

SOUDERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

760 Lower Road
Souderton, PA 18964

A regular public meeting of the Souderton Area Board of School Directors was held Thursday, April 26, 2007 at the District Administrative Office in the Tinner Board Room. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by President Eric MacDougall, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll call was as follows:

PRESENT:	Dr. R. Paul Baumgartner	Eric R. MacDougall
	William J. Brong	R. Bud Miller
	Tracy G. Cole	Dr. Jack A. Parry
	Bernard S. Currie	Victor M. Verbeke
ABSENT:	Mark D. Leer	
SOLICITOR:	Jeffrey Sultanik, Esq.	

Also present at the meeting were: Dr. Charles Amuso, Karen Berk, Brandon, Bilohlavek, Dan Bitner, Brenda J. Bray, Donna Brown, Brad Clemens, Grace Eves, Henry Franz, Frank Gallagher, Karen Giannini, Gail Ryan, Walt Salevsky, Jack Silva, Sam Varano, Wayne Walton, Representative Robert Godshall, representatives from *The Souderton Independent*, *The Reporter*, Radio Station WNPV, and the public.

RECOGNITIONS

Souderton Area High School/North Montco Technical Career Center Winners

Dr. Amuso introduced Sam Varano, principal of Souderton Area High School, who spoke about the North Montco Technical Career Center winners. Mr. Varano introduced the students and talked about HOSA and how the students competed. The North Montco Technical Career Center - Allied Health students won gold medals at the state level Health Occupations Students of America competition in Lancaster. The Health Education Team prepared a lesson for an elementary school which discussed common disabilities like cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, and seizures. These students will be going to Orlando, Florida in June to compete in the national HOSA competition.

MELISSA NIXON NATHAN SCHNECK KATHLEEN WLOTKO

There was a motion by Mr. Brong, second by Dr. Parry to recognize these students for their accomplishments. The vote was taken, and on a vote of 8 to 0, it was

RESOLVED, That the Board recognize these students for their accomplishments.

EXHIBIT A

Dr. Amuso called on the parents of these students and thanked them for their encouragement and support.

RECOGNITIONS (CONTINUED)

Report of the Student Representatives to the Board - DAN BITNER – Senior – Class of 2007

Dan Bitner reported on recent and future activities at the Souderton Area High School.

Donation to SAVE Organization

Dr. Amuso spoke about a \$1,500 donation that was recently received by the SAVE Organization. The High School SAVE organization received this donation from Emerson Charitable Trust to help fund the completion of the CONNECTIONS environmental building, located at the West Broad Street Elementary School. Dr. Amuso presented this as an information item.

WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEM

Accountability Block Grants

Dr. Amuso presented a sample letter addressing the present status of the Accountability Block Grants. He indicated that if requested by the Board, a letter would be sent to all local legislators to communicate Souderton's disappointment with the Accountability Block Grant distribution program. He spoke about the grants and how Souderton has used the money in the past, and indicated that the district can not take advantage of this new program because the additional funds are specifically earmarked for creation or expansion of a pre-K or full-day Kindergarten. Souderton does not have ten additional classrooms to take advantage of the new program. Legislators will be asked to consider allowing SASD to use funds for other programs.

Mr. Gallagher explained what programs have been put in place in the past with these funds. There is a very successful elementary technology program in its third year. Some programs were expanded last year when the state allocated more funds that were used to provide full-time social worker services for families with children who are at-risk. Another initiative was the K-2 Literacy Coach who works with teachers in improving writing and reading and staff development skills.

Board members discussed the purpose of accountability block grants, the status of present programs, and the need for communication with local legislators about funding.

Dr. Amuso explained that the letter drafted to legislators communicates that Souderton does not have the classroom space needed to expand or create a pre-k or full day kindergarten. If the district went with full day kindergarten, we would need 10 more classrooms. There are other school districts in the same situation.

Mrs. Cole indicated that there was discussion about this topic at the IU. Many of the Montgomery County schools have the same concern. The school districts that already have full-day kindergarten in place cannot take advantage of the Accountability Block Grant.

Mr. Verbeke asked that the district make certain to include the reasons why Souderton can not take advantage of the new Accountability Block Grants in the letter to local legislators.

Dr. Amuso mentioned that the letter will be redrafted and returned to the board for approval.

WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEM (CONTINUED)

Accountability Block Grants (continued)

Mr. Hugh Donnelly, of Franconia Township, questioned the funding shortfall for the high school project and asked that the Board remember the taxpayers when determining tax increases.

Mr. MacDougall clarified that the Board had originally decided to only finance \$90M of the \$114M project.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Amuso explained that the stadium project was not included in the project bid. The plan was to shift money from the General Fund to the Capital Reserve Fund to have money available for other maintenance projects as needed. The Board did not want to borrow more money than needed.

Mr. Ernest Rosato, of Upper Salford, expressed that the public should be made fully aware of how the Board plans to acquire the funds. He suggested cutting increased spending.

Mr. MacDougall clarified that the \$4.2M surplus came from new housing real estate taxes and other revenue sources. The previous Board planned to use the surplus over the long range plan of the high school project to pay off the high school.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

A Board workshop was held on April 12, 2007 following the Board meeting. The workshop lasted 20 minutes.

An Executive Session was held this evening prior to the Board meeting to discuss personnel items. The meeting lasted approximately 15 minutes.

Mr. MacDougall announced an Executive Session after tonight's meeting to discuss personnel.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education-Personnel Committee – Mr. Mark Leer, Chairperson

Mrs. Cole presented the Education-Personnel Committee report.

- Secondary Health Curriculum – Scope and Sequence Revisions. The changes were reviewed by the committee.
- Revision of 6th Grade Art Planned Course – This course revision was reviewed and is on tonight's agenda for a Second Reading.
- The committee reviewed The Governor's Commission on College and Career Success Report.
- Several requests for student field trips were reviewed and appear on tonight's agenda for action.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)

Operations Committee – Mr. R. “Bud” Miller, Chairperson

No report.

Finance Committee – Dr. Jack Parry, Chairperson

- Mrs. Natali answered questions regarding myLunchMoney.com, an online prepayment service that parents can utilize for their children’s Food Service purchases. There is no cost to the district. Parents will be charged \$1.95 for each payment they make.
- After reviewing student software from four companies, the administration is recommending the purchase of a web-based system K-12 student management system, eSchoolPlus, to replace the current SASI system that has been in place for approximately nine years. The initial cost is \$205,460. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Gallagher both discussed the strengths of this particular software program.
- PlanCon K for General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2006, refunded in December 2006, was reviewed. The Board will take action later in tonight’s agenda.
- A new PLGIT account was opened for the proceeds from the 2007 Bond Issue. There will be a recommendation to ratify the opening of this account later in the agenda.
- Mrs. Berk reviewed the 2007-2008 Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Special Education agreement for budgeted services that total \$838,817.14. This will be an action item on tonight’s agenda.
- The recommendation to transfer \$4.22M from the General Fund to the Capital Reserve Fund was reviewed again by the Finance Committee. This will be an action item on tonight’s agenda.
- The committee reviewed a spreadsheet highlighting the costs and related revenues of selected federal, state, and local mandates.

Policy Committee – Mrs. Tracy Cole, Chairperson

Mr. Verbeke presented the Policy Committee report.

- Board Policy 201.1. Admission to Kindergarten/Admission of Beginners. The committee reviewed and offered suggestions for changes and recommended that the policy move to a Third Reading on tonight’s agenda. The change in this policy removes the exceptions to the August 31 date for age for admission.
- Proposed Anti-Bullying Policy. The review of this new policy was continued. The committee will continue to review this policy at their next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS/CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Amuso announced that item IX - H would be moved to the Actions Items/Discussion Items section of the agenda.

Dr. Baumgartner asked for clarification on field trip requests by asking if the Board votes on allowing students to participate or how the trips are financed.

ACTION ITEMS/CONSENT AGENDA (CONTINUED)

Dr. Amuso explained that as per Board policy, all overnight and out-of-state field trips must go through Board approval.

There was a motion by Mr. Currie, second by Dr. Baumgartner to approve all items listed on the Consent Agenda, with the exception of item IX – H. The vote was taken, and on a vote of 8 to 0, it was

RESOLVED, That the Board approve the items listed on the Consent Agenda, with the exception of IX – H, as listed:

Approval of Minutes from the April 12, 2007 School Board Meeting. **EXHIBIT B**

Approval of Financial Statements and Check Listings for March 2007. **EXHIBIT C**

Requests to Attend Conferences/Workshops

GRETCHEN WALTER Writing Assessment and Instruction: Creating a High
Learning Support High Quality Writing Program
Indian Valley Middle School King of Prussia, PA
May 23, 2007 (Wed.)

Paid with Federal Funds
Est. Expenses: \$ 0.00
Sub. Expenses: 103.00
Total Est. Expenses: \$103.00

DONA ITALIANO Blogs, Wiki's, Podcasts and other Powerful Tools for
English, Senior High School Classroom Use
JUSTIN KREFT Norristown, PA
English, Senior High School May 30, 2007 (Wed.)

Est. Expenses: \$207.46 (combined)
Sub. Expenses: 103.00 (Kreft only)
Total Est. Expenses: \$310.46 (combined)

GAIL RYAN National Staff Development Council Academy
Director of Elementary Education Denver, CO
July 18-20, 2007 (Wed.-Fri.)

2007-2008 Funds
Est. Expenses: \$1,244.54
Sub. Expenses: 0.00
Total Est. Expenses: \$1,244.54

SHARON FUHRMAN Administrators' Institute
Principal, Vernfield Elem. Virginia Beach, VA
July 30-August 1, 2007 (Mon.-Wed.)

2007-2008 Funds
Est. Expenses: \$1,544.84
Sub. Expenses: 0.00
Total Est. Expenses: \$1,544.84

ACTION ITEMS/CONSENT AGENDA (CONTINUED)

Requests to Attend Conferences/Workshops (continued)

MEREDITH EHST	Responsive Classroom Institute
Fourth Grade, Salford Hills Elem.	Havertown, PA
LAUREN HENDRICKS	July 30-August 3, 2007 (Mon.-Fri.)
Third Grade, Salford Hills Elem.	Est. Expenses: \$1,250.00 (combined)
	Sub. Expenses: <u>0.00</u>
2007-2008 Funds	Total Est. Expenses: \$1,250.00 (combined)

Requests for Overnight/Out-of-State Field Trips

1. Souderton Area High School – Indoor Drumline and Color Guard – Grades 9-12
Date: May 3-6, 2007 (Thurs.-Sun.)
Destination: Wildwood, NJ
Purpose: Indoor Drumline and Color Guard Championships
Number of Students: 29
Number of Chaperones/Teachers: 6 Professional Staff/3 Parents
Requesting Staff Member: Perry Boucher
Trip financed by Band Boosters Assoc.
2. Indian Crest Junior High School – History Day Competition Students
Date: May 16-17, 2007 (Wed.-Thurs.)
Destination: Penn State University, State College, PA
Purpose: Compete in the State History Day Competition
Number of Students: 5
Number of Chaperones/Teachers: 2 Teachers
Requesting Teachers: Mary Moyer and Joe Gunn
Trip financed through District funds and fundraising events.
3. Souderton Area High School – Science Fair Students
Date: May 20-22, 2007 (Sun.-Tues.)
Destination: State College, PA
Purpose: Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (Science Fair). Competing students won first place at local competitions.
Number of Students: 4
Number of Chaperones/Teachers: 1 Teacher
Requesting Teacher: Peter Spizzirri
Trip financed by District funds
4. Lower Salford Elementary School – Fourth Grade Students
Date: May 24, 2007 (Thurs.)
Destination: Camden, NJ - Camden Aquarium
Purpose: Culminating units of study on oceans, whales and weather science.
Number of Students: 51
Number of Chaperones/Teachers: 2 Teachers/10 Parents
Requesting Teacher: Ramona Diaz Trip financed by students.

ACTION ITEMS/CONSENT AGENDA (CONTINUED)

Requests for Overnight/Out-of-State Field Trips (continued)

5. Vernfield Elementary School – Fourth Grade Students
Date: May 31, 2007 (Thurs.)
Destination: Adventure Aquarium, Camden, NJ
Purpose: Supplement to fourth grade science curriculum.
Number of Students: 77
Number of Chaperones/Teachers: 5 Teachers/22 Parents
Requesting Teacher: Tracy Borro
Trip financed by students.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Recommendations for Professional Sabbatical Leave

THOMAS LAUDENSLAGER Art Teacher, Senior High School
Effective: First semester of the 2007-2008 school year.

AMY SPANGLER-WELSH Fifth Grade, Vernfield Elementary School
Effective: 2007-2008 school year.

Requests for Childrearing Leave

KRISTIN DIAZ Fifth Grade, Oak Ridge Elementary
Beginning November 20, 2007 through the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year, following Family/Medical Leave. Mrs. Diaz is planning to return to work for the second semester of the 2007-2008 school year.

JENNIFER WEVODAU Language Arts, Indian Valley Middle School
Beginning November 20, 2007 through the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year, following Family/Medical Leave. Mrs. Wevodau is planning to return to work for the second semester of the 2007-2008 school year.

SUPPORT STAFF

Resignations

RACHEL HAGGERTY Custodian, Full-Time, Second Shift, Senior High
Effective: April 17, 2007

HEATHER ROUSSEL Cafeteria/Playground Aide, E. M. Crouthamel Elem.
Effective: April 24, 2007

Recommendations for Employment

KELLY CROUTHAMEL Substitute Cafeteria/Playground Aide, E. M. Crouthamel Elem.
Beginning: To be determined
Wage: \$9.20 per hour
Hours: As needed

ACTION ITEMS/CONSENT AGENDA (CONTINUED)

SUPPORT STAFF (continued)

Recommendations for Employment (continued)

DOLORES SLATER Special Education Aide – Autistic Support, Vernfield Elem.
Replacement for Beginning: To be determined
Sonya Talbot (resigned) Wage: \$10.23 per hour
Hours: 7 per day

Recommendation to Approve Pentamation Contract.

EXHIBIT D

Recommendation to Ratify Opening of a PLGIT Account for the 2007 Variable Rate Bonds.

Acknowledge Receipt of PlanCon K – General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2006.

EXHIBIT E

Recommendation to Grant Final Adoption of Policy #201.1 – Admission to Kindergarten/Admission of Beginners

EXHIBIT F

ACTION ITEMS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Recommendation to Renew Vantage Contract

Dr. Amuso indicated that the new contract is similar to the original contract which includes 40 slots for students in grades 6 to 12. The contract will be renewed for a period of three years, with a 3% increase in each of the three years.

There was a motion by Mr. Currie, second by Mrs. Cole. Mr. Miller indicated he was abstaining due to the fact that the operator of the program is a client of his employer.

The vote was taken, and on a vote of 7 to 0 to 1 with Mr. Miller abstaining, it was

RESOLVED, That the Board approve the renewal of the Vantage Contract for three years as presented.

EXHIBIT G

Recommendation to Approve Student Expulsion

Pursuant to the laws of Pennsylvania, that the Board approve the expulsion of **Student I. D. #228532** from the Souderton Area School District for the remainder of the school year, with the option to return during the next school year based on a report of good behavior, the completion of a counseling program, and successfully completing his/her academic program, all at the discretion of the superintendent.

Upon a motion by Mr. Brong, second by Dr. Baumgartner, and on a vote of 8 to 0, it was

RESOLVED, That the Board approve the expulsion of Student I. D. #228532 as presented.

ACTION ITEMS/DISCUSSION ITEMS (CONTINUED)

Second Reading/Review of Revised Grade 6 Art Planned Course

Dr. Amuso mentioned that this was the second reading of the review and revision to the Grade 6 Art Planned Course. The final reading will take place at the next School Board meeting.

Recommendation to Approve 2007-2008 Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Special Education Agreement

There was a motion by Mrs. Cole, second by Mr. Brong to accept the agreement.

Dr. Parry asked for clarification about the payment for services.

Mrs. Berk responded that Souderton only pays for the services that are used.

The vote was taken, and with a vote of 8 to 0, it was

RESOLVED, That the Board approve the 2007-2008 Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Special Education Agreement as presented. **EXHIBIT H**

Recommendation to Transfer \$4.22 Million to Capital Reserve Fund

Dr. Amuso indicated that it was the administration's recommendation to transfer \$4.22 M of the General Fund balance to the Capital Reserve Fund.

There was a motion by Mr. Miller, second by Mr. Currie.

Mr. Currie indicated that transfers should not be handled this way. He expressed that there was not enough information to transfer the money and would vote no.

Dr. Baumgartner spoke about pay now or pay later. He questioned what the tax rate would be if \$4.2M were deducted from the current tax rate and returned to the taxpayers.

Dr. Amuso responded that if the \$4.2 M were used for tax relief this year, the district would not have the necessary funds for next year and would have to raise the tax rate by way of referendum. Dr. Amuso added that the administration would need to look at expenditure reductions for 2008-2009. The district is not permitted to decrease professional staff since we are a growing school district.

Dr. Parry made a motion to table the recommendation and refer back to the Finance Committee for further discussion. Mr. Brong second the motion.

The vote was taken, and on a vote of 7 to 1, with Mrs. Cole voting no, it was

RESOLVED, That the Board table the recommendation and refer the issue back to the Finance Committee for further discussion.

INFORMATIONAL

Operations Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 2, 2007 beginning at 6:30 PM. The Finance Committee Meeting will start immediately following the 6:30 PM Operations Committee Meeting in the Tinner Board Room of the Souderton Area School District Administrative Office Building, 760 Lower Road, Souderton, PA.

The next School Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 10, 2007 at 7:30 PM in the Tinner Board Room of the Souderton Area School District Administrative Office Building, 760 Lower Road, Souderton, PA.

No Policy or Finance Committee Meetings on Wednesday, May 16, 2007. However, the Education-Personnel Committee Meeting will start at 6:30 PM. A Special School Board Meeting will begin at 7:30 PM to vote on the Proposed 2007-2008 Final Budget. All meetings will be held in the Tinner Board Room of the Souderton Area School District Administrative Office Building, 760 Lower Road, Souderton, PA.

Monday, May 21, 2007 at 7:30 PM will be the next North Montco Technical Career Center Joint Operating Committee Meeting in the Administrative Conference Room, of the North Montco Technical Career Center, 1265 Sumneytown Pike, Lansdale, PA.

Wednesday, May 23, 2007 will be the next Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors Meeting beginning at 7:45 PM in Conference Rooms B3/B4, at the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, 1605 West Main Street, Norristown, PA.

A regularly scheduled School Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 24, 2007 at 7:30 PM in the Tinner Board Room of the Souderton Area School District Administrative Office Building, 760 Lower Road, Souderton, PA.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

No report.

UNFINISHED/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Currie noted that campaign signs have been going up around the district. He asked about the status of the Act 1 mailing to public.

Dr. Amuso responded that the spring newsletter is going out to residents within the next week. Act 1 information will be on the front page. The Bucks County Board of Elections has notified us that the referendum question has been changed, but we have not heard from Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Mr. Currie was concerned that putting the information in the newsletter may not be read by residents who do not have students in the district.

UNFINISHED/NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Parry indicated that something should be sent out to all voters. The newsletter will not be sufficient; the interpretive statement should be more informative.

Mr. Currie said that the mailing needs to entice the voters to read it. We need to send information out regarding how a no or yes vote will affect the voters.

Mr. Miller added that some people in our area do not read the local papers or check the district's website and they need to be informed.

Dr. Amuso indicated that the district will send out another mailing to all registered voters in the district.

Dr. Baumgartner suggested writing a letter and placing it in the editorial section of the local papers.

On another subject, Mr. Verbeke talked about the American Flag Code and distributed a pamphlet to Board members about the American flag, and how the flag should be included in eighth grade curriculum.

Mr. Gallagher stated that the district had processed an order for the poster version of the pamphlet.

Mr. Verbeke has researched the flag policies in the Souderton Area School District policy manual and would like the policy committee to review these policies and make sure that policies are enforced.

Mr. Verbeke questioned the contingency fund for the new high school project by asking how much is in the fund, and can the money be used for shifting funds to the Capital Reserve Fund. He also questioned if there would be any profit from the sale of the old high school.

Dr. Amuso responded that it is unknown how much money will be left in the contingency fund. It may be possible to use the money remaining in the contingency fund, plus any profit from the sale of the old high school and put those funds into the Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Verbeke asked about fundraising efforts for the new high school.

Mrs. Cole provided information from her participation in the Pennsylvania Stakeholders Meeting regarding a Costing-Out Study. She spoke about state board priorities, the overview of the study, methodologies being used to estimate the cost of adequacy, and what successful school districts are doing.

BOARD COMMENTS

No comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Representative Robert Godshall, of Franconia Township, spoke regarding the Accountability Block Grants and how legislators and Governor Rendell are aware of districts that will benefit from the grants. Several legislators have signed a letter to the Governor about their concern for districts who cannot execute the mandates for Accountability Block Grants.

Mr. Sultanik stated that school districts can only decrease professional staff for reasons of reorganization or alteration/removal of programs, not due to increased class sizes. Souderton is considered a district with a growing population.

Representative Godshall also asked about Souderton's efforts to educate the public about Act 1. He shared information on how another local school district was publicizing the information for their residents.

Mr. Rick Mast, from Lower Salford Township, shared a concern about school bus safety. He asked if there were any options to the student for travel if they did not go on the school bus for a field trip. Mr. Mast asked if there was the likelihood for seat belts on the buses in the future or at least have the option of a limited number of buses with seat belts.

Dr. Amuso responded that it is administrative procedure that students who go on field trips are to travel on the bus so they are adequately supervised.

Mr. Gallagher added that field trip Policy #121 states that supervision begins at the school house doors. If the student is not in the approved vehicle, then they are not supervised. Bus drivers are well trained and bus speeds are controlled.

Mr. MacDougall asked the administration to look into Mr. Mast's concerns.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, a motion was made by Dr. Parry, second by Mr. Currie to adjourn the meeting. On a vote of 8 to 0 it was

RESOLVED, That the Board adjourn the meeting at 9:19 PM.

Respectfully,

Brenda Jones Bray
Board Secretary