

# South Fayette School District

Committee Meeting of the Whole

## ***Minutes***

Tuesday, February 19, 2008  
7:00 p.m.

The Committee Meeting of the South Fayette Township Board of School Directors was called to order at 7:08 p.m. in the South Fayette High School Conference Center by President William Newcomer with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Newcomer announced the Board had met in Executive Session to discuss personnel.

**Present:** Teresa Burroughs, Len Fornella, Lena Hannah, Frank Morelli, Bill Newcomer, Chris Niemann, and Todd Petrillo

**Absent:** Alan Wood and Jeff Smith

**Others:** Dr. Linda B. Hippert, Superintendent; Dr. Mary Ravita, Assistant Superintendent; Denice Allan, Director of Human Resources; George Safin, Director of Finance; Denise Beverina Moore, Elementary School Principal; Laurie Gray, Assistant Elementary School Principal; Ann Bisignani, High School Principal; Aaron Skrbn, Assistant High School Principal; Teachers Norene Sarnowski, Noelle Gagliardino, Molly Franjione, Megan Then, Daniel Bal, Kevin Maurer, Kathy Macurak; Robyn Weis, Jacqueline Fleisner, Gary Fleisner, Claire Eckroate, John Eckroate, Maria Yalch, Kari Putulowski, Alexa Sukolsky, Carolyn Potts, Mary Spolnik, Karen Behling, Darell Frank, Sara Bahl, Briana D'Alesandro, Margaret Nicholson, Vicki Steele, Joe Martineck, Lori Darnley, Bethany Darnley, Anthony Fontana, Daria Sakharova, Adam Zombek, Kelly Fritz, Katie Logan, Kris Tirimacco, Debra Amelio-Manion, Cindy Hestad, Cheryl Cindrach, Lara Louis, Denise Jones, Kim Luedeman, Mary Martinez, Jay Martinez, Michael Gates, George Palmieri; and Ruth Bell Superintendent's Assistant/Board Secretary

## **Minutes**

The Board considered approval of Minutes from the following Board Meetings:

Committee Meeting of the Board  
Regular Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 15, 2008  
Tuesday, January 22, 2009

## **Financial Reports**

The Financial Reports for January 2008, were enclosed for Board review and will be included on the Agenda for approval at the Regular Meeting.

## **Superintendent's Monthly Report – Dr. Linda B. Hippert**

## **Business Office**

1. The Board discussed the 2008-09 budget and were provided with the following information:
  - a. Governor Rendell's budget
  - b. Pennsylvania Department of Education's denial of the exceptions for the 2008-09 budget
  - c. Kindergarten for the 2008-09 school year

Elementary School Principal Denise Beverina Moore and Assistant Elementary School Principal Laurie Gray addressed the Board with the idea of having Kindergarten students come every other day for a full day; this would eliminate the need to have midday runs for Kindergarten.

- o Opportunity for public comment on the items listed above

Kelly Fritz – Old Oakdale Road – Feels she was not given a heads up about the possible change to Kindergarten. She is not planning on attending the Kindergarten Parent meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>, as she was told it would be the same information that was given out for this year. How would the days students attend be determined? Wouldn't it be confusing for children – do I go to school today or not?

Karen Behling – Sygan Road – If the administrators had time to do research which included schools in Nebraska, they knew before today this was going to be discussed. Is this the best way to save \$58,000, eliminating the midday run?

Mary Spolnik – Sygan Road – For a cost savings idea – why not turn off the lights at night. Kindergarten is a fantastic program, feels every other day is not a good idea.

Carolyn Potts – Sygan Road – Has 2 students in the system and one of her children went to all day Kindergarten and feels it did not really benefit her child. Her youngest child currently has a one page of homework every day, would this result in more homework? Many schools bus Kindergarten students only one way, perhaps parents can work together to make arrangements with their neighbors. Do we really need standardized tests in Kindergarten? What happened to the looping program? Send students every other day for a ½ day and eliminate midday bus runs; every other day would be detrimental to students.

Robyn Weiss – Forest Ridge Drive – Neighboring school districts bus Kindergarten students one way and it works for them; eliminate the midday bus run. Preschool currently goes every other day and this is confusing to children.

Cheryl Cindrich – Hickory Heights Drive – What is important to the children – regularity to academic experience. Feels with every other day it would be too disruptive to the children. If a child was out sick they would have the possibility of missing many days.

Robyn Weise – Forest Ridge Drive – Leave the Kindergarten program as it is.

Molly Franjione – Saddlewood Drive – As a parent and a teacher has concerns about the proposed change. Hopewell School District has done this for a number of years, perhaps the administrators could check with them.

Mike Gates – Battleridge Drive – Moved to the district because of the schools. The current program works, why change? What would the extra costs be to the cafeteria, impact of older students to have lunch, space for lunch? How much would the extra costs cut into the \$58,000 savings?

Norene Sarnowski – Battery Drive North – Has concerns as a teacher and as a parent as to the impact this would have on the children. We should compare this idea to our neighboring school districts.

Students Bethany Darnley, Keri Putulowski, Alexa Sukolsky, Daria Sakharova, and Briana D'Alesandro addressed the Board regarding leaving the activity busses in the budget for students who stay after school for activities. Many students do not drive and their parents work; if the activity busses were eliminated many students would not be able to participate in the after school activities and tutoring. Their comments are attached to the minutes.

Students Gary Fleisner, Maria Yalch, and Claire Eckroate addressed the Board asking them to reconsider adding the Probability and Statistics Course to the Program of Studies for the 2008-09 school year. Their comments are attached to the minutes.

Anthony Fontana – Battery Drive South – Concerned if the activity busses are cut; how would this impact students who are too young to drive? They wouldn't be able to stay after school for some of the activities. The activity busses provide a safe way for the students to get home.

The Board thanked the students for coming and encouraged them to return often. Dr. Hippert and the Board asked the students about their thoughts regarding the proposal from the Pennsylvania Department of Education adding Graduation Competency Assessments beginning with the class of 2014. The students indicated they feel stressed out already with having to take the PSSA, benchmarks, and the regular tests that are part of their classes. The students feel this will add additional stress. The question was raised from the students what if you don't pass 6 of the assessments? Dr. Hippert answered the student would not graduate, would not receive their diploma, would be invited back next year to retake the course and the assessment.

Carolyn Potts – Sygan Road – Graduation Competency Assessments is yet another test for students to take. This will add to additional stress on students.

Chris Triannco – Portman Lane – Students learn at different levels, not all students are good test takers. Adding another test is not the answer, when will this end?

Debra Amelio-Manion- Apple Blossom Drive – Wrestling boosters have received \$15,000 in donations for the JV program. There is a possibility of receiving another \$10,000. We are working to make the program the best possible for the students. Regarding the Graduation Competency Assessments – all districts teach to the tests. This is unfair for the students.

Dr. Hippert suggested that all parents and students write to their legislators voicing their concerns.

Cindy Hestad – Old Oakdale Road – What is the length of agreement with Daktronics?  
Dr. Hippert – 10 years.

George Palmiero – Old Oakdale Road – Kindergarten is hard on students, trying to fit everything they need to learn in a ½ day. Feels Kindergarten should be a full day program. If the ½ day program continues perhaps parents can work together to make arrangements to pick up their children.

Cindy Hestad - Old Oakdale Road – Fort Cherry School Districts busses one way and they have a good program. We haven't figured that out here, perhaps share information from other districts.

Noelle Gagliardino – Rutherglen Drive – Parents currently pick their children up at preschool, eliminating the midday run would not make that much difference for parents.

2. The Board considered the request from Chris Niemann to serve on the Strategic Plan Steering Committee.
3. The Board considered approval of the Parkway West proposed budgets for 2008-09.

	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
Parkway Vocational Technical Operating Budget	\$5,114,615	\$5,413,207
Alternative Center for Education Budget	\$ 911,932	\$ 949,583
Parkway West Building Rental Budget	\$ 333,300	\$ 322,200

**South Fayette’s Share of the Budget**

Parkway Vocational Technical Operating Budget	\$202,745	\$250,557
Alternative Center for Education Budget	\$ 45,545	\$ 47,707
Parkway West Building Rental Budget	<u>\$ 11,594</u>	<u>\$ 14,071</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$259,884</b>	<b>\$312,335</b>

There are a total of 37 South Fayette students attending Parkway West. This number includes 5 students who participate in the Alternative Education (ACE) Program.

4. The Board considered the request from Director of Human Resources Denice Allan and the trustees of the Allegheny County Schools Health Insurance Consortium to amend sections 2.1 and 4.1 of the Consortium’s governing agreement.
5. The Board considered for approval the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Finance George Safin, and Tax Collector Kevin Biber of the provided list of Real Estate Refunds due to reduction in assessment and/or overpayment.
6. The Board considered for approval the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance George Safin for payment of the interim delinquent tax collector fee in the amount of \$308.38 for 2005 delinquent taxes; penalty payment extends from January 31, 2008 to February 8, 2008; for \$947.15 for 2006 delinquent taxes; penalty payment extends from January 22, 2008 to February 13, 2008; and for \$4,222.31 for 2007 delinquent taxes; penalty extends from January 11, 2008 to February 14, 2008; as per the statements submitted by Kevin Biber, Township Treasurer.

**Personnel**

1. Hiring, resignations, and all changes regarding personnel were discussed in Executive Session prior to the beginning of the Committee Meeting.

**EDUCATION**

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mary Ravita to dispose of obsolete books as per Board Policy 706.1. The Board was provided with a list of books.

2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Ann Bisignani for Mr. Brandon Flannery, FBLA Advisor, to accompany 7 students who qualified at the regional competition, to travel to Hershey, Pennsylvania from Sunday, March 30, 2008 through Wednesday, April 3, 2008; for the FLBA State Leadership Conference.
3. The Board considered adopting a Resolution Opposing the Proposed High School Graduation Competency Assessment from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

### **Transportation**

There were no items to discuss.

### **Athletics**

1. Coaching assignments were discussed in Executive Session.
2. The Board discussed the Varsity Wrestling Program.
3. The Board considered the Daktronics agreement with Oliverio Buick to advertize on the scoreboard.

### **Construction**

There were no items to discuss.

### **Miscellaneous**

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval of the second reading of revised Policy 251 "Homeless Students".

### **Expenditures**

Submitted for Board review to be approved at the Regular Board Meeting.

### ***SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM VISITORS***

George Palmiero – Old Oakdale Road – Could the district make money from contracting with companies to place oil wells on property? We could either use the product that is produced or sell it.

The Board will hear comments from visitors. The time limit of comments will not exceed three (3) minutes and must relate to items on the Agenda. The Board will not respond to questions during this session, but will only hear public comment. (As per revised Policy 006 – Meetings" adopted May 23, 2006)

Hannah seconded Petrillo to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 p.m.

Voice Vote – All Yes

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William Newcomer, Board President

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Ruth Bell, Board Secretary