



Steel Valley School District Board Brief

**Board Meeting
March 27, 2007**

The Board acknowledged the passing of Theresa M. Finney, grandmother of Melissa Draganosky; Caroline Safko, grandmother of Therese Safko; Ann Majovsky, aunt of Michelle Blasko and Denise Blasko; James Niedermeyer, uncle of Dana White; Andrew Perhach, uncle of Melissa Pentin; Rebekah Bendgen, grandmother of Amy Lyons; Robert Forrest, nephew of Sandy Reiner; Emma Kalka, aunt of Mary Lou McConnell; and Mary Elizabeth Mahon, grandmother of Erin Cumming. It was moved by Mrs. Kubancsek and seconded by Mrs. Sloan to place books into the Steel Valley School District Libraries.

President's Comment

Mrs. Beth Cannon commended the Drama Club, Mr. Altman and the staff for a phenomenal musical this year. There is incredible talent in our community.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kinavey recognized Mrs. Toni Besh, French teacher, for being named an Honoree for the Teacher Excellence Program. Mrs. Besh will be recognized at the Celebration of Teaching Event on April 19 at which time she will learn if she receives one of the \$2,500 grants.

Fourth and fifth grade students showcased the *Freedom Train* program under the direction of teachers Karen Catterall, Lori Kenavey, Sharon Kampe, Student Teacher Robert Saunders and Media Specialist LuAnne Szczypinski. The students learned behind the scenes procedures, worked on public speaking skills, researched and studied the characters they portray through the Readers' Theatre project. The 4th grade students who participated were Jayla Irving, Alyssa Mackey, Shailyn DelGado, Miles Smith, Amonte Gwinn, Amanda Merling, and the 5th grade students included Naydina Phillips, Sashah Groce, Joseph Yano, Rykai Wright, Jeffrey Gardner, Deon Worthy and Shauna Ingraham.

Director of Secondary Education

Ms. Bethany Fenyus announced that 51 Middle School students raised \$1,957.46 from the Math-A-Thon to benefit St. Jude Children's Hospital, under the promotion of Mrs. Beth McCallister.

Sixth grader Logan Perry took part in the Regional Spelling Bee at the University of Pittsburgh.

On March 24, five middle school students participated in a National History Day competition at the Heinz History Center. The students performed an original skit based on the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892. Student participants included Kayla Baird as Andrew Carnegie, Alaina Bott as Henry Clay Frick,

Taylor Wellman as Homestead Mayor John McLuckie, Sandra Alhaj as union leader Hugh O'Donnell and Sara Fallon as the narrator. Teachers Mr. Ivan Braszo and Mr. Mark Fallon sponsored the group.

Students who achieve a 3.0 or higher on their report card or progress report are eligible for a 50% discount on a one-month Athletic Club membership at the Carnegie Library of Homestead. Students with a 2.5-2.9 GPA will receive a 33% discount. Students who attend school 30 consecutive days without an unexcused absence or suspensions will receive a 25% discount. This program will begin with the 3rd quarter report card. Guidance counselors will provide students with a certificate to present to the library for the discounted membership. A regular club membership rate is \$30 per month.

The District is now accepting donations for the Geri Palmieri Scholarship fund. Please send any donations to Ms. Fenyus or Mrs. Geyer at the Senior High School.

Munhall High School graduates from the Class of 1949 have offered to donate \$1,000 to the high school library for books to be placed in memory of Miss Margaret Howat, retired Head Librarian of the Munhall and Steel Valley School Districts.

A Parents' Night Out is planned for April 12 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the high school cafeteria. The Student Learning Team, comprised of teachers, parents and administrators is planning an early childhood literacy event for parents and their children.

The Community Leaders Breakfast will be held on April 18 beginning at 8:30 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. in the high school cafeteria. The high school Rhythm Club and students from the Music Technology program will perform. Dr. Kinavey will address the accomplishments of the school district. The proceeds from this event support the Mon Valley Great Idea Grant program.

The Veterans' Day Committee and the Munhall Garden Club are planning a dedication of a Blue Star Bi-Way on April 14 at 11:30 a.m. at the Carnegie Library of Homestead.

The Steel Valley Chamber of Commerce honored the Veterans' Day Committee, Mrs. Sharon Fisher, Chief Irvin Williams, Students Melissa Kaufold, Ian Mehok, Sara Fallon and Tyler Votedian at the annual Outstanding Citizens Dinner on March 29.

Ms. Fenyus reported that the PSSA testing went well at the middle school and high school. She thanked the principals, teachers and students for their hard work during testing week. As a reward, 11th graders enjoyed an ice cream social and the 8th graders went on a bowling trip. Various gift certificates, prizes and iPods were raffled off to students with perfect attendance and positive behavior during the testing. Ms. Fenyus thanked Mr. and Mrs. McCallister, Ms. Sabo and Mr. Colebank for their help with the activities and incentives.

Ms. Fenyus distributed an overview of the national and local SAT scores. Out of the 80 students who took the SAT in 2006, 42 students scored higher than the national average on the writing section, 44 students scored higher than the average in reading, and 55 scored higher than the average in math. She reported that the district is partnering to create an SAT tutoring program for students in grades 8-11. In the meantime, students have the opportunity to take the Test-Taking Strategies course at the high school.

National Testing Day is April 28, and in order to encourage students to practice taking the SAT or ACT, the Princeton Review is offering free practice testing at St. Edmund's Academy in Squirrel Hill. Students are encouraged to take this practice test in order to help strengthen standardized test taking skills. More information is available at www.princetonreview.com or from Ms. Kunca in the High School Guidance Department.

Director of Elementary Education

Dr. Policastro reported that she is developing professional development training for Barrett and Park paraprofessionals to assist them with a variety of strategies and resources to support student learning. Elementary Technology Assistants LuAnne Szczypinski and Kevin Tomasic will receive additional Waterford computer training in the areas of math and science.

Kindergarten registration for the 2007-2008 school year is continuing. Parents should contact Mrs. Cain to register their children, and subsequently a student assessment will be scheduled.

Dr. Policastro is working with the elementary principals to develop the framework for aligning the Pennsylvania state standards with the district curriculum.

Student Representatives Reports

Miss Kim Hartnett announced that all 10th grade students completed the Adopt-A-School program and received a certificate of participation from the FBI and law enforcement agencies.

Fifty representatives participated in Career Day on March 8 to assist students with career choices and to help juniors complete their senior projects.

The spring musical *Into the Woods* was well received by the community as well as the students.

Miss Hartnett reported that 98.7% of the juniors participated in the PSSA tests held March 14-16.

At Barrett Elementary School, fifth grade students have been tutoring second graders two afternoons per week. Fifth graders are paired with second graders who help them practice word lists and stories. The second graders get more practice time and the fifth graders develop a new appreciation of teaching.

On March 10, eleven members of the Barrett Chess Club represented the school at the Carnegie Library Chess tournament. Congratulations to Caleb Groce for taking 2nd place and Amonte Gwinn for his 3rd place award in the elementary division. In addition, the Barrett Chess Club has challenged the administrative staff to a game of chess during recess on April 18, 19 and 20.

Student teacher Ben Laughton taught a lesson on Africa to Mrs. Stokes' third grade class. As a culminating activity and with the help of Ms. Kampe, Mr. Ward from the Carnegie Library brought in his collection of African instruments for all to enjoy.

Law Week will be held April 23-27 at the Middle School and High School. The 8th grade class will be touring Washington, DC, on their annual trip May 10-11.

Thomas Barefoot was crowned Mr. Steel Valley at the annual pageant.

Congratulations to the Steel Valley team of AJ Dominick, Josh Joll and Thomas Barefoot on their outstanding win at KDKA's Hometown High Q.

Mr. Barefoot announced the upcoming middle school events:

April 10-13	Spring Book Fair	
April 20	School Dance	(
May 2	Spring Band and Choral Concert	
May 18	Semi-formal Dance	(

May 24
June 1

7th grade trip to Wildwood Highlands
Honors Assembly

Meeting Minutes

The Board approved the meeting minutes of the February 20 special meeting, February 20 worksession, February 27 regular meeting, March 6 special meeting and March 20, 2007 worksession meeting.

Financial Management

The Board approved the following financial items:

- General Fund hand checks for February 2007 in the amount of \$397,601.16
- General Fund invoices for February 2007 in the amount of \$273,266.62
- General Fund invoices for February 28, 2007 in the amount of \$67,529.74
- Payroll Funding Transfers for February 2007
- Food Service invoices in the amount of \$40,448.15
- Custodial/Hand Checks in the amount of \$23,890.26
- Athletic/Hand Checks in the amount of \$2,963.94
- Middle School/Hand Checks in the amount of \$992.07
- Capital Projects 2005 Statement of Income and Expenses for the month ending February 28, 2007
- Capital Projects 2000-2001 Statement of Income and Expenses for the month ending February 28, 2007
- Steel Valley Foundation for Education Statement of Income and Expenses for the month ending February 28, 2007

The Board approved the following items:

- Authorized Munhall Borough real estate tax refund to Barbara Donaldson, Lot & Block 133-G-32 for a total amount of \$723.10 for years 2002 through 2006 as a result of a change in assessment
- Transfer of \$351,653.67 from the 2005 Capital Projects Fund to the district's General Fund as reimbursement for payments made by the General Fund for various capital projects through June 30, 2006

- Amended ACT 1 Ballot Question as prepared by School District Solicitor Donald Fetzko at the request of the Allegheny County Election Division
- Proposal from Milliman Consultants and Actuaries to value the Steel Valley School District's Post Employment Benefits during the 2007-2008 school year at a cost of \$7,000.00
- Advertising of supply bids for the 2007-2008 school year, which will include Art, Athletics, Audio Visual, Computer Supplies, General School and Office, Home Economics, Technology, Library, Music and Science

Operations

The Board approved the facility rental requests and fundraising requests as presented.

Co-Curricular Leadership

The Board approved the following items:

- Payment of \$700 for the services of a DJ and up to \$300 for security at the prom to be held at the Sheraton Station Square on May 11, 2007
- Field trip by the Senior High School History Club on May 19-20, 2007, to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and Sharpsburg, Maryland
- Field trip for six 10th graders to the Teen Institute Leadership Training on April 26-27, 2007, at Linden Hall in Dawson, PA, with all expenses paid from the Safe and Drug Free Schools Grant
- Field trip to Fort Necessity in Farmington, PA, for the fourth grade class from Barrett Elementary School on May 29, 2007, at no cost to the district
- Field trip to Laurel Caverns in Hopwood, PA, for the fifth grade class from Barrett Elementary School on May 30, 2007, at no cost to the district

Special Assignments

- The Board held a second reading and adopted the revision to Policy No. 801 Public Records

Educational Leadership

The Board approved the following:

- 2007-2008 Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Program of Services Budget in the amount of \$3,551,450
- Revisions to the 2006-2007 school calendar as presented
- Proposed 2007-2008 school calendar as presented

Personnel Management

The Board approved the following Personnel items :

- Unpaid leave of absence for Jill Bakota on December 12, 13 and 14, 2007
- Family medical leave of absence for Gwendolyn Berchok beginning on or about May 3 through June 5, 2007
- Accepted, with regret, the resignation of Stacey Overton, Special Education Learning Support Instructor, retroactive to March 9, 2007
- Joe Bytzura, Krista Sommer and Lisa Gamrat as substitute teachers for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year at the rate of \$75 per day for the first 30 days and \$100 per day

thereafter retroactive to February 28, 2007

- Appointed Tim Hinkle and Terrie Hoffman to the position of substitute tutors at a rate of \$30 per hour per the EAP tutoring grant, which ends May 8, 2007
- Attendance of Diana Borges to the Pennsylvania Association of Pupil Services Administrators Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, from April 23-24, 2007, at a cost of \$365 plus meals, mileage and tolls
- Attendance of Bethany Fenyus and Alyson Fisher to the 2007 Safe Schools Conference to be held April 30 – May 2, 2007, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- Rafaela Aubrecht as a substitute paraeducator for the 2006-2007 school year at the rate of \$6.50 per hour pending receipt of mandated physical and drug screening
- Rodney Blackwell as a substitute in the custodial department at the rate of \$8.75 per hour contingent upon receipt of acceptable Act 34 and 151 clearances, passing a general physical examination and the district's mandated screening for controlled substances
- Services of John Yaklich at the rate of \$250 per day effective immediately

Previous Board Action

The Board held a public hearing on Act 1 Referendum to increase wage tax for reduction in qualified real estate tax. The Board adopted a resolution approving the referendum question as follows:

Do you favor imposing an additional 0.90% Earned Income Tax? The revenue generated from the increased tax rate will be used to reduce taxes on qualified residential property by an estimated amount of \$283.80. The current Earned Income Tax rate for Steel Valley School District is 0.50%.