



POTTSGROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Held February 11, 2014

Summary of Key Discussion and Actions Taken:

The Pottsgrove School District Board of Directors held its twice monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 at Pottsgrove Middle School.

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

We Go Together – Mrs. Carole Bean and selected cast members performed a short excerpt from the Middle School's upcoming production of Grease. The middle school version of the musical will be presented on three nights, February 27, 28, and March 1, 2014.

Gateway to College – Keima Sheriff, director of the Gateway to College (GtC) program, along with a few Pottsgrove GtC students thanked the board for their support of the Gateway to College Program, a nation wide drop out prevention program. Pottsgrove School District entered into a partnership with Montgomery County Community College in May 2014 for this intensive reverse dual enrollment program for students who are credit discrepant and at risk of dropping out of school.

HS Renovation Update – Representatives from KCBA Architects presented an overview of the High School Renovation project including a focus on items that have caused potential cost increases. As indicated at a previous meeting, the projected cost of the project has increased by approximately \$2 million from the total presented in May 2013 at the conclusion of the Feasibility Study. A portion of this increase is due to normal cost escalation that occurs during the design process. However, most of the increase was due to the identification of educationally driven improvements that were not contemplated in the Feasibility Study. The District is also considering seeking an Alternative and Clean Energy (ACE) grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. This grant would require the High School Building to attain LEED Gold status. Attaining this status will result in a highly efficient building with lower operating costs. The grant could provide up to \$2 million to offset a portion of the costs incurred to attain LEED Gold status. For more information on the project, please visit our website www.pgisd.org.

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

Preliminary Budget 2014 - 2015 - The Board adopted its preliminary budget for the 2014-2015 school year. This action was required to be taken prior to February 20, 2014 to comply with state regulations. The budget calls for expenditures of \$63,589,888. In its current state, the budget calls for a tax increase of 3.85% which would result in an increase of approximately \$170 to the average taxpayer with a home assessed at \$120,000. This is the first step in a lengthy budget process that must be concluded by June 30, 2014. Budget discussions will be incorporated in the regularly scheduled board meetings throughout the remainder of the school year. The Board's goal is to reduce the tax increase as much as possible prior to passing a final budget.

Telecommunication Services – The Board authorized the renewal of contracts for telecommunication services with XO Communications and for a fiber optic Internet lease with Sunesys, LLC. Both of these services qualify for partial reimbursement through the federal E-Rate program.

HS Chiller Project – The Board approved a change order in the amount of \$3,239.08 for the HS Chiller project and also approved payments for construction services on this project and the Sanitary Sewer Replacement project totaling \$23,101.85.

MCIU Budgets 2014-2015 – The Board approved 4 separate budgets for the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit for the 2014-2015 school year. The total of these budgets for Pottsgrove School District will be \$31,375 which represents an increase of 1.26%. This does not include any special education services that are purchased from the Intermediate Unit.



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Assessment Appeal - The Board authorized Fox, Rothschild to execute a settlement stipulation for an assessment appeal related to the Ravens Claw property. The settlement will result in a refund of approximately \$26,850.

2013-2014 Calendar Revisions - The Board approved an amendment to the 2013-2014 school district calendar which included converting March 10, April 16 and April 17 to student instructional days and utilizing two of the currently incorporated snow/emergency days on June 11 and June 12 for student instruction. The revised calendar and accompanying letter to stakeholders will be available on the district website, www.pgsd.org.

The personnel report included approval of a number of professional and support personnel actions.

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

- 1. Calendar Draft 2014-2015** – The Board discussed a recommended draft 2014-15 calendar. The draft will be posted to the District website and will be on the Board’s agenda at their next meeting on February 25.
- 2. Budget Update** - Mr. Nester provided an update on the Governor’s budget that was presented on February 4, 2014. There were some positive items included in the proposal including a new revenue stream entitled the *Ready to Learn Block Grant*. This grant would provide an additional \$241 million to districts across the state for use in specific areas. In addition, the Governor proposed a \$20 million increase in special education funding. If this comes to fruition, it will be the first increase in this high cost area in 6 years. He also proposed \$10 million specifically for districts developing hybrid-learning opportunities.

The Governor’s budget proposal is based on a number of significant assumptions that have not yet been enacted. This raises questions on the viability of his proposal. The Governor’s budget assumes that some form of pension reform is approved as part of the budget process and that legislature authorizes more stringent caps on rate increases for the state run pension systems. Pension reform was discussed last year, but was unable to gather a consensus in the legislature. While the imposition of additional rate caps would help districts in the short run, it would only make the problem larger over time. In addition, the Governor’s proposal anticipates significant increases in a number of revenue streams, some of which do not exist yet, and the use of one-time revenues to balance the budget. One major item that was not discussed as part of the Governor’s budget was the insufficient funding of the Plan Con process that assists districts in funding of school construction projects. Pottsgrove is one of many districts that have completed construction projects approved by the Department of Education but are still awaiting funding. Funding for the Ringing Rocks Elementary School project was requested in 2010, but the District has yet to receive any funding for the project. The total owed to districts across the state is estimated at \$1.2 billion.

The Governor’s budget proposal has not been factored into the Pottsgrove’s preliminary budget. Administration is currently studying the Governor’s proposal and evaluating the District’s budget to identify areas where the potential new funds can be used most efficiently.

Upcoming Dates:

- 02/11/14 – Athletics/Co-Curricular Activities Committee Meeting @ 6:30 – Middle School Library
- 02/11/14 - School Board Meeting @ 7:30 p.m. – Middle School
- 02/14/14 – Staff Day – No Students
- 02/17/14 – Presidents’ Day – No School
- 02/18/14 – Curriculum/Technology/Student Affairs Committee Meeting @ 7:00 – District Office
- 02/24/14 - Math Night (High School & Middle School @ 7:00 – High School Library
- 02/25/14 – Operations/Facilities Committee Meeting @ 6:30 – High School Library
- 02/25/14 – Policy Committee Meeting @ 6:30 – District Office
- 02/25/14 – School Board Meeting @ 7:30 p.m. – District Office