

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
JUNE 22, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District met in the Senior High School Auditorium on Monday, June 22, 2020. This meeting was filmed for posting on the District website.

An Executive Session was held prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel issues. 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 Lesia Dobo, Board President.

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. McKittrick. 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; Don Short, Athletic Director; and visitors.

Dr. Miller and Dr. Maslyk presented the proposed Health and Safety Plan for re-opening schools in the fall. The District will continue to seek feedback from stakeholders and incorporate more guidance into the plan. It is anticipated that a final version of the plan will be adopted on July 20, 2020 and forwarded to the Department of Education for their approval.

Mrs. Dobo asked for approval of minutes.

MOTION #1

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the May 18, 2020 Business Meeting Minutes and the June 8, 2020, Work Meeting Minutes. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors in attendance.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMSMOTION #2

By Jeff Winkle, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, 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 May, 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 May, 2020, as presented, and make said report a part of these minutes.

Financial Statements

3. Recommendation to accept Financial Statements for the month of May, 2020, as presented, and make said statements a part of these minutes.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS

Dr. Miller responded to questions that Dr. Metz and Mrs. Cedro had for her at the June 8, 2020 Board meeting. Mrs. Cedros' questions and Dr. Miller's responses are as follows:

1. Why has the FLEX program been discontinued from the Junior High School?

Dr. Miller's Response:

*Last year, Spanish and Latin were offered in the Junior High for two periods, two semesters. These are elective courses. Last year, 7 students took Latin in the first semester and none in the second semester and 34 total students took Spanish 1st or 2nd semester. We can consider offering Spanish in the coming year as an elective in the JH and may explore this possibility after tonight's meeting, however, it will not be part of a FLEX program.*

2. Why was it not implemented as its definition explicitly states; to be offered a course that changes language throughout the year-long course?

Dr. Miller's response:

*By providing it as you state above, students lost the opportunity to explore other electives and by forcing this choice, numbers are further lowered in the JH foreign languages courses because students have requested multiple elective options, as*

*opposed to being limited to one foreign language option. There was never an intent by the District to offer foreign languages at the Junior High as defined by the FLEX definition. Your proposal of FLEX was never adopted by the school board as a course of study, but the District has provided foreign language electives at the JH when possible.*

3. At the High School level; as you phase out the Latin program, where will the students who are enrolled in the Level 1 class be placed since the other foreign language classes are full or no other sections will be opened in them?

Dr. Miller's response:

*There were 8 students enrolled in Latin I. These students have already chosen another level I foreign language class. The current enrollment in Level I classes, including these 8 students, are:*

- a. *Spanish 1: 21 (1 section)*
- b. *German 1: 68 (2 sections)*
- c. *French 1: 19 (1 section)*
- d. *Italian 1: 40 (2 sections)*

4. With regards to the French program, there are approximately twelve students enrolled in level 3 and eleven enrolled in level 4, yet, each level will ***not*** have its own. How do you justify combining two very distinct language levels into one class period when there are clearly enough students to create two separate classes?

Dr. Miller's response:

*At this time, the District is keeping these sections of foreign language combined. The current enrollment numbers are 8 students in French III and 8 students in French IV for a total of 16 students in one class period.*

*Combining level III and IV languages is a practice the District has done before when course numbers combined can provide for one class, as opposed to two classes.*

5. Why is a cap not placed on classes that are excessively too large in order to even out numbers into the other languages, as done at other schools?

Dr. Miller's response:

*By capping courses, there are chances that students would not be able to take the foreign language of their choosing. The District tries to accommodate students requests for foreign language courses to the maximum extent possible.*

Dr. Metz's questions and Dr. Miller's responses are as follows:

1. In regards to Action Items #2 and 3 at the last meeting (these refer to the reduction of positions), what are the enrollment differences between this year and the next school year at the high school? What constitutes a substantial decrease in pupil enrollment? To what standards of organization does this conform?

*Dr. Miller's response:*

*Enrollment and substantial decrease:*

- a. *HS enrollment in 19-20 was 543 for 3rd day enrollment and is expected to be 587 in 20-21.*
- b. *Court cases and arbitration cases, however, allow for a look back period of 1-10 years for pupil enrollment decline.*
- c. *Over the past five years, enrollment has declined in grades 7-12 from 973 in 2014-2015 to 866 in 2019-2020*

*In responding to standards of organizations, the District has reviewed the number of teachers within the four major disciplines.*

- a. *At the High School in 2019-20, there were:*
  - i. *7 Math teachers;*
  - ii. *6 Social Studies teachers;*
  - iii. *7 Science teachers; and*
  - iv. *8 English teachers.*

*It is my recommendation to the Board of School Directors that it is appropriate for our standards of operation to have 7 Math teachers, 6 Social Studies teachers, 6 Science teachers and 8 English teachers for the 2020-2021 school year. Additionally, staffing levels will be continually looked at and possibly reduced through attrition in the future based upon decline in student enrollment.*

2. Why are we reversing our district's commitment to STEM?

*Dr. Miller's response:*

*The District still remains committed to STEM. ALL course offerings are still available to students in the upcoming year. The only decrease is two sections of the elective astronomy. =*

3. How are we going to safely re-open schools in the fall and adhere to safety protocols with a higher student to teacher ratio when we should be lowering that number?

Dr. Miller's response:

*The number of students in courses will remain the same if the proposed change in staffing at the science department did not occur, with the exception of the elective of astronomy. As for larger class sizes in the high school, administration is reviewing alternative locations for instruction to accommodate the size of the classes. Out of the 31 science courses offered at the start of the 20-21 school year, four of the courses currently have over 22 students enrolled and 18 of the courses have 20 students or under.*

*Of the four courses over 22 students, the enrollment numbers are 30, 29, 25, and 24. Administration is working to reduce the larger two classes and reschedule these students into alternative sections.*

4. Are we considering that all departments put a cap on the number of students who can take each elective?

Dr. Miller's response:

*At this time, the District is committed to maximizing students' ability to choose courses they wish to take.*

5. Does the Board really agree to the following?
  - a. The certain elimination of the face-to-face elective Chemistry 2, cyber physics, and cyber astronomy?

Dr. Miller's response:

*The District will attempt to maximize student options for cyber courses. Also, Chemistry 2 was offered as an elective, but just like this past year, there was not enough student interest to run the course. This year, only five students requested Chemistry 2 so the course will not be offered. We have not offered Cyber Astronomy courses and Cyber Physics can still be offered with certified staff who would be given the opportunity to bid the open courses as per the Cyber Education MOU.*

- b. The certain elimination of 2 sections of face-to-face astronomy.

Dr. Miller's response:

*Students will be able to take this elective in the future and upperclassmen can be given preference in scheduling.*

- c. Stifling the growth of the district's science program and renegeing on our commitment to STEM.

Dr. Miller's response:

*The District is still committed to STEM and will continue to enhance STEM related programming in grades K-12.*

- d. Not being able to equitably teach AP Physics 1 or AP Physics 2 by having them meet 7 periods a week like all of our other AP classes.

Dr. Miller's response:

*When the Physics teachers approached administration requesting the addition of AP Physics 1 and 2, they assured administration that it was appropriate and possible to offer AP Physics 1 and 2 as a single period course. The administration is following the agreement with the Physics teachers when they requested the addition of these courses.*

- e. The possibility of having to cut AP Physics 2, losing yet another STEM course.

Dr. Miller's response:

*AP Physics 2 will be offered this year*

- f. Having the Gifted Coordinator teach 2 science classes.

Dr. Miller's response:

*The Gifted coordinator is able to provide gifted support and as opposed to duties, provide instruction in the Science department. Last year, she taught one science course and is expected to teach two courses this year in lieu of a study hall duty.*

- g. Shifting the remaining students into already large study halls.

Dr. Miller's response:

*There are no caps on study halls. Administration will continue to schedule students as appropriate and have appropriate supervision for students during study halls.*

- h. Not being able to meet the PDE and CDC guidelines for safely re-opening in the fall.

Dr. Miller's response:

*The Health and Wellness Plan that will be presented tonight identifies plans for the District to address PDE guidelines which are aligned to CDC guidelines.*

Visitors to the meeting asked the following questions:

Kris McCafferty asked for clarification if students do not return to school full time. If there is a plan for students to return to school Tuesday/Thursday and Wednesday/Friday and every other Monday, would it be possible for students to participate via Zoom when they are working virtually?

*Dr. Miller responded that instruction material would be the same for all days of instruction. Dr. Miller stated that they are also exploring this idea and the administrative team will continue to discuss the possibility.*

Mrs. Cedro, Foreign Language Department Chair, asked the Board to reconsider phasing out the Latin program, beginning this year with the elimination of Latin 1. She does not agree with the District's decision to eliminate the exploratory foreign program at the Junior High School. Mrs. Cedro also feels that if caps are placed on courses with high enrollment, this would force students to choose a different language.

Jeanette Miller, a former student and parent to 3 students, supported Mrs. Cedro's opinion that the District should not eliminate any foreign language courses. As a chemical engineer, she understands the benefits of having a full course selection for both foreign language and science. She believes that the District is doing the community a disservice by reducing the number of elective courses offered to students.

Becky Adams is concerned about not having a full-time principal at Independence Elementary School. She asked Dr. Miller what the plan was for having an administrator in the Building.

*Dr. Miller responded that Mrs. Kane would be the principal of all three elementary buildings. She stated that Dr. Maslyk would have an ongoing presence at Margaret Ross Elementary School and that she would have an ongoing presence at Independence Elementary School. There is also the possibility of hiring a part-time retired administrator should the need arise.*

Dr. Julia Metz, Science Department Chair, asked Dr. Miller how the District can vote on a Motion that was defeated at the June 8, 2020 Board meeting. She asked the Board to reconsider furloughing Brittany Covalt. Dr. Metz disputes enrollment numbers the District is using to eliminate course offerings and believes current course offerings are needed to accommodate student requests.

Liam Watters, a recent Hopewell graduate, doesn't believe that the District adequately prepares students for college. He believes that the 1:1 technology initiative is years behind other schools.

Michelle Read was concerned about the decision to transfer Dr. Kartychak to the Senior High School, leaving Independence without a full-time administrator. She acknowledged the District's plan of having Dr. Miller in the building when needed, but believes Independence is being slighted with respect to this issues.

Amy Kelly asked about the District Viking Connect program and would it be possible for each student K-2 receiving an iPad, not just one for each family.

*Dr. Miller responded that would be the hope of the District that we can accommodate each student, but that we will just have to wait and see what the enrollment numbers for those grades are in the fall.*

Deanna Hiltz asked that if a parent would like to participate in the Health and Safety Plan focus groups, but was not selected, could the District create a Google survey for parents to complete so that their opinions are heard. She was also concerned that Dr. Miller may not be able to do everything, including superintendent, principal and pandemic coordinator.

*Dr. Miller and Dr. Maslyk said that they would create such a document.*

Janet Meyers, Senior High School teacher, supported her colleagues in their requests for the Board to reconsider personnel and course eliminations. She believes that personnel decisions are so important to schools, and asked if it was worth it to lose two exceptional young educators.

At this time, Mrs. Dobo reviewed the agenda in its entirety.

### APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMS

#### MOTION #3

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve items (1) through (12) 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, with the following exceptions: Mrs. Zupsic voted no on item 1 and Mr. Newberry abstained on item 4.

1. Renew agreement with Cumberland Therapy Services, LLC to provide supplemental school psychologist for the 2020-2021 school year at a rate of \$75.85 per hour. This is an increase of \$1.85 per hour from last year.
2. Membership renewal with Pennsylvania School Boards Association for the 2020-2021 school year in the amount of \$11,657.04.



3. E-Rate Category 1 services for Lit Fiber WAN through Crowncastle for the 2020-2021 school year in the amount of \$4,496.64. This cost represents Hopewell’s 50% E-Rate discount of this service.
4. Renew the following insurance coverage through Utica Insurance Company and UPMC/Workpartners (for worker’s compensation) for the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. This coverage will be provided through the Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Agency.

Privacy and Network Liability	\$8,360.00
General Liability/Excess Liability	\$77,739.00
Automobile	\$29,567.00
Workers Compensation	\$203,004.00

United States Fire Insurance Co. through Andrew J. Benedict Insurance Agency Student Accident/Athletic Policy	14,400.00
--	-----------

5. Renewal of PA-Educator, the District’s clearinghouse for professional applications, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.
6. Resignation for retirement of Connie Iorio, Library Aide, effective June 8, 2020.
7. Resignation of Christine Haddad, bus utility attendant, effective June 12, 2020.
8. Employment of Chet Gapcynski, Head Girls’ Soccer Coach for the 2020-2021 season.
9. Appointment of Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent, as the District’s Pandemic Coordinator.
10. Acceptance of a sealed bid of \$1,500.00 from John Zeleznik, for the purchase of seven ‘as-is, where-is’ District vehicles on the attached list.
11. Resolution 15-2020, designating Superintendent as Agent for Hopewell Area School District for the purposes of PEMA/FEMA grant applications.
12. Resignation of Melissa Mineard, substitute bus driver, effective immediately.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMSMOTION #4

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Jeff Winkle, 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 payments in the amount of \$286,330.58
2. Cafeteria Fund payments in the amount of \$72,113.04
3. Capital Reserve Fund payments in the amount of \$744.86
4. General Fund payments in the amount of \$2,212,243.80

MOTION #5

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve Resolution #5-2020 a Resolution providing for adoption of the Final General Fund budget for the 2020-2021 General Fund budget, which projects revenues of \$40,626,135.00 and appropriations of \$42,877,943.00. The difference of \$2,251,808 will come from the Fund Balance. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #6

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Dan Caton, to approve Resolution #6-2020, a Resolution levying a tax during the 2020-2021 School Fiscal Year upon real estate within the territorial limits of the School District and fixing the rate thereof at 78.2 mills. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

APPROVAL OF GROUPED ITEMSMOTION #7

By Lori McKittrick, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve items (1) through (8) 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. Resolution #7-2020, a Resolution requesting the Chief County Assessor to direct the inspection and reassessment of all taxable property within the territorial limits of the School District to which major improvements were made after September 1, 2019, and not included in the tax duplicate certified to the Treasurer of the School District for the School Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021.
2. Resolution #8-2020, a Resolution authorizing rates of discounts and penalties on real estate taxes for the 2020-2021 School Fiscal Year.

3. Resolution #9-2020, a Resolution providing for the installment payment of real estate taxes during the School Fiscal Year 2020-2021.
4. Resolution #10-2020, a Resolution reenacting for the 2020-2021 School Fiscal Year the tax upon transfers of real estate situated within the territorial limits of the School District, the same heretofore imposed pursuant to the authority contained in the Local Tax Enabling Act.
5. Resolution #11-2020, a Resolution reenacting for the 2021 Calendar Year the tax upon salaries, wages, commissions, compensations, net profits, and other earned income of residents, the same heretofore imposed pursuant to the authority contained in the Local Tax Enabling Act.
6. Resolution #12-2020, a Resolution reenacting for the 2020-2021 School Fiscal Year the tax upon natural persons engaging in an occupation within the territorial limits of the School District, the same heretofore imposed pursuant to the authority contained in the Local Tax Enabling Act.
7. Resolution #13-2020, a Resolution reenacting for the 2020-2021 School Fiscal Year the mercantile tax upon the gross receipts of wholesale and retail business activity performed or rendered within the territorial limits of the School District, the same heretofore imposed pursuant to the authority contained in the Local Tax Enabling Act.
8. Resolution #14-2020, a Resolution authorizing the Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion real estate assessment reductions for the Hopewell Area School District's Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2020, under the provisions of the Taxpayer Relief Act (Act 1 of 2006).

#### MOTION #8

By Jeff Winkle, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent for the curtailment or alteration of the Program of Courses and Classes of Latin by the elimination of Latin I and providing Latin II in a class and Latin III and IV in a class together, effective June 9, 2020, for the 2020-2021 School Term Year, to conform to standards of organization or due to a substantial decline in pupil enrollments in the High School. The Board hereby directs the Superintendent to notify the Pennsylvania Department of Education in accordance with Section 1124(2) of the Public School Code of the curtailment or alteration of the Program of Courses and Classes of Latin. MOTION carried by a roll call vote of eight voting yes, with Mrs. Zupsic voting no.

MOTION #9

By Jeff Winkle, seconded by Matthew Erickson, to approve the demotion of Kelsey Steele, Latin teacher, from full-time to part-time (3 instructional/duty periods and a 1/2 period for preparation) employment status on the grounds of substantial decrease in pupil enrollment within the High School or the curtailment or alteration of the Program of Courses and Classes of Latin or to conform to standards of organization, effective July 1, 2020, and to give notice of the right to a hearing. MOTION carried by a roll call vote of eight voting yes, with Mrs. Zupsic voting no.

MOTION #10

By Jeff Winkle, seconded by Matthew Erickson, to approve the non-renewal of the temporary professional employee contract of Brittany Covalt, Science teacher at the High School, on the grounds of substantial decrease in pupil enrollments within the High School and the Junior High School or to conform to standards of organization, effective June 9, 2020, and to give notice of the right to a hearing. MOTION carried by a roll call vote of six voting yes, with Mr. Caton, Mr. Newberry and Mrs. Zupsic voting no.

MOTION #11

By Dan Caton, seconded by Dan Santia, to approve the Reintroduction to Sports Plan, as presented, providing guidance for the resumption of District sponsored athletic activities during the summer 2020. The Superintendent is directed to post this Plan on the District's website. The Superintendent is authorized to make necessary changes which may be required due to changing coronavirus conditions and report to the Board as necessary. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #12

By Jeff Winkle, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the Initial Health and Safety Plan as presented by the Superintendent and in accordance with guidelines issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Governor's Office, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Center for Disease Controls. This approval herein shall incorporate into the Health and Safety Plan all subsequent amendments to the aforementioned guidelines as based on new medical data related to Covid-19. MOTION carried unanimously by an affirmative roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Miller read the Beaver County Superintendent's joint statement on Social Justice. She stated that the administration has been working over the past year to provide high school students opportunities regarding diversity and plans are being made to create an Equity Committee.

Solicitor's Report

Nothing to report.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

July 20, 2020: Business Meeting, Senior High School Auditorium

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

Mrs. Dobo adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Lesia Dobo, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary