

TO: Board of School Directors
FROM: George W. Ioannidis, Business Manager / Board Secretary
SUBJECT: Meeting Minutes – Directors’ Study Forum
DATE OF MEETING/ April 4, 2011
TIME: 8:12 PM
LOCATION: Educational Service Center

PARTICIPANTS:

School Board: Michael Brookhart Eric Cable, Mary Dolheimer,
Brent Hoschar, Cindy Huber, Anne Jones, Stacy Meyer,
Emily Sindlinger

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

Absent: Doug Stein

The Directors’ Study Forum meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Spring Grove Area School District was called to order at 8:12 PM by Mary Dolheimer, Board Vice President. Ms. Dolheimer noted eight board members remained present from the voting meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robin Russo, Heidelberg Township, commended district administrators and level V employees for their request to a wage freeze for 2011-2012. He said teachers should also freeze wages and asked the board to consider decreasing programs and eliminating positions to show seriousness of cutting expenditures. Mr. Russo stated his displeasure with the board’s consideration of repealing the current Per Capita tax and increasing the millage rate by that amount. He stated his disappointment with board approval of an unnecessary technology upgrade, which taxpayers will fund.

Eric Seibel, Jackson Township, thanked district administrators for their willingness to request a wage freeze for 2011-2012. He stated his appreciation for the board approving the technology upgrade, noting his children will benefit from the investment.

Paul Powers, Jackson Township, commended the board for approving the technology upgrade at a substantially lower amount than originally presented, as he understands this approval will eliminate future expenditures related to technology.

Lisa Bahn, Paradise Township, commended the board for making sound decisions, seeing firsthand through her children’s use of online resources and texts at home how district technology supports the educational process. Mrs. Bahn believes this will translate to a decrease in textbook costs.

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPOSE

Dr. Lombardo reminded board members that while approval of the technology upgrade was critical for supporting programs, meeting reporting requirements and prolonging the life of existing hardware, there will always remain a need to fix, update and repair systems and make program adjustments. He commended George Ioannidis and Chris Enck for their work to present a package adjustment with costs substantially lower than original quotes presented.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dr. Lombardo asked the board to give direction on 2011-2012 budgetary line item reductions prior to bringing back for consideration and request for approval at a future voting meeting. The state reimbursement figure remains an unknown and they are not opening the matter to discussion. They are not likely to reduce proposed cuts, stated Dr. Lombardo, who indicated that if Governor Corbett decides to tax Marcelus Shale drilling, things could look different.

Dr. Lombardo noted administrative wage freezes will have an impact on expenditures presented earlier in the proposed budget, and teachers currently are discussing a wage freeze as well. Dr. Scott Deisley, Assistant Superintendent 7-12, noted at present, economic furloughs are not an option for districts. Spring Grove may furlough a teacher under two conditions: a decrease in enrollment or elimination of program(s). Dr. Lombardo does not see a need to discuss eliminating programs at this time. Board members discussed the possibility of cutting non-essential positions, such as Coaching, Drivers Ed, and the School Resource Officer. The administration will include these, as well as other additional scenarios, and bring back to the board at the April and May meetings. Final budget adoption is necessary by June 30, 2011 and proposed adoption is required at least 30 days prior.

Mr. Mark Czapp, Support Services Director, shared information concerning the Energy Star rating at the High School and Spring Grove Elementary. A combined savings of \$579,442 at these buildings has been realized over a two-year period. Mr. Czapp shared statewide statistics and the district's benchmarking achievements for energy conservation, and displayed the PASBO Award of Excellence in School Facilities for 2010, recently awarded to Mark. Mr. Ioannidis recognized him for his assiduous effort and dedication to the district.

Following brief discussion concerning upcoming meeting topics, board members requested the Citizen's Advisory Council Final Report be included on the June 6 discussion meeting agenda.

Mr. Ioannidis noted in light of the current budget status, the administration does not recommend moving forward with steps to pursue a Solar Energy Project at this time. Discussions concerning the project are currently on hold.

Mr. Cable requested discussion concerning existing procedure for use of district facilities for funeral services. Dr. Lombardo shared information received from district psychologists and Mr. Stephen Russell, Solicitor, and stated the administration does not recommend a change to language in policy. Following brief discussion, board consensus was to support this recommendation.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Karyn Brown, Special Education Director, shared a presentation concerning the transition of Neurological Support students from LIU-operated classrooms to Spring Grove special education classrooms beginning with 2011-2012. Currently, parents of 13 students out of 22 enrolled in the program have consented to the transition. Anticipated savings are upwards of \$220,000, some of which will be budgeted to cover one new teacher necessary at the elementary level to support the program. Ms. Brown noted that while most Intermediate Units have ceased offering Neurological Support services to districts, LIU #12 remains an IU that still does.

Kyle Showalter, High School Music instructor, presented Tonal Harmony Music textbooks for discussion. Mr. Showalter indicated currently, workbooks used in Music Theory I, II and III are disposable and date back to 1963. Purchase of these textbooks will enhance learning and save money with reuse by students year after year. Potential exists for an AP Music course following introduction of this curriculum. Textbooks come with audio file CDs – and licensures would need purchased for student use. After brief discussion, the board will consider approval at the April voting meeting.

Emily Sindlinger presented one overnight trip for discussion. The board will consider approval of Bruce Weaver's trip to Indiana University of Pennsylvania to observe and gather information on driving simulators at the April voting meeting. Dr. Deisley noted that funds received from Officer Tome's widow are used to support the classroom component of the Drivers Ed course; this equipment will help in that classroom.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Brent Hoschar presented Policies No. 122.1, No. 601 and No. 619 for review. Following brief discussion, the board will consider approval of a first reading for these policies at the April 18 voting meeting.

PLANNING

Mary Dolheimer noted planning items for future discussion include the Flexible Spending Account and E-Tech Plan Update. Ms. Dolheimer noted an executive session would be held for legal purposes immediately following adjournment of the discussion meeting.

Dr. Deisley congratulated Nathan Frank, High School Assistant Principal, for his article entitled "Rallying Behind At-Risk Freshman" recently published in ASCD's April 2011 Educational Leadership magazine, a nationally recognized publication.

Eric Cable motioned for adjournment at 9:30 PM. Cindy Huber seconded the motion, unanimously approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

George W. Ioannidis
Business Manager / Board Secretary