

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
DECEMBER 14, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conducted a virtual Board meeting on Monday, December 14, 2020. This meeting was recorded.

An Executive Session was held on December 10, 2020 and prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel matters. This announcement is being made to be in compliance with Act 84 of 1986, Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law, as amended.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Jeff Winkle, Board President.

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Dobo. Roll call by the secretary followed. Those Directors in attendance were:

Daniel Caton  
Lesia Dobo  
Matthew Erickson  
Lori McKittrick  
Darren Newberry  
Kathryn Oblak  
Daniel Santia  
Jeffrey Winkle  
Lindsay Zupsic

Also, in attendance were: Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent, Dr. Jacie Maslyk, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. John Salopek, Solicitor; Jennifer Conrad, Business Administrator; Nancy Barber, Secretary; Robert Kartychak, Kylee Babish and Korri Kane, Principals; and visitors.

"Good News" reports were presented by Mrs. Kane from the elementary schools, Mrs. Babish from the Junior High School, and Mr. Kartychak from the Senior High School. Copies of each report are attached to these minutes.

Mr. Winkle asked for approval of minutes.

MOTION #1

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the November 23, 2020 and December 7, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS

MOTION #2

By Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve items (1) through (3) as presented in accordance with School Board's agreement for grouping items in a single motion. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Tax Collectors' Report

1. Recommendation to accept report for taxes collected for the month of November, 2020, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Treasurer's Report

2. Recommendation to accept report of the Treasurer for the month of November, 2020, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Financial Statements

3. Recommendation to accept Financial Statements for the month of November, as presented, and make said statements a part of these minutes.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Newberry explained the new public participation procedures, which will begin on January 11, 2021.

1. Written comments will no longer be read during public comment at Board meetings. The community is still encouraged to contact any administrator or Board member with concerns or comments;
2. If you wish to speak during public comments, you must register by noon the day of the Board meeting with the Board Secretary;
3. You must state your name and address. If meetings are virtual, your name must be visible while addressing the Board;
4. Questions are limited to three minutes, including response; and
5. Answers may or may not be given during the meeting.

**Andrew Hardisky, 355 Route 30, Clinton, PA**

Why has none of the bus drivers been paid for being off during this mandatory virtual period as per my understanding they have not been released by the district.

*District Response: Per the motion on tonight's agenda, transportation employees will be paid their expected wages from November 23 through January 3, 2020.*

**Bethany Pistorius, 2008 S. Trillium Drive, Aliquippa, PA**

1. I see on the agenda that food service employees and transportation department employees will only receive pay compensation until January 3rd. With our approved and date for remote learning being January 15th, and likely to go longer, why would the compensation stop on the third?

*District Response: The Board will discuss this topic during the motions on this evening's agenda. In anticipation of a possible extension of virtual learning, the District reviewed the work that is needed to be done by the Food Service Department and Transportation Department. With limited work, identified employees will be able to begin collecting Unemployment Compensation. Additionally, the date of January 4 was chosen so that employees could have their paid Christmas and New Year's holidays. Impacted employees will be recalled when the District moves back to hybrid learning.*

2. On New Year's Day if the Covid tracking statistics released that day are not showing Beaver County in the moderate category there will be no way to be in the moderate category for two consecutive weeks prior to the end date of remote learning. Will the board and administration wait until the January 11th board meeting to extend remote learning or will parents be able to plan earlier?

*District Response: The Board will review the most current data and make a decision on January 11 as to whether to extend virtual learning. With the current state-wide closures and the increasing rate of transmission in Beaver County, it would be prudent for parents to prepare for an extension of virtual learning, although this will not be determined until the January 11 Board meeting.*

3. A huge thank you to the teachers, support staff, food service department, counselors, transportation department, custodial department and everyone who works daily with and for our children. The majority of 2020 has been atypical and everyone has worked hard to still make school a safe and educational place. This holiday season we thank you immensely for your commitment to our district and our children. We hope that the break gives you all the time you deserve to refresh and reset!

*District Response: On behalf of the District staff, thank you.*

**Julie Arington 607 Golf Course Rd, Aliquippa, PA**

Could you please address why the high school students are still on a 2-hour delay schedule? Why are they not following a regular class schedule with the entire class time being live? Currently, my

son has about 3 live classes per day and each last about 20 minutes. If they were in school the teachers would be following a regular schedule so why are we not able to do this from home, at least for the majority of classes? I can't imagine that our students aren't falling behind and we have now had months to figure this out. My child is becoming bored and disengaged from the learning process. I would really like to understand why we aren't following a live regular schedule. Thank you.

*District Response: The District teachers and staff use the time at the beginning and end of the school day to work with students on help sessions, respond to questions of students and parents, participate in meetings, and plan and create assignments, instructional videos, lessons, etc. Should the Board determine that virtual learning will continue beyond January 15, the District will run on a regular schedule beginning January 19.*

**Rebecca Adams, 122 Christy Drive, Aliquippa, PA**

I would like to address the board with a couple of concerns I have regarding my children's school day. My first question is this, why are we still operating on a two-hour delay schedule? I have spoken with numerous other parents from various schools in our area and we seem to be the only school district on this schedule. I would appreciate an explanation as to the advantage to this and the hesitation to change. My high schooler usually completes with her school day in about an hour and a half to two hours. I find this completely unacceptable. Not all of her teachers are to blame but she does have some who have done minimal live teaching with her and her classmates. And by minimal, I mean two live classes since the school year has begun. During the hybrid learning, she had received assignments after school hours on days that she was learning from home. Again, unacceptable.

My middle schooler's schedule is all over the place, it can range from one live class a day to four in a day. There is no consistency and for this I am also upset by. I also have a child in the elementary school and his teacher Miss Beck has done an amazing job with on-line learning. She is teaching her students live three different times throughout the day. In all actuality, I feel this is the only age where the two-hour delay schedule is still somewhat acceptable. Other than that, I feel you as an administration, are failing our children.

As a parent, this is what I see, a class is 25 minutes long, by the time all of the kids log one, they are probably getting 20 minutes of instruction a day, 100 minutes a week, and this is if they are live, which most are not. Classes should be 43 minutes long, so you are all intelligent adults and can do the math, and realize the amount of time our kids are lacking in their learning on a weekly basis.

I am not blaming the teachers, I know this has been a huge change from their norm and I don't envy what they are doing at all, but when my daughter comes down by 11:30 and says she is done for the day, I need to speak my mind. Or when my middle schooler is missing an assignment because he turned it in to the wrong file, or something went wrong technically and his grade is failing yet no one notifies him or me, yes, I am angry. You have all had time to figure this out, every day of the week should not be a "snow day". Do better administrators.

*District Response: The District teachers and staff use the time at the beginning and end of the school day to work with students on help sessions, respond to questions of students and parents, participate in meetings, and plan and create assignments, instructional videos, lessons, etc. Should the Board determine that virtual learning will continue beyond January 15, the District will run on a regular schedule beginning January 19.*

*Parents and students should see additional live (synchronous) learning in all classes this week. Even within a regular class during normal circumstances, teachers are providing instruction and students are then applying and practicing these new skills either individually or collectively. Most instruction is typically 20-25 minutes for the instructional portion of a lesson; the application and practice of a lesson that usually occurs in the classroom is now occurring at home.*

The following three comments from community members address support for the continuation of athletics. This will be addressed by board members during the board meeting this evening.

**David and Peggy McCowin, 460 School Road, Clinton, 15026**

Writing once again in support of HASD winter sports programs. Understanding the mandate from Governor Wolf that practice/competition is halted until Monday, 1/4/2021, we ask the board to vote to reinstate the season with practice to start 1/4/2021.

At the 12/9/2021 PIAA meeting, the Association did NOT vote to delay or cancel the season. Since the governor's mandate to postpone the season in PA will be lifted on 1/4/2021, it makes sense to vote to reinstate sports at HASD along the same timeline.

Our children have already missed 4 weeks of practice since the board shut down practices prior to the Governor's mandate. Missing another 3 weeks due to the mandate will continue to put our student athletes further behind those with whom they will be competing. We are confident these athletes are doing their best with home workouts, but practicing as a team is important, and nothing can replace pool workouts for members of the swim team.

At the last meeting on 12/7/20, the board delayed a return to practice to "wait on guidance from the PIAA." As stated above, the PIAA was moving forward with the start of the season prior to Wolf's mandate. Given that information, it makes sense for the board to vote to allow our students to start practice when the current mandate postponing practice/competition expires. Our athletes should not be left in limbo from meeting to meeting and should be allowed to practice and compete with the precautions and guidelines outlined by PIAA.

We appreciate that this is a very difficult decision for the board, but it really should be a decision of each individual student and their parents/guardians. Sports are being played in schools across the country, and it's up to each individual to choose what is best for them.

**Frank and Tracey Blosnick, 1004 Euclid Avenue, Aliquippa, PA 15001**

This question is to see if the Board intends to address the continuation of winter sports once the Governor's restrictions are lifted, presumably, January 4. The Board has delayed its decision waiting on direction of the PIAA, if no other changes are made, the winter sports season will

continue once the Governor lifts his restrictions. We are asking the Board to lift their restrictions when the Governor allows sports again.

Give our swimmers the chance to have a season. Most, if not all of the other schools in our section will be back in the pool once the Governor's restrictions are lifted. Without allowing our swimmers in the water, we don't have a chance. There is a good possibility that our meets may be virtual. There are only 22 swimmers and 2 coaches. We have all the faith in the world in our Athletic Director, Coach Marshall and Coach Elder to keep our swimmers safe and for them to follow safety rules. Also, as you have been made aware, the CDC has stated there is no evidence that the coronavirus spreads through water in pools.

Also, as stated in HASD Reintegration to Sports under Classification of Sports:

Low Risk: Sports that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.

Examples: running events, cross country, throwing events, SWIMMING, golf, weightlifting, sideline cheer

Give these kids a chance once the Governor has lifted his restrictions. You gave fall sports a chance not knowing what would happen and with football falling under High Risk under your sports classification. This is a scary time for all of us. We as parents are asking the Board to let us make the decision for our children whether or not we allow them to participate under conditions at the time. I am sure those of you with school aged children have made the decisions you thought best for your family. Don't we deserve the same?

### **Mary and Jeff Webster**

I'm hoping with the Governor closing sports and activities that we will be able to start back up on January 4, 2021 like all other schools in the area. It was mentioned to me that at least everyone is in the same situation but Hopewell is not being that now we will have lost 6 weeks of practice unlike other schools who are only out 3 weeks. At this time, it doesn't sound as though the PIAA will be extending the Winter season by 3 weeks.

I understand your concerns for the safety of our children but we as parents had the option of signing the waiver and either allowing or not allowing them to participate. I have all the confidence in the world that Coach Marshall and Coach Elder will keep them as safe as possible and be tough on the kids on following the safety rules. These coaches really care about our kids. Coach Marshall and Coach Elder are both club coaches and have been working with these safety issues since the beginning of summer. This is nothing new to them.

My daughter is a senior and I don't want by her looking back at her high school years by the events that have occurred only in 2020. 2020 has really been mentally tough on these athletes. Please make 2021 start in a positive way and help salvage the school year for these kids!!!!

Mr. Winkle continued with committee recommendations and discussion.

**Educational/Curriculum/Instruction by Lori McKittrick, Co-Chair**

**MOTION #3**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve revisions to the District's Health and Safety Plan. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #4**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the Service Agreement with The Children's Institute. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #5**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the Agreement with Geneva College to provide practicum experience to students in the Communication Disorders Program. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #6**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve Nicole Marrs, a student at Geneva College, to complete a clinical placement in Speech Pathology with Emily Collins during the spring of 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #7**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Matthew Erickson, to approve Shannon Staver, a student at Geneva College, to complete her student teaching in the spring of 2021, under the guidance of Jason Winters. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #8**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve Zach Almy, a student at Geneva College, to complete his student teaching in the spring of 2021, under the guidance of Michael Shuleski. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**MOTION #9**

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the Senior High School clubs and sponsors. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #10

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the Junior High School clubs and sponsors. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #11

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve Michael Marchetti as Graphica Club sponsor retroactive to September 8, 2020. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Athletics by Matthew Erickson, Co-Chair**MOTION #12

By Matt Erickson, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to resume District and community athletic programs as of January 4, 2021, if the Governor lifts the ban on athletics and Beaver County is in the moderate range of transmission of Covid-19. MOTION carried by a vote of eight to one, with Mr. Santia voting no.

MOTION #13

By Dan Caton, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the reintroduction to Athletics Plan. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance. The revised plan includes guidelines on facial coverings and transportation.

**Finance and Budget by Lori McKittrick, Chair**APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMSMOTION #14

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve items (1) through (3) and to ratify item (4) as presented, in accordance with 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 \$342,362.53
2. Cafeteria Fund payments in the amount of \$95,574.78
3. Capital Reserve Fund payments in the amount of \$4,975.34
4. General Fund payments in the amount of \$2,216,783.24

MOTION #15

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the appointment of Diane Palsa as Delinquent Real Estate Tax Collector for Hopewell Township for 2020 school taxes for period December 31, 2020 through April 15, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #16

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the appointment of Mary Ellen Oros as Delinquent Real Estate Tax Collector for Independence Township for 2020 school taxes for period December 31, 2020 through April 15, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #17

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the appointment of Sandra Cain as Delinquent Real Estate Tax Collector for Raccoon for 2020 school taxes for period December 31, 2020 through April 15, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #18

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve the contract with BerkOne to process the District's Act 80 records at an approximate cost of \$827.00. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Personnel by Matthew Erickson**MOTION #19

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to accept the resignation of Toyna O'Brien, elementary cyber teacher, effective on or about January 15, 2021. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #20

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the request of Christina Signorelli for a medical sabbatical, effective the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year. MOTION carried by a vote of eight to one, with Dr. Erickson voting no.

MOTION #21

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the reaffirmation of the appointment of Kellee Oliver, Coordinator of Pupil Personnel Services, as the District's Title VI and Title IX, Section 504 Compliance Officer. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #22

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Lesia Dobo, for the payment continuation plan for the employees in the Transportation Department for the period Monday, November 23, 2020 through Sunday, January 3, 2021, by which no employee shall receive more or less compensation (based on an employee's status, availability and regular schedule as of Friday, November 20, 2020) than the employee would otherwise have been entitled to receive from the District due to the reduction of available work when the District went to all virtual learning and to authorize the layoff and furlough of employees in the Transportation Department, on Monday, January 4, 2021 and any subsequent recall, in the discretion of the Superintendent in order to maintain the appropriate staffing level for the efficient operation of the Transportation Department. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #22

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, for the payment continuation plan for the employees in the Food Service Department for the period Monday, November 23, 2020 through Sunday, January 3, 2021, by which no employee shall receive more or less compensation (based on an employee's status, availability and regular schedule as of Friday, November 20, 2020) than the employee would otherwise have been entitled to receive from the District due to the reduction of available work when the District went to all virtual learning and to authorize the layoff and furlough of employees in the Food Service Department, on Monday, January 4, 2021 and any subsequent recall, in the discretion of the Superintendent in order to maintain the appropriate staffing level for the efficient operation of the Food Service Department. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

**Policy and Planning by Lindsay Zupsic, Chair**MOTION #23

By Lindsay Zupsic, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to approve Policy 829 – Electronic Signatures. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Miller wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year. She also stated that the Food Services Department will be handing out 7 days' worth of food on December 28-30, 2020 at Independence Elementary School and the Junior High School from 10:00 until 12:00. She also thanked family and community members for their generous support of the toy and food programs this holiday season.

Solicitor's Report

John wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

January 11, 2021 Reorganization Meeting, via Zoom  
January 25, 2021, Regular Business Meeting, via Zoom

MOTION by Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Dan Santia, that the meeting be adjourned.  
MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Winkle adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Jeff Winkle, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary