



# POTTSGROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Held February 12, 2013  
Summary of Key Discussion & Actions Taken:

The Pottsgrove School District Board of Directors held its bi-monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 12, 2013 at Pottsgrove Middle School.

During the **Education Report**, the following was presented/discussed:

## **Student Recognition-**

- Middle School News:
  - Middle School Principal Dr. Ziegler congratulated the PGMS Lego Robotics Team for their Second Place win at the PA Regional Lego Robotics Championship (The PGMS team placed second out of 42 teams from across the Tri-State area.)
  - Dr. Ziegler congratulated The Future City Competition Team for their Special Recognition Award and their first year of competition, and the Team thanked Mr. David Faulkner and Mr. Jim Kaiser for their generous donation to the Future City Team.

**Middle School Technology** – Parts of the education report last evening focused on the technology education program at Pottsgrove Middle School. As the district establishes a new Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) initiative at Pottsgrove High School, it is also exploring options to enhance and update what is already a well-established program at PGMS. The STEM initiative features hands-on activities and provides real-life context for skills and concepts learned in math and science.

**District Comprehensive Plan** – The Bucks County Intermediate Unit presented an overview of the new Pennsylvania Department of Education Comprehensive Planning Process that replaces current “strategic” planning. It requires all districts to have a three-year plan with general goals and strategies. The Comprehensive Planning process is to kick-off with a committee meeting scheduled for March 5, 2013 beginning at 4:00 PM in the district office. Parents, Rick Rabinowitz and Marisa Neesen were appointed by the Board as parent representatives. The Board is still looking for two business community representatives (if interested email Shellie Feola at [sfeola@pgsd.org](mailto:sfeola@pgsd.org)).

**Bond Sale Results** - Jamie Doyle from PFM presented the results of a Bond Sale that took place on Tuesday morning. The purpose of the sale was to refinance some older, higher interest bonds. She informed the board that Standard & Poors indicated the district’s bond rating increased from AA- to AA. This is the second upgrade the district has received since 2005. Upgrades have been rare in this down economy. Standard and Poors cited maintaining strong reserves; maintaining a capital projects fund outside of the general fund, and reserving funds for increased pension costs as the reasons for the upgrade. The District’s bond sale resulted in a savings of approximately \$225,000. This savings will be recognized in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

In addition to the regular monthly reports and business, the **Board took action on the following:**

## **1. Preliminary Budget Adoption.**

The Board adopted a preliminary budget with an increase of 1.296 mills or 3.6%. Property taxes were budgeted at the maximum level permitted without seeking exceptions, and the District planned to use \$550,000 of the funds it set aside to help defray the rising cost of retirement contributions. This action does not commit the District to raising taxes by 3.6% (which represents an increase of about \$156/year on the average home with an assessed value of \$120,000.) The Board adopted the preliminary budget with the maximum tax increase to



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provide flexibility during the budget process. There are many unknowns including the amount of funding the State will provide. The budget will be constantly evolving until the final version is approved in June.

## **2. Delinquent Earned Income Tax.**

The Board approved the Act 192 Schedule of Costs for delinquent earned income tax collections for 2013.

## **3. In addition to the regular personnel report, the following personnel action was approved:**

The appointment of Nancy Miller was approved as the District Wellness Coordinator at a cost of \$2,000 for one (1) year. This position is contingent upon grant funding from the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation and is no cost to the district.

In addition to the regular monthly reports and business **the Board discussed the following new business:**

### **1. Facilities Committee Meeting Report**

Following a brief tour of the Middle School, the Facilities Committee discussed the status of a number of current projects including:

- High School Feasibility Study
- Chilled Water Plant project at the High School
- Roof replacement and sanitary sewer projects for the High School
- Installation of a new scoreboard in the High School Gym

In addition, the committee reviewed a proposal to install a new scoreboard on the Varsity Softball field at the High School to improve equity between boys and girls facilities. They also reviewed a list of proposed capital projects planned for the 2013-2014 school year. These projects will be discussed with the full Board during future budget presentations.

### **2. Policy Committee Report - Revision – Field Trip Policy # 121**

The policy committee presented that it had met on January 22, 2013 and reviewed Field Trip Policy (#121) due to inconsistencies and confusion surrounding costs (what is paid for by students vs. the district) for various student competitions. After lengthy conversation and a thorough review of the district's current practices, the committee recommended the following:

- State & Local Competitions: The district will continue to fund transportation and advisor costs (including lodging) for local competitions while the student is responsible for their entry fees, food, lodging and any other expenses.
- National Competitions: The district will pay for all costs.
- Clarification on Organizations Recognized for Competitions: The above competition guidelines will apply to the following recognized groups: PMEA, Mock Trial, DECA, TSA, Academic Quiz Team, Science Olympiad, Future City and Lego Robotics. Any additions to this list of recognized groups must be approved by the Board of School Directors in advance.

The full board entertained the committee's recommendations. The revisions to this policy will be on the next board agenda for approval.



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### 3. Gateway to College Program

The Board gave support to proceed in partnership with the Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) in the Gateway to College Program. This is a degree completion program for 16 to 21 year olds who have dropped out of high school or who are significantly behind in credits and are unlikely to graduate. The program allows them to earn college credit while getting their high school diploma. The program allows them to earn college credit while getting their high school diploma. MCCC and its partner districts are actively seeking grant/scholarship funding to offset these tuition costs for the districts.

### 4. Draft Calendar for 2013-14

The administration presented a DRAFT 2013-2014 district calendar for the Board of Education to review. The calendar is similar to those in years past. The first student day is scheduled for August 27, 2013 and the last is scheduled June 10, 2014. After some discussion, the Board of Directors preliminarily endorsed the calendar draft but will wait for final approval until after the Superintendent discusses the calendar with the PGEA to receive their input. The calendar will be on the board agenda for approval at an upcoming board meeting.

### 5. Superintendent Visits PTO Meetings

Ms. Feola reported that as part of her entry plan, she and/or Dr. Davies visited every PTO meeting during the months of January and February. The objective for each meeting was to better understand what is working in the Pottsgrove Schools as well as some areas that may need more attention. Several themes emerged from the conversations with parents including a need for the district to do a better job communicating “need to know” information as well as positive events and activities that are occurring in the district; a need for a better understanding about how the Board of Education makes decisions; and a need to build “community” among all stakeholders across the district. Ms. Feola stated that she is working with her cabinet to review/revise the current communications plan in order to address the needs expressed by parents during these focus group sessions, and she and her staff will continue to make improvements for the benefit of the students and parents in the district.

An **executive session** to be held immediately following the regular meeting for personnel and negotiations was announced.

#### Upcoming Dates:

02/18/13 – School Closed – President’s Day

02/19/13 – Staff Development – No Students

02/26/13 – School Board Meeting @ 7:30 p.m. – District Office