

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

The January 9, 2006 Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:34 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

Karl Meyer
Charles Porter
Ronald Savitski

Paul Starr
Michael Yeager

OTHERS PRESENT

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

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

President Meyer announced that Personnel Items A and E on the agenda would be considered action items.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lonoconus' report included the following topics:

- 1.) He noted that he looks forward to working with the new Board. He handed out some information regarding PSBA's New Board Member Orientation.
- 2.) PSBA has distributed new standards and a code of conduct for School Board members. He noted that the Board would need to decide if they want to adopt the new standards or maintain the current code of conduct. The information will go through the Policy Committee first.
- 3.) Catawissa Township has appointed Columbia County to collect their taxes since no one was elected to the position. There is a person interested in the position, but at this point, they would only collect the school taxes. Solicitor Roberts was not sure if the position could be split and noted that he would speak to Ms. Gail Kipp from the Commissioner's office to obtain more details.
- 4.) Mrs. Lombardo reported that the \$21st Century Grant, for which she applied to run programs in the high school, was rejected. The district would have to send a request for detailed information regarding the rejection.
- 5.) The Administrative Office received a request from Fleetwood Enterprises, Inc. for a waiver of the penalty amount on their real estate taxes. Solicitor Roberts strongly recommended that the Board not grant the request. They complied therefore, no formal Board action was necessary.
- 6.) He reminded the Board that in the past, when one Board member requested information, the information was disseminated to all Board members. He asked if the procedure should remain the same or if the Board wanted to make a change. There was also discussion regarding access to

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school district buildings. Dr. Lonoconus noted that the administration just wants to know what is expected by the Board. He noted that the administration would appreciate a phone call to set up an appointment prior to a visit. Any visitor to a classroom is a disruption. If a teacher knows in advance, the students can be notified and prepared for the visit. Mr. Jones noted that there is not established protocol written and asked if it would be necessary. Dr. Lonoconus noted that each building Principal has their own setup. Parents have thanked administrators for taking the extra step to ensure security for the students.

7.) Dr. Lonoconus asked the Principals to report on enrollment. Mrs. Shultz reported that as of June 30, 2005, K-4 enrollment was 517 with a breakdown as follows:

Kindergarten	- 101	3 rd Grade	- 102
1 st Grade	- 117	4 th Grade	- 98
2 nd Grade	- 99		

The 3rd day enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year was 533 and 10th day was 535. By the end of November it had increased to 538 and as of January 9, 2006 the total enrollment for grades kindergarten through grade 6 was 540. She will not have an idea of kindergarten enrollment for the 2006-2007 school year until March or April. There were 86 students registered for the current school year, 8 of which did not attend, however 15 additional students enrolled during the summer and 10 more enrolled since the school year started. Current kindergarten enrollment is 109.

Mr. Becker reported that the Middle School numbers are fairly consistent. He reported that there are 8 more students this school year in grades 5 through 8 than the previous year. The difference is as follows:

5 th Grade:	-2	7 th Grade:	+2
6 th Grade:	-3	8 th Grade:	+11

Mr. Caputo reported that last year's enrollment in grades 9 through 12 was 469. The current enrollment is 478 and a new student is scheduled to register tomorrow. He noted that this is the highest enrollment in the high school in approximately 15 years.

8.) Mr. Rodgers thanked everyone for helping in his transition into the Business Manager position and reported that he received a letter from the Department of Agriculture regarding the review of the district's Single Audit Report. The review indicated that the district's Schedule of Federal Finance Assistance was acceptable. The report was approved and in compliance. He noted that he is looking forward to meeting with the Finance Committee and working with the administration on the budget process.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - Paul Starr, Chairperson, reported that the committee discussed the start of a "Spirit Club" and setting up an account for fundraising and the Athletic Director's contract. Mr. Sharrow has offered to extend his contract for another year. Dr. Lonoconus would like to survey the coaches and people working with him regarding his performance. There would be a financial advantage to renewing his contract. A disadvantage would be not having him here when needed. The coaches like to have direct contact and that is not always possible, since his time on campus is limited. President Meyer asked if the Activities Committee would make a recommendation. Dr. Lonoconus replied that if the Board concurs, the administration would research the matter. Mr. Porter asked if a new person would be paid based on the same points. Dr. Lonoconus noted that it would not necessarily be the case, because the points are also based on experience.

The committee also discussed the expenses for the recent playoff games and the difference in state reimbursement and actual expenses. Changes may be necessary. President Meyer asked if

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this was the first year there was a difference. Dr. Lonoconus noted that Terry Sharrow just brought it to his attention. He would get the actual figures. Mr. Porter noted that he would also like to know a timeline as to when the amount of returns would be known. Dr. Lonoconus noted that PIAA has different reimbursement plans. Reimbursement can be based on pre-ticket sales, actual ticket sales or a flat fee. Larger schools benefit more from ticket sales. Mr. Starr noted that the Activities Committee would continue to meet prior to the first Board meeting on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Curriculum - Elsie Bittner, Chairperson reported that a meeting date needed to be determined.

Facilities & Services - Michael Yeager, Chairperson, deferred to Mr. Caputo who reported that four students came in over the winter break and painted the hallway near the high school boiler room and the Industrial Technology classrooms. It was done as part of a Social Sciences service project. The fresh paint has really brightened the hallway. President Meyer asked Mr. Caputo to thank the students on behalf of the Board. Mr. Yeager reported that new ceiling tiles and lights were also installed.

Finance - Karl Meyer, Chairperson, reported that the committee would meet the first Thursday of each month.

Negotiations & Personnel - Chairperson, Amanda Bell-Perry, asked if the committee should meet to discuss Mr. Sharrow's contract. President Meyer replied that Dr. Lonoconus and the Activities Committee would bring information and a recommendation to the entire Board.

Mr. Yeager expressed his concern over lack of involvement with curriculum. He noted that it is the most important item and it is not getting enough emphasis. He would like to see more Board involvement at the Curriculum Committee meetings. Dr. Lonoconus noted that he would like to see committees of the whole. He noted that the Activities Committee met for 45 minutes and then reenacted it for the entire Board. Mr. Porter asked how the time would be delegated. Dr. Lonoconus replied that a time limit could be specified. President Meyer recommended that they try a Curriculum Committee of the whole for the first meeting in February to see how it would work.

ITEMS – TREASURER'S REPORTS

ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

ITEMS – FISCAL

Mr. Porter referred to a budget transfer and asked if the administration did not transfer the funds, would the bill get paid regardless? Mr. Rodgers replied affirmatively, but noted that the transfer would replenish the funds. If transfers were not made, the district would not be reporting correctly. Mr. Porter asked if there was a way to reconcile so that the accuracy of the original budget could be checked. Mr. Rodgers replied that he believed that they had the capability.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Yeager and second by Bittner, an additional Instructional Aide position for the remainder of the 2005-2006 school year was presented for approval. Prior to a vote, Mr. Dunkelberger explained that a severely handicapped student requiring an individual aide had moved into the district. He anticipates being able to cover the position next year due to students graduating, but an additional aide would be required for the current year. He noted that the

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position would be paid through ACCESS funds and the district should receive reimbursement through ACCESS for the student. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Dr. Lonoconus explained that the need for a Bus Starter was brought to his attention by the AFSCME Union President. The month of December was much colder than usual and there was a problem where the fuel gelled in several of the buses. Drivers are given 20-minute for warm-up and pre-trip inspection. The Bus Starter would come in prior to the 20-minute warm-up time. President Meyer asked how many days the cold weather is a problem. Dr. Lonoconus replied that normally it is just a "handful." Mr. Savitski noted that he could see the buses being started early a few days, but to do it everyday would cause excessive fuel costs. Mr. Porter noted that it sounded like a fuel additive problem. Dr. Lonoconus noted that normally, the additive is in the fuel in January through March. The extreme temperatures are not usually a problem in December. The mechanics admitted that they were caught off guard, but they did put additive in the individual fuel tanks of the buses after hearing the weather forecast.

ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

Mr. Clippinger explained that the first and last pages of the draft copy of the Professional Education plan, which he distributed to Board members, were not part of the actual plan. They were to provide new Board members with information on past practice. He noted that the Plan is not in its final form. The Action Plans will become part of the appendixes and will not be numbered. Costs are not required, but estimated costs are listed on the Action Plans. Related costs are also listed, such as pre-approved college courses. No registration fee is required for professional development through the CSIU menu of services. The district is charged a flat fee of approximately \$2.00 per student. The costs for the Action Plans are similar to last year. Professional Development spending decreased due to availability of funds. Other districts are out-spending Southern Columbia by three or four to one in Professional Development. A clear cut Action Plan for the Gifted Program has been added. Mr. Clippinger noted that he would like to take care of any questions at the present because he would be unable to attend the meeting on January 16th.

Mr. Porter asked if the \$2.00 per student fee covers all training. Mr. Clippinger replied that if CSIU is doing something specifically in technology, they may charge extra. Some grant funds are used, but the bulk of professional development is paid through local funds. Mr. Porter asked if the district was doing a lot of professional development during the seven in-service days. Mr. Clippinger responded affirmatively, but added that some of the in-service days are set aside for parent/teacher conferences. Other duties are required on the non-instructional days. Mr. Porter asked if meeting Act 48 requirements is the responsibility of the teacher. Dr. Lonoconus responded affirmatively, but noted that school districts and intermediate units are entrusted to provide Act 48 opportunities for educators. If a teacher loses their certification, the district loses that teacher. It is in the district's best interest to provide Act 48 opportunities.

Mr. Porter noted that in other districts' weapons policies, before parents are contacted, law enforcement is contacted first. He asked if the Policy Committee could look into changing Southern's weapons policy accordingly.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Savitski asked if the Board could honor the football coaching staff by taking them out to dinner. Dr. Lonoconus agreed that it would be a nice gesture.

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RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, asked for details of the additional Instructional Aide position. Mr. Dunkelberger explained that an aide's duties depend on a student's needs. Aides can assist students with mobility and cognitive disabilities and provide small group instruction, all under the directive of the classroom teacher. Aides also perform duties such as cafeteria and hall monitor. Mr. Gotshall asked the number of aides currently employed. Mr. Dunkelberger replied that there were currently 21.5 Instructional Aides in the Special Education Department. Mr. Gotshall questioned the requirements. Mr. Dunkelberger replied that a high school diploma is required, however, the Title I Aide position requires a college degree.

Mr. Chris Gengler, President of the Southern Columbia Education Association, read a letter on behalf of faculty and staff members in support of Dr. Lonoconus.

District resident, Mr. Florey Guarino, agreed that a parent should definitely contact an administrator to make an appointment for a visit, but noted that a Board member should have the ability to come into the district unannounced, especially if he or she is looking into a complaint regarding a teacher's performance. Dr. Lonoconus noted that in the event of a complaint, the teacher should be contacted first. If the complaint would not get resolved, the next step would be to contact the Building Principal. If still not resolved, then the Superintendent should be contacted. Individuals need to follow the chain of command. In most cases, when a parent comes to a Board meeting and makes a complaint, they did not go through the chain of command. Problems are usually resolved when the proper chain of command is followed. Mr. Gotshall asked for an explanation of the proper chain of command. Dr. Lonoconus explained that a teacher should be contacted first, the Building Principal second, and finally the Superintendent. Mr. Gotshall noted that he has seen what seems to be a lack of communication.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Jones and second by Bittner, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary