

Interviewer: Chris Kim

Interviewee: Janine Jacobs

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What are some of your backgrounds or involvements regarding Century this school year?

I help within the school and I was hired as a Social Studies teacher in my integrated block with Benton. My first year here, I was a National Honor Society advisor. I did that for about 3 years. I started the Jag Crew here, which was then a membership team, and I've had that for 5 years. I was on the planning team and I've helped out with the activities when I can and I help out with the cheerleading try-outs.

In general, how do you think this school compares to other schools that you've been to?

I think Century is a beautiful building, there's no question about that. I think that it's had a great vision, but I'm not sure we're still headed in that vision. I think that we as teachers, are being allowed to do what we think is right for kids, which has been hard this year and will be hard next year as well. I think we have a motivated staff and I think our students are lucky to be here.

What are some of our views on the high points for this school year?

The CAMs are forcing the programs last night, the set-up looked fabulous. The arts department and the theater department are really strong here. I think we have exceptional technology people and students and staff and I think that if you go into any regular classroom, you will see higher level thinking and higher level teaching and we've tried to keep that, even in the face of negotiations and waiver votes. We try to let the teachers get behind their door, and they leave those troubles behind and they do what they do best.

How would you describe the general morale among the administrations and students and staff members?

It's been a tough year, there's no question. I have never seen anything as bad as now. It's neither the fault of the teachers or administrators. I think it's the fact that we were close to a strike with to negotiations. I think our superintendent has made some choices that have impacted and actually really hurt the good relationship teachers have had with the administration. I feel bad because I look at our principal and how she's been an advocate for years, and she's always been on our side and she's always trying to allow us to explore and expand and do cool things. She's been placed in a position where she can't do that anymore and anything that costs money seems to be getting cut. So I think it's all difficult.

Who have been some key people who have made a difference at Century this year?

I think the forensics team has been doing an awesome job: they're going to nationals. I think Benton has been a great coach and I think she is one that I've seen have been able to put her feelings about what's happened inside and do an excellent job with her kids. I think the Jag Crew program has been exploring; we haven't had a class this year, but I think we will get one next year. We have applications that kids filled out and we have over 160 kids that want to be on Jag Crew, even if we are losing 1/3 of our student population and that's a huge number. I think our drama department kids are putting on great plays. You owe it back to all those people that are in charge of those programs. Look what your teacher, Mrs. Duykinck is doing right now. I mean there's a receptive school and instead of just winding down early, she's having you guys do this oral history. Which would be easier to not do? This is the cool stuff that people do.

How do you think we are known in the community of Hillsboro?

I think that outsiders would view Century as school with a lot of technology and that we connect the arts. When I look at Century, I see we have the best kids and the best teachers and the best programs. But I think that's because we do our best here. Outside people would look at us as being an arts and theater school, a technology school. We don't have a high economic group of students here, and our college rate is a little bit lower than we like to. We look at that kinds of numbers and we want those up; we want more kids going to college.

What are your views on the national coverage we've been getting at the Hillsboro District?

I am sickened by it. I have to be honest: I believe this was a great district at one time and I think that our superintendent and our school board have committed a travesty to this district and they need to be held accountable to it. I'll tell you a personal story: I was a head of a personal biography to be on a school advisory board for my children's school. I purposely left out the fact that I work in a Hillsboro School District. I thought about that, I mean I've been a teacher for 24 years and I think I'm good at what I do and I love my job, but I purposely left that out because I was embarrassed by it. I AM embarrassed by it because what they portray in doing sparing is not what goes on in this school. It goes on at the school board maybe but it doesn't go on here. It's horrible, it's damaging.

What are your views on the effects of cutting 17 days to the school year?

My view is that even though we're taking a leave this year, my friends at the other district have already been told that their rate