



Steel Valley School District Board Brief

Board Meetings February 2007

The Board acknowledged the passing of Mrs. Margaret Howat, retired head librarian; Mrs. Phyllis Quinlain, grandmother of Dave and Kelly Emro; Mr. Anthony J. Zamule, father-in-law of retired teacher Leslie Evans; Mrs. Audrey Yanyo, aunt of Drew Vautier; Miss Mary Laszunova, aunt of retired teacher Marie Dithrich; Mrs. Ruth Weightman, mother-in-law of Kim Weightman, Public Relations Specialist; Mrs. Pat Fetchen, aunt of Tracy McGrew; Mrs. Dorothy Klocek, mother-in-law of Joe Panaia; Mr. Benjamin J. Policastro, Sr., uncle of Carole Policastro; Mr. James Krause, grandfather of Jeff Deabner; Mrs. Debbie Campbell, wife of James Campbell, Friend of Steel Valley; and Mr. William L. Meade, Sr., grandfather of Scott Meade. It was moved by Mrs. Kubancsek and seconded by Mrs. Sloan to place books into the Steel Valley School District Libraries in their memory.

President's Comments

Mrs. Beth Cannon reported that the district's Emergency Management Team met with parents, fire officials, police officials and interested community members to discuss how to improve our response in emergency situations. There were many good suggestions that will be incorporated into our plan.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kinavey honored Steel Center Vocational Technical School students Jared Ducar for his Extra Effort Award in electronics and Joshua Hankey who received the Extra Effort Award for diesel mechanics. Also recognized was Brandon McCrum who was named Top of the Shop award winner in automotive mechanics. Representing the Steel Valley Marching Band, Steven Gregory presented the numerous trophies earned this year by the band. The marching band performed in 30 events this fall and is proud to represent Steel Valley. Board Member Colleen Fedor noted that they are a hard-working group of students. Middle School math teacher Amanda Olson and 8th grade students Sandy Alhaj, Abby Maddigan, Kelly Bennett and Alaina Bott presented many features of the Smart Boards purchased this year. This is cutting edge technology that teachers and students have learned to use in the classroom.

Solicitor's Report

The Board expelled a minor male student for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year and expelled a minor male student upon the conditions and for the time period set forth in the adjudication.

Director of Secondary Education

Ms. Fenyus announced that the PSSA writing tests have been completed by 8th and 11th grade students. Students are preparing for the reading and math exams at the 6th, 7th, 8th and 11th grade levels that will take place on March 13, 14 and 15. At the middle school level, incentives and raffles are planned during testing week. Eighth grade students who have perfect attendance during testing will be treated to a bowling party, and 11th grade students with perfect attendance will indulge in an ice cream sundae bar.

On March 13, 14 and 15, there will be a delayed start to school for students in grades 9, 10 and 12. These students will report

to school at 10:30 a.m. and juniors shall report at 7:30 a.m. on these testing dates. A healthy breakfast will be served at 7:00 a.m. in the high school cafeteria.

On March 16, juniors who have perfect attendance all three testing days will be treated to a sundae bar and prizes will be raffled off. These students will also be dismissed at 1:45 p.m.

Middle School and High School teachers have created a map of their courses that is aligned with the Pennsylvania standards and anchors. They will eventually be available to parents, students and staff on Edline.

High School students Thomas Barefoot, A. J. Dominick and Josh Joll will represent Steel Valley on KDKA's Hometown High Q on Saturday, March 17, at 11:00 a.m.

Congratulations to Ms. Toni Besh, French and Japanese instructor, who has been named an *Honoree* in the Teacher Excellence Program. She will be honored at the Celebration of Teaching Event on April 19. She is one of 101 teachers from 5,000 nominations being honored from 81 school districts.

Mr. Fallon and the 8th graders are excited to welcome Tom Hubka to the middle school on March 8th and 9th. Hubka is a Professor of Architecture at the University of Wisconsin and is writing a book on the architecture of the houses in Homestead. He will be sharing information on the importance of local architecture and getting students involved with hands-on drafting activities.

Gifted support teacher Michelle Maddigan and students in *The Future is Mine* program will host a Career Fair in the Steel Valley High School gym on Thursday, March 8, from 7:55 – 10:05 a.m.

In celebration of Black History Month, Dr. Errington from the Harmony Club held an assembly with high school students on the contributions that African Americans have made to our local history. She featured the photographs of Pittsburgh Courier journalist Teeny Harris. Harris depicted African American community life from 1930-1960.

Teachers Rebecca Kristen and Sue Salapa held a middle school spelling bee with 65 students participating. Congratulations to sixth grade student Logan Perry who won. The winning word was "cryptic."p>The middle school and high school counselors are working with the Allegheny County Children's Initiative and Turtle Creek to begin group counseling, character building and goal setting sessions with students.

Eligible high school students will have the opportunity to take part in a major research study through Carnegie Mellon University. The study will examine to what extent students learn math concepts more effectively when given samples that relate to regular problem solving.

Director of Elementary Education

The students in grades 3, 4 and 5 will participate in the PSSA Reading and Mathematics tests during the week of March 12.

Ms. Policastro is working with the elementary principals to create an Academic Handbook for grades K-5, which will include the elementary school curriculum aligned with the Pennsylvania state standards in Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science/Technology, Music, Physical Education, Art and Library.

Read Across America will be celebrated in all elementary schools in early March. Community leaders will serve as guest readers at Park and Barrett. Franklin students will dine on green eggs and ham.

On April 12, parents of children between the ages of 0-5 are invited to the Parent Spring Fling. A grant provided by the Mon Valley Education Consortium will provide free books for children and classes for parents.

Report of Director of Operational Services/Board Secretary

Mr. Bichko reported on the recent newspaper articles on the fine assessed the school district. He noted that the 2005-2006 fine was for the Annual Financial Report (AFR) not the district audit. He noted that the AFR was submitted in a timely fashion, but the Department of Education requested corrections. According to the PDE, the corrections were not completed in a timely fashion; and therefore, a \$6,300 deduction was made to the district's subsidy. Dr. Kinavey has made a written

appeal to the Secretary of Education Zahorchak to return the \$6,300. There has been no response from the Department of Education to date.

In 2004-2005, the district incurred a penalty of \$9,600 for late submission of the Annual Financial Report, and no appeal was filed. Since the hiring of a Director of Facilities in December, Mr. Bichko can now devote all his time to the financial operations of the district.

The Allegheny County Health Insurance Consortium has notified school districts that there will be a 2.5% increase in medical health benefits in 2007-2008. Mr. Bichko added that the proposed budget included tentative health care costs, but he will now make adjustments to the budget.

Mr. Bichko reported the state budget would include a 2% increase in basic and special education subsidy for Pennsylvania school districts. Any more than 2% will be contingent upon passing of an additional sales tax in Pennsylvania.

Meeting Minutes

The Board approved the meeting minutes of the January 16, 2007 worksession meeting and the January 23, 2007 regular meeting.

Financial Management

The Board approved the following financial items:

- General Fund hand checks for January 2007 in the amount of \$1,016,639.95
- General Fund invoices for January 2007 in the amount of \$389,772.99
- Payroll Funding Transfers for January 2007
- General Fund Revenue Report for December 2006
- General Fund Expenditure Report for November 2006
- General Fund Expenditure Report for December 2006
- Food Service invoices in the amount of \$32,489.71
- Capital Projects 2005 Statement of Income and Expenses for the month ending January 31, 2007
- Capital Projects 2000-2001 Statement of Income and Expenses for the month ending January 31, 2007
- Steel Valley Foundation for Education Statement of Income and Expenses for the month ending January 31, 2007
- Custodial Hand Checks in the amount of \$10,390.81
- Band Trip/Hand Checks in the amount of \$566.00
- Athletic/Hand Checks in the amount of \$4,904.91
- Middle School/Hand Checks in the amount of \$65.83

The Board approved the following items:

- Exonerated the Homestead Borough real estate tax collector for year 2006 in the amount of \$206,246.90 and for year 2005, one uncollected amount of \$264.88
- Exonerated the Munhall Borough real estate tax collector for year 2006 in the amount of \$637,151.88
- Authorized Munhall Borough real estate tax refund to Nancy Cibula, Lot & Block 180-F-164, in the amount of \$244.75 for year 2006
- Authorized Munhall Borough real estate tax refund to United States Steel Corporation, Lot & Block 179-E-15, in the amount of \$72,910.57 for year 2005
- Renewal of the district's School Leaders Liability Insurance coverage for the period February 8, 2007, through and including February 8, 2008, at a cost of \$16,590 with the School Boards Insurance Company of Pennsylvania, Inc.
- Annual purchase of the RealSTAT program at the stated cost of \$1,800 in accordance with the recommendation of Solicitor Donald Fetzko
- Tax Anticipation Note proposal from Citizen's Bank, the district's depository, in the amount of \$2,000,000 at an interest rate of 4.64%, effective March 1, 2007. The note will be scheduled for repayment upon receipt of the district's TIF distribution, which is expected to be in excess of \$2,000,000
- Accepted the proposal from Anchor Homestead Pharmacy, LLC, the lesser of Walgreen's, to set the assessed

valuation of the properties at 133 West 8th Avenue, Homestead, PA 15120, identified by Lot & Block Nos. 130-N-319, 130-N-316 and 130-N-328, respectively, at \$4,500,000 and with the proviso that the Steel Valley School District agrees not to appeal this assessed value for the tax years of 2006, 2007 and 2008

Operations

The Board approved the following items:

- Facility rental requests as presented
- Fundraising requests as presented
- Awarded the contract for service to the fire protection sprinkler systems at the High School/Middle School Complex and Park Elementary School at a cost of \$275 and \$220 respectively; for service to the two fire hydrants at the High School/Middle School Complex in the amount of \$125; and for dry stand pipe riser 5th year hydro testing at the High School/Middle School Complex at a cost of \$1,800
- Accepted the donation of \$500 from John and Judy Merisko for the purchase of library books and Accelerated Reader quizzes in memory of John Merisko for Park Elementary School and to accept the donation of custom memorial bookplates made by Mrs. Pisarcik
- Payment to FranJo Construction in the amount of \$9,488 as presented on their Payment Application No. 8, their final payment application on the Middle School Science Classroom Construction Project
- Services of Mr. Donald Holmes of Victory Security to the district's security and fire alarm upgrade/replacement project and approve payment from the Capital Projects 2005 Fund of their invoice in the amount of \$2,805
- Participation in the paper recycling program offered by Abitibi Consolidated and authorized the purchase of classroom and office receptacles at a cost not to exceed \$3,000 in the event the receptacles are not provided to the district

Co-Curricular Leadership

The Board approved the following items:

- Creation of the Geri Palmieri Memorial Scholarship Fund and allowed solicitation and acceptance of funds
- Field trip by the Senior High Swim/Diving Team on March 8, 2007, to Splash Lagoon in Erie, Pennsylvania, at no cost to the district
- Use of the Campbell Memorial gym and/or the High School gym by the Girls' Softball and Boys' Baseball teams using the appropriate indoor equipment to throw the ball. There is to be absolutely no hitting of the ball indoors.

Special Assignments

- The Board held a second reading and adopted the revisions to Policy No. 140 Title I Districtwide Parental Involvement, new Policy No. 140.1 Title I Parent Involvement Barrett Elementary School Program and new Policy No. 140.2 Title I Parent Involvement Franklin Primary Center Program
- The Board held a first reading of a revision to Policy No. 801 Public Records
- Mrs. Sloan reported that the work on the Homestead Grays Bridge would be finished in May but the painting will continue until November.

Educational Leadership

- The Board approved the adoption of HST Integrated Science (Green, Red and Blue series) and Modern Chemistry, authored by Davis, Frey, Sarquis and Sarquis, and published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, for the 2007-2008 school year at a cost of \$45,367 plus shipping and handling

Personnel Management

The Board approved the following:

- Unpaid leave of absence for Kimberly Sheaffer on October 3, 2007
- Accepted the resignation of Lisa Gamrat from the part-time position of Speech instructor effective immediately
- Appointed Bridget Stright to the position of tutor at a rate of \$30 per hour per the EAP tutoring grant ending May 8, 2007
- Attendance of Dr. Mary Cay Rojtas-Milliner at the Pennsylvania School Librarians' Association Annual Conference to be held April 12-14, 2007, in Hershey, Pennsylvania, at an approximate cost of \$335
- Kelly Dee and Laura Burger as substitute teachers for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year at a rate of \$75 per day for the first 30 days and \$100 per day thereafter
- Resignation of Jeffrey Lynn and Nicole Asson from their respective supplemental positions of Assistant Band Director and Assistant Girls' Softball Coach effective immediately
- Resignation of Linda Townsend from the position of special education paraeducator effective immediately
- Family medical leave of absence for Mary Lebeda commencing on or about January 31, 2007, not to exceed 12 weeks in duration
- Accepted the retirement of Jo-Anne Hixson from the position of substitute caller under the terms and conditions of the Steel Valley Secretarial/Aide Education Support Professionals bargaining agreement effective April 28, 2007

Previous Board Action

The Board approved the adoption of the 2007-2008 proposed General Fund Operating Budget in the amount of \$26,908,415