

COCALICO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Denver, PA

A special meeting of the Cocalico School Board was called to order on Monday, November 7, 2016 by the President, Mr. Allen Dissinger, who welcomed all those in attendance.

Board Members Present

John Lorah	Douglas Graybill	Desiree Wagner
Juanita Fox	Randall Renninger	Allen Dissinger
Richard Brenner	Barry Harting	

Administrators Present

Dr. Ella Musser	Dr. Stephen Melnyk	Dr. Nathan Van Deusen
Chris Irvine	Sherri Stull	Anthony DiMatteo

Guests Present

Michael Hession	Terry Arment	Michael Gensemer
Sandy Flory	Chris Flory	Regina Hammer
Rod Redcay	Todd Stewart	Dave Mackley
John Palm	Carol Roland	Sean Post

Mr. Dissinger called the meeting to order. Introductions were made around the room. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Ella Musser, Superintendent, who introduced Mr. Michael Hession, Denver Borough Manager. Mr. Hession provided the definition of a School Resource Officer (SRO) and listed the duties associated with the position. He explained that an SRO acts as a liaison between the community and the school district he/she serves. He spoke of the various benefits of having an SRO who could assist with issues at school and at home. Police Chief Terry Arment of East Cocalico Police Department shared conversations he had with both a current SRO and a former SRO. They told him they completed a 40-hour course that provided training on law enforcement and mentoring. Chief Arment stated that the SROs would begin their day before the start of school. After arrival of the students, they would travel between school buildings, doing external and internal building checks and showing a presence in the hallways, at lunch, and at athletic events. He added that over the summer months when the students are off from school, the SRO would take vacation time or use up comp time accumulated during the school year.

Mr. Hession further explained that there is currently a Safe Schools Grant offered through the PA Department of Education that may help cover the cost of an SRO, at least partially. According to Mr. Hession, a grant of \$60,000, if awarded, would be available in the first year of hire, and \$30,000 would be available for the second year. He estimates the total yearly cost for an SRO at between \$90,000 and \$100,000. Additionally, the Denver Borough might be amicable to splitting part of the cost with the District. Mr. Rod Redcay, Denver Borough Mayor, spoke of the respect he had for the District staff and

administrative team, citing their caring and concern for the students. He stated, however, that he feels an SRO might help parents feel their children are safer while in school, and may even help to bring back students currently enrolled in cyber charter schools or those being homeschooled. Mr. Michael Gensemer, Denver Borough Council Member, expressed disappointment that the District did not assist in keeping the regional police department together. He also referenced a meeting that included discussion regarding drugs and loitering in downtown Denver. Mr. Doug Mackley referenced his acquaintance with a former SRO at Ephrata Area School District. He continued by saying we all need to teach kids that police officers are not the enemy; times have changed and we need to change with it.

Dr. Musser provided handouts clarifying the number of reportable incidences within the District that required police response versus what the East Cocalico Police Department had reported. It was noted that discrepancies existed due to differences in how the District is required to report incidents from how the police are required to make their report. In addition, the police department included incidents occurring after school hours and on the weekend, not necessarily connected to school. Dr. Musser also shared a listing of Drug Awareness & Prevention Supports provided to students by the District which include the following: school counselors, home and school visitor, SADD club advisor, student assistance program (SAP), site-based counseling, probation officer, extensive health curriculum, extracurricular activities, and a wide variety of additional school programs and services at each building level. Dr. Musser commented that an SRO might adversely affect the school culture and that the District would not want to give up a position in order to free up funds to hire an SRO. She then cited an article supporting the claim that an SRO can have a negative impact a district. Mr. Chris Irvine, High School Principal, stated that the District has a great relationship with the East Cocalico Police. But he added that student incidents have decreased significantly, most likely due to the trust the students share with staff, and the presence of the Student Assistance Program and other counseling options. He reported that discipline is down, and feels mental health issues tend to be more of a problem.

Mr. Dissinger reiterated Denver Borough's vision of the SRO relationship with the District, its cost, and how the position would be supported financially. Mr. Douglas Graybill, School Board Member, clarified the number of hours the SRO would work due to the school year being 180 days. He inquired if the summer time could be used for Borough work rather than charging the District while the students are off-campus. Mr. Hession stated that Warwick School District splits the coverage cost and calendar year with the police force. School Board Member Randall Renninger shared that he felt what was being described was more of a security guard roaming the halls. Chief Arment responded that an SRO would additionally offer mentoring and counseling, complimenting resources the school already has in place. Mr. Hession added that the police department desires to build relationships with the students. Dr. Stephen Melnyk, Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education, spoke about how being greeted by an individual with a gun and going through a metal detector changes how an individual feels when entering a building. He added that 40 hours of training for an SRO is not nearly enough to address underlying student needs. The District has personnel

whom are properly trained in their roles. Dr. Nathan Van Deusen, Assistant to the Superintendent for Elementary Education, stated that he doesn't know what the SRO would do at the elementary level. At the high school level, students reported high levels of satisfaction with teachers' level of caring and how safe they feel at school. Dr. Van Deusen further shared that Cocalico students are doing well academically, and that he is impressed by what he sees at the Middle School and High School. School Board Member Barry Harting shared that he appreciates the police force and what they do, but doesn't feel an SRO is warranted at this time. He's concerned an SRO may change the culture of the schools. Mr. Dissinger then closed the conversation by requesting the Borough follow up with hard copies of the information provided at the meeting. He also stated that the Board would review the information presented.

Mrs. Sherri Stull, Business Manager, introduced Ms. Carol Roland and Mr. Sean Post from Trout, Ebersole and Groff, LLP, who shared the results of the recent audit of Cocalico School District's financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016. They explained the audit process and testing procedures, and reported that the firm had issued an unmodified opinion, stating the financial statements of Cocalico School District present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the District as of June 30, 2016. Ms. Roland reviewed various government-wide and fund financial statements, and also explained the reconciliations between the two sets. She continued that 70% of the District's revenues come from local sources (mainly taxes), while 29% is received from the State and 1% from the Federal government. On the expenditure side, salaries and related benefits accounted for the majority of the increase over the prior year. Ms. Roland continued by reviewing various schedules and the Notes to the Financial Statements included in the Annual Financial Report. She also explained the impact of new GASB Standards 72, 74 and 75 on the District's financial statements, citing that their primary objective is to improve accounting and financial reporting by state and local governments for investments and postemployment benefits other than pensions. Additionally, it was announced that only one federal program was required to be audited for 2015-2016. Mr. Post concluded the presentation by explaining the audit letters, including the letter to the Board, and the audit firm's recommendation for implementation of a Business Continuity Plan.

Under miscellaneous items, Dr. Musser shared that the District had received positive feedback from the Ministerium meeting held November 2nd: the District's Special Education Plan was approved by the PA Department of Education; District water sources were tested for lead, now awaiting results; in the news, a transgender case to go to the Supreme Court; two recent newspaper articles featuring the Middle School Social Studies Department's mock election; the Cocalico Eagles football team is headed to the playoffs; and Cocalico student Jamie Zamrin won the District 3 Cross Country Championship. In closing, Dr. Musser expressed her appreciation for the School Board.

Time was given for questions and answers after each presentation. There being no more business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

Sherril L. Stull
Secretary