

SOUTHERN COLUMBIA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
800 SOUTHERN DRIVE
CATAWISSA, PA 17820

The June 20, 2005 Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:36 p.m. with President Karl Meyer in charge of the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

President Meyer welcomed everyone, followed by a roll call of Board Members.

BOARD MEMBERS

Amanda Bell-Perry

Elsie Bittner

Hugh Jones

Linda Kreischer

Karl Meyer

Ronald Savitski

Richard Swank

Michael Yeager

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Alan J. Lonoconus, Superintendent; Joseph Springer, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Roy Clippinger, Pat Shultz, Paul Caputo, James Dunkelberger and Barbara Lombardo, Administrators; district residents and members of the media.

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

Mr. Charles Porter, district resident, noted that by looking at the budget document, it is difficult to determine the specific Student Activity and Capital Reserve Fund transfers because they are lumped together. He recommended that in future years the transfers be separated. Mr. Springer explained that page 38 of the budget document references the Athletic Fund budget on page 41, which clarifies the transfers. Mr. Porter questioned the transfers to the Cafeteria Fund. Mr. Springer explained that they are not actual transfers. The transactions were for services rendered or supplies provided. Mr. Porter noted that there is no "actual" on the Athletic Fund and asked if it would be possible to include it on the last page. Mr. Springer responded affirmatively. Mr. Porter asked where Mrs. Lombardo's position could be found in the budget. Mr. Springer replied that none of the competitive grants are included in the budget, because it would skew the budget compared to other years. Mr. Porter asked if Mrs. Lombardo's position would end if the grant funding ends. Mr. Springer responded affirmatively and noted that her position is included under the Supervisors Handbook, with other positions such as Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, Director of Food Services, and Transportation Coordinator.

Mr. Porter noted that there are only four administrators listed under Standard and Poor's reports. Mr. Springer noted that he does not spend time trying to reconcile the reports, as it is difficult to know exactly where they are getting their information. However, all personnel listed in the front of the budget are included in the budget cost.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lonoconus' report included the following topics:

1.) He distributed information regarding Mrs. Slotterback's inquiry at the June 13th Board meeting. He noted there were only nine failing grades in 7th grade. Out of the nine, four were in Language Arts and five were in math. In the 2003-04 school year, there were 22 final grades that fell below the 70 percent level; four in Language Arts and one in Math. In the 2001-02 school year, 31 final grades fell below 70 percent; eight in Language Arts and five in Math. He noted

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that the same breakout is being seen as in past years. They are just asking the students to rise to another level.

2.) A date for the Board retreat was discussed but not finalized. It was determined that the following dates would not be appropriate: July 11th, 19th and the entire week of July 25th.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - Linda Kreischer, Chairperson, reported that she did not receive any further information regarding an equestrian team. She was asked about the practice of allowing employees to attend sporting events at no charge. She noted that the practice is done as a courtesy to the staff. It is helpful for an employee of the district to be present at events and available to assist if there are any incidents. It provides a familiar face for students.

She reported that coaches do not provide newsletters to Mr. Sharrow, but they are all invited to attend an Activities Committee meeting at the end of their season to report on how their team performed, bring up any issues and provide a "wish list" of equipment needed for the next season.

The Cheerleading program is due for new uniforms in 2006-07, but there may be a need to purchase one or two replacement uniforms this year. Students that are new to the district and wish to cheer, must go through tryouts if there is a position available. The individual cannot bump an existing cheerleader. There are 22 to 25 cheerleaders for Varsity Football and 12 to 15 for Junior High Football.

The pay to participate concept was discussed. Mrs. Kreischer asked Board members to provide input. Mrs. Bell-Perry, Mr. Swank and Mr. Jones voiced their opposition to the concept. They felt it would negatively affect participation. Mr. Yeager asked that a motion whether or not to pursue a proposal be included on the July agenda. Mrs. Kreischer noted that the district could have raised as much as \$17,000 last year if there had been a \$25 pay to participate fee. She does not want to ask the administrators to take the time to research the issue if the Board is not interested in pursuing it. Mrs. Kreischer asked Mr. Yeager if there was ever a problem in the Milton School District with students paying the fee and not getting to play. Mr. Yeager was not aware of any such problems.

Mr. Yeager asked if there were any problems with the cheerleading tryouts. Dr. Lonoconus replied that all of the girls that tried out at the varsity level made the squad, but there were possibly two girls cut from the Junior High squad. Mr. Yeager asked if the dress code policy would affect the new uniforms. Mrs. Kreischer said it would be addressed when the new uniforms are purchased. Dr. Lonoconus noted that they have to be careful on that issue and mentioned the wrestling uniforms as an example.

Curriculum - Mike Yeager, Committee Member, noted that he couldn't say often enough that he really gets an education from attending the Curriculum Committee meetings and encouraged other Board members to attend. He noted that the curriculum is on a 6-year cycle for review and revision. Grades 6, 7 and 8 will be changing to the Connected Math Program. This year's budget allows for grades 6 and 7 to change this year and 8th grade will change next year. A revised Saxon Math 6/5 book has been sequentially realigned with the Math Assessment Anchors for 5th grade. One-quarter of the 6th grade math curriculum will be focused on algebra. The 7th grade math curriculum will consist of 50 percent Algebra and 80 percent of 8th grade math will be focused on algebra. He noted that it would promote critical thinking and it would be relevant to everyday math situations. Algebra in 8th, 9th and 10th grades will be available for students who need an applied algebra class. A new textbook, Discovery Algebra: An Investigative Approach is recommended for 2005-2006. A new college level book entitled

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Elementary Statistics will be used by upper level students, mostly seniors. He noted that parents need to be aware and involved in the Connected Math Program, and multiple resources will be available to parents. Three teachers will be traveling to New Jersey for training this summer to be ready for the implementation this September.

The Curriculum Coordinating Council meeting went well. Board members were unable to attend. Board members and administrators will receive a letter asking them to participate in the Professional Education Plan Committee. Mr. Clippinger noted that he plans to get the letter out during the current week and he hopes to get the work done in three or four meetings.

Mrs. Kreisler asked how the new books are selected. Mr. Clippinger replied that it is a multi-step process. The curriculum is reviewed on a 6-year cycle. They look at no more than two major curriculum areas per year. The first step is to look at the present level of student achievement with the current materials. The administrators and staff view current research as far as literature is concerned. Teachers look at what changes are needed. They look at programs available that would help meet their needs and look at other districts' programs. Teachers look at groups of materials from several different publishers to determine which would help meet their goals. The teachers reach a consensus and recommend the materials to the Curriculum Council, which in turn recommends the council-approved materials to the Board. A PSSA Math Coach Workbook for 11th grade will also be purchased. There will be a 18 to 36 week course. It will be a way for students to get a 4th math course and become proficient on the PSSA.

Policy - Hugh Jones, Chairperson, reported that the committee met prior to the Board meeting. Mr. Swank, Mrs. Kreisler, Dr. Lonoconus and Mr. Jones were in attendance. They discussed the following policies: 211 Student Accident Insurance, 220 Student Expression and 913 Relations with Special Interest Groups. They looked at the suggested policy updates from PSBA and compared them to existing Southern Columbia policies. The suggested change to Policy 211 would be to include special insurance for overnight activities. The change to Policy 220 would limit it by addressing the school's right to an orderly environment. Policy 913 would address outside groups that come in and use the school. More information on the three policies will be provided within the next month.

CSIU - Linda Kreisler had nothing to report other than the Board Briefs.

Vo-Tech - Rick Swank noted that the Vo-Tech decided not to serve the free meals prior to the Joint Operating Committee meetings. Several members noted that they were willing to pay for their meals. This issue will be revisited. Ms. Judy Ohl purchased a home that was built by Vo-Tech students in 1994. She will be moving out of the area and the school invited her to the meeting and presented her with a plaque for her support of their programs. Several senior students were present and spoke out about their experiences at CMAVTS. They received a clean audit and will receive a refund in healthcare premiums. They discussed how to distribute the money. It was decided that it should be given back to the respective districts, but it will not be returned during the 2005-06 fiscal year. They plan to apply any reduction as a credit to sending districts in the 2006-07 budget.

Mr. Yeager asked if the Vo-Tech School was held accountable for their PSSA scores. Dr. Lonoconus noted that there is a big discussion statewide because their mission as a vocational-technical school is different than a regular school. Their focus is more on the applied side. Their goal is to increase their academic instruction along with their vocational programs. Their students do well on the NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute) test, but not as well on the PSSA. Dr. Lonoconus noted that he was appointed as Superintendent of Record for the Joint Operating Council.

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TREASURER'S REPORTS

On a motion by Savitski and second by Jones, the Treasurer's Reports were approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

MINUTES AND INVOICES

On a motion by Kreisler and second by Bittner, the minutes of May 9 and 16, 2005, were approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Swank, General Fund invoices in the amount of \$340,069.22 and Capital Reserve Fund invoices in the amount of \$16,919.16 were presented for approval. Prior to voting, Mrs. Bell-Perry asked for clarification on the following checks. Mr. Springer provided explanations unless otherwise noted.

#11455 to Verizon - She asked why it was for a Bloomsburg phone number. It is the ISDN for the Distance Learning program.

#11253 to 3B Consultants - They are hired to mow the grass and plow snow at the Family Center. It is less expensive than doing it in-house.

#11409 for PMEA Membership - The membership allows students to participate in Song Fest and other PMEA sponsored events.

#11422 for Responsive Classroom - Mrs. Shultz explained that it paid for reservations for Teachers to attend Responsive Classroom Training.

#11396 to American Law Weekly - The publication is purchased as a courtesy to our Solicitor.

Mrs. Bell-Perry questioned some of the receipts that were charged through a credit card, in particular a receipt from K-Mart for miscellaneous food items and a pack of poker cards. Mr. Springer noted that he would have to check with the teacher who purchased the items and provide clarification. President Meyer asked if it is on an honor system when staff members make purchases with a district credit card. Mr. Springer responded that typically, all receipts are matched up with the credit card invoices. The expenses are reviewed by the Principal and Mrs. Denise Kreisher.

Mrs. Bell-Perry expressed her concern over the FBLA students being accommodated at a Ramada Inn instead of the Seven Springs hotel. Dr. Lonoconus explained that the FBLA advisors successfully sent a fax for room reservations requesting the hotel on February 4th, which was well before the deadline. When the advisors did not receive confirmation, they contacted Seven Springs and found that they had not received the reservation request. She was informed that they could place the students in the hotel, but they would be housed with students from other schools and would be spread out throughout the hotel. The other option was for them to stay at the Ramada Inn. Seven Springs offered transportation to the resort and a room for students to change. No one at Seven Springs could explain what happened to the original faxed reservation request. By roll call vote; 7-Yes, 1-No (Bell-Perry voted No), the motion carried.

President Meyer asked if Mrs. Bell-Perry had any other concerns. She noted that she preferred to keep her comments to herself.

ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Yeager and second by Bittner, budgetary transfers in the 2004-05 budget to ensure proper accounting (**per Exhibit A**) were approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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On a motion by Kreischer and second by Jones, appointing the following institutions as school district depositories for the 2005-06 fiscal year was approved:

- First Columbia Bank & Trust Co.
- Pennsylvania School District Liquid Asset Fund
- Pennsylvania Treasurer's INVEST Program
- Union National Bank
- M&T Bank

On a motion by Swank and second by Yeager, accepting additional state and federal funds into the 2004-05 budget as follows was approved:

- ACCESS - \$25,702.93 - Funds to be used for instructional aide salaries and benefits and additional Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy costs.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Kreischer and second by Yeager, authorizing the Business Manager to make appropriate transfers for proper budgetary accounting to close out the fiscal year and prepare for audit was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Swank, authorizing the Business Manager to transfer unallocated expenditures remaining at the conclusion of the 2004-05 fiscal year to the Capital Reserve Fund was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Swank and second by Yeager, a Resolution (**per Exhibit B**) requesting permission to continue to participate in the Pennsylvania Department of General Services Cooperative Purchasing Program was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bittner and second by Savitski, the agreement with Strategic Energy for the supply of electricity through the Pennsylvania Energy Consortium (PENCON) was extended for three years beginning June 2005. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Savitski, adopting a Resolution (**per Exhibit C**) approving the Southern Columbia Area School District General Fund Budget for the 2005-06 fiscal year in the amount of \$13,918,640 was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Yeager, Support Staff (non-union) salaries (per Exhibit D) were approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Swank and second by Jones, a one-year lease with St. Paul Lutheran Church, Numidia, at a cost of \$450 per month, was approved. The space is to be utilized for the Southern Columbia Family Center; costs to be paid from Communities That Care funds. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Keischer and second by Bittner, the following additional Tutors were approved for the Southern Columbia Area Summer Fun-da-Mentals Program (pending completion of all employment requirements), at a rate of \$10 per hour, which will come from proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant:

- Kristen Wasileski (\$10/hour)
- Michelle Brochus (\$10/hour for pre-approved extra time)
- Mary Britton (Aide/contracted rate)
- Megan Hockenbroch (\$20 per hour)
- Danielle Jacobs (\$10 per hour for pre-approved extra time)
- Charity Maurer (\$10 per hour for pre-approved extra time)

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bittner and second by Yeager, the following individuals were approved as instructors for the 2004-05 Extended School Year Program at the contracted rate for 5 hours per week for 5 weeks per assigned student:

- Brenda Webb
- Margaret Wondoloski
- Carol Williams
- Susan Maciejewski
- Paula Wittenrich
- Mary Britton

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Jones and second by Swank, the second reading and adoption of revised Policy 101 Philosophy of Education (Exhibit E) was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Kreischer and second by Swank, the second reading and adoption of revised Policy 001 Name and Classification (Exhibit F) was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Swank and second by Bittner, the first reading of new Policy 210.1 Possession/Use of Asthma Inhalers (Exhibit G) was presented for approval. Prior to voting, Mr. Yeager noted that he was concerned about teachers not being aware of students carrying inhalers. Dr. Lonoconus replied that unfortunately, with the new HIPPA regulations, there are certain things that cannot be divulged unless the student or parent chooses to provide the information on their own. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Yeager, the first reading of revised Policy 303 Employment of Administrators (Exhibit H) was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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On a motion by Bittner and second by Yeager, the revision to the Graduation Requirements for the 2005-2006 school year (per Exhibit I) was approved. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

President Meyer asked Mrs. Bell-Perry to voice her concerns. She asked if any Board members had ever gone to the school and looked at the invoices. Most of the Board members said that they had not. She noted that possibly the district was too relaxed on its credit card policy. Mr. Springer explained that Southern Columbia has one of the tightest credit card policies around. The credit cards are kept in the vault and individuals using a card must sign the card out when they use it and sign it back in when it is returned. He also noted that items can be purchased on a credit card for a student activity and reimbursed by the student activity account. He noted that he needs to check on the particular charge in question.

Dr. Lonoconus noted that if there are concerns from Board members, it is a common courtesy that they contact an administrator prior to the meeting so they can research the matter and provide concrete answers at the meeting to alleviate further questions. Some vendors are known because they are used regularly, but others may need to be researched in order to provide proper explanations.

He asked Barb Lombardo to report on the Community Safety Day. She reported that the second annual event was held on Saturday, June 18th. She noted that a "Spider Man" character addressed topics such as anti-bullying with the children. Children and parents got involved in several activities, some of which were geared toward Father's Day. They could make stepping stones for the garden or cancer awareness bracelets. Healthy snacks were provided. The Locust Township Police department handed out safety information and the St. Paul Church participated. The event was once again successful.

Mr. Yeager noted that Mr. Springer agreed to teach the Board members about school finance at the Board retreat to give them a better understanding of the budget process and the daily financial functions of the district. Mr. Yeager asked if there were any summer school classes in place. Mr. Caputo replied that nothing is planned for the summer, but Sociology and Physiology courses are planned to be offered again during the school year. He has also offered to teach a History class through Alvernia.

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Ms. Joan Vallacchi, noted that she has been helping students with their education for many years. She noted that she is a retired teacher. One of the students she has been helping failed math this year. The student was given the options of attending Summer School, retention or hiring a tutor. Mrs. Vallacchi noted that she is not allowed to tutor her because she is not certified in the state of Pennsylvania. She is certified in Elementary Education through the state of New Jersey. She has a Master's degree in Special Education and she has taught in New Jersey for 35 years. She doesn't understand why she would not be qualified to provide tutoring. Dr. Lonconus noted that it is a state regulation. The only thing he could do would be to contact the Pennsylvania Department of Education to see if they would approve her as a tutor.

District resident, Mr. Florey Guarno, expressed his concern regarding district employees getting passes to athletic events. Mrs. Kreisler noted that the only sports that charge admission are football, basketball and wrestling and the benefit only applies to the home events.

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Approximately only 10-15 percent of district employees take advantage of the passes. Mr. Guarno noted that he doesn't think it should be an option.

Mr. Porter noted the SATs were re-centered. He asked if the district would honor the high scoring students. Dr. Lonoconus replied that he is not sure if they are going to honor the new SATs. He noted that it would take a while to convince him that the new SATs are better.

Mr. Porter questioned the reconditioning of the sports equipment. Mr. Swank explained that there are two companies that perform reconditioning that have been used in the past. One company's quality of work was extremely poor. Mr. Porter asked if someone would be looking into it. Dr. Lonoconus replied that a company is already contracted for this year.

Mr. Porter noted that it is his understanding that an audit is not a good audit if it doesn't provide suggestions for improvement. Mr. Springer noted that what he is suggesting is not an audit; it is a management letter. An audit attests that the numbers contained therein are accurate and factual. If issues come to light during an audit, a management letter is issued, which lists all of the issues. Mr. Springer noted that the district has not received a management letter as a result of a General Fund audit during his employment as Business Manager. The Tax Collector audit did result in a management letter, which was reviewed with the Finance Committee and the Tax Collectors. There are ways of getting the information to the Board if there is a deficiency. Issues would appear in a management letter, not as part of the audit.

Mr. Porter asked if home schooling could be approved for the student that Ms. Vallacchi has been tutoring. Dr. Lonoconus noted that tutoring is different than remediation. Home schooling would not apply to this case.

Mr. Porter asked if the district has received any Safe and Drug Free Schools grant funds in the last three years. Mr. Dunkelberger replied that the allocation was approximately \$7,000. Mr. Porter asked if it is possible to apply for another grant. Dr. Lonoconus noted that he would get information and report to the Board.

Mr. Porter asked if Communities That Care funding would continue. Mrs. Lombardo responded that a fundraiser was recently held and she applied for continued funding. He noted that the grant money that is now funding the Program Director was paying for the weightlifting supervisor. Mrs. Lombardo explained that the grant changed from being Federally run to being State run. Under the new grant, it is a State requirement that a Program Director be hired and funded by the grant.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Jones and second by Bittner, the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary