POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

April 14, 2011

The Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, April 14, 2011, at 7:34 PM in the second floor LGI room of the Pottstown Middle School with President Richard Huss presiding. The following board members were present Ms. Valerie Harris, Mr. Thomas Hylton, Mrs. Michele Pargeon, Mr. Dennis Wausnock, Mrs. Polly Weand and Mrs. Julia Wilson. Absent were Mr. Robert H. Hartman, Jr. and Mr. Nat White. Also present were Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Reed Lindley; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana; Business Administrator, Mrs. Linda Adams; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Mr. John Armato, Ms. Pamela Bateson, Mrs. Rita Cohen, Mr. Robert Giering, Mr. Barry Angstadt, Ms. Lindi Vollmuth, a member of the press and interested citizens.

MR. ROBERT H. HARTMAN, JR. AND MR. NAT WHITE ENTERED THE MEETING AT 7:37 PM.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Patrick Connors introduced Mr. Andy Pistoria, CEO, and Ms. Myra Fick, Marketing Manager Tri-County Federal Credit Union. Mr. Andy Pistoria presented a $500 donation from the Tri-County Federal Credit Union to the Pottstown Football Program. Coach Myers and three members of the football team (Cory Hueber, Corey Baker and Dante Auman) accepted the donation of behalf of the Football Program.

AWARDS

Mr. DiDonato introduced the Barth Elementary Writing Award winners. Each student read their award winning writing and was presented an award by the Board President

K-5 - Kira Rodriguez
1st Grade - Zavion Paschall
2nd Grade - Haile Clayton
3rd Grade - Jorge Mundo
4th Grade - Harrison Wolf
5th Grade - Simon Sylvestor

REPORT

Budget Proposal

Dr. Lindley asked Mrs. Adams to review the budget process and assumptions of the preliminary budget including the current deficit and any changes in financial assumption since the preparation of the preliminary budget presented in January 2011. Dr. Lindley stated that Dr. Sparganga will review the highlights of the Budget Proposal.

Mrs. Adams explained the impact of the Governor's proposed budget reductions. The proposed budget cuts result in a loss of over three million dollars to the district. Some of the reductions were anticipated which resulted in the need to reduce the preliminary budget by a little more than two and three quarter million dollars. This is impossible to accomplish without impacting staffing and programs.

Dr. Lindley explained the administration's proposed reductions in art, music, library curriculum and physical education including the reduction in administrative positions and reducing classroom assistant hours. These proposed reductions along with the administrators' agreement to forgo a salary increases in 2011-2012 and the closing of the Administrative Annex will provide a balanced budget that protects the long term quality of education in Pottstown.

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the proposed Full Day Kindergarten with ½ day Pre-K Budget Reductions:

Proposed Teaching Reductions	= $ 365,091
Proposed Support Staff Reductions	= $ 786,981
Proposed Reductions in Expenses	= $ 632,404
Total Non-Program Reductions	= $1,784,476
Total Instruction Program Reductions	= 544,165
Grand Total of All Reductions	= $2,328,640

Dr. Sparagana explained that $2,763,670 was needed to balance the Preliminary Budget; $435,100 represents additional funding through changes in assumptions resulting in $2,328,570 in total reductions needed to balance the 2011-2012 Budget.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Wausnock and seconded by Mrs. Wilson that the minutes of the regular meeting held on March 17, 2011 be approved as presented. Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: nine. Nays: none. Motion carried.

It was moved by Ms. Harris and seconded by Mrs. Wilson that the minutes of the committee of the whole meeting held on March 31, 2011 be approved as presented. Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: nine. Nays: none. Motion carried.

LIST OF BILLS

It was moved by Mr. Hartman and seconded by Mrs. Pargeon that the list of bills for the period of March 10 through April 6, 2011 from the Athletic Fund totaling $14,713.70; the Construction Fund totaling $2,470.00; the Cafeteria Fund totaling $174,799.62; the Elementary Activities Fund totaling $2,958.21 and the General Fund totaling $630,596.58 be approved and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum # 2010-2011-057.

Upon roll call, all members voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

It was moved by Mrs. Pargeon and seconded by Mrs. Weand that the Treasurer's Report be approved and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum # 2010-2011-068.

Upon roll call, all members voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

HEARING FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS

A member of the Pottstown High School Band spoke about the importance of band in her life and the benefits to all students who participate in the co-curricular activities. She suggested the Board take a look at cutting positions and materials that have a lesser value.

Penny Griffin, 176 S. Roland Street, parent of a band member, voiced her concerns about cutting band. She felt it would have negative effects on the students. She was concerned about the burden on the parents if they were asked to help pay for their children to participate in co-curricular activities. She suggested pay cuts for staff and eliminate both administration buildings.

Gloria Fritz, a 1974 graduate of Pottstown High School, suggested that the Board look at the programs (art, music, etc.) that make Pottstown strong. She asked the Board to look somewhere else for cuts in the budget, not sacrifice these programs for the sake of the budget.

A member of the Pottstown Band talked about his involvement in music since elementary school and his goal to become a music teacher. He spoke about the band as a family and how cutting the band will hurt the community and the students. He expressed his lack of understanding why the Board would cut band when Pottstown is in the top 10 for property taxes in the state.

A member of the Pottstown Band expressed his love of music and his goal to teach music in the Pottstown School District. He spoke about the structure art and music provide for students, the ability to express themselves through songs and pictures. He voiced his concerns about taking away the opportunity for other students to succeed and risk of students getting in trouble.

A parent of a band student complimented the music teachers and their ability to help the students achieve their goals. She stated that cutting music would be a terrible waste to Pottstown.

Alicia Smith-Robinson, 848 N. Warren Street, talked about how music has helped her children flourish. She voiced her concerns about an increase in delinquents if cuts are made to the co-curricular activities. She asked the Board to think about the future of the students.

Kim Golding, 1077 Hale Street, voiced her concerns about the difficulties her daughter has experienced with getting math tutoring and the emphasis on preparing for PSSAs, taking away from regular class work. She does not agree with the music cuts.

A member of the band spoke about the eligibility requirements to participate in the co-curricular activities. She works hard for her grades to meet the requirements. She felt that if music is taken away from the students that Pottstown will not be a good place to live.

Sheree Kulp, 474 Farmington Ave., thanked the administrators for spreading out the proposed cuts. Her wages will be affected by the proposed cuts. She asked where the pay cuts were for the administrators.

Kathy Yeagle, 38 W. Fifth Street, spoke about the importance of the arts in the schools. She read various statistics she obtained from the internet. Depriving students from the arts can lead to physical and mental problems.

Jane Pollock, 1032 Logan Street, asked why the administrators selected peer demotions over seniority.

CONSENT ITEMS

It was moved by Mr. Wausnock and seconded by Mrs. Wilson that the following consent items be approved in accordance with Policy 1120, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

PERSONNEL

Resignations /Terminations

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following resignations/terminations:

Professional

Ratify Greg Troutman, Secondary Teacher, Pottstown resignation effective April 1, 2011, employed since September 7, 1993.

Exempt

Jane Hamilton, Supervisor Word Processing/Copy Center, Administration Building, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective July 5, 2011, employed since October 14, 1974.

Ratify Alison Detweiler, Psychologist, Annex Building, resignation effective March 25, 2011, employed since August 9, 2007.

Classified

Ratify Stacey Oldham, Classroom Assistant, Franklin Elementary, resignation effective March 21, 2011, employed since December 2, 2008.

Jon Ross, Student Services Coordinator, Pottstown High School, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective June 17, 2011, employed since January 15, 2003.

Ratify Melissa Smith, Part-Time Cafeteria Worker, Pottstown High School, resignation effective March 25, 2011, employed since September 11, 2007.

Leaves

Professional

Julie Voelker, Pottstown Middle School, request for extension of childrearing leave of absence from the end of the 2010-2011 school year to approximately March 7, 2012.

Maureen Rieger, Secondary Teacher, Pottstown High School, request leave of absence covered by the Family Medical Leave Act effective approximately September 25, 2011, end date TBD.

Classified

Ratify Martha Coulter, Classroom Assistant, Edgewood, request for leave of absence covered by the Family Medical Leave Act, effective April 8, 2011, end date TBD.

Wilamena Kelly, Part-Time Cafeteria Worker and Cafeteria Aide, Pottstown High School, request for leave of absence covered by the Family Medical Leave Act, effective April 25, 2011 through June 17, 2011.

Election

Professional

Ratify Nicolynn Habecker, Per-Diem Substitute Teacher, effective March 24, 2011, $95/day, in accordance with Board Policy 3920. She will also assume the role of Substitute Classroom Assistant, $14.13/hour, effective March 24, 2011.

Ratify Britney Oxenford, Per-Diem Substitute Teacher effective March 24, 2011, $100/day, in accordance with Board Policy 3920. She will also assume the role of Substitute Classroom Assistant, $14.13/hour, effective March 24, 2011.

Classified

Ratify Larry Bender, in addition to his current positions of Substitute Van Assistant and Substitute Breakfast Aide, will also assume the role of Substitute Van Driver, $14.54/hour, effective March 8, 2011.

Ratify Marion Moore, in addition to her current positions of Substitute Lunch Aide and Cafeteria Substitute, will assume the role of Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective March 14, 2011.

Ratify Carol Bender, in addition to her current position of Part-time Breakfast Aide, will assume the role of Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective April 4, 2011.

Ratify Michelle Evans, Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective March 29, 2011.

Ratify Cindy Nodolski, Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective March 29, 2011.

Homebound Instruction

Ratify Kelly Smale, Pottstown High School, from March 14, 2011 through April 26, 2011, $29/hour, assignment not to exceed 5 hrs. per week.

Ratify Jolie Martinez, Pottstown High School, from March 21, 2011 through June 17, 2011, $29/hour, assignment not to exceed 5 hrs. per week.

Ratify Maureen Russell, Pottstown Middle School, from March 21, 2011 through June 17, 2011, $29/hour assignment not to exceed 5 hrs. per week.

Additions to 2010-2011 Game Workers List, $10/hour

Katrina Keene

Compensation for Missed Planning Time, 2010-2011 school year $23 per period, for the time period ending March 4, 2011

Lisa Cassidy-Lawler	PHS	18 missed planning times	$414.00

Tuition Reimbursement

Professional Staff

Name	School	3/31/11 deadline
Ginger Angelo	PMS	1335.00
Perry Augustine	PMS	1296.00
Justin Detweiler	PHS	2664.00
Matthew Fabian	Rupert/Franklin Elem.	1332.00
Stefanie George	PMS	1668.00
Elizabeth Haring	Lincoln Elementary	1960.00
Ben Hayes	PMS	960.00
Sally Jenkins	Lincoln Elementary	980.00
Kari Kindig	Lincoln Elementary	980.00
Jared Leimeister	PMS	2592.00
Megan Meier	Barth Elementary	1332.00
Jennifer Milkovits	PMS	3000.00
Sarah Noska	Rupert Elementary	2664.00
Kevin Pascal	PHS	1875.00
Joshua Pierce	Barth Elementary	1332.00
Lois Sanders	PMS	1293.75
David Todd	PHS	3000.00
Stanley Walerski	PMS	2592.00
Jen Wiand	PHS	2592.00

Support Staff

Name	Building	Amount
Janice Bobst	PHS	261.00
Karen Dilliplane	Barth Elementary	1320.00
Robert Spencer	Admin.	2000.00

Salaries

JROTC Salaries, 50% funded by USAF, 50% funded by District, effective January 1, 2011

Lt. Col. James C. Porter	JROTC Instructor	$86,557.68
Mst. Sgt. Donald MacNeil	JROTC Asst. Instructor	$68,477.28

Employee Disciplinary Action

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following employee disciplinary actions and the names filed in the Secretary's office as addendum #2010-2011-069:

Pottstown Classified employee, Rupert Elementary, one (1) day unpaid suspension, effective TBD.

Pottstown Professional employee, Pottstown High School, two (2) day unpaid suspension, effective March 30, 2011.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVES

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following professional leaves:

Bldg.	Name	Conference Title	Conference Location	Dates to Attend	Cost
Middle	Lisa Whitehurst	New Test Development Grades 4-8	Harrisburg, PA	4/18/11 – 4/22/11	Educational Testing Service will cover all expenses
Middle	Diane Halpine	PSSA-M Reading Standard Validation, Grades 4-8 & 11	Harrisburg, PA	5/17/11 – 5/19/11	All expenses paid by DRC on behalf of PDE
Middle	Diane Halpine	PSSA Reading Rangefinding, Grades 3-8 & 11	Harrisburg, PA	5/23/11 – 5/24/11	All expenses paid by DRC on behalf of PDE
Admin Franklin Barth	Lisa Schiavone Denise Leschak Karen Neitz Julie Schumaher	PAFPC Annual Conference	Seven Springs PA	4/3/11 – 4/6/11	Approx. $334.00 Paid by Title I grant

FIELD TRIPS

None

CONTRACTS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following contracts and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum 2010-201-070.

1. Advance Power Control HVAC Service Agreement
2. Devereux Foundation
3. Child Guidance Resource Centers
4. Crabtree, Rohrbach & Associates Fee Proposal

BID AWARD

The Superintendent recommends that purchase orders or contracts be awarded to the companies as listed and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum #2010-2011-071. The award in each case being made to the lowest bidder meeting the required specifications

1. First Aid General Supplies

REVISED 2010-2011 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the revised 2010-2011 School Calendar and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum #2010-2011-072.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

NON-CONSENT

Dr. Sparagana reviewed the Non-Consent Personnel and Field Trip items for Board approval.

Dr. Lindley reviewed the 2011 Candidates for Alumni Honor Roll for Board approval.

Mrs. Adams reviewed the Contracts and Energy Savings Contractor Bid Award for Board approval.

Mr. Kalis reviewed a motion to allow Preservation Pottstown to access the 423 Chestnut Street property for spring clean-up and planting. Mr. Kalis spoke about a draft agreement of sale between the Pottstown School District and Preservation Pottstown for the purpose of constructing and maintain a community garden at 423 Chestnut Street. He stated that the draft agreement was mailed to council handling the matters for Preservation Pottstown.

PERSONNEL

Resignation

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following resignation:

Classified

Ralph Bainbridge, Custodian, Pottstown High School, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective August 3, 2011, employed since December 26, 1990.

Leaves

Professional

Rebecca Heiser, Secondary Teacher, Pottstown High School, requests for leave of absence covered by Family Medical Leave Act and Childrearing, anticipated effective dated September 11, 2011, end date November 29, 2011.

Elections

Classified

Ratify Melinda Black, Substitute Secretary, $15.59/hour, effective April 11, 2011.

Ratify Michelle Evans, in addition to her position as Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, will assume the role of Substitute Van Driver, $14.54/hour, effective March 31, 2011.

Ratify Shilid Ford-bey, Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective April 4, 2011.

Ratify John Watters, Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective April 1, 2011.

Ratify Jennifer Levengood, Substitute Student Proctor, Pottstown Middle School, $13.87/hour, effective February 16, 2011. She will also assume the role of Substitute Student Proctor, Student Services, Pottstown Middle School, $12.15/hour, effective March 30, 2011.

Ratify Sandy Freese, Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective April 11, 2011.

Ratify Janet Steffenhagen, Substitute Van Driver, Transportation, $14.54/hours, effective April 11, 2011.

Ratify Carolyn Dise, Substitute Custodian/Housekeeper, $12.34/hour, effective March 31, 2011.

Ratify Scott Speaker, Substitute Van Driver, Transportation, $14.54/hour, effective April 5, 2011.

It was moved by Mrs. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Wausnock that the Board approve the Non-Consent Personnel items as presented.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

FIELD TRIPS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following field trip:

# of students and/or group	Name of conference or activity	Destination	Date of trip	Cost to student	Cost to district-substitutes	Chaperone(s)
2 HS	2011 International Career Development Conference	Orlando, FL	4/29/11 – 5/4/11	-	Total not to exceed $3,000 including $400 for subs	Kevin Pascal & Megan Delena (Pottsgrove)

It was moved by Mr. Wausnock and seconded by Mrs. Wilson that the Board approve the Non-Consent field trips as presented.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

2011 CANDIDATES FOR ALUMNI HONOR ROLL

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the 2011 candidates for the Alumni Honor Roll.

It was moved by Mr. Hartman and seconded by Mrs. Weand that the Board approve the Non-Consent 2011 Candidates for Alumni Honor Roll as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum #2010-2011-073.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

CONTRACTS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following contracts:

1. Opportunities School
2. Opportunities School

It was moved by Mrs. Pargeon and seconded by Mrs. Wilson that the Board approve the Non-Consent Contracts as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as addendum #2010-2011-074.

ENERGY SAVINGS CONTRACTOR BID AWARD

The Facilities Committee recommends the Board approve Reynolds Energy Services as the Energy Savings Contractor for the district's Guaranteed Energy Savings Project.

It was moved by Mr. Hartman and seconded by Mrs. Pargeon that the Board approve the Energy Savings Contractor Bid Award as presented.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

423 CHESTNUT STREET/PROPERTY ACCESS

Motion to approve immediate access by Preservation Pottstown to begin clean up and planting at 423 Chestnut Street subject to a site access agreement signed by a representative of Preservation Pottstown.

It was moved by Mrs. Pargeon and seconded by Mr. Hartman that the Board approve the Non-Consent 423 Chestnut Street Property Access subject to a site access agreement signed by a representative of Preservation Pottstown.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Policy 122: Co-Curricular Programs for Pottstown High School and Pottstown Middle School- 1st Reading (no action to be taken)
2. Policy 122.1: Co-Curricular Awards – 1st Reading (no action to be taken)
3. Policy 707: Use of School Facilities – 1st Reading (no action to be taken)

INFORMATION

1. Conference Report: March
2. PEAK Report: April
3. Monthly Meeting Notice: May
4. Entitlement (Formula Driven) Grant Update
5. Competitive Grant Update
6. Quarterly Update

FEDERATION REMARKS

Ms. Lindi Vollmuth expressed her disappointment that all groups were excluded from the budget process. She stated that the Federation had been denied any and all access to the proposed budget cuts. She expressed her concern about the proposed cuts that directly affect the students. There must be a way to solve the budget cuts without cutting the staff that work day to day with the students. The educational staff makes a difference every single day.

ROUND TABLE

Mr. White – no comment.

Mr. Hylton read a statement describing his intentions to seek information regarding all correspondence referring to providers interested in moving a charter school to Pottstown.
A copy of Mr. Hylton's statement is included in the minutes.

Mrs. Wilson was pleased to hear the Barth students writing awards. She thanked the staff and teachers for their support. Mrs. Wilson stated that band is big in her family as well as art and music. She understands the painful decisions that need to be made and hopes that the district can keep the band together.

Ms. Harris commended the students and teachers for their writings and the band students who spoke tonight. She will try to do everything possible to keep the arts and band if at all possible. Teachers play an important role in developing and educating students.

Mrs. Weand expressed her understanding of the budget cuts that the district has to face. She appreciates how the students feel about the band and voiced her support to keep band.

Mr. Hartman enjoyed the writing awards. He agreed with all the comments supporting the arts. He spoke about the proposed program reductions. Mr. Hartman urged the parents to contact their legislators and state senators. He thanked everyone for coming out and stated that their voices have been heard.

Mrs. Pargeon acknowledged the difficulties and struggles sitting through the committee meetings. She stated that the legislation that is currently being pushed through does not look favorable for public education in the state of Pennsylvania. Mrs. Pargeon felt that in the future, in order to provide any programs, the public will have to decide on what programs to fund, not the Board. She thanked everyone for coming out tonight and she thanked the Board for moving forward on the Community Garden.

Ms. Harris made mention of the cost savings to the 2011-2012 budget. She commended Mr. Armato for his gesture to provide his services at no cost to the district.

Dr. Sparagana reported on the final Parent Literacy Night. He thanked all the people who made donations to be raffled off and the donations that help the parents start a home library. He reported that next year's literacy nights will be condensed to five, beginning in September and ending in December, adding a 1st grade component to the program. Dr. Sparagana reported that the Pottstown School District has participated in the advocacy of reinstating the Accountability Block Grant. He noted that the proposed budget presented tonight is sustaining Kindergarten and ½ day Pre-K.

Dr. Lindley commended the Board and all who spoke (teachers, staff and students). He was impressed with everyones approach through this difficult budget process and was pleased to see the passion and commitment for the same cause. He stressed the need to provide quality education with equity to the taxpayers. Pottstown is already maxed on taxes. There must be a third option. Dr. Lindley spoke about the duties of the administration to present their recommendations to the Board. It is their job as well as the community, to push back on those ideas. He expressed his desire as Superintendent, to be open and accessible to the community.

The budget concerns will not be over with the passage of the 2011-2012 Budget. Everyone who spoke tonight gets it. Pottstown is an intelligent and strong community. Dr. Lindley asked the community to continue to engage in the process to discuss what most impacts education.

Mr. Wausnock – no comment.

Mr. Huss – no comment.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Harris and seconded by Mrs. Wilson that the Board adjourns. None opposed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 P.M.

Linda S. Adams
Board Secretary

At our last meeting, on March 31, Dr. Lindley read a letter dated March 30 from Vahan Gureghian, chief executive officer of Charter School Management Inc., which operates a charter school in Chester.

Mr. Gureghian stated his firm was considering submitting an application for a charter school in the Pottstown School District. He further stated that if pending legislation, Senate Bill 904, was passed, he would likely offer a proposal to manage the education of our kindergarten through 5th grade students. As I understand it, this would probably entail laying off our entire elementary school staff – principals, teachers, support staff.

After Dr. Lindley read this letter, I urged him to make this letter available to the school board together with a memo to the board explaining what he knew about the matter. The following day, all board members were emailed a copy of the letter together with a letter from Dr. Lindley. Both letters have been made part of our minutes.

AFTER reflecting over these letters, I sent Dr. Lindley and all board members an email on Sunday evening, April 3, as follows:

Dear Reed:

Thank you for emailing us the letter from Vahan Gureghian dated March 30, 2011 and your accompanying letter to the board dated April 1, 2011.

I have some concerns about this issue I would like to share with you and members of the board.

As you know, I write paid opinion pieces in The Mercury. At the end of each one, I am careful to include the following disclaimer: "Thomas Hylton is a member of the Pottstown School Board. However, the thoughts expressed are his alone and not those of the school board or administration." While many of my colleagues don't like these columns, I believe as an elected official responsible to the voters, I can express my opinions as long as they are clearly labeled as my opinions and not the board's.

As superintendent of schools, however, your role is different. You are appointed by the school board to carry out policies established by the board.

For you to gather information and explore options for our consideration is commendable. I have complimented you several times on your candor, including at a recent public meeting of the school board. At this point, I suggest the board needs candid answers to the following questions:

1. In your letter, you state you were contacted by persons wishing to discuss charter schools, and you had three appointments with individuals who made it clear to you that there were providers interested in moving a charter school to Pottstown. Who are these people, and what is their charter school affiliation?

2. Were these conversations initiated by people affiliated with the charter schools, or did you invite these conversations?

3. I believe we need a written summary of your recollection of these conversations.

4. You state in your letter that you and Mrs. Adams made two separate visits to Harrisburg to meet with legislators to advocate for mandate relief. Who are the legislators with whom you met?

5. In meeting with these legislators, what specific mandates did you discuss?

6. What specific bills did you discuss?

7. When you visited the Chester Community Charter School, who from our district accompanied you?

8. Once again, I believe a written summary would be helpful.

9. At our committee-of-the-whole meeting Thursday (March 31), you said that with the current climate in Harrisburg, if we don't approve a charter school application, they may appeal to the state and receive approval anyway. Were you referring to an application for an independent charter school open to all students, or were you referring to Gureghian's tentative proposal to manage the education of our kindergarten through fifth grade students? If you meant the latter, is it your understanding that current law would allow such an appeal?

That email was sent April 3 and the questions remain unanswered.

The following day, on Monday, April 4, vice president Dennis Wausnock informed me that sometime earlier in March, he traveled to Harrisburg for a meeting with Sen. Jeffrey Piccola, head of the Senate Education Committee; Sen. Raffery; Vahan Gureghian; and other officials. Officials from the Pottstown School District at the meeting included Dr. Lindley, assistant superintendent Jeff Sparagana, business manager Linda Adams, and our director of development, Terri Lampe.

Last Thursday April 7 at our finance committee meeting, Dr. Lindley confirmed this meeting took place.

I am disappointed Dr. Lindley did not feel the need to disclose to all members of the school board that he was meeting with Sen. Piccola, Mr. Gureghian, and others, either before or after the meeting.

Dr. Lindley stated to me that he made it clear to the senators and Mr. Gureghian that he was speaking for himself only and not the district. I question whether this is the appearance given by attending such a meeting with the district's executive team and the vice president of the school board.

After further reflection, I have concluded that at this point, the appropriate and necessary course of action for the school district is full public disclosure of the circumstances surrounding this meeting.

Therefore, last Friday, Aug. 8, I emailed a Right-To-Know request to the district's open records officer, with copies to all board members, as follows:

I request copies of the following for the dates between Jan. 1, 2011 and April 8, 2011, either in electronic format or hard copy:

1. All correspondence, including email correspondence, between any member of the Executive Team (Reed Lindley, Linda Adams, and Jeffrey Sparagana) and any operator, representative, or person affiliated with a charter school operating in Pennsylvania.

2. All correspondence, including email correspondence, between any member of the Executive Team (Reed Lindley, Linda Adams, and Jeffrey Sparagana) and any Pennsylvania legislator or federal legislator, including members of the legislator's staff.

3. Any internal correspondence, including memos and emails, regarding charter schools, between any of the following persons: Reed Lindley, Linda Adams, Jeffrey Sparagana, Pam Bateson, Terri Lampe, and John Armato.

4. Any handouts or Power Point presentations given to legislators related to the Pottstown School District.

That was the end of my request, which I made separately as a school board member and as a citizen.

Transparency is essential as we discuss the future of charter schools and public education in Pottstown. Thank you.