

Century High School Museum Project

Interview: Mrs. Robinson

Interviewers: Melissa Owskey and Daylena Schmidt

Date: May 20, 2002

Time: 1:15pm

Daylena: How long have you been involved with Century High School?

Mrs. Robinson: This is my third year.

Daylena: Umm, you're on the Site council...

Mrs. Robinson: I am.

Daylena: What are some of your responsibilities?

Mrs. Robinson: Of the Site Council, in general?

Daylena: Yes

Mrs. Robinson: Uh the Site Council has representatives, from classified staff, and they have a parent, and they have a community member they have administrators and teachers, they oversee the staff development of the building. So they're in charge of things like what do we want to focus on this year to make our teaching and learning better.

Melissa: Umm What have some of those focuses this year been, like you said that uh, they focus on making teaching and learning better.

*Interruption by the Principal Dawn Montgomery:*

*Dawn: Matt Heinsmen, for a CIM award.*

*Mrs. Robinson: What?*

*Dawn: That's what I said.*

Melissa: All right um the Site Council focuses on towards what we want to make better, what were the focuses for this year?

Mrs. Robinson: We had a couple focuses this year. The first one we got from the district was to improve reading, because sometimes our reading scores aren't as high as we would like, and so all the different teachers were going to agree to do some more reading

in their classes and teach kids how to read better. So that was one focus. Another one had to do with the schedule that we're on and the biggest one that took the most time this year is do we go to trimester schedule like the other two high schools or do we stick to the block that we've had. So we got lots of information of what the difference would be, we had a vote, and the staff overwhelmingly voted to stay with the block schedule and not go to trimester next year. And that took most of the time. And then Academic Seminar, which you guys get to sleep in, and we have to come and learn things. That was other thing that Site council planned how each session would go and what we would do.

Melissa: Okay, um, when and where and how often does the Site council meet?

Mrs. Robinson: It usually meets once a month sometimes twice, at 6:45 in the morning upstairs in the library.

Melissa: Okay, and uh, which other administrators gather for it?

Mrs. Robinson: Well Ms. Montgomery is officially on the Site Council, and um Mrs. Peterson comes just because she likes to see what's going on.

Melissa: Okay, um, what does a typical agenda look like?

Mrs. Robinson: Oh a typical agenda looks like... what we've already covered, what new information we found out, how things are going. We also have the opportunity to listen to people talk about new classes that they want to propose, and so sometimes that's what the agenda looks like. We listen to what they would like to propose, why they want the new classes, and about grants. The kinds of funds people are asking for and why.

Melissa: Okay, um, what new classes have been proposed?

Mrs. Robinson: Uh this year, we've got, this year we're going to have something for the human resources CAM, it's called PAC II, and it's going to be partly community involvement and part the government Econ credit so they combined those two things. And we have a couple of new technology classes. Last year we had a computer and arts class and um that community changing career and social studies and lots of opportunities you can do in the community.

Melissa: Okay, um how did you get on the Site Council?

Mrs. Robinson: I got on the Site council because at the end of each summer we decide which administrators will do what and I wanted to get on the Site council and I had been on it before. And so, I wanted to stick with it.

Melissa: How do you feel about your participation on the Site Council?

Mrs. Robinson: Well I was the chair for a year, and that was...that was fine. And, but it should be a teacher instead of an administrator, but at the time we were switching over because the school was a couple of years old, and some of the people hadn't...

Daylena: Do you feel that students and parents have an equal voice?

Mrs. Robinson: On the Site Council? Well when we're all at the table we do. We have two students and I didn't mention that earlier, but we have two students each year that represent the school and the student body, and this year the two are from the Student Council and they generally are. And so they are very much apart of what goes on because when we try to propose something that we think is great and the students go "ohh" we want to see that. Um it makes a big difference. I do think, they play some part but it's really hard to represent 160 staff members and 2000 kids when you have a group of 12 people.

Melissa: Um as a group have you made a difference in the school for the Site council. Like do you feel that you've made a difference.

Mrs. Robinson: Well I think we make a difference in planning, and I think we make a difference in having a place for people to come and get their ideas tested out, and some new programs for kids. So I think we do. I think on a day to day people don't even think about the Site council. But um, I do think we can make a difference, and getting some funding and getting some new classes going, And some one working with teachers, and getting programs for kids.

Melissa: Okay, um to switch gears now. Um, what other school did you come from? And why did you choose to come here?

Mrs. Robinson: Okay, I've been in a a lot of different schools, but the one that's probably the most important was I was at Westview, on the planning team as a teacher. So we planned and built Westview which at the time was the new school, although now we're newer than they were and I was a teacher. And so when I went to administration I thought it'd be a good idea to go some place close by but where I hadn't been just a teacher, where I could start as an administrator and this was a brand new school. Two years you know it was their second...I think it was their second year, yea it was their second year so they had already gone through the whole growing pains thing that happens every time you open a new school. And so it was just a really good match, and I liked what I heard and I liked the people that worked here

Melissa: How would you describe the culture of Century compared to Westview?

Mrs. Robinson: Uhhhh, that's a hard questions...ohhh, well when I first got here I thought everyone was friendlier and more grateful for having school, for just being here and they weren't as demanding. And um, you know its hard to tell because Westview's gotten so big they have 2400 kids, and its so big and so crowded, and they've got wonderful programs and great teachers and it just felt better here, it felt smaller although

it feels huge to everybody who's here. But I liked the staff and I thought they treated the kids real well, I mean even the kids I deal with I just really like them I think there's a good ethic here I think they care about the school. Cleanliness you can actually walk through the cafeteria even though it's messy, umm at Westview for awhile it was very very messy and it was impossible to walk through without garbage everywhere, and it seems like most of the kids care a little bit more and pick it up. And like the assembly this morning they were very well behaved and, it was a very long assembly. And no one stood up and shouted not that anyone would at Westview either, but that's part of the culture here is that they're respectful, and anyway I feel that way.

Melissa: Okay, um, how else are you involved with Century other than Site Council and being just an administrator?

Mrs. Robinson: Just an administrator. Well lets see I go to the games, and I go to lots of dances, and I'm the curriculum assistant principal. So anything having to do with CIM, CAM, and PASS I do that. And I write the board report and I write the report that goes to the state, which no one really cares about that, but we have to do it, and that's another thing I'm involved with.

Melissa: What do you think, how, what do you think about the CIM and the CAM, do you think its necessary or just how do you feel about it in general.

Mrs. Robinson: What I feel about in general is I don't want anyone from Century graduating from Century High School, that can't read, and write, and do math, and speak in front of a group. And so the CIM what that does it just makes it so that you also in addition to being able to do those things have to pass some state tests. I'm not fond of that part for lots of reasons, because we're testing some kids who don't even have a chance, who don't speak English very well and still have to take the test. Well that's not fair. But the actual tasks in CIM I think every body should be able to do that. And so I don't have much of a problem with that. And if it's part of the class assignment that's as it should be. The state test I'm sort of washy about that. And I think CAM's great, if they do it right it gives kids a chance to learn a lot of stuff and get some hands on experience in different kind of careers.

Melissa: What would you change about Century if you could?

Mrs. Robinson: I think I might change the level of involvement in like clubs and that kind of thing. And you know...we have a core of students who do a lot of work, and then a lot that don't. and I think the more you get involved in the school, the more you care about the school, the more you learn, the more you grow, and you know I would just like that to improve. And, and you remember the kids that are getting involved in things.

Melissa: Okay, and um since you need to be on lunch duty is there anything else you would like to tell us that you haven't already?

Mrs. Robinson: Well tell me exactly... your project is too...

Melissa: Make a museum of the school. And the history, and so we're interviewing just about everybody, all the administrators just to find out about their jobs and their role with Century. Just to give the students a kind of sense of history and to know more about their school.

Mrs. Robinson: Okay, well the only thing I'd like to add, is I like look forward to coming to school everyday, and I think a lot of people do that, and that doesn't always happen in a school. And so, although you can't identify exact things about the culture, is it a place you want to come to or a place you think "oh do I should really stay home today?" But it's a place where people want to come, and the key to a good school isn't just test scores, it's do people want to be there, are they working to make it better, do they hang together, do we have good programs all that stuff I think is really important in making Century. And after five years you know it takes a long time to build a culture and to build traditions, you don't have traditions your first year out. But know the fifth year we can look back and we modify some things but I think it's still good.