

**Souderton Area School District**

760 Lower Road  
Souderton, PA 18964

A regularly scheduled public meeting of the Souderton Area Board of School Directors was held Thursday, May 8, 2008 at the District Administrative Office in the Tinner Board Room. The meeting was called to order at 7:09 PM by President Bernard S. Currie, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll call was as follows:

PRESENT:	Dr. R. Paul Baumgartner	Thomas A. Kwiatkowski
	William J. Brong	Eric R. MacDougall
	Bernard S. Currie	R. Bud Miller
	Scott C. Jelinski	Victor M. Verbeke
ABSENT:	Mark D. Leer	
SOLICITOR:	Jeffrey Sultanic, Esq.	

Also present at the meeting were: Dr. Charles Amuso, Karen Berk, Brenda J. Bray, R. Bradley Clemens, Molly Dugan, Grace Eves, Henry Franz, Frank Gallagher, Ken Hamilton, Gail Ryan, Walt Salevsky, Jack Silva, Wayne Walton, representatives from *The Reporter*, *The Souderton Independent*, Radio Station WNPV, and the public.

TEACHER RECOGNITION

Dr. Amuso introduced **KEN HAMILTON**, Souderton Area High School Science teacher, who was recently inducted into the 3E Institute’s Educator 500 Program at West Chester University. The 3E Institute’s Educator 500 Program is comprised of entrepreneurial educators, meeting in the power of collaboration, innovation and resourcefulness, to bring best practices into classrooms and schools. The 3E Institute encompasses over 300 business and educational leaders from Greater Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley. Mr. Hamilton is also the S.A.V.E. advisor at Souderton Area High School.

There was a motion from Mr. Verbeke and a second from Dr. Baumgartner.

Mr. Hamilton spoke about his affiliation with the 3E Institute and the success of the recent S.A.V.E. Recycling Day. Fifty-five students volunteered for the day to collect 35 tons of materials from over 1,500 cars on Recycling Day. The students also won an award from Temple University for their environmental efforts.

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

**RESOLVED**, That the Board recognize Ken Hamilton for this prestigious achievement.

**EXHIBIT A**

WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS

Finance Committee  
R. Bud Miller, Chair

2007 – 2008 Budgetary Transfers – Reallocation of budgeted funds to match actual expenditures. Mr. Miller highlighted the transfers, which totaled \$166,000.

**Recommendation:** Move the 2007-2008 budgetary transfers forward to the May 22, 2008 Board meeting for action.

Re-Appoint Solicitor and Retainer Agreement for Solicitor Services for School Year 2008-2009

Mr. Miller commented on the services over the years from Fox Rothschild, LLP. Dr. Amuso also commented on Mr. Sultanik's service and commitment to the district.

**Recommendation:** Move this item forward to the May 22, 2008 Board meeting for action.

Review of the 2008-2009 Proposed Final Budget

Mr. Miller indicated that the proposed final budget will be voted on this evening due to state requirements that call for the proposed final budget to be posted for public view thirty days prior to the Board vote on the final budget. Mr. Miller commented on the budget and how difficult the process has been this year with the state of the economy. The administration was given the directive to look at the 2007-2008 expenditure budget side and develop the 2008-2009 budget that would fund the required expenses throughout the year and then the discretionary items. The Board issued a directive to keep the budget increase to 2.18%. The administration has come back with a slightly higher increase, but without dropping any programs.

Mr. Miller thanked the administration for doing a wonderful job in holding expenses for next year. He reviewed the budgeted expenditures and budgeted revenue for next year's budget and commented on how difficult and challenging it was to keep spending to a minimum. A difference of \$821,000 between budgeted expenditures and anticipated revenue is higher than the directed 2.18% increase, but the administration has recommended that the difference be funded through the district's Fund Balance. The bottom line is that there will be no real estate tax increase for 2008-2009.

Mrs. Bray commented on the next step for budget approval. The budget will be posted on the district's Website, posted at all school buildings, and available for review at the Indian Valley Public Library.

Dr. Amuso clarified that the recommendation from the administration would not cause an increase in the real estate tax millage rate for the next school year. Tonight is for action on the proposed final budget for 2008-2009. In June, the tax rates will be recommended for Board approval.

Mr. Currie congratulated Dr. Amuso and Mrs. Bray on their efforts to develop this difficult budget.

**Recommendation:** Move the 2008-2009 Proposed Final Budget to later in tonight's agenda for action, and as required by law, the posting of the Proposed Final Budget for public review and comment.

WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS (CONTINUED)

Finance Committee (Continued)

At this point, Mr. Miller called on Mrs. Bray to address Pennsylvania Gaming Revenue and how this will affect the taxpayers of the Souderton Area School District.

Mrs. Bray indicated that adjustments can be made in the Proposed Final Budget during the next thirty days. One of those adjustments will be the reallocation of funds from local revenue to State revenue. The district has been informed that it will be receiving \$2,082,500 from gaming revenue. Taxpayers who applied for homestead and farmstead status will get a reduction in their property taxes, as per Act 1, of approximately \$197.00 per eligible homestead/farmstead.

Education-Personnel Committee

Mark D. Leer, Chair

Dr. Baumgartner chaired the workshop in Mr. Leer's absence.

Middle Level Transition: Excellence and Equity Committee Update

Dr. Baumgartner introduced Jack Silva, who presented an overview of the work in progress from the Excellence and Equity Committee, a sub-group of the Middle Level Transition Committee.

Mr. Silva stated that in reorganizing the secondary grade structure, it was important to establish excellence and equity in both middle schools. Discussions and decisions about excellence and equity in a middle school program carry different frames of reference such as: political, economic, social and academic needs. The general trend in practice is toward greater equity and "inclusion" of students with diverse needs into the regular education program. Another trend is the development of "Pre-AP options" or "Pre-AP courses" to replace existing challenge programs and honors courses.

Pending changes to Chapter 16 regulations and current Souderton Area School District gifted caseloads were addressed by Mr. Silva. There is a financial cost (increased staffing) in lowering the number of caseloads. He also spoke about the Special Education Plan that is due to the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the current gifted middle school students who are also entitled to special education services.

The current grades six-seven gifted program consists of self-contained reading classes that meet daily. The standards of the grades six-seven reading curriculum are met in an accelerated and compacted format using more challenging materials. Students' individual learning styles and intelligences are addressed through individual learning contracts. The current grades eight-nine program provides support for student-directed research and projects to be taken to outside audiences.

In the current grades six and seven regular education program, students are heterogeneously-grouped in teams in Language Arts, Social Studies and Science classes. The current grade eight regular education program groups the students homogeneously in teams and core classes.

WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS (CONTINUED)

Education-Personnel Committee (Continued)

Middle Level Transition: Excellence and Equity Committee Update (Continued)

Currently, there are no program evaluation criteria or procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the gifted education and Honors programs. Mr. Silva explained the problems associated with trying to evaluate these programs.

Mr. Silva went on to address the charge of the committee to reconcile the excellence and equity issues that accompany scheduling high-ability students in a new middle school schedule. The committee will develop a scheduling recommendation to be presented to the Superintendent by the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The current method of grouping and instructing gifted and high-ability students will be maintained in the future schedule should the Excellence and Equity Committee not meet its charge.

At this point, Mr. Silva highlighted the work that is still ahead of the committee: establish a steering committee to represent the range of stakeholders; research the academic, social and emotional needs of gifted learners; research National Standards, State Regulations, and Instructional Models; analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current gifted program; Honors program, and ability-grouping practices. The committee also must analyze specific instructional/grouping models that best contribute to excellence and equity, collect data from those models, and develop a scheduling recommendation to best promote excellence and equity in the middle school program.

Once the committee has developed a schedule, a presentation will be made to the superintendent, who will make a recommendation to the Board of School Directors.

Dr. Baumgartner asked about expected outcomes from developing the new schedule.

Mr. Brong asked for clarification regarding the program should the committee not come up with a schedule for the new configuration.

Mr. Silva and Mrs. Berk addressed caseload restrictions and the requirements of the Gifted IEP.

Mr. Miller asked about the number of Gifted students in the middle level grades.

PA-Pact Funding/Program

Dr. Baumgartner introduced Frank Gallagher to talk about the PA-Pact which is part of the Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers Act that, if passed, will provide additional funding for school district to implement new programs that ensure all students achieve greater academic success.

Mr. Gallagher mentioned that this information is the most current information received to date. He explained the purpose of the Pa-Pact and that Pa-Pact will create a single application process for the Accountability Block Grant, the Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers, and Educational Assistance Program funding. Mr. Gallagher also explained that these blocks of funds must have specific purposes.

WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS (CONTINUED)

Education-Personnel Committee (Continued)

PA-Pact Funding/Program (Continued)

Souderton will qualify for PA Accountability Block Grant funds and Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers funds, which will total \$547,161. These numbers can change since the governor's budget has not been finalized yet.

Mr. Gallagher thanked Mrs. Ryan, the elementary principals, and the Reading coordinators for their work in determining the specific interventions needed for elementary students and then he explained the interventions that will be provided through this funding. Staffing and funding implications were explained, along with the program evaluations expected for each grant.

Desired results are increased numbers of students who are proficient in PSSA and District assessments, less referrals to special education, and more families receiving support through social work services.

Mr. Miller asked about a summer remediation program that had been offered in past years and if that program would fit into the funding program.

Mr. Gallagher responded that this program would be offered during the school year. He also addressed the exploration of summer remedial programs.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Jon Emery, of Lower Salford Township, commented on the exploratory arts program scheduled for the middle level transition and asked how to further address concerns.

Mr. Currie recommended that Mr. Emery address his concerns to Mr. Silva.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Bernard S. Currie

An Executive Session was held on April 24, 2008 to discuss litigation matters. The session lasted 45 minutes.

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

Mr. Currie announced that the nomination and election of Board Treasurer, Grace Eves, will take place on Thursday, May 22, 2008. The term of office is for one year, starting July 1, 2008 and concluding June 30, 2009.

CONSENT/ACTION AGENDA

Dr. Amuso presented the items on the consent/action agenda for approval and invited Board members to pull an item from the agenda if they wanted more discussion on a particular item.

There was a motion by Mr. Miller, second by Mr. Brong, and with a vote of 8 to 0, it was

**RESOLVED**, That the Board approve the consent/action agenda items as listed:

Recommendation to Approve Minutes of the April 24, 2008 School Board Meeting.

Recommendation to Approve Requests to Attend Conferences/Workshops

<b>KAREN FIORILLO</b> Computer Technology Teacher Indian Valley M. S.	Using Innovative Technology Projects to Strengthen Content Area Learning Fort Washington, PA May 8, 2008 (Thurs.) Est. Expenses: \$187.58 Sub. Expenses: <u>103.00</u> Total Est. Expenses: \$290.58
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<b>PATRICIA HEDRICK</b> L.S. Intermediate, Oak Ridge Elem.	Giving the Non-Verbal a Voice Workshop Dallas, PA May 22, 2008 (Thurs.)
<b>KATHY RAMSPACHER</b> Speech/Language, Oak Ridge Elem.	Est. Expenses: \$260.00 (Combined) Sub. Expenses: <u>103.00</u> (Pat Hedrick only)
<b>Paid from IDEA Funding</b>	Total Expenses \$363.00 (Combined)

<b>MARGARET LYNN CONNERY-ORCUTT</b> Elementary Literacy Coach	2008 Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Institute Jacksonville, FL June 11, 12, 13, 14, 2008 (Wed., Thurs., Fri., Sat.) Est. Expenses: \$1,778.18
<b>Paid from Accountability Block Grant Funding</b>	Sub. Expenses: <u>0.00</u> Total Est. Expenses: \$1,778.18

<b>JENNIFER FRANKS</b> Autistic Support Lower Salford Elem.	TIM Academy/Structured Teaching I Berwyn, PA June 23-27, 2008 (Mon.-Fri.) Est. Expenses: \$1,720.19
<b>Paid from IDEA Funding</b>	Sub. Expenses: <u>0.00</u> Total Est. Expenses: \$1,720.19

CONSENT/ACTION AGENDA (CONTINUED)

Recommendation to Approve Requests to Attend Conferences/Workshops (Continued)

**GRACE EVES** Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants  
Assistant Business Manager and Local Government  
Hershey, PA  
July 14, 15, 2008 (Mon., Tues.)  
Est. Expenses: \$602.52  
Sub. Expenses: 0.00  
Total Est. Expenses: \$602.52

Request for Out-of-State Field Trip

Indian Crest Junior High School – Grade 8 and 9 Special Education Students

Date: May 27, 2008 (Tuesday)

Destination: Adventure Aquarium, Camden, NJ

Purpose of Trip: Culminating activity for a unit on “Oceans of the World.”

Number of Students: 8 Number of Parents: 8

Number of Teachers: 2

Requesting Teacher: Margot Winfree

Trip financed by students and parents.

PERSONNEL – PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Recommendation to Accept Resignation

**CHRISTINA BLANCO** Long-Term Substitute, Spanish Teacher, High School  
Effective: March 28, 2008

Recommendation to Approve Professional Sabbatical

**CAROL LUCIANI** Second Grade Teacher, Lower Salford Elementary  
First Semester of the 2008-2009 school year.

Recommendation to Approve Request for Childrearing Leave

**CHERI FOGLE** Kindergarten Teacher, Vernfield Elementary  
Beginning approximately June 12, 2008 through the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year. Mrs. Fogle is planning to return to work for the second semester of the 2008-2009 school year.

PERSONNEL – SUPPORT STAFF

Recommendation to Accept Resignation

**KIMBERLY HAYES** Café/Playground Aide, Salford Hills Elementary  
Effective: May 2, 2008

CONSENT/ACTION AGENDA (CONTINUED)

PERSONNEL – SUPPORT STAFF (CONTINUED)

Recommendation to Approve Transfers

**MATTHEW DONIS** From: Part-Time Custodian, Indian Crest Jr. High  
Replacement for To: Full-Time, Second Shift, Custodian, Indian Crest.  
Francisco Carmona Beginning: April 28, 2008  
(resigned) Wage: \$17.65 per hour  
Hours: 8 per day

**DAWN LAMONT** From: Café/Playground Aide, Five Days/Week  
Salford Hills Elementary  
To: Substitute Café/Playground Aide, Salford Hills  
Beginning: May 5, 2008  
Wage: \$9.37 per hour  
Hours: As needed

Recommendation to Approve Changes to Supplemental Contracts

**WILLIAM GROSS** Head Coach, Boys Lacrosse (HS) \$1,110.00  
Transfer from Asst. to Head Coach - \$3,700 pro-rated for balance of season  
(Replacement for Peter Spizzirri – resigned – 4/21/08)

Recommendation to Approve Contract for Coaching Services

**JEFFREY MUSSELMAN**<sup>^</sup> Asst. Coach, Boys Lacrosse (HS) \$ 697.50  
(\$2,325 pro-rated for balance of season)  
<sup>^</sup>New to coaching at SASD

New High School Project – Change Orders

Recommendation to approve change orders for the new high school project as presented on April 24, 2008:

The Farfield Company (Electrical Contractor): Sewer Meter Pit . . . . . 14,133.73

J.B.M. Mechanical, Inc. (Plumbing Contractor):

Credit for allowances not expected to be used . . . . . (50,000.00)

**EXHIBIT B**

Third Reading and Final Adoption of Policy #807 – Opening Exercises/Flag Displays

Recommendation to approve Policy #807 – Opening Exercises/Flag Displays as presented on April 10<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

**EXHIBIT C**



DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Recommendation to Approve the 2008-2009 Proposed Final Budget for the Souderton Area School District with Expenditures Totaling \$95,885,872.

Dr. Amuso recommended that the Board approve the Proposed Final Budget for the 2008-2009 School Year, which includes the proposed final expenditures and revenue as required by the School Code, and will be available for public inspection, as required by law, and placed on the Souderton Area School District Website.

The adoption of the final budget and setting of the real estate tax rates is scheduled for the regular meeting of the Board of School Directors on June 19, 2008.

Dr. Amuso noted that the administration recommends no increase in the real estate tax rate at this time.

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

Mr. Miller again thanked Dr. Amuso and Mrs. Bray for their hard work on the budget.

Dr. Amuso also added his thanks to the entire administrative team for their assistance in preparing this budget.

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

**RESOLVED**, That the Board approve the 2008-2009 School Year Proposed Final Budget for the Souderton Area School District with Expenditures Totaling **\$95,885,872.**

**EXHIBIT D**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

The next meeting of the North Montco Technical Career Center Joint Operating Committee is scheduled for Monday, May 19, 2008 at 7:30 PM. The meeting will be held in the Administrative Conference Room at the Technical Career Center, 1265 Sumneytown Pike, Lansdale, PA.

The next regularly scheduled School Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 22, 2008 beginning at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held in the Tinner Board Room of the Souderton Area School District Administrative Office Building, 760 Lower Road, Souderton, PA.

On Wednesday, May 28, 2008 at 7:45 PM a meeting of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors will take place in Conference Rooms B3/B4, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, 1605 West Main Street, Norristown, PA.

REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR

Jeffrey Sultanik, Esq.

No report from Mr. Sultanik.

UNFINISHED/NEW BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

No unfinished/new business from the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Bonnie Freed, from Franconia Township, asked the Board for information on the proposed Walking Trail to be established on the grounds of the West Broad Street Elementary School property. She also asked if this topic could be addressed at the May 22<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting.

Mr. Currie indicated that the Board would wait to make comments on the subject until other interested parties have a chance to speak at the May 22<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting.

Mr. Currie asked Mrs. Freed if her request had been addressed by the School District administration or the Franconia Township officials. He recommended that Mrs. Freed address her concerns to these two parties.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

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

**RESOLVED**, That the Board adjourn the meeting at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully,

Brenda Jones Bray  
Board Secretary