

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR WORK MEETING
NOVEMBER 9, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District conducted a virtual and in-person Board meeting on Monday, November 9, 2020 in the Senior High School Auditorium. This meeting was recorded.

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.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 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 (Via Zoom)
Lori McKittrick
Darren Newberry
Kathryn Oblak
Daniel Santia
Jeffrey Winkle
Lindsay Zupsic

Also present were: Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent, Dr. Jacie Maslyk, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. John Salopek, Solicitor; Jennifer Conrad, Business Administrator; Nancy Barber, Secretary; Michael Allison, Principal and visitors. Visitors also participated virtually through Zoom Meeting.

Dr. Miller gave an update on positive Covid 19 cases and the efforts the District is making to clean and sanitize all learning spaces and buses. Currently there is one positive case at the Junior High School. As a result of the positive case at the Junior High School, 30 students, 2 teachers and 1 coach are quarantined. This also affected three other schools including, Beaver, Keystone Oaks and Eden Christian Academy, as well as game officials. According to the Department of Health, another case at the Junior High School may cause the Junior High School to go virtual for five to seven days.

In order to assist residents with the most up-to-date information regarding Covid 19, the District has posted on their website information and statistics with respect to District and Beaver County cases.

At this time Dr. Miller reviewed items that will be voted on this evening.

Education/Curriculum/Instruction: Mr. Winkle, Chair; Ms. McKittrick, Co-Chair

1. Management Labor Agreement with respect to Covid-19 for the 2020-2021 school year between the Hopewell Area School District and the Hopewell Education Association.

Personnel: Dr. Erickson, Chair; Mrs. Oblak, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Employment of Keana Gordon, substitute nurse, at a rate of \$40.93 per hour, for one day, October 26, 2020.
2. Request of Brittany Powell, bus driver, for a 30-day leave of absence, effective October 28, 2020.
3. Employment of Shannon Staver as a daily substitute and long-term substitute for high school science, beginning on or about December 7, 2020 through June 11, 2021.
4. Employment of Holly MacBeth, long-term substitute for elementary technology teacher, effective November 16, 2020 through on or about March 11, 2021.
5. Resignation for retirement of John Hendricks, bus driver, effective October 14, 2020.

At this time Dr. Miller began her review of those items that would be voted on at the November 23, 2020 Business meeting.

Education/Curriculum/Instruction: Mr. Winkle, Chair; Ms. McKittrick, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Revisions to the 2020-2021 school calendar. (Attachment)
2. Discussion: Hybrid instructional model: Revisions for 2nd quarter.

As the first nine weeks come to a close, Dr. Miller discussed adjustments that are being made moving forward with hybrid model. Consistency with instruction is a common complaint with the hybrid model. Beginning November 16, 2020, the following will be implemented:

- A. All teachers will have the entire week's assignments posted by a specific time on the first day of the school week (usually Mondays). For any

assignment or resource that cannot be posted, the teacher will identify when it will be posted (i.e. Tuesday: instructional video and assignment will be posted by 4th period today).

- i. High School and Junior High: 7:45 AM
 - ii. Elementary: 9:00 AM
- B. Attendance will remain the same. In order for a student to be counted as present on remote learning days, the student must log onto their platform by 2PM each day.
- C. Completion deadline
- i. All assignments will be due by 11:59 PM each Sunday unless the teacher provides more time to complete the assignment.
 - ii. If an assignment is determined to be late, teachers will use their discretion in grading (i.e. half credit, loss of points, etc...)
- D. Instructional Platforms:
- i. Grades 9-12: Schoology
 - ii. Grades 3-8: Google Classroom
 - iii. Grades K-2: SeeSaw
- E. Platform for synchronous learning and/or connecting with peers/teacher:
TEAMS

Expected time for learning on remote learning days

Grade	Core Subjects	Electives
Kindergarten	105-170 minutes of ELA and Math	10-20 minutes, optional
First	140-205 minutes of ELA and Math	10-20 minutes, optional
Second	150-215 minutes of ELA and Math	10-20 minutes, optional
Third	155-235 minutes of ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science	10-20 minutes, optional
Fourth	175-245 minutes of ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science	10-20 minutes, optional
Fifth and Sixth	170-270 minutes of ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science	15-30 minutes, required elective
Seventh and Eighth	155-255 minutes of ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science	15-30 minutes per each required elective (Students usually have 2-3 electives)
Ninth-Twelfth	140-300 minutes of English, Math, Social Studies, and Science *Can be more for AP and Honors classes	60-120 minutes, required electives

3. Informational: Parent and Staff Surveys.

Dr. Miller stated that later this week the District will be disseminating surveys to teachers, paraprofessionals and parents. Results should be available at the November 23, 2020 meeting.

4. Discussion: 5-day in-person instruction model.

At the request of the Board, the administrative team has developed options for a return to school five days per week. Those options include:

Option 1:

All schools are open 5 days/week for 4-4.5 hours. All students get bagged lunch to eat at home.

- High School: 7:30-12:00; classes are 26 minutes long
- Junior High: 8:00-12:30; classes are 26 minutes long
- Elementary: 9:00-1:00

Afternoons: Remote learning

- Junior and Senior High: Students complete all homework and learning extensions via remote work.
- Elementary: Students complete all homework and participate in “specials” virtually at home. Specials will be posted at 1:30 PM each school day. All assignments are posted on SeeSaw/Google Classroom.

Students receiving Special Education services

- All students may opt to stay until 2:30 PM. During this time, students will be assigned to support study halls to complete work or work on IEP goals, receive any Special education services, and eat lunch in a socially distanced cafeteria setting.

Career and Technical Center

- Students would be required to attend at assigned times

Option 2:

All schools are open 5 days/week. Elementary is open for 4 hours with the JH and SH holding classes at regular time. Elementary students get bagged lunch to eat at home.

- High School: 7:35-2:00; classes are 38 minutes long
- Junior High: 7:45-2:30; classes are 39 minutes long
- Elementary: 9:00-1:00 (NOTE: The District is continuing to work on how to safely keep all elementary students in school until the end of the school day.)

High School and Junior High would follow the current bell schedule with end of day office hours for teachers to support student learning.

Elementary in the afternoon: Students take specials virtually at home. All assignments are posted on SeeSaw/Google Classroom.

Elementary

- K-2 120 minutes of ELA, 60 minutes of math, 30 minutes of special, 15 minutes of recess
- 3-4 90 minutes of ELA, 75 minutes of math, 30 minutes of special, 30 minutes of science/social studies, 15 minutes of recess

Elementary Students receiving Special Education services

- All elementary students receiving Special Education services may opt to stay until 3:00 PM. During this time, students will be assigned to support study halls to complete work or work on IEP goals, receive any Special education services, and eat lunch in a socially distanced cafeteria setting.

Career and Technical Center

- Students would be required to attend at assigned times

There are obstacles for the transition to five days per week. They include deficiencies in our Wi-Fi. There would be connectivity issues in each building. Another obstacle is social distancing. Students must wear masks unless they are 6 feet apart. This will have a significant impact on the cafeterias in the elementary buildings.

5. Erin Kunzmann, a student at Robert Morris University, to complete her student teaching in the spring of 2021 at Margaret Ross Elementary School, under the guidance of Mrs. Cutone.
6. Tanner Yake, a student at Robert Morris University, to complete his student teaching in the spring of 2021 at Margaret Ross Elementary School, under the guidance of Mrs. Doria.

Athletics: Mr. Caton, Chair; Dr. Erickson, Co-Chair

1. Payment of fall coaches beyond the regular season. (**Attachment**)
2. Informational: Spectators at HOME winter athletic events.

Varsity Basketball: Boys and Girls

Viking athletes and cheerleaders will receive 2 tickets each. No students permitted without an adult and ticket. No tickets for visiting athletes.

Middle School Basketball: Boys and Girls

Viking athletes will receive 2 tickets each. No students permitted without an adult and ticket. No tickets for visiting athletes.

Wrestling

Viking athletes will receive 2 tickets each. No students permitted without an adult and ticket. No tickets for visiting athletes.

Swimming: No spectators

Bowling: No spectators per Sheffield Lane

Gymnastics: No spectators per Monaca Turners

Buildings and Grounds: Mr. Newberry, Chair; Mr. Winkle, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Request for Dave Bufalini to use the auditorium for rehearsal for BF Jones Library and Artist in Residence benefit concert. Dates to be approved by Mr. Allison, based on availability.
2. Informational: This District is lifting restrictions for community use of the track.

Finance: Ms. McKittrick, Chair

1. Request of John M. Newman to purchase tax parcels 66-222-0109-000 and 66-222-0110-000 located in Independence Township out of the Beaver County repository. All delinquent taxes for the 2019-2020 tax year and prior years are exonerated.
2. Request of Thomas and Tracey Moses to purchase tax parcels 65-018-0105.000, 65-018-0106.000, and 65-018-0107.000, located in Hopewell Township out of the Beaver County Repository. All delinquent taxes for the 2019-2020 tax year and prior years are exonerated.
3. Approve the proposal from Doing Better Business (DBB) for a renewal lease purchase of 16 District copiers, financed by a 60-month municipal lease through DLL Financing, at a monthly cost of \$4,978.69. (Attachment)

Legislative: Kathryn Oblak, Chair

1. Appointment of Mrs. Dobo as District representative to the Beaver County Career and Technology Center Joint Operating Committee.
2. Appointment of Ms. McKittrick as alternate District representative to the Beaver County Career and Technology Center Joint Operating Committee.

Transportation: Dan Caton, Chair

1. Participation in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's joint purchasing program for the purchase of gasoline and diesel fuel for the 2021-2022 school year.

VISITOR'S COMMENTS

Since this meeting is being conducted virtually and in person, virtual visitors were asked to email questions prior to the meeting. Dr. Miller also stated that anyone who has additional questions can email her and she would answer questions directly to the individual.

Kris McCafferty (In Person)

Ms. McCafferty continues to experience difficulty with the hybrid model and consistency with instruction. She was discouraged with remarks made to students by a teacher and the workload for some students. She asked why all classes cannot be synchronous.

Amy Kelly (Virtual)

Many families are having a good experience with the K-6 cyber school program, and a lot of ways it can be the right fit for some students and families, especially since it can be customized to meet students' individual needs. Has the district considered keeping this option for the foreseeable future (past the pandemic)? Not only would it stop some of the financial lost from students attending an online charter school, it could give students who need significant academic acceleration the opportunity to be appropriately challenged while remaining in a developmentally appropriate classroom (so for instance, 3rd grader who can do 4th or 5th grade math, but needs 3rd grade level ELA.)

District Response: The District has provided this option for many years to students in grades 7-12. At this time, the District is considering providing this option, post pandemic, to our students.

Parents are also noticing that their students are missing the opportunity for specials at the Elementary level since those teachers are being pulled to cover classrooms. Has the district considered raising the substitute pay to be more competitive? Other local districts have posted rates \$50+ more than we pay, and with a limited supply of substitutes, it seems that we need to increase our pay to attract more candidates, so that our students can experience specials.

District Response: The District, along with other school districts, is struggling to secure daily subs and building subs. Even districts who have increased their daily sub rate are not able to secure all substitutes that are needed. We will continue to monitor this.

Can you outline the contact tracing process on the district website? When there is a case or presumed positive case at your school, you want to know as much information as possible. Parents don't know if they will hear that day, five days later, etc. if their child has been exposed? What happens if the case is on an opposite hybrid day, will parents be informed that the classroom had a case? Does the teacher automatically get quarantined? Etc.

District Response: Please refer to the Parent FAQ on the website.

Lastly, I just want to comment, many of us parents know that our teachers and staff are working harder than they have ever before and appreciate everything they do. We know that you all were placed in an impossible situation to make the "right" decision. We also know that our students won't be behind-that the entire world is dealing with these same issues. Thank you for all you do for our schools.

District Response: On behalf of the teachers and staff, thank you for your kind words of encouragement.

Gavin Buxton (Virtual)

I would like to thank the School District for all their hard work in keeping our schools open in the hybrid format, which has been a wonderful format to allow students the in-person instruction they need in a safe and responsible manner, while also helping to keep our community safe. Cases are rising, and will continue to rise as we head into the winter months. In terms of returning to a 5-day format the question is: how can we educate our students on the value of science if we choose to ignore the basic epidemiology of this disease? How can we teach civics while deciding that as a society it is appropriate to sacrifice lives for convenience? The hybrid system is working, and the administration has done a wonderful job getting us to a place where children are safe and have in-person instruction. I urge the School District to support the administration in continuing the hybrid format.

District Response: Thank you for your feedback.

Bethany Pistorius (Virtual)

1. Why did students/parents not received mid-grading period progress reports for the nine weeks ending tomorrow?

District Response: Parents at the Junior High and High School have the ability to see their child's grades at any time via Schoology (High School) and CSIU (Junior High). The elementary school has not printed progress reports.

2. Will the district offer formal parent/teachers conferences either virtually, in person or via phone call? (I understand that parents can request a meeting with their child's teacher, but offering formal options district wide could significantly increase the communication and aid in cohesion between remote learning and in person learning.)

District Response: Parents may request a conference at any time. Many conferences have already occurred throughout the first quarter. Teacher office hours are a daily opportunity for conferences for parents and teachers.

Teacher communication at the elementary level is daily through Google Classroom, Dojo and SeeSaw. Elementary teachers will be able to schedule November 25 (half day) for parent/teacher conferences.

3. Our district's teachers are now doing two full-time jobs. They are creating and teaching two full and separate lesson plans each day for their in person students and remote students. As well as, being accessible to support remote students while being present and teaching their in person students. This is a massive undertaking and often teachers are working well into the night. Many times we see that teachers post their remote assignments late in the evening, and into the night, for the following day. I am grateful Hopewell has such dedicated teachers, but worry about the tremendous toll this is taking on them. How are the teachers being supported? What resources and assistance is offered to them to be able to work essentially 16+ hours and still have a work/home life balance?

District Response: Our entire staff is working harder than ever to keep students growing academically and supporting their emotional well-being, while at the same time, keeping students as safe as possible while at school. Although not enough time, our teachers and paraprofessionals have office hours at the end of the day that assist them with the increased workload. We are very aware of how some of our staff are struggling and we try to support them on an individual basis.

4. How many services/companies does the district sub-contract? At a time when the district's budget could not continue to support the many teaching positions eliminated since June (I believe around 3-4 teaching positions) is the district sub-contracting companies to provide services Hopewell is capable of providing in house? For example, the district has a grounds department and an employee on staff that is licensed to apply pesticides. Is the district paying a sub-contracted company for these services?

District Response: In terms of positions, the District has three supervisor positions and two technology positions that are outsourced: Transportation Director, Technology Director and two technology employees, Food Service Director. These leadership positions are specialized positions/departments in the District and by outsourcing, the District can ensure that there is specialized company that can assist the District when needed.

In the Maintenance and Technology Department, subcontracting occurs when the District does not have the manpower, equipment, and/or the expertise to complete certain projects. Using a subcontractor is only used after an assessment of the scope of the project is completed. If a project or task can be completed internally, it is completed by Hopewell employees.

5. When the school grounds are used for sports and activities outside of school hours, how much time is scheduled between activities for the custodians to properly sanitize the area?

District Response: Evening athletic areas are cleaned at the end of the evening. Due to the need for “gym time”, practices and games are typically held consecutively throughout the evening. The District’s Athletic Director advised all groups to sanitize their equipment after each practice/event. Sanitizer and disinfectant is provided to all school athletic teams by the District and for any other group upon request.

6. With our school, like many districts, now having cases within the athletic teams, how are the safety protocols being enforced?

District Response: Safety protocols are reviewed by the Athletic Director with all coaches. It is the coach’s responsibility to enforce safety protocols.

7. How is the district going to fix the excessive cancellation of specials?

District Response: The District, along with other school districts, is struggling to secure daily subs and building subs. Even districts who have increased their daily sub rate are not able to secure all substitutes that are needed. We will continue to monitor this. We will also try not to cancel specials for the same class.

8. At the last board meeting the superintendent responded to the question of student's performance being lower by saying it was a "statewide phenomena." While I do not dispute that, I am not personally concerned about the students statewide. I am concerned about my children and the students of our district. How is the district dealing with this phenomenon with their students?

District Response: The District is currently gathering comparison data. We can't compare all data until the end of the first 9 weeks. The administration will provide an analysis to the Board at the November 23 Board meeting.

9. I appreciate the information on the website providing information about active/inactive cases per building and broken down between staff and students. Can the district maintain this information continuously as well as add the information regarding number of staff and students currently isolating per building? With this information easily accessible to parents, we can make our own informed decision regarding sending our child to in person learning during active and presumed cases.

District response: The only individuals who are isolating for the required 10 days are those who have tested positive. If a person is identified as a close contact, the close contacts are asked to quarantine for 14 days. The District will maintain the information on the website regarding positive cases. When there are close contacts identified due to exposure in the schools, the District can make this information available. There were no close contacts due to exposure in the school district except for the last positive case on November 5, 2020. Connected to the November 5 positive case, there are 30 Hopewell students, 2 Hopewell teachers and 1 Hopewell coach required to quarantine for 14 days. Additionally, there are athletes from three other school district middle school basketball teams and the 6 officials assigned to the three games played during the week of November 2 who were considered close contacts.

10. If a parent feels the risk may be too great to send their child to school after notification of a positive case, can the child complete assignments remotely and still be considered present? Some parents have communicated with teachers, received the remote assignments and had child complete only to still be marked absent in the parent portal. We would like some definitive clarification on this.

District Response: If a parent has a concern about sending their child after a positive case in a particular school, the student may stay at home and work remotely for a 1-2-week time period. Parents should email the school counselor or principal this request. If a student is marked absent after this request was made, parents should contact the teacher or office for this to be corrected.

At this time, Mrs. Dobo returned to Education/Curriculum/Instruction

Education/Curriculum/Instruction by Mr. Winkle, Co-Chair

MOTION #1

By Jeff Winkle, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the Management Labor Agreement with respect to Covid-19 for the 2020-2021 school year between the Hopewell Area School District and the Hopewell Education Association. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Personnel by Dr. Erickson, Chair

MOTION #2

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Darren Newberry, to approve the employment of Keana Gordon, substitute nurse, at a rate of \$40.93 per hour, for one day, October 26, 2020. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #3

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Jeff Winkle, to approve the request of Brittany Powell, bus driver, for a 30-day leave of absence, effective October 28, 2020. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #4

By Matthew Erickson, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, to approve the employment of Shannon Staver as a daily substitute and long-term substitute for high school science, beginning on or about December 7, 2020 through June 11, 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

Dr. Erickson participated via Zoom. Dr. Erickson did not have the remaining two items on the Agenda, therefore, Mrs. Oblak made the Motions.

MOTION #5

By Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Jeff Winkle, to approve the employment of Holly MacBeth, long-term substitute for elementary technology teacher, effective November 16, 2020 through on or about March 11, 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all Directors in attendance.

MOTION #6

By Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Lindsay Zupsic, to accept the resignation for retirement of John Hendricks, bus driver, effective October 14, 2020. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

Unfinished Business

None.

Upcoming School Board Meetings

November 23, 2020, Regular Business Meeting will be held virtually and in person.

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

Mr. Winkle adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Lesia Dobo, Board President

Nancy Barber, Secretary