

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

The March 17, 2008, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:40 p.m. with President Michael Yeager in charge of the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

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

BOARD MEMBERS

Timothy Benner
Charles Porter
Ronald Savitski

Thomas Slusser (*Absent*)
Paul Starr
Richard Steele

David Stellfox
Michael Yeager
John Yocum

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles Reh, Superintendent; Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Roy Clippinger, Joseph Shirvinski, James Becker, Robert Mehalick and Barbara Lombardo, Administrators; district residents and members of the media.

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

President Yeager announced that all items on the agenda would be action items.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

1.) Ian McCoog who is the Classrooms For the Future Coach has established a blended course that will take place this summer. There are 15 students registered for the course. It is an online course, but there are three times the students will come to school to do a presentation and to take the final exam. The purpose of the course is to give students an opportunity to take additional courses and also to give them the freedom to take dual enrollment courses at some of the area universities. Mr. Porter asked if the board needed to approve the curriculum. Mr. Becker replied that it is the P.O.D. curriculum and it has already been approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy - Rick Steele reported that the committee needs to look at a policy concerning some of the newer technology such as distance learning and online courses. There are a lot of issues for both students and staff taking online courses.

Curriculum - John Yocum, Chairperson, reported that Mr. Clippinger talked about the state of the curriculum and the induction plan for six new teachers. He indicated that there would be a lot more new teachers hired over the next several years. The committee discussed the realignment of the elementary science curriculum and changes to the social studies materials for this coming year. The committee discussed the Professional Development Plan, middle school training and 4Sight testing. Mr. Clippinger gave them information on where the district stood in academics. Southern is in the upper 20 percent of schools in Pennsylvania and second in the IU.

Finance - Charlie Porter, Chairperson reported that the committee met March 13th. The administration presented figures regarding potential leasing or contracting of buses. Mr. Rodgers had prepared a spreadsheet that included actual figures from 2004-05 through projected figures for 2009-10. The board was given three scenarios under the 2009-10 figures. One was if the

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buses were still owned, one was if the buses were leased and the third was if the busing services would be contracted. The board members and the committee seemed to be satisfied as to the accuracy of the figures presented. Mr. Rodgers discussed in detail the line items and how the figures were derived. He noted that there were members of the public present and he hoped that their questions were addressed. They did discuss the budget comparison from last year to this year. The administration took the Board's directive and in order to make the transportation figures as competitive as possible, two runs were cut. With all expenses and income from the State accounted for, the district cost for keeping the buses would be a projected \$467,000 for the 2009-10 school year. If the district would lease the buses, the cost would be approximately \$700,000. If the district would contract the services, it would be in the red approximately \$315,000. Comparing the contract option versus the ownership option; it's approximately \$152,637 in favor of contracting at this point. There is an additional item to be considered. It was estimated that an income of over \$900,000 would be received from the sale of the buses. It cannot be considered savings because it is the sale of an asset and is a one time income. They discussed keeping several vans for trips. They heard from some residents. Mr. Porter stated that nothing would be done until they enter contract negotiations. The current union contract expires June 2009, so the board anticipates starting the negotiations process this summer. Mr. Porter stated, "To quell any rumors that people need to be looking for jobs or Southern is selling the buses, that decision has not been made. That decision will not be made until we discuss with the union and enter negotiations."

The committee discussed summer help. Historically, two office students have been hired. Five students will also be hired to work either outside or with the janitorial staff during the summer. They discussed the district's Plan Document adoption. Mr. Rodgers explained that the Plan Document adoption relates to the current retirement programs in place for employees; more specifically the 403B plans and 457 plans. The district is mandated to do this by the IRS. The district is also looking at appointing a TPA (Third Party Administrator) to assist the district and ensure that it is in compliance with all of the new IRS regulations regarding this type of retirement plans. It was presented at the Finance meeting and the final Plan Document will be presented to the board for adoption in either April or May. The TPA service is provided free of charge.

The educational foundation was discussed briefly. A special budget meeting is scheduled for March 27th. The big ticket items list was discussed. The committee felt that several items on the list such as textbooks, software upgrades and strategic planning, should not be considered big ticket items. The administration is going to include those items in the regular budget as line items, as they are ongoing expenses, and decrease the big ticket items accordingly.

Mrs. Lombardo reported that she has 21st Century funds coming in that will take care of Family Center activities, six months of rent, high school tutoring and summer learning. Communities That Care has been involved in fund raising for the past several years and has the funding to keep the programs going.

Mr. Rodgers added that the committee also discussed the PEP Grant and the request for proposals for the audit services.

TREASURER'S REPORTS

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

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MINUTES AND INVOICES

On a motion by Stellfox and second by Yocum, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. The Minutes of February 11 and 18, 2008.
- B. General Fund invoices in the amount of \$396,671.53

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Savitski and second by Benner, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. The 2008-2009 Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School General Operating Budget in the amount of \$6,635,902.00; Southern Columbia Area School district's cost is \$486,090.
- B. The 2008-2009 Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit General Operating Budget in the amount of \$1,996,419.
- C. To appoint Brewer, Gehrig & Johnson, LLC to audit the financial records for the local tax collectors for the year ended December 31, 2007, as required by the Pennsylvania Local Tax Collection Law, at a cost not to exceed \$ 2,125.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

On a motion by Savitski and second by Stellfox, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. Employment of Heather Higgins for the position of Learning Support Teacher effective upon release from Mt. Carmel Area School District (pending completion of all employment requirements) at Step 10 of the Masters Salary Schedule (\$47,186); benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- B. Employment of Lisa Fleishauer as Half-time Instructional Aide (*working 3 days of 6-day cycle*) effective March 19, 2008, (pending completion of all employment requirements); salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- C. Employment of Debra Johnson as Half-time Instructional Aide (*working 3 days of 6-day cycle*) effective March 19, 2008, (pending completion of all employment requirements); salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

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- D. FMLA Leave on an intermittent basis for Employee #1341TK effective March 11, 2008; not to exceed 12 weeks in the next 12-month period.
 - E. FMLA Leave for Employee #1748DL effective March 16, 2008; not to exceed 12 weeks in the next 12-month period.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Savitski and second by Stellfox, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. First reading of revised Policy 429 Substitute Compensation (Per Exhibit A).
- B. National Honor Society/FBLA Field Trip to New York City on May 14, 2008, with no expense to the district except for substitute costs; teachers and parents to chaperone.
- C. 10th Grade Class Field Trip to Washington, D.C. on April 30, 2008; district expense to include standard transportation and substitute costs; teachers and parents to chaperone.
- E. Revised 2007-2008 School Year Calendar (per Exhibit B) designating April 25, 2008, as a make-up day.
- F. 2008-2009 School Year Calendar (per Exhibit C).
- G. 2008 Summer School Program for grades 9-12, June 10th through June 30th, Monday through Friday, with the exception of Friday, June 13, 2008. Transportation will be provided and all costs will be covered by proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant.
- H. 2008 Summer Kindergarten Readiness Program for incoming Kindergarten students, June 30th through July 31st, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Transportation will be provided and all costs will be covered by proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant.
- I. Homebound Instruction for a middle school student beginning March 17, 2008, until further evaluation by a physician, for a maximum of 6 hours per week.

Prior to voting, Mr. Porter asked if there was any educational value in the senior class trip to Great Wolf Lodge. Mr. Becker replied negatively, but noted that previous senior classes have taken similar trips. Mr. Porter stated that due to the district expense and the fact that there is no educational value to the trip, he would have to vote “No” on that particular item. President Yeager asked if the ineligibility list would be in effect for these trips. Mr. Becker replied that the other trips have educational value so he would not discourage students from attending. President Yeager stated that his impression of field trips is that the district cannot require students to attend and it is not a graded process, so the ineligibility list should apply. The ineligible student(s) could stay in school and make up their work.

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Mr. Reh stated that last year when a similar trip was up for approval at a board meeting, several parents came to the board meeting in support of the trip. When the parents voiced their opinions, the board approved the trip. It was agreed that item "D" concerning the senior class trip would be pulled from the block vote and would be voted upon separately.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

On a motion by Savitski and second by Stellfox, a Senior Class trip on May 18 and 19, 2008, to Great Wolf Lodge, Stroudsburg, PA, was presented for approval. District expenses will include transportation and the cost of six substitutes. By roll call vote, the motion carried; 7-Yes, 1-No (Porter voted No).

BOARD COMMENTS

President Yeager thanked the board for the long hours they have been dedicating to the district.

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Ms. Sue Adams, asked if students would be picked up according to the state mandate, where the stop could be a mile and one-half from the house, or will they be required to pick up on a house to house basis as is currently done if the services are contracted. Mr. Porter replied that a request for proposals would need to be put together and he would hope that they would be comparing apples for apples. Mr. Stellfox stated that he would not be in favor of changing the way students are being picked up. Mr. Rodgers stated that the bus stops would be at the discretion of the school district; not the contractor.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Porter and second by Yocum, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary