

TO: Board of School Directors

FROM: George W. Ioannidis, Business Manager / Board Secretary

SUBJECT: Meeting Minutes – Directors’ Study Forum

DATE OF MEETING/ May 2, 2011
TIME: 7:12 PM

LOCATION: Educational Service Center

PARTICIPANTS: School Board: Michael Brookhart, Mary Dolheimer,
Brent Hoschar, Cindy Huber, Anne Jones,
Emily Sindlinger, Douglas Stein

District: Karyn Brown, Scott Deisley, George Ioannidis,
Robert Lombardo

Absent: Eric Cable, Stacy Meyer

The Directors’ Study Forum meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Spring Grove Area School District was called to order at 7:12 PM by Mr. Douglas Stein, President. Mr. Stein noted that seven Board members remained present from the voting meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

George Ioannidis, Business Manager, reviewed the approved figures of the proposed 2011-2012 budget, and noted the decrease in revenues and increase in expenditures from the prior year. The proposed budget is posted on the district website. PDE released Spring Grove’s district property tax reduction allocation as \$997,424.44, virtually the same as 2010-2011; however, an increase in homesteads will result in a minor reduction of tax relief per eligible property. Mr. Ioannidis shared that legislation is being proposed to eliminate the use of exceptions without voter referendum, with support from local representative, Seth Grove. Economic furloughs remain on the discussion table. The Board may still choose to repeal the PC/OC tax, with one board member considering Mr. Russo’s suggestion as an option, to include a cap for reevaluation and/or reassessment. Salary freeze considerations will be taken into account prior to final adoption, which is planned for June 6, 2011.

Dr. Lombardo noted that at a recent School Law Update, Representative Ron Miller reminded district administrators of Governor Casey’s decision to remove the growth factor for districts several years ago, which affected 20% of Pennsylvania districts, including Spring Grove. He also spoke to the taxation of Marcellus Shale drilling, with any generated revenue going to the state, not to the local level.

Mary Dolheimer expressed her hope that people are becoming more educated about the financial challenges facing school districts through the budgetary process.

Mr. Brookhart presented proposed 2010-2011 budgetary transfers for discussion. The board will consider approval of the transfers at the next voting meeting on May 16.

Mr. Ioannidis indicated the appointment of Board Treasurer is necessary each May. Mr. Brookhart indicated his consent to continue to serve in this capacity for the 2011-2012 fiscal year, which the board will vote to approve at the next voting meeting.

Mr. Ioannidis provided an update concerning employee flexible spending account options. After further evaluation, he concluded the district will not seek proposals from other vendors, but will likely continue with Security Benefit Trust. Any changes in the implementation of services will be discussed with members of SGEA prior to final determination.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Brent Hoschar presented the 2011-2012 proposed Code of Student Conduct for discussion, indicating the section covering personal communication devices has been revised in keeping with recommended revisions to Policy No. 237. Emily Sindlinger noted that existing policy language indicates cell phones will remain in full off mode during the instructional day. Dr. Scott Deisley, Assistant Superintendent Gr. 7-12, noted the expectation is clear they will continue to remain in full off mode during the instructional day, unless otherwise permitted at teacher discretion. Revision to language would allow students to use cell phones at lunch or text a parent, but would not support the notion of usage during class for taping, texting, etc. Dr. Deisley noted proposed changes were recommended by PSBA and will better accommodate students for the present day.

When asked for comment, Ms. Rosemary Cugliari, High School Principal, shared that students at the High School level are challenged to demonstrate respect for the educational environment and the rights and privacy of individuals within the community. Revising Policy No. 237 will entrust students with this responsibility, and teach them how to use their systems appropriately.

Following lengthy discussion, board consensus was to consider approval of the 2011-2012 Code of Student Conduct at the May 16 voting meeting, with administrators' understanding of the need to follow through with support of teachers' enforcement of the rules associated with the change.

Mr. Hoschar presented policies no. 215, no. 217 and no. 237 for review and discussion. Policy 217 is being revised to open up flexibility in graduation requirements. Following brief discussion of revisions, the three policies will be moved for approval of a first reading at the May voting meeting.

Dr. Lombardo indicated that according to School Code, class size for grades 1-3 cannot exceed 25; class size for grades 4-8 cannot exceed 30. Past practice by the board has been to hire aides prior to class sizes meeting the maximum allowable caseload at the elementary level. While projected enrollment for 2011-2012 does not warrant addressing the issue at present, class sizes are expected to increase as a result of staffing decisions and the board may need to revisit the issue in the future for concerns regarding funding.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Emily Sindlinger presented the 2011-2012 District Assessment Plan for review, indicating no changes from the current year. The board will consider approval of the Assessment Plan at the May 16 voting meeting.

Mrs. Sindlinger presented two major trips for consideration. The board will consider approval of the Senior Trip to Six Flags and the Music Department's 2012 trip to Cleveland, Ohio at the May voting meeting.

Anne Jones presented the marching band proposal for the 2011 season. If approved, the district will realize a savings of \$2,100 over budgeted amounts for the music department. The board will consider approval at the May voting meeting.

Dr. Lombardo indicated two items for the June 6th discussion meeting will be the use of athletic fields for Junior High sports and revenues for admissions to home athletic events.

Anne Jones moved for adjournment at 8:12 PM. The motion, seconded by Cindy Huber, was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

George W. Ioannidis
Business Manager / Board Secretary