the kids who aren't motivated," said Jim Liggett. "Maybe something like a school-within-a-school with only those students who can handle it on a flexible schedule. It would be a shame to drop it all together, because so many kids are benefiting.

"The good thing about flex-

ible scheduling is the time you have to work individually with students. In the classroom, you almost have to teach to the middle student — there's no time for anything else."

English teacher James Reilly, whose classes are set up on a traditional, 50-minute a day, five days a week schedule, because he was on sabbatical when the new system was being setup, also believes in a modified flexible schedule.

"With the teachers out of the way, there is no end to the improvement a student can make," he said. "The system can be fixed to deal with the irresponsible students — for example, making students qualify for a flexible schedule by showing they are ready for it."

C. W. Jensen, head of the Industrial Arts Department and a teacher for 20 years, takes the position that the students aren't ready for flexible scheduling yet.

"There is no way 75 per cent of the kids can handle the responsibility," he said. "They aren't used to it; it has to start at the elementary level.

"The student is walking along to class, sees other kids on the lawn and that's the end of it (going to class).

"Flexible scheduling is great for the A and B students and if we can find a way to reach the ever growing mass of C and D students, it will be great for them, too.

"In drafting, the students have 10 mods (180 minutes) a week in class and five on their own," he said. "They just don't do the work in the five unscheduled mods. They won't work. In the old system, I had control over them.

"The parents could help if they would, but they could care less. The ones you'd like to see you never see. If they would come to the school and find out what's going on and see the great potential of the modern kid, they could help apply the pressure.

"There are other problems. Teachers like me who have been in the traditional system for a long time, find it hard to adjust to a laissez faire system.



SONG SESSION — NOT ON THE SCHEDULE
Carlmont students relax during "free" time

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(Times Photo)

AND THEY'RE OFF

Students at Carlmont High School in Belmont (and even some teachers) poured out onto Alameda de las Pulgas Saturday as their benefit Walkathon got under way. The students were raising money for sports and student activities at Carlmont, and their 10-mile hike took them throughout San Carlos and Belmont. They ended up back at Carlmont for a barbecue.

S.M. Times 3/24/82

CURFEW: Curbing truancy is key

Continued from 1A

officer finds the juvenile has broken curfew, he can then charge the youth with an infraction.

"We expect to use it in moderation," Goulart said. "Hopefully, it will be a useful tool."

Teens who disobey the curfew will find themselves in the traffic division of the juvenile court. For the first infraction the court can impose a fine of \$35 and may also require 20 hours of community service.

If the juvenile is charged with a second infraction within a year of the first, the court can impose a fine of \$75 and may suspend or delay the issuance of a driver's license for 60 days, and may also require 20 hours of community service.

For third and subsequent offenses, the court can impose a fine of \$150, may suspend or delay the issuance of a driver's license for 90 days and may require an additional 20 hours of community service.

After learning of a daytime curfew ordinance that helped curb truancy in another

community, Goulart decided to see if it would work in Belmont. Teachers at Carlmont High School and local business owners favored the concept.

Belmont Teen Specialist Robert Iziumi said that the city police asked for input in the early stages of creating the curfew ordinance.

"I think the students understand the concept behind the creation of curfew," Iziumi said in an earlier interview with the Enquirer-Bulletin. "It increases the safety for everybody, including the truants."

Volunteers Outreach Involvement Community Events Service (VOICES), a 22-member teen group made up of a cross-section of the local teenage community, voted unanimously for the new curfew ordinance.

Councilmember Nancy Levitt was absent at the time of the vote but said she would not have voted for it.

"I keep reading that while the national crime rate is dropping, juvenile crime is increasing. If statistics show that juvenile crime is

increasing... is it because the new curfew laws are being counted in that statistic?" Levitt said.

She also said other Bay Area cities have found daytime curfew ordinances to be ineffective.

"In 1990, the San Francisco Police Commission recommended that the city scrap its teenage curfew law," she said. "The commission found that the law could not be enforced fairly and would just multiply the problems the Police Department already faced.

"More recently, Oakland's city attorney and police chief both recommended against a juvenile curfew, finding that it would limit patrol officer availability and burden resources without increasing public safety."

A mother of a home-schooled child also spoke out against the ordinance at the Belmont City Council meeting. She said she felt that home-schooled teenagers, who often do not keep regular school hours, may be unnecessarily stopped by officers.

Teen curfew clock starts ticking today

*inquirer -
Bulletin
Jan 8, 1997*

CITY

Belmont's daytime curfew is first of its kind

BY BRENDA JORDAN
Staff Reporter

Beginning today, teenagers could end up in court if seen loitering on the Belmont streets or other public places during school hours or between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The new daytime curfew ordinance is the first to be approved

in the county. Members of the San Mateo County Traffic Division of Juvenile Court would like to see similar ordinances accepted by all cities in the county.

"Belmont's done a good job in putting this together," said San Mateo County Chief Probation Officer Gene Roh. "They've left nothing out. A number of cities in the county have expressed interest in establishing daytime curfew, and since the Traffic Division of Juvenile Court ultimately will have to enforce the curfew... it would be easier if cities were to implement this ordinance (than

for each city to create its own)."

The Belmont City Council voted 4-0 to approve a new daytime curfew ordinance on Dec. 10.

The ordinance was originally introduced by Belmont Police Chief James Goulart in July.

"We found that the fines were too high," Goulart said. "So we pulled it off (the council agenda)."

Originally, a first offense would have meant a \$100 fine, a second offense, \$200, and a third, \$500.

In the revised ordinance, the first offense will command a \$35 fine, the second, \$75; and the third, \$150.

The idea is to curb truancy.

"Our goal is to keep kids in school," Goulart said. "At the high school level, we've had some trouble with truancy."

According to Roh, "We've witnessed increases in violent crime and more serious juvenile crime nationwide. We forget that kids who get in trouble with curfew often move on to more serious crimes.... We simply need to focus on keeping kids in school."

The measure is supported by police, city officials, business owners, students and parents, Goulart said.

The Belmont ordinance states that during the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on days in which school is in session, it will be unlawful for minors to remain, loiter, idle or wander upon public streets, highways, roads, alleys, parks, playgrounds or other public grounds, public places, public buildings, places of amusement, eating places, vacant lots or any unsupervised place within the city.

The existing curfew, adopted in 1967, extended from 10 p.m. to sunrise. Now, the curfew will extend from 11 p.m. until 6 a.m.

the following day.

"Times have changed," said Goulart. "A 10 p.m. curfew would be kind of strict today."

The clauses in the ordinance added by the teens make exception for teens who are running emergency errands for parents or guardians; going or coming from school, work or religious activities; and authorized lunch periods.

Before taking enforcement action, police must first ask the offender's name and reason for being in a public place. If the

See **CURFEW** page 10A

over

Sequoia High School Board
Courier Bulletin
July 14, 1976

Sequoia Board Opposes

School Unification Gets SMC Nod

The County Committee for School District Organization voted on Monday night with a 7 to 1 margin to approve the inclusion of Carlmont High School in the Belmont school district.

The unification proposal

will now go to the State Board of Education for approval.

The Sequoia Union High School District is against the removal of Carlmont from the district because of the current integration program according to Mrs. Marian McDowell, the district's assistant supervisor.

"The district has put together a quality integrated education program," said the assistant. "The removal of Carlmont would disrupt it, and deny the Carlmont students an opportunity for integrated education."

Mrs. McDowell suggested the possibility of residents in Belmont being misled when they signed a petition for the removal of the school from the present system.

"There is a chance that residents may have been under the impression that if Carlmont is not removed from the Sequoia district, it

will be closed," said Mrs. McDowell.

Mr. John Bolton, chairman of the Citizen Unification Committee, said he feels that the issue will pass, but fears the decision of the organization

committee on who will vote.

"If the committee decides that only the voters in the Belmont district will vote on unification, I am confident that it will pass," stated the chairman.

"However, if the committee decides that the voters in all of the Sequoia Union High School District may vote, we may have problems.

Deputy supervisor for the San Mateo County Office of Education, Myron Schussman, remarked that although the organization committee passed the issue, it is only a tentative recommendation.

"The committee will decide on who votes in August," said the deputy. "However, before a recommendation is made to the State, there must be a public hearing on the issue."

He added that a date for a hearing has not been decided at this time.

Mrs. McDowell said she did not expect the State Board of Education to approve the proposal, mainly because it is a disruption of integration.

If the issue is accepted, it will not be put into action until at least 1979, according to Bolton.

"It would take a few years to have the Belmont School District become a unified school district," noted the chairman. "However, the Belmont School District has informed us that they are behind us."

Bolton indicated that he was happy with the results of last night's meeting, and expects a victory for his committee.

"The Sequoia school board was there," he said. "They were against it. We took them on face to face and we won."

The chairman added that the committee needs the support of the city council,