

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

The December 15, 2008, Special 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 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; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Roy Clippinger, Joseph Shirvinski, Roger Nunkester, James Becker and Robert Mehalick, 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.) He congratulated Mr. Shirvinski who has completed the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership program, which is a three-year program sponsored and supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for principals to receive additional coursework in leadership.

2.) The second annual Senior Citizens' Christmas Dinner will be held Tuesday, December 16th, at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Nunkester reported that 128 individuals have signed up. If the dinner is postponed due to inclement weather, it will be held Thursday, December 18th.

3.) A concert will be held Friday, December 19th, featuring the group Twelve-Twenty Four. All proceeds will benefit future Senior Citizens' Dinners.

4.) The PSSA scores for science across the state were below expected achievement levels. Southern Columbia had 90 percent of its 4th graders score proficient or above. The state average for 4th grade was 71 percent. The 8th grade state average was 53 percent and Southern's 8th grade had 72 percent of its students score proficient or above. The 11th grade state average was only 36 percent and Southern had 52 percent 11th graders score proficient or above.

5.) Nominations for the Distinguished Alumnus Award will be accepted this year until February 27, 2009. Individuals who were nominated last year do not need to be re-nominated. They will remain on the list to be considered. Nominees must have graduated from Southern Columbia and must be successful in their field of endeavor.

6.) Mr. Clippinger gave a report regarding the Strategic Plan, which is broken down into seven components. Mrs. Brenda Monick and Mr. Brian Davis were present to answer questions regarding the Educational Technology Plan. Mrs. Monick explained that there are three components to the Technology Plan. She noted that the budget page can be a little alarming, but she explained that the three-year total \$1,187,500 actually addresses everything that

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encompasses technology in the district. They are trying to get on a four-year replacement plan for technology equipment. Mr. Porter stated that the plan was needed to apply for grants and he expressed concern as to what would happen if the technology is not upgraded as agreed in the plan. Mr. Rodgers stated that components of the plan are contingent upon grant availability. Mr. Porter asked what figure would be used for the 2009-2010 school year technology budget. Mr. Rodgers stated that he would be sitting down with Brenda and Brian and they would start with the \$125,000 figure. He also stated that historically, there have been "big ticket" items. In the last two years, there were good amounts of money that were dedicated to hardware updates through the technology department. Depending on what happens in a given year, that \$125,000 figure could increase at any time as it did in the past two years. In addition to that \$125,000 and some of the "big ticket" items, there were also upgrades to the Television Studio. Mr. Porter stated that he didn't want to see the district approve the Strategic Plan with these figures and then be locked into these figures without going through the normal budget plan. Mrs. Monick pointed out the district has had the same budget for the last ten years. It has not changed except for the type of things Mr. Rodgers discussed.

Mr. Davis stated that the district currently has 1,079 computers in its inventory. President Yeager asked if they have a replacement plan in place. Mrs. Monick stated that she and Brian need to sit down within the next few weeks to prepare the Pennsylvania Technology Inventory. She stated that they never have enough money in the technology budget to replace on a four-year cycle, but they address where the greatest need is and where the oldest computers are. It was agreed that the inventory list would be provided to the Board upon completion.

Mr. Clippinger stated that the Special Education Plan was approved by the Board last May, and changes suggested by PDE. Mr. Mehalick stated that the district is also looking to do the best for the students in regard to the Student Services Plan. They are planning monthly meetings. Mr. Clippinger had distributed a goals sheet to Board members prior to the meeting. There were nine goal statements that were utilized, all relating to student achievement. In surveying the staff, internal communications seemed to be a particular issue. They would like to give support staff more input in decision-making processes. According to the No Child Left Behind law, goals dealing with student attendance, graduation rate and participation rate in PSSA testing are required. The Board and administrative team have been very active on maintenance and facility use. An elective goal statement was added pertaining to that aspect. Mr. Clippinger stated that since all of the time and effort was being put into the facilities, it needed to be reflected in the overall process of the Strategic Plan.

Almost two years ago, the administration sat down at an administrative retreat and looked at the structure of doing strategic planning. He noted that people will not attend a lot of meetings because they are already extremely busy, so they tried to use the natural purposes of the school district to bring the Strategic Plan forward. Some examples are the K-12 Curriculum Council, the Professional Education Committee and the Induction Team. Each of these committees helped to develop the plans as a natural part of what they are doing anyway. A lot of the development of this plan was business as usual.

In 2007, when the Science assessment anchors were published by the state, it was coincidental that Science was the area that was being revised that year in the district's six-year curriculum cycle. Those assessment anchors were picked up when the Science curriculum was revised so the high school students really had two full years to work toward the assessments.

There are some areas where it is known that we do not have dedicated courses to address certain standards because of current staffing or certification. Those standards are embedded into existing courses. Mr. Clippinger stated that a lot of credit should be given to the teachers and

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administration. He noted that where they are intending to do a good job K-12, they are doing a good job.

As long as they have staff shared between the high school and middle school and as long as they have faculty covering certain areas, the lack of daily planning time will hamper further instructional gains.

Mr. Steele stated that No Child Left Behind is due to be revised and asked if it would have an impact. Mr. Clippinger stated that so much priority has been put on the economic crisis that the change in presidential administrations may not have a significant, immediate impact.

There will need to be an administrative discussion about graduation requirements. The state is moving toward a graduation competency test.

Mr. Porter asked how the administration intends to attain input from the staff.

Mr. Clippinger stated that a lot of it will come from principals listening to their staff and central office administrators listening to their staff.

7.) Mr. Reh stated that all area districts were invited to attend the grand opening of the Berwick Armory. Mr. Nunkester represented the district at the event.

8.) Mr. Nunkester congratulated the 6th through 12th grade band students for an excellent concert performed recently.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities - Chairperson, Paul Starr, reported that the committee met with three fall sports coaches. Head Football Coach, Jim Roth, reported a 10-3 season with a District championship. There were 20 seniors on the team. They will be facing strong teams next year. He had no problems with equipment, but the field maintenance is not done in a timely manner. He would like to see an additional rain train for the lower fields. He needs more trophy cases. He talked about a non-skid surface for the locker room floor, more equipment for the weight room and he also talked about an all-weather track, which could be used for other sports and events.

Football Cheerleading Head Coach, Kenda Roth, stated that she is being paid as an advisor; not a coach, and would like that addressed. Assistant Football Cheerleading Coach, Brenna Lawrence, had a problem with transportation this past year. There wasn't enough room for Junior High cheerleaders on the bus.

Head Girls Soccer Coach, Derek Stine, stated that the Heartland League was not much of a challenge this year. He would like to see direct electricity run to the concession stand. It is now being powered by an extension cord. They discussed permanent restrooms instead of the use of portable facilities. The condition of the fields was an issue as well as a lack of bleachers.

Mr. Stellfox stated that all of the coaches reported that most of the students that participate in extra-curricular activities also do very well academically, so it is important that the Board continues to provide opportunities for them.

Curriculum - John Yocum, Chairperson, reported that no meeting was held.

Facilities - Mike Yeager reported that the Lowe's project is near completion. They discussed the Priority List and a new work order system. Mr. Rodgers noted that Mr. Paul Knoepfel, Head Custodian, was pleased that the district is finally fully staffed in the custodial area. The 2nd shift maintenance worker has also been very beneficial in addressing daily work orders in a timely fashion. Mr. Rodgers stated that it was requested that an energy audit be researched. He will report back to the Board with more information.

Finance - Charlie Porter, Chairperson, reported that the committee discussed architects. Mr. Reh would be contacting The Architectural Studio concerning the rider. President Yeager asked why Article VII pertaining to dispute resolution was deleted. Solicitor Roberts responded

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that generally speaking if there is a dispute, he would prefer litigation as apposed to arbitration. The committee discussed the building project and the possibility of bringing 18 emotional support students back into the district from other districts. He estimated variable cost savings of \$100,000 if they were brought back. The committee asked for long-term projections for district finances. Mr. Rodgers agreed to provide them for the January meeting. Mr. Rodgers spoke with RBC Capital and he asked for an update of projections on financing. They talked about an increase in millage for the financing part of the project of 1.01 mills throughout the three-year project. Now, that has been changed to 1.17 and 1.16 as a three-year millage increase. Increased cost estimates carried out over thirty years would be \$25,000 to \$40,000 per year.

The auditors report generated in September indicates the employer's share of pension costs to PSERS is 4.76 percent. That would remain roughly the same until 2012-13 when it would go to 11.23 percent and then projected out to 16.28 percent. He stated that PSERS makes their annual projections on December 12th, so the board should receive an update.

The committee asked Mr. Rodgers to have figures available for the next Finance meeting with a breakdown of student run costs and activity run costs by the different contractors compared to what it would cost the district to maintain those runs. They also asked that the projections they were already given be tightened up. The district has sent a letter to the three contractors asking for a pay scale, current contracts they have and also a lender verification of financial stability. To date, Mr. Rodgers received no responses. The Board also requested that Mr. Rodgers provide the Board with an estimate of what it would cost the district to update the fleet to the same standards set forth by the Request for Proposals. He gave them an estimate of \$850,000 in bus purchases to upgrade the fleet. Mr. Porter stated that he was looking into grants and spoke with someone in the Senate Transportation Safety Subcommittee in Washington and they are going to look into whether there are grants available through that committee for safety upgrades or through the House Education Committee. He also recommended that the district contact legislators to have bus purchases put into the Stimulus package.

The committee was informed that Locust Township has a new tax collector; Ms. Debra Long. The budget process will begin in January, however Mr. Rodgers feels very comfortable that the Board could pass a resolution stating that the district would not exceed the index amount that would require referendum. The resolution would be included on the January agenda for approval.

Mr. Porter stated that there is an authority in Pennsylvania called the Pennsylvania State School Building Authority. They offer a number of services such as dealing with the state and the contractor. He asked that some research be done prior to the next Finance Committee meeting.

The audit report will be coming in January. No findings are anticipated and it looks like there will be a surplus to go to Capital Reserve. A \$10,000 donation was received from a donor who wished to remain anonymous. Acceptance of the donation is on the agenda for approval. The committee discussed using an anonymous survey to obtain suggestions for saving money in the transportation system. It might elicit comments that would not have come out otherwise; however they did not want to encounter another grievance. He asked Solicitor Roberts for guidance. He stated that it should be cleared through Carl Beard.

Negotiations and Personnel – No meeting was held.

Policy – Rick Steele, Chairperson, reported that policies pertaining to Foreign Exchange Students and Bullying/Cyberbullying were on the agenda for second readings and final adoption. The committee will meet next on January 19th at 7:00 p.m. A sample policy pertaining to public participation in meetings was distributed to Policy Committee members and President Yeager. It will be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Porter asked why this policy was being revised. He

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stated that he wasn't aware there was a problem. Solicitor Roberts stated that the Board didn't have to make any changes. Public participation in meetings can become problematic at times. He noticed that the Milton policy contains some things he felt were interesting. He said that it is not necessarily a recommendation, but it is interesting food for thought. The Policy Committee should at least review it and make a recommendation to the Board one way or another.

Mr. Stellfox stated that sometimes Board members are repeatedly asked the same question that they are unable to answer because they don't have enough information. Mr. Steele stated that there are some areas of the Milton policy that are not addressed in Southern's policy.

CSIU – Charlie Porter reported that he has been going to meetings for about a year and he does it as a public service. He stated that he is very much at odds philosophically with some things that are going on there. He doesn't want that to overshadow the fact that there are some very good things going on at CSIU. The Governor's School is an excellent program and applications are due in January. Mr. Becker stated that Mrs. Meyer has been promoting it and it is a very good opportunity, but it is six weeks out of the summer. Mr. Porter stated that he has found out that some of the large contracts through the Joint Purchasing Council were never really competitively bid. School districts are required to bid any project over \$10,000. There are some contracts that are probably bringing in an excess of \$30 million a year and it has been going on for years. Some of these contracts have not been competitively bid. There are two procurement items; one is the Joint Purchasing Council and they are also affiliated with the National Purchasing Council. At the last meeting they approved supplemental PEPPM bids for the purchase of technology equipment, software and supplies. There were forty-four areas and of those forty-four, only four were competitively bid, which means that forty were given to the only vendor who submitted a bid and that's possibly worth millions of dollars. He questioned why, but there is nothing he can do about it and it is legal. Last year in the professional development fund there was \$20,000 missing. He wanted to see authorities called in, but the rest of the Board didn't want to do that, so it wasn't done. He feels that if there is a problem, it must be dealt with. The senior salaries go from \$106,000 to \$150,000. He noted that the Director is probably making over \$325,000 in salary and benefits. They do private business, but the genesis of most of the money that goes there is tax money, grants and tax money that is generated from services. He stated that he cannot support that.

Vo-Tech – Mike Yeager reported that they are no longer providing paper agendas. Everything is done through e-mail and the agendas and supporting documents will be projected on a screen during meetings. They have three applicants for the Director position. The requirements for Director have multiplied. Their reorganization meeting would be held the following evening.

MINUTES AND INVOICES

On a motion by Steele and second by Vought, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. Minutes of November 10 and 17, 2008.
- B. General Fund invoices (with the exception of check #18734) in the amount of \$581,951.99, Capital Reserve Fund invoices in the amount of \$6,815.00 and Athletic Fund invoices in the amount of \$15,293.03.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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ITEMS – FISCAL

On a motion by Steele and second by Vought, the following items were presented for approval:

- A. Budgetary transfers in the 2008-2009 budget to ensure proper accounting (**per Exhibit A**).
- B. A gift to the district in the amount of \$10,000 from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

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

- A. Revised job descriptions for the following positions (**per Exhibits B, C and D**):
 - 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Project Director
 - 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Program Coordinator
 - Middle School/21st Century Grant Secretary
- B. Employment of Kristen Petro for the position of Middle School/21st Century Grant Secretary effective January 5, 2009 (pending completion of all employment requirements); salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- C. The addition of Jerid Lindenmuth (Citizenship) to the 2008-2009 Instructional Substitute List effective December 16, 2008 (pending completion of all employment requirements).
- D. Employment of Kelly Bulla for the After School Programs effective December 4, 2008, at her contracted rate, which will come from proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant.
- E. Employment of the following individuals as Tutors for the After School Programs effective January 13, 2009, at the contracted rate for \$21 per hour, which will come from proceeds of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant:
 - Margaret Barbarito
 - Cynthia Doby
 - Marc Longenhagen
 - Susan Yodock
 - Randy Young

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- F. Employment of the following individuals as Tutors for the District After School Tutoring Program effective January 13, 2009, at the contracted rate of \$21:
 - Diane Wittig Musser
 - Suzanne Harder
 - Helen Hilderbrandt
 - Jay McGinley
 - Anthony Pecora
 - Robert Visnosky

- G. FMLA qualifying leave for employee #1091TB effective December 4, 2008; not to exceed 12 weeks in the next 12-month period.

- H. Employment of Kim Delbo and Megan Yuskoski as Co-Head Cheerleading Coaches for Wrestling for the 2008-2009 school year at a salary of \$1,382 (shared).

- I. The addition of Julie Klinger (K-12) to the 2008-2009 Instructional Substitute List effective December 16, 2008 (pending completion of all employment requirements).

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – POLICY AND PROGRAMS

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

- A. Second reading and adoption of Policy #239.1 Foreign Exchange Students (per Exhibit E).

- B. Second reading and adoption of Policy #249 Bullying/Cyberbullying (per Exhibit F).

- C. The Southern Columbia Area Strategic Plan for 2008 through 2014.

- D. Revised list of School Board meetings, dates times and location for the 2009 calendar year **(per Exhibit G)**.

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

President Yeager asked about the status of the Biology discs. Mr. Clippinger replied that one set of discs was purchased and another set was copied. Both sets were distributed to teachers.

Pertaining to the Public Meetings policy, Mr. Porter stated that he would like to see the Policy Committee err on the side of the public when reviewing the policy. He noted that if someone has something to say, he would like to hear it. He stated that it is a fundamental right to question their government. Solicitor Roberts stated that there is a right under the open meeting law for public comment and this policy does not change that in any way. The policy states, for example, that somebody will not get an opportunity to speak twice on an issue before everyone else has had an opportunity to be heard. He stated that he thinks that's a good idea. He doesn't

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think that it's fair to have one person monopolize a meeting. This is just an effort to try to streamline that process and make it as fair as possible. Again, he stated that he is not necessarily recommending this, and the committee may decide that the current policy is fine, but there are some interesting things in the policy that should at least be looked at. Mr. Porter requested that a copy of the Milton policy be included in his next Friday Letter.

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident and Girls Soccer Coach, Derek Stine, reported that twenty of the twenty-one girls on the soccer team were on the honor roll or distinguished honor roll. Mr. Stellfox stated that it seems to run through all of the sports and the Board needs to keep that in mind when making decisions.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Benner and second by Stellfox, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary