

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LANCASTER SCHOOL BOARD
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Special Meeting – Adoption of 2009-2010 Final Budget and Alternative Education
June 30, 2009

The School District of Lancaster School Board held a special meeting for the purpose of adopting a final budget for the 2009-2010 fiscal year and other matters to come before the Board on Tuesday, June 30, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the Scheffey Board Room, 1020 Lehigh Ave., Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The following members of the Board were present:

Mr. Patrick Snyder, President
Mr. Michael Rowen, Vice President
Mrs. Barbara Boben
Mrs. Marta Howell
Mrs. Stacey Marten
Mrs. Jacqueline McCain
Dr. Nenita Faller-Miller
Mrs. Linda Troublefield Owens
Ms. Janelle M. Simms

Officers: Mr. Pedro Rivera, Superintendent
Mr. Matt Przywara, Treasurer
Mrs. Rita Balogh, Secretary

Legal Counsel: Mr. Robert Frankhouser, Solicitor

6/30/2009: CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Snyder. Roll call was answered by: *Directors Boben, Howell, Marten, McCain, Miller, Owens, Rowen, Simms, and Snyder – 9; Absent – 0.*

6/30/2009: PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

Superintendent Rivera recognized Mrs. Patricia Schreibeis, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, for her service to the District and for being such a phenomenal resource for him. Even though she is retiring and this is the last day of her career, Mrs. Schreibeis was still present right up to the last minute for this meeting. She will be sorely missed!

6/30/2009: ADOPTION OF 2009-2010 PROPOSED FINAL BUDGET: Matt Przywara, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the budget. Because the state budget is still undecided, there is \$6.2 million in state funding at risk to the District. He reminded the Board that he previously reviewed alternate plans with them, and we have a plan for every possible scenario. The administration's recommendation is for a 3.52% tax increase (an increase of .79 mills to 23.26 millage rate) to provide the revenue required to meet the \$162,047,614 budget expenditures.

In response to President Snyder's question concerning when the District receives the largest portion of money from the state, Mr. Przywara explained there are five payments from the state, but the largest comes at the end of the year on May 31. President Snyder commented that any cuts the District may need to make must be in areas that would have the smallest impact in classrooms.

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENTS

**ADOPTION OF FINAL
2009-2010 BUDGET**

**ADOPTION OF FINAL
2009-2010 BUDGET
(cont.)**

Director Rowen asked if we have a feel for how the dilemma with the state budget may affect other area non-urban districts, and Superintendent Rivera and Mr. Przywara responded that other districts have large fund balances and that over 40% of our District's budget is funded by the state. No other area district is nearly that much.

Director Owens questioned if other districts are cutting positions or freezing wages, and Superintendent Rivera said that even though he has heard some talk about freezing salaries, no other area districts have done it yet that he is aware of.

Director Boben asked what other districts are doing in anticipation of the PSERS dramatic rate increase in 2012. Last year the contribution percentage was 7.13% and many districts are staying at that rate and banking the difference according to Mr. Przywara, but the percentage increase will have a much greater impact on our budget than other districts. Superintendent Rivera added that there has been a recent move to raise the maximum allowed for school districts to hold in reserves because of this issue.

Director Rowen reiterated his position that he is against setting aside funds to reduce the impact of the 2012 PSERS increase. The state legislature has created the problem and needs to resolve it.

Director Marten disagreed, stating that even though we are saddled with the PSERS issue, to completely ignore it is irresponsible. On the other hand, the Board must be responsible to the community. Even though a rebate will help homeowners, there is no help for apartment dwellers. She favors a compromise between the administration's recommended 3.52% increase and the allowable Act 1 index of 5.8% with a .99 millage increase.

In the ensuing discussion, several Board members stated their opinion and debated the benefits and disadvantages of increasing taxes beyond the 3.52% required to balance the budget.

Director Rowen made a motion to adopt a budget for 2009-2010 with a 23.46 millage rate, an increase of 4.41%, which would cost the average homeowner (assessed at \$100,000) an additional \$99. The motion was seconded by Director Owens, who then asked Solicitor Bob Frankhouser if the motion must include a stipulation to reserve an amount for the future PSERS increase or other expenditures requiring Board approval. Mr. Frankhouser responded that within the school code, the Board can set a reserve, but there is no requirement to do so. The motion was defeated by the following vote: *Aye: Directors Marten, Owens, and Rowen – 3; Nay: Directors Boben, Howell, McCain, Miller, Simms, and Snyder – 6.*

Director Owens stated that with a 3.52% increase in the budget, she won't vote to allow any cuts that would directly impact teachers and classrooms.

Superintendent Rivera responded that before we would get to a point where we would cut teachers, we would cut every professional development for that teacher, including areas like student interventions and supervision of teachers. Any cuts of that nature still affect the quality of education.

Director Boben's motion to adopt a 2009-2010 budget with a 3.52% increase as proposed by the administration (23.26 millage rate for a total budget of \$162,047,614) was seconded by Director Simms. The motion was approved as follows: *Aye: Directors Boben, Howell, McCain Marten, Miller, Simms, and Snyder – 7; Nay: Directors Owens, and Rowen – 2.* Before casting her vote, Director Marten commented that although she was voting in favor of the 3.52% increase, she didn't feel that it was the best choice.

6/30/2009: DISCUSSION/ACTION:

Mr. Todd Bock, Senior Vice President, and Mr. Joe Carter, Assistant Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, of Camelot provided a PowerPoint presentation on their alternative education program. They emphasized their two transitional schools and accelerated high school in the School District of Philadelphia.

In response to questions from Director McCain concerning restraint methods used, Mr. Carter said that all employees except the housekeeper and custodian receive 40 hours of training in the "handle with care" system. Restraints are a last resort and are only used in the event of danger or harm to self or others or due to major property damage. Administrators are certified instructors.

Director Boben asked how many students the program would serve. Superintendent Rivera said up to 100 could be served; currently 73 students are at Buehrle.

Matt Przywara observed this program could yield \$275,000 in savings, but this figure was not included in the budget approved by the Board tonight.

Director Miller wanted to hear from someone who had visited the programs in Philadelphia. Carole Clancy, Supervising Coordinator for Special Education, stated she toured the Excel accelerated high school and Shallcross transitional school. She was impressed with the positive displays she observed and felt very comfortable about the programs.

President Snyder asked if students are allowed to stay in the programs if they choose.

Director Owens asked how long it takes for students to get into the upper echelons of behavior and student government. Mr. Bock responded the time varies based on behavior, but it can be a month or more. The time may be accelerated in a new program.

Responding to Director McCain's question about the possible length of a contract, Superintendent Rivera reported he would suggest a year, but we must consider what is best for kids. He noted the proposed accountability measures which he distributed earlier.

Director Owens observed the program teaches more than the core subjects. Instruction is also provided in art and music to educate the whole child.

Director Miller asked if an external evaluation could be provided through Franklin & Marshall. Mr. Przywara stated the accountability measures are easy to measure, so

**ADOPTION OF FINAL
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(cont.)**

DISCUSSION/ACTION
Alternative Education
Program

the evaluation could be done in-house.

Director Howell made a motion to direct the administration to negotiate a contract with Camelot to bring to the July meeting for Board approval. Following a second by Director Rowen, the motion was approved as follows: *Aye: Directors Boben, Howell, Marten, McCain, Miller, Owens, Rowen, Simms, and Snyder – 9; Nay – 0.*

6/30/2009: NEW BUSINESS: None

6/30/2009: OLD BUSINESS: None

6/30/2009: INFORMATION: None

6/30/2009: ADJOURNMENT: On a motion by Director Owens, seconded by Director McCain, President Snyder adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m. following a unanimous voice vote.

Attest:

Rita Balogh
Board Secretary

DISCUSSION/ACTION
(cont.)
Alternative Education
Program (cont.)

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT