

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
NOVEMBER 26, 2024

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conducted a virtual and in person Board meeting on Tuesday, November 26, 2024. This meeting was recorded.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Dan Santia, Board President.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Santia.

Roll call by the secretary followed. Those Directors in attendance were:

Anitre' Bell
Carla Buxton
Daniel Caton
Victoria Gill
Anissa Klessner
Jeanette Miller
Bethany Pistorius
Daniel Santia
Lindsay Zupsic

Also in attendance were: Dr. Jeffrey Beltz, Superintendent, Deborah Engelman, Business Administrator; Krisha Dimascio, Solicitor; Nancy Barber, Secretary; Joe Lamenza, James Cassell, and Donna Steff, Principals; Dr. Joel Roth, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and visitors.

Good News in our School was presented by Mr. Lamenza from the Senior High School and Mr. Cassell from the elementary schools. Copies of each report are attached to these minutes.

An Executive Session was held prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel. This announcement is being made to be in compliance with Act 84 of 1986, Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law, as amended.

MOTION #1

By Victoria Gill, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, to approve the agenda as written.

Mr. Santia asked for approval of minutes.

MOTION #2

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the October 22, 2024 Business meeting and the November 12, 2024, Board Work Meeting Minutes. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #3

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the Financial Reports consisting of the Tax Collection, Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements, for September. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Dr. Roth provided an overview of the District's efforts to enhance curricular consistency, establish clear parameters, and ensure vertical alignment across grade levels. He emphasized the importance of instruction and accountability in achieving these goals. The District analyzes data to evaluate student performance by comparing current results to previous District data, as well as benchmarking against neighboring districts and state-wide metrics. While acknowledging room for improvement, Dr. Roth highlighted the administrators' satisfaction with the ongoing growth demonstrated by students.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS

Effective October 12, 2021, a maximum of thirty minutes total will be reserved during the Board meeting for community members who request to speak. At any time, the Board may allow additional time for the visitors portion of the Board meeting.

Whether the community member is participating virtually, or in-person, the community member will:

- State their name and township of residence
- Have up to three minutes to make a statement and/or ask a question to the Board
- Only be able to speak once during the visitors portion of the board meeting
- Have their time begin when the individual begins to speak

It is recommended that community members wishing to speak during the visitors portion email the Board Secretary prior to the board meeting, however the online chat will be monitored during the visitors portion of the meeting for anyone wishing to speak.

A response may be given during the meeting, however, it is also possible that no response be provided during the Board meeting. The Board will instruct the Superintendent, the Business Administrator, and/or the Solicitor to either respond to the inquiry or do further research and report back to the Board and/or the resident. For any question that requires a response, the District will contact the individual directly to respond or will share responses at the following Board meeting.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, May and Ella Taylor, Katie and Eva Brunton, and Aislynn Patrick, students in the District, addressed the Board with heartfelt statements regarding their active involvement in the annual Hookstown Fair, held each year in mid-August. The students emphasized the cultural and personal significance of the fair, noting its role in fostering community engagement and providing valuable learning experiences. They expressed concern that the fair's timing often coincides with the start of the school year, leading them to face a difficult choice between attending the fair and participating in the important first few days of school.

The students respectfully requested that the Board consider adjusting the academic calendar to delay the start of the school year, allowing them to fully engage in both the fair and the beginning of the academic term. They highlighted the importance of these early school days in setting the tone for the year and establishing connections with teachers and peers. The Board thanked the students for their thoughtful and passionate presentation and acknowledged the value of balancing educational priorities with community traditions.

Deanna Hiltz commended the students who spoke at the Board meeting for their eloquent and passionate presentation to the Board regarding their participation in the Hookstown Fair. She praised the students for their poise and advocacy, noting the compelling case they made for adjusting the school calendar to accommodate the fair.

Mrs. Hiltz also took a moment to recognize the students and staff involved in the recent production of *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*, applauding their hard work and talent. She remarked that the production was exceptional and that everyone involved did an amazing job. Additionally, Mrs. Hiltz acknowledged the departure of Mr. Toporski, the current director of the production, and expressed her staunch support for Sarah Bober to be appointed as the new director for next year's production, emphasizing her confidence in Ms. Bober's leadership and abilities.

Jason Powell addressed the Board to express his concerns regarding a perceived lack of support from certain Board members for the residents of Independence Township. Mr. Powell voiced his belief that not all Board members were fully representing or advocating for the interests of the township's community and stated that Independence Township should leave the Hopewell Area School District. He specifically criticized a Board member, though the details of his concerns were not fully elaborated. The Board acknowledged Mr. Powell's remarks, noting his concerns for the record.

Krishna Dimascio, solicitor, addressed the Board following Jason Powell's comments, cautioning against engaging in a direct response to his remarks. She emphasized that Board members are volunteers who dedicate their time and efforts to serve the community. Attorney Dimascio reminded those in attendance of the importance of maintaining respectful dialogue and the need to focus on the collective work of the Board in supporting the District.

Committee Discussion and Recommendations

Education/Curriculum/Instruction by Lindsay Zupsic, Chair**MOTION #4**

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the request of Mr. Katkich for the Junior High School Student Council to attend Education Days at Cedar Point on Tuesday, May 27, 2025. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #5

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the request of Dr. Kartychak for the Senior High School to host Beaver County Poetry Slam on Friday, April 4, 2025. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #6

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved Amara Stewart, a student at Fairleigh Dickinson University, to complete her field experience at Hopewell High School from January 13, 2025 through January 17, 2025. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #7

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Anitre Bell, approved the request of Dr. Kartychak for the Senior High School to host a unified robotics competition at Hopewell High School on January 31, 2025. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #8

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Anitre Bell, approved Nicole Tomasko, a student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, to complete her student teaching in the spring at the Junior High School under the supervision of Jolene Blyzwick. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Athletics by Mr. Caton, Chair**MOTION #9**

By Dan Caton, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the PIAA cooperative sponsorship agreement between the Hopewell Area School District and the Ambridge Area School District in Boys Varsity Tennis for the 2024-2025 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Buildings and Grounds by Dan Caton, Chair**MOTION #10**

By Dan Caton, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the disposal of broken stage at Hopewell Elementary School. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #11

By Dan Caton, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the disposal of/recycle the choral risers at the Senior High School. New risers have been purchased at the Senior High School. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Finance and Budget by Lindsay Zupsic, Chair**MOTION #12**

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Jeanette Miller, approved items (1) and (2) and to ratify item (3) as presented, in accordance with the School Board's agreement for grouping items in a single motion. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

1. General Fund List of Bills in the amount of \$1,306,195.50
2. Cafeteria Fund List of Bills in the amount of \$120,577.70
3. Payments to be ratified in the amount of \$1,324,737.33

MOTION #13

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the request of Joshua Burkert and Jordan Perille to purchase parcel 65-054-0116-000-01-1 located in Hopewell Township out of the Beaver County Repository. All delinquent taxes from 2021-2022 tax year and prior years are exonerated. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #14

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Victoria Gill, approved the contract with BerkOne to process the District's Act 80 records at an approximate cost of \$878.00. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Personnel by Bethany Pistorius, Chair**MOTION #15**

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the payment of fall coaches beyond the regular season. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #16

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Anissa Klessner, accepted the resignation of Tom Oros, substitute bus driver, effective December 31, 2024. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #17

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Lindsay Zupsic, approved the termination of employee 2525, cafeteria at the Junior High School, effective November 19, 2024. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #18

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Jeanette Miller, approved the employment of Diana Henry, cafeteria at the Junior High School, effective November 22, 2024. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #19

By Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Carla Buxton, approved the wrestling coaches and salaries for the 2025 season. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

a.	Brett Smith, Head Coach	\$6,256.00
b.	Kraig Smith, Varsity 1 st Asst.	\$3,200.00
c.	Cody McCullough, Jr. High Head Coach	\$3,000.00
d.	Dustin Winkle, Jr. High Assistant Coach	\$2,000.00
e.	Kenn Smith, Volunteer	
f.	Matt Hundenski, Volunteer	
g.	Doug Cook, Volunteer	
h.	Alex Obeldobel, Volunteer	
i.	Dylan Winkle, Volunteer	

Policy and Planning by Anissa Klessner, Chair

MOTION #20

By Anissa Klessner, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved the adoption of the following Board policies. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

a.	Policy 006.1 –	Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications
b.	Policy 100 –	Comprehensive Planning
c.	Policy 101 –	Mission Statement/Vision Statement/Shared Values

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| d. | Policy 102 – | Academic Standards |
| e. | Policy 105 – | Curriculum |
| f. | Policy 105.1 – | Review of Instructional Materials by
Parents/Guardians and Students |
| g. | Policy 105.2 - | Exemption From Instruction |
| h. | Policy 106 - | Guides for Planned Instruction |
| i. | Policy 107 - | Adoption of Planned Instruction |
| j. | Policy 108 - | Adoption of Textbooks |
| k. | Policy 109 - | Resource Materials |
| l. | Policy 110 - | Instructional Supplies |
| m. | Policy 111 - | Lessons Plans |
| n. | Policy 112 - | Guidance Counseling |
| o. | Policy 113 - | Special Education |
| p. | Policy 113.1 - | Discipline of Students with Disabilities |
| q. | Policy 150 - | Title I – Comparability of Services |
| r. | Policy 620 - | Fund Balance |
| s. | Policy 622 - | GASB Statement 34 |
| t. | Policy 625 - | Procurement Cards |

Transportation by Anitre Bell, Chair

MOTION #21

By Anitre Bell, seconded by Bethany Pistorius, approved District participation in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's joint purchasing program for the purchase of gasoline and diesel fuel for the 2025-2026 school year. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Other Business

Mrs. Pistorius expressed her admiration for the recent production of *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*, praising the students and staff for their phenomenal performance. She stated that she was amazed by the talent displayed on stage, highlighting the dedication and effort that made the production a resounding success. Mrs. Pistorius congratulated everyone involved, emphasizing how proud the entire school community should be of their accomplishment.

Mrs. Buxton also praised the outstanding performance of *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*, commending the students and staff for their hard work and dedication. She specifically highlighted the valuable assistance provided by the Senior High School students, acknowledging their support and mentorship as an important contribution to the production's success. Mrs. Buxton expressed gratitude for the collaborative effort, emphasizing how it enriched the overall experience for everyone involved.

Mrs. Gill thanked May and Ella Taylor, Katie and Eva Brunton, and Aislynn Patrick for speaking earlier in the meeting, commending them for their outstanding presentation. She emphasized how effectively they expressed their passion for participating in the Hookstown Fair and noted that they should be very proud of themselves for their poise and eloquence.

Mrs. Klessner, representing Region 1 on the Board, informed the meeting that the Board would be having a discussion regarding potential changes to the school calendar. She acknowledged the request made by the students earlier in the meeting concerning the timing of the Hookstown Fair and assured those present that the Board would carefully consider the issue during an upcoming discussion.

Mrs. Miller wanted to ensure the community was aware that she had responded to Mr. McLaughlin regarding his request for the District to adjust the school calendar to accommodate student participation in the Hookstown Fair. She took a moment to read the email she had sent to him, outlining her thoughts and response to his concerns. Mrs. Miller emphasized that the Board is taking all input into consideration as they continue their discussions on the matter

Dan McLaughlin, Independence Township Supervisor and Hookstown Fair Board member, clarified that he had received an email from Mrs. Miller regarding the proposed changes to the school calendar. He also wanted to make it clear to the community that he did not support Mr. Powell's desire to secede from the Hopewell School District. Mr. McLaughlin emphasized his commitment to working collaboratively within the district.

Solicitor's Report

Nothing to report.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Beltz discussed an upcoming meeting with 20 high school students to gain their perspective on current District issues and to hear their ideas for moving forward. Dr. Beltz highlighted the importance of engaging students in the decision-making process and expressed enthusiasm about the opportunity to listen to their insights.

Dr. Beltz also shared his positive feedback regarding the Junior High School musical, noting that it had been a huge success. He commended everyone involved in the production for their hard work and dedication, stating that their efforts had truly paid off.

Lastly, Dr. Beltz reminded the Board that tomorrow would be a half-day for students and took the opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, encouraging the community to enjoy the holiday.

Upcoming Board Meetings

December 3, 2024, Reorganization, Central Administration Board Room and Virtual

MOTION by Bethany Pistorius, seconded by Victoria Gill, that the meeting be adjourned.
MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Santia adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Daniel Santia, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary