POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
OCTOBER 30, 2008 – 7:30 PM

The Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, October 30, 2008, at 7:34 PM in the second floor LGI room of the Pottstown Middle School. The following board members were present: Mr. Edwin Edwards, Mrs. Amy Francis, Mr. Richard Huss, Mrs. Michele Pargeon, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Mr. Nat White, Mrs. Julia Wilson, and Mrs. Judyth Zahora. Absent was Mr. Robert Hartman. Also present were Superintendent of Schools, David Krem; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Reed Lindley; Assistant Business Administrator, Mrs. Penny O'Donnell; Solictor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Mr. John Armato, Mrs. Pamela Bateson, Mrs. Gail Cooper, Mrs. Mia DiPaolo, Mr. Robert Giering, Mrs. Loretta Hoch, Mr. Matthew Moyer, Mrs. Lisa Snyder, Dr. Angela Tuck, Mr. Jerry Ummarino, Mr. Robert Decker, a member of the press and interested citizens.

AWARDS
No awards.

MINUTES
Mrs. O'Donnell presented the minutes of October 16, 2008 Regular Board meeting to be approved at the Regular November 13, 2008 Board meeting. No changes or comments were suggested.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel Committee
Mr. Wausnock stated the committee will meet on Tuesday, November 11, 2008 at 7:30 PM in the Board Room of the Administration Building.

Finance Committee
Mrs. Zahora stated the meeting originally scheduled for Thursday, November 13, 2008 has been rescheduled to Thursday, November 20, 2008 at 7:30 PM in the Board Room of the Administration Building.

Facilities Committee
No report.

Montgomery County Legislative Committee
Mr. White shared that he will be attending the next scheduled meeting to be held on Wednesday, November 12, 2008.

PSBA Representative
Mr. White stated he has no report at this time.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Representative
No report.

Community Relations Committee
Mrs. Wilson stated the next scheduled meeting is for Thursday, December 4, 2008 at 6:30 PM before the Committee of the Whole Meeting. Tiyko Cotton and Alexus Brinkley, Career and Technology students gave a presentation of the blood drive they are organizing during Health Care Week. The blood drive will be held Monday, November 10th from 7:20 AM to 1:30 PM at the high school with the support of Miller-Keystone Blood Bank. Mr. Krem challenged the Board Members and Administration to see which group could have more donors. Mr. Armato informed the Board that PIPPS has received three grants. Giant Corporation donated $3,000.00 through the Tax Credit Program. Mr. Tom Coyle donated $4,500.00 from money raised at the Oldies Concert held in the spring. An anonymous corporation donated $5,000.00.

2006 alumni graduate Michael Beury, has triple majored at Penn State University in mathematics, physics and astro-physics.

Co-Curricular Activities Committee
No report.

Dress Code Policy/School Uniforms
Mrs. Francis shared that the committee is moving forward with the high school piece of the policy and that they may be able to implement the policy during the second semester. She stated the meeting originally scheduled for Thursday, November 13, 2008 has been rescheduled to Thursday, November 6, 2008.

Technology/Curriculum Committee
Mrs. Zahora stated a great meeting was held this week and she learned a lot. She asked Dr. Lindley to update the Board on specifics. Dr. Lindley shared that every curricular area was reviewed. Mrs. Kolka has developed a brochure for parents regarding curriculum. This is the year for science to be updated and we are trying to align our physical and environmental science with state standards. We are looking at adding a .5 credit course for physical science which will require a new teacher. We are extending challenges for high achieving students. We shared successes at the elementary schools through the use of Dibbles testing and discussed the Step-by-Step program and its progress.

Liaison with Borough Council and Economic Oversight Committee
Mr. Edwards has no report at this time.

LIST OF BILLS
Mrs. O'Donnell presented the list of bills to be approved at the Regular November 13, 2008 Board Meeting.

CONSENT ITEMS

Personnel
Dr. Lindley reviewed the personnel items to be placed on the Regular November 13, 2008 Board Meeting agenda for approval.

403(b) Plan
Mrs. O'Donnell reviewed the additional pieces of the 403(b) Plan to be board approved at the Regular November 13, 2008 Board Meeting.

Professional Leave
Dr. Lindley reviewed the professional leaves and field trips to be placed on the Regular November 13, 2008 Board Meeting agenda for approval.

Substitute Tax Collector Appointment Resolution
Mrs. O'Donnell stated this resolution is for Mrs. Adams to be the substitute tax collector and will be placed on the Regular November 13, 2008 Board Meeting agenda for approval.

Communication Associates LLC Contract
Mrs. O'Donnell presented the contracts for speech services to be approved at the Regular November 13, 2008 Board Meeting.

MR. HARTMAN ENTERED THE MEETING AT 7:56 PM.

Mr. Huss requested Mr. Hartman report on the committees in which he chairs at this time.

Facilities Committee

Mr. Hartman reported a meeting was held on October 13, 2008 and stated Mr. Angstadt gave an update on the modular classrooms. At this time all ten modular classrooms are being utilized. The security upgrade project is close to being finished. The plumbing issue at Barth is being addressed. A preliminary maintenance budget is prepared including big ticket items such as roofing. Mr. Angstadt is hoping to attend the Tools for Schools conference where he will gain energy conservation facts to bring back to the committee. Work on the high school basement has resumed, now that the modular classrooms are complete. Parking issues at the high school and middle school are being looked at. They hope to have signs up and have the police enforce towing. The storage shed planning at the stadium is being finalized. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 10th at the Administrative Annex at 7:30 PM.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Representative
Mr. Hartman stated he has no report at this time.

Co-Curricular Activities Committee
Mr. Hartman stated the meeting scheduled for Monday, October 27, 2008 has been rescheduled to Monday, November 3, 2008 at 7:30 PM at the High School.

NON-CONSENT
No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Independence Blue Cross Contract
Mrs. O'Donnell stated the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit met today with Independence Blue Cross and are working together to finalize the contract. The IU will contact the consortium when an agreement has been reached and which will then be presented to the Board for approval.

Elementary Building Construction Discussion: Class Size
Mr. Krem stated the Board needs to make a decision regarding class size for the four elementary schools they voted to renovate. It is simple. The Board can either choose a class size of 21 or 25 students.

It was suggested by Mr. Edwards for the Board to consider finding out what it would cost the district to update the elementary building's mechanicals and bring them up to code in lieu of renovating four elementary buildings. He strongly feels in these tough economic times, the Board needs to be responsible with tax payer dollars. He shared based on Mrs. Adams reports; the four school option requires more teachers and is not cost effective.

Mr. White disagrees with Mr. Edwards and feels the four school option is a good choice however he is in agreement that the idea of improving each building may provide tax payer relief in lieu of renovations. He also feels the economy needs to be considered.

Mrs. Francis agreed with Mr. Edwards stating that a four school option was never discussed as a Board based on the Superintendent's redistricting report. She believes we need to be cautious and to consider the possibility of business losses and decreasing values of our homes.

Mrs. Pargeon feels the four school option will limit us in energy management. She stated a three school option would cost less to the tax payers while achieving the upgrades needed. She also feels that special education should be a huge part of this consideration.

After continued discussion regarding staffing needs, expectation of teachers in the classroom, and the various ideas regarding mechanical upgrades to the buildings, Mr. Huss requested Mr. Krem to contact Mr. Hal Hart at Crabtree Rohrbaugh to estimate the bare necessity cost of mechanically upgrading each elementary building. The Board decided if renovations with four elementary schools were to move forward, they agreed on a class size of 25.

REPORTS

TRP Goals Update
Mr. Capraro presented an update on measuring goal achievements through the Total Rewards Program currently being done by the administration team. Mrs. Zahora was the driving force for the development of these numbers and the administrative team was very pleased with the results of the formula. Mr. Capraro pointed out how the goals of TRP align perfectly with the district's strategic plan. Mrs. Zahora was pleased and is looking forward seeing the results in the spring.

Pottstown Middle School Board Report
Mrs. Cooper reported the following information to the Board:

- School Improvement Grant of $98,000.00 to be used for the computer lab and level books
- PSSA Scores
- Ascellus Math Computer Assistance Software Program

Mrs. Cooper shared how the Middle School is utilizing a culture of caring which embraces a warm and welcoming approach with our students and they are making good progress. A goal for this approach is to have each student feel that this year is their best year yet at the Middle School.

Inclusive Learning
Mrs. Bateson played a DVD entitled "Inclusive Learning" prepared by the Department of Education to promote the importance of including students with special needs into the learning environment of the regular classroom. It emphasized that it is state law to have inclusive practice in Pennsylvania schools but they would like to see more teachers adopt an open mind to the idea of how to effectively teach all students.

INFORMATION

1. Single Audit Report for Year Ended June 30, 2007 – Mrs. Adams
2. Current Elementary Enrollments, October 2008 – Dr. Sparagana

FEDERATION REMARKS
Mr. Decker offered the following comment to the Board:

It is part and parcel of the very fiber of every teacher to help children and young adults - This district hires excellent teachers. Those teachers will always find ways to fill the gaps that our students come to us with.

We do have to parent our students. We do have to provide them with love. We will always have to do that. Even if the dynamics of this community experience a quantum shift - we will still have the same responsibilities to meet the needs of each and every student - the needs may be different, but the students will always have needs.

I agree with Dr Lindley - there will always be economic issues, always be additional discussion, always be additional and different concerns. The constant is always going to be our students. We are all here to do what is best for them, to support them. No matter what their home life, their individual talents, their needs. The only thing that can provide that support is personal interaction.

That personal interaction suffers with each additional student we are charged to interact with.

I applaud the Board's continued tenacity in looking at the hard numbers involved with such a massive undertaking such as Elementary School Renovations. It is nice to see that mindsets of this board are open to continued discussions about what the number of schools should be, but I am extremely dismayed that those same mindsets seem to have been summarily closed with regard to the topic of lessening class size and therefore increasing the personal interaction and impact we as educational professionals can have on the student population.

I ask that the issue of reduction of class size be given the deliberation it is due.

ROUND TABLE

Mrs. Zahora stated that she attended last week's Band Cavalcade. She shared the event was nice but the weather did not cooperated which affected attendance. She said the kids did a great job.

Mrs. Pargeon stated she also attended the Cavalcade and was disappointed that the weather hindered the Band's ability to fully perform. She updated the Board on the recent seminar she attended in Hershey. She learned about inclusion, programs to reduce high school drop-out rates and ways to work better as a Board with the executive team. She attended tonight's spaghetti dinner hosted by the 6th Grade Green Team and she attended Lincoln Elementary Fall fest.

Mr. Huss announced that the PIPPS Meeting will immediately follow after adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

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Penny O'Donnell
Substitute Board Secretary