

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

The November 8, 2010, Board Meeting of the Southern Columbia Area School District Board of Directors convened in the High School Library at 7:31 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

Jennifer Oiler
Charles Porter
Eric Stahley

Paul Starr
Richard Steele
David Stellfox

Timothy Vought
Michael Yeager
John Yocum

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles Reh, Superintendent; Daniel Rodgers, Business Manager; Tresa Britch, Board Secretary; Richard J. Roberts, Solicitor; Joseph Shirvinski, Roger Nunkester, James Becker, Brenda Monick, Robert Mehalick, Administrators; Timothy George, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; district residents and members of the media.

AGENDA HEARING PERIOD

President Yeager announced that Fiscal Item C, all Personnel Items, and one Policy and Programs Item B on the agenda would be considered action items. District resident, Florey Guarno, asked if the paraprofessional positions were new positions. Mr. Mehalick replied that the positions were all replacement positions.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Reh's report included the following topics:

1.) Dr. Randy Rarig met with Mr. Merkle (chemistry teacher) regarding his donation of equipment to be used in the chemistry and science department. Acceptance of the donation is on the agenda for approval. Mr. Becker stated that the equipment is of higher quality than the district would normally purchase.

2.) Information regarding the alternate bids was distributed to the Board. Mr. Reh stated that an estimate of \$300,000 to \$500,000 was quoted in the newspaper. He stated that the figure is not inclusive of the entire track project. In addition to the track, the project will include excavation, drainage, grading, sodding, fencing, the long jump area, javelin pit, and the discus and shot put facility. He noted that he didn't want the Board to expect a bid of \$300,000 to \$500,000, because he is anticipating that it will be higher for the entire track alternate.

3.) The bid opening will be held Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. The next regular Board meeting would be held on the following Monday. If possible, the Board could possibly make a decision at the next meeting on the 15th. All of the bid tabulations would be included in the Friday Letter for Board members to review. He mentioned the possibility of meeting earlier to discuss the bids at 6:00 p.m. on the 15th, but noted that a decision should be made to allow time for advertising. Mr. Reh noted that Mr. Yocum would not be present at the next Board meeting, but he felt that all Board members should be allowed to vote on such an important issue. Solicitor Roberts informed Mr. Reh that a telephone vote would be possible as long as all Board members and participants

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would need to be able to hear Mr. Yocum and Mr. Yocum would need to be able to hear all of the discussion. The district has a speaker phone that is capable of doing that. It was decided that a special Facilities/Finance Committee meeting would be held at 6:00 p.m. on November 15th and the Curriculum and Transportation Committees meetings would be cancelled. The regular Board meeting would follow at 7:30 p.m.

4.) Mr. Reh referred to the letter to the editor that was in the local newspaper on “Southern Teaches Warped Lesson.” The article stated that the district defines itself by the success of its athletic program, especially football. It goes on to state that the district avoids any rule that might keep the best athletes off the field, and “winning at any cost.” He stated that it is a sad editorial. He added that for a local newspaper to be able to write something that sad is deplorable. Southern Columbia is a great school district that’s known for its academics. It also has a great athletic program. He stated, that to state that this district defines itself by its athletics and wins at any cost is totally ridiculous. He added, that the district has higher academic standards than any requirement of the PIAA, and to make comments about Coach Roth was totally out of hand. He noted that the rebuttal by Dave Wojtowicz was excellent. He noted that when he was serving as Acting High School Principal in 2006, a football player was suspended for a violation and was not able to participate in the state championship game. He went on to say that any program that has a philosophy of winning at any cost is not successful. A program has to be organized and disciplined, and that is what Southern’s football program is. Southern Columbia is proud of their academics and their athletic programs. He noted that Southern Columbia defines itself by its academics and its athletics are an offshoot of that success. Mr. Steele stated that beyond what it attempted to say about the district’s athletics, it was a slap in the face to the teachers and all of the academic programs. There doesn’t seem to be a lot of coverage of all of the other awards and accomplishments that occur on a yearly basis, including last year. Ms. Oiler stated that the students work very hard and the article was an attempt to take that away from them.

Mr. Reh stated that if a student violates a policy they are disciplined. There is no question as to whether or not they are an athlete. He noted that the Girls Soccer team qualified for States and the Football team qualified for Districts.

Mr. Becker stated that he was offended by the editorial. He noted that it paints a false picture of the district. People are calling and wanting to move into the district because of its academics. The district has met AYP for the past several years. The PSSA scores are among the best in the entire Intermediate Unit. Southern Columbia students get accepted into topnotch colleges every year. He added that great students walk out of these doors every year and it is a testimony to all of the people who help the district’s students succeed. Mr. Stellfox stated that all of the things Mr. Becker just mentioned don’t sell newspapers. President Yeager stated that in 2003, the grading system was upgraded. An A was changed to a 92 and failure was moved up to a 65. They also required four of all of the academic programs; Math, Science, Social Studies and English to be taken in order to graduate. They also changed the attendance policy; not just for athletics but for anyone involved in an extra curricular activity. They changed the eligibility criteria from having just to pass four credits, to being ineligible if a student is failing two credits. As a Board they have done a lot to encourage academics, and he agrees that the editorial was a shot at a lot of people.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Activities – Paul Starr, Chairperson, stated that they discussed the Athletic Director position. They will be looking at a full-time position. The committee will be meeting with the Fall coaches. The Boy’s Soccer and Football teams all made Districts. One Cross-Country runner

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made States and the Girls Soccer Team would begin State competition the following day. Mr. Becker is also in the process of revising the Athletic Handbook. Mr. Becker stated that he would like to have it approved by April due to scheduling of physicals. He would also like to have the Athletic Director position settled by May. Mr. Becker stated that Andrew Steely is a freshman qualifier for the State Championship in Cross Country. He finished 45th in a field of around 200. One mile into the race, he lost his shoe and finished the race with one shoe. He was the top freshman in the state. The meeting with the Fall Coaches will be held November 23rd at 6:00 p.m. in the High School conference room. Mr. Porter asked about the Athletic Director position. Mr. Becker stated that the current situation was a one-year arrangement and it was his wish from the start to have a full-time position. He will put something together to present to the Board.

Facilities & Services - Dave Stellfox, Chairperson, reported that the committee met the previous week. There was a discussion on some of the alternates. Barry Brobst discussed the upcoming events that the Board would be facing for decisions, and the bid due date. They briefly discussed the projects on the list for the next six months.

Finance - Eric Stahley, Chairperson reported that they discussed the bond issue and financing. Brian Bradley was present to explain how the bond issue would work. They discussed the tax collector audit, which had no findings. Mr. Rodgers gave an update on the 2009-2010 local financial audit, which is still in progress. The Board should have a report on that soon. They discussed the Ronald and Joanne Kohler Scholarship Fund is currently administered by the Union National Bank. The bank is looking to get out of the scholarship business. They would like to make the district the trustee of the funds and transfer all of the fiduciary items to the district. The district currently maintains eleven scholarships in the amount of roughly \$52,000. There are other scholarships that are administered outside the district above and beyond that amount. Mr. Rodgers also gave a report on the Tax Collection Committee. They are in transition for the year 2011. As of January 1, 2012, there will be a new earned income tax collector for the district. Mr. Porter gave a brief update on the CS Trust meeting.

Policy - Rick Steele, Chairperson, reported that the committee met prior to the regular meeting. In the Friday Letter, Board members received some policies to review involving Field Trips, Overnight and Out-of-State Education Trips and Use of Medications, which all relate to ongoing discussions regarding chaperones and clearance reports. Ultimately, the committee decided to put something down in writing so the Board had something to respond to. He asked the Board to consider the policies in draft form. The clearances were one of the biggest issues. Three clearances are required for staff. The FBI clearance alone is approximately \$40. The recommendation of the Policy Committee is to require the State Police and Child Abuse clearances, which would be a \$20 charge. The committee also discussed the field trip policies. The big issue is the use of medications and who is allowed to administer medications. He noted that the Volunteers Policy requires some volunteers to obtain all three clearances, so they will need to ensure that the policies are consistent with one another. They also discussed participation in athletic and extra-curricular activities by students who may have been involved in some type of crime or adjudication of a crime. There are some inconsistencies and they will continue to discuss some of those issues. President Yeager asked the principals to distribute copies of the draft policy to the organizations that were previously involved and invite them to attend the next Policy Committee meeting on January 10th at 6:30 p.m. The principals agreed to do so. Mr. Porter mentioned that he distributed some athletic policies from other districts to the Policy Committee members. He noted that they had some questions as to what are the legal boundaries when setting policies.

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CSIU - Mike Yeager discussed a grant; Teaching American History. There were 31 teachers that attended. Some of them were from the Capitol IU, and some of them had to attend because their districts did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). It will be offered again this year. Board members also received the Board of Directors Report that included information regarding a \$9 million grant for health professions, to try to meet some of the nursing shortfall. The Vo-Tech is trying to develop the same program. Three bids were received for the Executive Director search. The directors approved Dr. Leary at a base cost of \$12,000 with additional costs capped at \$4,000. He already began working. The proposal is to have someone on board by March. He is currently working with eight focus groups to obtain input. He met with the Board on November 3rd. The CSIU installed an anti-virus spam program, and within one week they removed 1.2 million threats. They are also applying for an internet access grant. Mr. Yeager stated that he has their services and programs manual. There are over 100 programs and services for preschool, school age, adult learners, educators, parents and school agencies. Mr. Porter asked about the salary range and when Dr. Witten would be leaving. President Yeager stated that he would be leaving when his replacement is on Board. He stated that they could match the governor's salary, but then they would have to provide a house, a car and a helicopter.

Vo-Tech - Eric Stahley reported that they met in executive session to discuss some personnel issues prior to the last meeting on October 19th. At the regular meeting they discussed some of the goals for the new Executive Director and how to measure that progress. They heard a report about the students who participated in the Bloomsburg Fair and how they made \$1,520 on that endeavor. They heard about the School Counts program. Twenty-three students participated. On October 5th, the Vo-Tech participated in the Radiological Drill at the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station and all went well. They also had a discussion about the seven administrators who kept the school running during the strike last year. They discussed compensating them for their time and how to adequately express their thanks for them stepping up and keeping the school running. Mr. Bacher spoke for the group and said that they appreciated the thought, but a "thank you" was fine. They will be forming a Policy Committee, a Budget and Finance Committee and a Curriculum Committee. All three committees would meet following the next regular meeting on November 16th. They decided to advertise for a new Director of Student Services. They also talked about a Coach for Classrooms for the Future program. A Field Day event was held as a reward for the students meeting AYP. The Bucks County Career and Technical Center will be visiting the Vo-Tech School to see how it works and how it orchestrates its academic and vocational scheduling. Mr. Dunkelberger stated that thirty-five of the special education students visited Penn Tech recently. The Superintendent of Record, Mr. Wayne Brookhart, discussed the projection on the state allocation. Because Pennsylvania will have a new governor, the definite number on the state allocations will probably not be known until February.

CS Trust - Charlie Porter reported that they met October 27th. The Keystone Health Plan and GHP contracts are up for renewal January 1st. The GHP renewal rate is 6.09 percent. Approximately two to three percent of that increase is because of the new Health Care Plan. The CS Trust will be taking on a Wellness Program. The cost will be \$7.65 per member if they are in GHP already, and \$17.32 per member if they are not in GHP. Every employee in the Trust can get a health screening. They will need to schedule times to have blood drawn, but a schedule has not yet been determined. He noted that there will be a \$50 increase in the GHP emergency room co-pay to \$100. Mr. Rodgers and Mr. Porter made a motion and a second to unbundle the rates of the PPO and the traditional plans. The district is paying CSIU \$275,632 in administrative costs. He stated that he was not sure which costs would be eliminated if the district would change plans. Mr.

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Porter also stated that beginning in January 2018, there will be a forty percent excise tax on the “Cadillac” plans.

ITEMS – TREASURER’S REPORTS

ITEMS – MINUTES/INVOICES

Mr. Porter requested some corrections to the minutes.

ITEMS – FISCAL

Mr. Porter asked about the transfers to purchase replacement projector bulbs. Mrs. Monick stated that they are still trying to estimate how many hours they can get from a projector bulb. They are now tracking the hours to help in the budgeting process.

On a motion by Starr and second by Yocum, to accept the donation of twenty-two boxes of equipment, including beakers, flasks, volumetric glassware, hotplates, and precision analytical balances, from Randy Rarig was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS – PERSONNEL

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

- A. Employment of Lurae Brophy as a Half-time Paraprofessional effective November 9, 2010 (pending completion of all employment requirements); salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- B. Employment of Joanna Calvert as a Half-time Paraprofessional effective November 9, 2010 (pending completion of all employment requirements); salary and benefits per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- C. To acknowledge tenure for Maria Callahan (Learning Support Teacher) effective October 9, 2010.
- D. The addition of the following individuals to the 2010-2011 Substitute List effective November 9, 2010 (pending completion of all employment requirements):
 - Lurae Brophy (Paraprofessional)
 - Joanna Calvert (Paraprofessional)

The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

ITEMS - POLICY AND PROGRAMS

On a motion by Oiler and second by Yocum, Instruction in the Home for an elementary student (#31806) effective November 9, 2010, for a maximum of five (5) hours per week, until further evaluation by a physician, was presented for approval. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

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BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Reh asked for a count of Board members that would be attending the Reorganization Meeting.

Mr. Porter questioned the process of choosing and hiring long-term substitutes. After a brief discussion, it was determined that it is done on a case by case basis upon the recommendation of the building principal and in most cases long-term substitute positions are advertised.

Mr. Porter expressed concern over the track alternate. He stated that other districts are applying for grants, and once the project is completed, there will be no effort to apply for grants or initiate fundraisers.

RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

District resident, Blaine Madara, thanked the Board for allowing a local church to use the campus to hold an appreciation service and dinner for the local emergency management services. Mr. Madara stated that the editorial was sad, because it shows the pure hatred that the newspaper and the people running it have for Southern Columbia. He noted that the editorial comments come from a lack of knowledge. He noted that 90 to 95 percent of students that participate in Southern sports are on the honor roll. He also noted that his son and daughter were both very involved in athletics during their high school career. Neither of them received scholarship money for their athletics, but they did for their academics and PSSA scores.

District resident, Florey Guarno, asked for a date for the approval from PDE. Mr. Reh did not know the exact date, but he noted that it was approved prior to November 1st. Mr. Guarno noted that a lot of the people that came to show their support for the track don't live in the district. Mr. Becker stated that those people care about the students and the district programs as much as any taxpayer. Mr. Guarno also asked if the bids come in lower, would the Board approve alternates to spend the \$20 million. Mr. Stellfox stated that he couldn't say what he'll do until the bids come in, but it is a possibility.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Porter and second by Stellfox, the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m. The motion carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tresa J. Britch
Board Secretary