

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

The March 20, 2006 Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:33 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

Thomas Slusser

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; district residents and members of the media.

**AGENDA HEARING PERIOD**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Lonoconus' report included the following topics:

- 1.) He announced that he received another letter from the State regarding the budget from the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee reporting on another side of the budget process.
- 2.) A Negotiations and Personnel Committee meeting will be held immediately following the Board meeting. He urged all members to attend.
- 3.) Mr. Cihocki, Head Softball Coach, has requested that a Junior Varsity Softball Coach be hired due to the number of participants in the program.
- 4.) Mr. Rodgers has quotes on the safety rail, lockers and basketball backstops, which will be discussed later during the meeting.
- 5.) The administrators reported on the activities of the non-instructional day. Mr. Clippinger reported that they continued work on ongoing activities pertaining to Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. They worked on the science curriculum, revised courses of study and a group of teachers looked at new science materials. He will be distributing science Planned Courses of Study in April, May and June. They also worked on standards based report cards.

Mr. Becker reported that the Student Support Team went over information obtained at a recent conference. They discussed a lot of student and legal issues. Mr. Visnosky introduced a Reading Apprenticeship program to the staff. The program basically makes all teachers reading teachers. There are reading instructions in all core subjects. Strict reading instruction stops at 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The program compliments the new math program.

Mrs. Shultz reported that the elementary teachers spent the bulk of the morning looking at ways to strengthen writing. They would like to see more continuity. A guest speaker, Andrea Martine, went over the PSSA writing rubric and some current writing theories to assess competency. A variety of tasks were completed in the afternoon. They looked at K-4 science

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materials, building goals and 1<sup>st</sup> grade worked on aligning the assessments to the recently revised report card, which is aligned to state standards.

Mr. Caputo reported that the high school staff participated in a Parent Connect orientation. The program allows parents to access students' grades and other electronic data over the Internet. Over 300 families are already enrolled in the program. He anticipates more families getting on board. The Student Support Team gave a presentation, which included information on cyber-bullying and anorexia. The student support process was explained to staff. They also continued to review the curriculum. The Family Consumer Science teachers met with the POD teacher. They felt there is some overlap, but determined that the overlap is beneficial for the students. Department meetings were held. They reviewed safety in the building and building evacuation plans.

Mr. Dunkelberger reported that the Special Education department participated in trainings that were offered by the building principals. In addition, the aides attended a Safe Crisis Management training, which teaches staff how to deal with students who become aggressive. The Special Education Teachers attended a team meeting in the afternoon.

Mr. Yeager asked if any Act 48 hours were given. Mr. Clippinger replied that a few of the activities would be considered direct instruction and would be approved hours. Mr. Porter noted that he was approached by a 7<sup>th</sup> grader who was concerned about the PSSA. Depending on how well the individual does on the test would determine what classes he/she could take next year. Mr. Becker explained that they look at a number of items including PSSA scores, Terra Nova scores, past performance, grade point average and teacher recommendations. They don't look at just one piece of data. Mr. Becker noted that math is the only subject in which PSSA scores are used to accelerate students.

6.) Dr. Lonoconus reported that PSSA testing would take place this week. It is a very important week as the district continues to work toward meeting AYP goals.

Mr. Porter asked how much time staff is spending inputting information into Parent Connect. Mr. Becker responded that the program is tied into the grading system. When teachers enter grades, the information is imported into Parent Connect. The teachers may have to change the way they report, but they will not have to do additional work. Dr. Lonoconus noted that there were some problems with the program at first, but they are working through it.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum - Elsie Bittner, Chairperson, reported that the main topic of discussion was eligibility rules. They are looking for more input, but feel that eligibility to participate in extra curricular activities should be across the board, not just for athletics. Eligibility should be reviewed on a weekly basis. They were thinking that possibly Mrs. Lombardo could monitor it. Mr. Yeager noted that the concept is academics and now only athletes are monitored. They need to be looking at everyone's eligibility for extra curricular activities. They are looking at getting software that would track a certain number of failures and help with the monitoring process. Solicitor Roberts noted that it would require a policy change. Mr. Yeager noted that the committee is asking for thoughts on the concept. President Meyer noted that he thinks it would be appropriate. Dr. Lonoconus noted that a lot of discussion would be needed to determine what activities would be included under the eligibility requirements. He noted that he agrees with the concept, but it would be a matter of how the policy is formatted. Mr. Porter asked what kind of numbers they would have had historically. Mr. Yeager asked how many are ineligible for sports on average. Mr. Sharrow replied that on average there are three or four per week. He noted that

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this has been a very good year. Mr. Yeager asked if the committee has direction to continue working on the concept. The Board concurred.

Mrs. Bittner reported that work continued on the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade standards-based report card. They took out Art, Music, Library and Physical Education. Those areas report twice per year on an insert. Mr. Yeager also noted that they discussed further reading training to continue the Reading Apprenticeship program.

Policy - Paul Starr, committee member, reported that they talked about Policy 246 Student Wellness, which is mandated by the state. The policy addresses a healthy school environment, nutrition and physical activities. The challenge will be coming up with a board or Wellness Committee. It should include a nurse, teacher, coach, classified staff, food services worker, representatives of local agencies and someone from the Board. The first reading of the policy is planned for April. Dr. Lonoconus noted that the plan should be approved by May. He would like the Wellness Committee to continue to meet on a regular basis after the plan is approved. He noted that he is still waiting on regulations from the state. Mr. Yeager noted that a Local Wellness Policy checklist is all that was sent out by PSBA. Dr. Lonoconus noted that Mrs. Holleran has been attending some of the seminars and workshops. President Meyer asked if interested citizens could serve on the committee. Dr. Lonoconus replied affirmatively. He noted that he would also like to see an outside dietician serve on the committee. Mr. Yeager noted that physical activity is the other part of the plan. It refers to non-physical education activity. Dr. Lonoconus reported that the district must be a contributor of 60 minutes per day of physical activity. Mr. Jones asked what is meant by the school district being a contributor. Dr. Lonoconus replied that things like recess in the elementary grades would be considered a contribution. It would be a little more difficult in the high school, but activities such as walking to class would qualify. He noted that having the building open for public use could be considered a contribution, but certain times of the year it is not available due to the schedule of activities.

Negotiations & Personnel - Amanda Bell-Perry, Chairperson, announced that the committee would be meeting following the Board meeting.

CSIU - No report.

Vo-Tech - Mr. Yeager attended the introduction meeting at the Vo-Tech school. This year they accepted 142 applicants and turned down 192. The school is designed to hold 580 students and the current enrollment is 680. Acceptance of applicants is based on an evaluation form. Seventh grade students should be aware of the evaluation form if they are planning to attend CMAVTS. He also noted that they take a certain number of special education students. They do not write IEPs for Gifted students. He noted that the administrators that are leaving are going to be difficult to replace.

Mr. Porter noted that the CMAVTS budget did not include a budget comparison. There is a 3.7 percent increase and a \$258,000 deficit. He noted that the trend concerns him. Southern Columbia's contribution will go up next year. Dr. Lonoconus noted that a district's portion is also based on an average of students sent. He noted that they didn't want to increase the budget artificially and have districts sending money to drive up the fund balance. Mr. Porter noted that his concern is not with the formula but with containing the costs. Dr. Lonoconus noted that the district pays a base fee just to belong to the sending districts whether it sends one student or 100 students.

Mr. Porter made a motion to suspend the Act 93 Agreement dated July 2004 and replace it with the Act 93 Agreement dated July 1999, until full Board review and action. Mrs. Bell-Perry seconded the motion. Solicitor Roberts noted that Mr. Porter could not unilaterally terminate an

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Act 93 Agreement. Mr. Porter noted that four Board members were not aware of the changes in the agreement and the public didn't know about the changes. Solicitor Roberts noted that if there was a vote by the Board to approve the Agreement, it is binding. Unless the Agreement expires or both the Board and the parties involved agree to negotiate, the agreement remains in effect. Even though it is not a contract, it is viewed as a contract. Solicitor Roberts noted that if the Board wanted to change something in the Agreement, they would need to ask the administrators to meet and discuss the Agreement. Mr. Porter noted that he is concerned about the Retirement and Demise Pay clause and the liability to the district. He was concerned that the payment for unused sick days would be considered income pertaining to retirement. Solicitor Roberts noted that a Board can decide to do something contradictory to the law, but his recommendation is against it. He recommended that if the Board is not happy with the plan, they should ask the administrators to meet and discuss it. Mr. Porter withdrew the motion on the advice of legal counsel and Mrs. Bell-Perry concurred. It was decided that a plan of action would be discussed at the Negotiations and Personnel Committee meeting following the Board meeting.

### TREASURER'S REPORTS

On a motion by Slusser and second by Yeager, the Treasurer's Reports were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

### MINUTES AND INVOICES

On a motion by Jones and second by Yeager, the minutes of February 13 (as amended) and 20, 2006, were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bittner and second by Savitski, General Fund invoices in the amount of \$305,595.81 were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

### ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Jones and second by Bittner, budgetary transfers in the 2005-06 budget to ensure proper accounting (**per Exhibit A**) were presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Bittner, the 2006-2007 Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School General Operating Budget in the amount of \$6,304,945 was presented for approval. Southern Columbia Area School District's cost is \$443,506. Prior to a vote, Mr. Porter expressed concern over the health care costs. Dr. Lonoconus noted that they are aware that co-pays are on the horizon. By roll call vote the motion carried (6-Yes, 3-No; Bell-Perry, Porter and Slusser voted No).

On a motion by Bittner and second by Slusser, to establish a student activity account for a Spirit Club; Martha Kanaskie, Advisor, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

### ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Bell-Perry and second by Bittner, the resignation of Randall Campbell as Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds was accepted effective March 31, 2006. Mr. Campbell has

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been with the district since December 2001. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Slusser, the resignation for retirement of Barbara Hornberger (Learning Support Teacher) was accepted effective with the end of the 2005-2006 school year (June 9, 2006). Mrs. Hornberger has been with the district since August 1985. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bittner and second by Starr, the resignation of Jason Minnick as Head Boys Soccer Coach was accepted effective March 20, 2006. Mr. Minnick has been with the district since July 2002. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Bittner and second by Savitski, the addition of a Junior Varsity Softball Coach position for the 2005-2006 school year was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Slusser and second by Yeager, the addition of Michelle Farda (Elementary) to the 2005-2006 Substitute List effective March 21, 2006 (pending completion of all employment requirements) was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Bittner, employment of the following student teachers as After School Tutors effective as listed (pending completion of all employment requirements), at a rate of \$10 per hour, which will come from proceeds of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers Grant, was presented for approval:

- Trisha Sizgorich - effective March 28, 2006
- Courtney Gontz - effective April 4, 2006
- Angela Gould - effective April 4, 2006
- Maria Hinchey - effective April 4, 2006

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones, Mr. Porter was nominated to serve on the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Union Board of Directors. Mr. Porter declined the nomination. On a motion by Jones and second by Porter, the appointment of Karl A. Meyer to serve on the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit Board of Directors to complete the unexpired term of Elsie Bittner through June 30, 2007, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

### ITEMS – POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Jones and second by Savitski, the second reading and adoption of Policy 137.1 Extracurricular Participation by Home Education Students (per Exhibit B) was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Yeager and second by Savitski, the second reading and adoption of revised Policy 123 Interscholastic Athletics (per Exhibit C) was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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On a motion by Bittner and second by Yeager, the 2006-2007 School Year Calendar (per Exhibit D) was presented for approval. Prior to a vote, Mr. Porter noted that he would like to see the calendar compressed. Dr. Lonoconus noted that the calendar format has worked well in the past. Mr. Yeager noted that the break in the spring is beneficial to both students and staff. Mrs. Bell Perry asked when dates are set for summer school. Dr. Lonoconus replied that they are set following the end of school. Mrs. Bell-Perry asked why the district does not hold its own summer school. Dr. Lonoconus replied that because of the number of students, it is not cost effective. Mr. Yeager asked if everyone was aware of how much the air conditioning system is affected by the Summer School programs and the difficulty accommodating the program and scheduling summer cleaning. Mr. Porter recalled that PPL indicated that the air conditioning system was set up wrong. Mr. Yeager noted that the system is not big enough or capable to work in the summer. By roll call vote, the motion carried (7-Yes, 2-No; Bell-Perry and Porter voted No).

On a motion by Jones and second by Bittner, the 2006 Summer Fun-da-Mentals Program for grades K-12, June 19 through July 27, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (with the exception of July 4), was presented for approval. Transportation will be provided and all costs will be covered by proceeds of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Grant, with the exception of a Distance Learning class. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Jones and second by Slusser, to extend the time for taking action on the Proposals for a Guaranteed Energy Savings Act Comprehensive Energy and Operational Efficiency Services Performance Contract to and including May 15, 2006, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

### BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Rodgers distributed information regarding quotes for several projects to the Board members and asked for their direction. It was determined that the fence safety cap should be addressed as soon as possible. Mr. Yeager noted that the cap comes in a large roll. If a piece were damaged, it would be more difficult to replace than the other product, which comes in 8' sections. Dr. Lonoconus noted that there could also be problems with bee nests due to the design of the safety cap. Mr. Rodgers noted that the quotes were for materials alone. The safety cap comes in a coil and the fence shield comes in sections. Mr. Yeager noted the difference in quotes and asked if the same product was quoted. Dr. Lonoconus replied that they would make sure it is the same product before purchasing. President Meyer recommended that they go with the best price if the product is the same. It was determined that a motion was not necessary at the present time. The purchase would be approved as part of the bills list. Dr. Lonoconus noted that if the Board decided to pay for it through the General Obligation Note, a motion would be needed at that time. The Board directed the administration to purchase the fence shield at the lower quote if it is the same product. They would determine how to pay for it at an April meeting.

They locker quotes were then discussed. Mrs. Bell-Perry noted that she would like to see the color changed to something lighter because of the dark hallways. President Meyer noted that he is not interested in changing the color. Mr. Porter asked where the replacement lockers would be installed. Mr. Caputo noted that they would finish the first hallway and go down the next hallway as funds become available. After a brief discussion on details, Dr. Lonconus stated that

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it comes down to how much the Board wants to micro-manage. The Board gave permission for the purchase of the lockers.

They moved onto the basketball backstops. One company that provided a quote will be installing the gymnasium bleachers. Dr. Lonoconus noted that there would be a guarantee on the installed product by Degler-Whiting, but not if it would be installed in-house. Mr. Rodgers noted that it makes sense to go with the company that would already be here. Mr. Porter questioned the length of the warranty. Mr. Rodgers replied that it is a lifetime warranty. The Board agreed to have the backboards installed.

District Resident, Mr. Blaine Madara, referred to the Guaranteed Energy Savings project and noted that it is good to check things out, but they are getting delayed on doing things over the summer. The delays drive up the costs. Mr. Savitski noted that the companies already committed to a price. After a brief discussion it was determined that a special Facilities Committee meeting would be held on Monday, March 27, at 6:00 p.m. in the High School Library to discuss the Guaranteed Energy Savings proposals. It was agreed that the regularly scheduled Facilities/Finance Committee meeting scheduled for the first week in April would remain scheduled.

Mr. Yeager requested an executive session following the Board meeting. Solicitor Roberts announced that the purpose of the executive session would be to discuss a student matter that is confidential and possibly a personnel matter.

### **RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC**

District resident, Mr. Richard Gotshall asked if the water supply problem had been resolved. Mr. Yeager reported that he took a tour with Mr. Campbell recently. He noted that when the pump turns on, the pressure goes from 0 to 70. He also noted that the area around the pump is well insulated. Dr. Lonoconus reported that at the current time, the water supply is in good shape. They are looking at the cost of a filtration system versus drilling a new well in the event that one of the current wells would fail. Mr. Gotshall asked how the students that drive to school affect transportation. Dr. Lonoconus explained that the students must be included on a bus run roster whether or not they drive. He noted that they count on a certain number of seats being empty.

Mr. Madara noted that it might be more cost efficient to purchase all of the lockers at once instead of only 100 each year. Mr. Porter asked if any quotes were received regarding the wells. Mr. Yeager reported that Mr. Campbell did not yet have a chance to get a quote for a sulfur treatment system.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Porter and second by Jones, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch  
Board Secretary