

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
OF THE  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
MT. LEBANON SCHOOL DISTRICT

October 16, 2017

A Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors was held at 7:33 p.m. on Monday, October 16, 2017, in Room D205, Mt. Lebanon High School.

Mrs. Birks called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Foster students Chelsea Rattay, London Nzambi, CeCe Conley, Jackson Stephens, and Levi Stephens. The students presented a report on the Foster Veteran's Day Celebration to be held on November 10.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Hugh Beal, Mr. William Cooper, Mr. Lawrence Lebowitz, Mr. William Moorhead, Ms. Sara Olbrich, Mr. Daniel Remely, Mr. Michael Riemer (by phone), Dr. Stephen Strotmeyer, Mrs. Mary Birks  
Absent: None

ATTENDING:

Dr. Timothy Steinhauer, Superintendent  
Thomas Peterson, Solicitor  
Administrative Staff: Mrs. Sloane Astorino, Ms. Cissy Bowman, Dr. Ronald Davis, Dr. Marybeth Irvin, Ms. Janice Klein, Mr. Richard Marciniak, Mr. Christopher Stengel, Mr. Jason Ramsey, Mr. Chris Wolfson

MINUTES

It was moved by Cooper and seconded by Lebowitz that the Board approves the minutes of the Discussion Meeting held on August 14, 2017, and the Regular Meeting held on August 21, 2017.

It was moved by Cooper and seconded by Lebowitz to amend the motion to read that the Board approves the minutes of Policy Meeting held on September 11, 2017; the Discussion Meeting held on September 11, 2017, and the Regular Meeting held on September 18, 2017.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE

It was moved by Cooper and seconded by Lebowitz that the Board approves the minutes of Policy Meeting held on September 11, 2017; the Discussion Meeting held on September 11, 2017, and the Regular Meeting held on September 18, 2017.

MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORTS

Mellon Middle School Student Council members Lauren Ghil, Ruby Siefkin, Tori Laskovich, Gia Routh and Leah Vuillemont reported on the activities at Mellon Middle School. The year started with the recruiting of new members to Student Council. Presentations were given by council members in each homeroom on how student council works. Many new students, particularly eager 6<sup>th</sup> graders, joined with excitement towards service projects.

The service year began with Mellon's Open House in early September. Students volunteered their time during the evening to help parents find their way around Mellon. A few students collected donations for those impacted by Hurricane Harvey. The first school service project was a pajama day, where \$616 was raised and donated to the Hurricane Harvey Pajama Program which provides sleepwear to children impacted by the storm.

The next service project will be recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The faculty and students wear shirts each Wednesday to support the cause. For this year's PINK OUT, Student Council is selling Mellon Pink Out shirts, pink bandannas, and novelty items with all proceeds going to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

The last activity of the month is a bit of fun for the teachers and students. For Halloween, student council is "Booing" the teachers with a little gift of thanks for a great first quarter. Student Council is sponsoring a costume contest for each grade level.

The students at Mellon are looking forward to a great year and to the sense of community created by the students involved in Mellon's Student Council.

Mt. Lebanon High School student body co-presidents, Will Buerger and Thomas Heagy, reported on the activities at the High School. In August, the Link Crew Program comprised of juniors and seniors welcomed the Class of 2021 and new students to the Mt. Lebanon High School. They have continued to socialize with these students by hosting a tailgate party prior to the September 8 football game, by stopping by their homeroom and delivering a scripted program during extended homerooms conveying messages of building a strong work ethic, developing character, and acting responsibly.

The seniors began the school with the Senior Boat Ride on September 17. It was a beautiful night to cruise the three rivers, dance with classmates, and chat with friends.

Mt. Lebanon High School is recognizing six great alumni this year. They are Dr. Judy Balk, Class of 1981; Dr. Cheston Berlin, Class of 1954; Dr. Tacy Byham, Class of 1986, Mrs. Steffanie Lewis, Class of 1954; Dr. Linn Mollenauer, Class of 1954; and Mr. Michael Riemer, Class of 1978. It was an honor for the senior officers to host four of these six exemplary alumni at the ceremonial luncheon and evening recognition event and to learn firsthand about their impact on our world.

Other events for the start of the school year included the Class of 2018 Homecoming Parade, Homecoming Dance, the first blood drive of the year, the Halloween door decorating contest, Spirit Week, the Spirit Assembly and the annual Pink Out at the October 27 football game.

#### BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Birks reported that the Mt. Lebanon School District has a strong tradition of parent involvement in our schools thanks in large part to our PTAs. On behalf of the students, staff and Board of School Directors, the board president thanked all of the PTA volunteers, and in particular the PTA presidents, who work tirelessly and volunteer thousands of hours each year to make our schools a better place for students and staff. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the following PTA presidents the 2017-2018 school year: Council PTA President-Moira Aulbach, High School - Julie Maselko, Jefferson Middle- Julie Smith, Mellon Middle - Melissa Bailey, Foster - Mary Ellen Donato, Hoover - Cristina Battaglia, Jefferson - Christine Neavin, Lincoln-Tracy Adam, Markham-Sue Galeone, Howe - Joyce Devine and Washington - Natalie Kukla.

Mrs. Birks read the following statement: *I am exceptionally proud to have such a sensational leadership team, dedicated to the mission of our district. Our school principals are incredible professionals, educational leaders at individual schools, who also step up and provide expertise in a myriad of ways throughout our district; Mr. Marciniak has made it possible for us to look 5 years or more into the future to determine the capital needs of our district, ensuring funding for regular maintenance as well as big ticket items such as roofs. Ms. Bowman worked tirelessly to get the Dashboard off the ground years ago, facilitating clearer communication between the district and parents; she and Mr. Stengel have partnered on multiple projects, including the updated website. And Mr. Stengel works with our teachers and teams of students in order to make technology work for them. His energy and passion for utilization of technology in the classroom is second to none. In Ms. Devine, we have a professional in HR that is second to none. I hear from administrators and faculty alike about her kindness and her demeanor that puts everyone at ease. Ms. Klein, director of business, manages the finances of this district to ensure that we are able to bring in the most talented teachers to teach our students. Her professional reputation goes beyond the borders of the MTL SD. Both of our assistant superintendents, Dr. Irvin in elementary ed., and Dr. Davis in secondary, make data driven decisions that enhance education in every classroom and for each and every student. Working alongside Dr. Steinhauer, they are our curriculum experts and they lead a team whose only focus is on student learning. Dr. Steinhauer empowers his leaders to do great things, while challenging himself each and every year to be a better superintendent, becoming more informed, identifying new curriculum ideas for the district's student, bringing in innovation, such as the social emotional learning we are seeing throughout our district. He carefully balances the expectations of parents with the financial realities of our community.*

*I recently found a great John Irving quote: "Don't forget this, too: Rumors aren't interested in the unsensational story; rumors don't care what's true."*

*I'm here this evening to dispel the rumors that don't care what's true.*

*I'd like to begin with the Capital Campaign, which was the School Board's initiative to provide a vehicle by which interested parties could contribute to the School District. We saw the lack of funding coming from the state, and the cuts that were seemingly indiscriminate. We knew that it was expected that we continue offering innovative programs throughout the district, provide for capital improvements not covered in the facilities plan as well as improvements throughout all departments. Pledges could be donor designated funds, such as the incredible gifts by Mr. McMurray, the Conovers and the Waltons, or they could be used for other items that might not otherwise be covered in the budget, which is how many others directed their donation and pledges.*

*There is nothing untoward going on with the Capital Campaign. There are individuals in this community who have no knowledge or understanding, or the desire to understand, the concept of Development for this district. These queries, nearly 40 RTK requests since the beginning of September, have simply yielded more rumors from those interested in politicizing the Capital Campaign, carrying assumptions and accusations that are simply false. Development takes a lot of time; we recently heard from a donor that his gift to his university has been 45 years in the making. And it takes time to develop relationships and cultivate interest in providing funding to a public school.*

*We recently received information that Ms. Jan Klein's expertise is being called into question by some of the same individuals who have no expertise in development or in public school accounting, least of all, Government Accounting Standards.*

*Ms. Klein has led this district's business office for over 35 years; it is due to her level of integrity and operating at the highest professional standards, that this school district was awarded an Aa1*

*rating from Moody's which enabled the district to obtain an exceptional bond refinancing in the spring. We utilized those savings for the installation of air conditioning in all 7 elementary schools and both middle schools.*

*Our reserves are strong because of her conservative budgeting; we have not had to borrow money when the state does not send us our allocation, which many districts had to do in order to keep their doors open and their teachers paid.*

*It is thanks to Dr. Steinhauer, and the finance team, led by Ms. Klein, that we were able to find enough savings that we had a zero mil increase this year. Not one person on this Board could have found the savings in our extensive budget; that came from Ms. Klein and Dr. Steinhauer. To assert anything other than this is absurd.*

*Additionally, we are audited each and every year, with no findings, by an outside auditor. We post an RFP every 3 years for an auditor, and after review of the firms submitting proposals, we have brought in Maher Duessel each time. And this has been accomplished by multiple boards, not just those in recent history. We are due for another RFP in 2018, and I'm certain the board will review the proposals and will do its due diligence before voting on the appropriate firm.*

*I always had an appreciation for Ms. Klein's expertise, having attended school board meeting for 13 years before running for this seat. But the first occasion when I realized how respected Ms. Klein is outside of our little bubble, was at my first PSBA conference I attended. As I settled into my first workshop, a gentleman sat down next to me and we exchanged pleasantries. He was a finance director from the other side of the state. "Is Jan Klein still at MTL?" he asked. And when I said 'yes,' he went on to tell me that he was trained by Ms. Klein as a business manager and he learned more from her than he did from anyone else. "You are very lucky to have her still there." I concurred.*

*I've heard from finance directors and superintendents alike, who took her budgeting class at CMU and raved about her depth and breadth of abilities and overall knowledge. Her reputation is rock solid with people in the business of school financing who understand the challenges of this aspect of school districts.*

*As the Board Chair for Allegheny County Schools Health Insurance Consortium, Ms. Klein has worked tirelessly to save districts AND employees hundreds of thousands of dollars in health care costs. She works with a team that includes both management and labor in an effort to keep costs down for its member districts and their employees. She is both respected and renowned for her thorough and challenging questions to vendors and to the insurance companies. This model is recognized throughout the entire state.*

*She is called upon to present at state and national conferences, professional organizations such as PASBO, serving as President, as well as reported before legislative panels and with other school districts, deserving each and every accolade earned for her financial acumen and her cutting edge work with ACSHIC.*

*Her budgets have earned the Meritorious Budget Award from the Association of School Business Officials International for 22 years and she has won the Association of School Business Officials International Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 32nd year in a row for excellence in financial reporting and accountability for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. In short, Ms. Klein leads a professional business office for our community, this district and its students; the consummate professional, she continuously looks for ways to save money for us. If anyone embodies our district's guiding principle of "Continuous Improvement," it is surely Jan Klein.*

*In years' past, we've had board members elected with a laundry list of business expertise who ran for the board in an effort to run the district like their business. Try as they might, they discovered you cannot run a school district like a business. The accounting methodology is different, there are unfunded and funded mandates; there is a slew of government reporting.*

*I truly understand that most people in our community and those that serve on the board are not experts in this field; that is why we hire a competent Director of Business, and that is Ms. Klein in every respect.*

*While those of us who are public officials certainly understand that our position exposes us to the spotlight of criticism, and at times, reckless claims intended to harm, we refuse to accept such unjustified and unsubstantiated treatment of our employees. Harassment and defamation of character have no place with our professional staff and will not go unanswered.*

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steinhauer reported that the legacy of school board service is firmly embedded in the history of our nation and its commitment to public education. The Pennsylvania School Boards Association, founded in 1895, has a rich history as the first school boards association established in the United States. The consummate board member is described as an ethical, principled, individual with a deep desire to serve. School directors have a strong belief in the value of public schools and local control for the benefit of all students.

PSBA has been recognizing the contributions of dedicated local school directors with long-term service since 1983. The Honor Roll is the association's way of saying **Thank You** to those individuals who exemplify leadership by giving unselfishly of their time and talents for the betterment of the public schools. PSBA sent two certificates of appreciation and asked that their service be publicly recognized for dedicated service.

The certificate reads: in recognition of the unique role of the school board service and the long-term contributions of individuals who bring their energy, talent and values to the guidance of youth and public education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Congratulations to Mary Birks for 8 years of service and Dan Remely for 12 years of service.

The superintendent reported that Jefferson Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> grade was ranked #1 among 157 middle schools in the region, and Mellon Middle School was ranked #6 on a recent release from the Pittsburgh Business Times. The formula considers a three year average of PSSA scores in math, science and English with greater weight being placed on the most current year. In addition, the Pittsburgh Business Times ranked #4 among 129 high schools in the region based on results from the most recent Keystone Exams. The high school ranked #1 in Algebra I and is the highest in Allegheny County; ELA results ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Biology is 4<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to our students, administration and faculty on these excellent results. Mt. Lebanon schools consistently rank among the top schools in the region.

The community of Mt. Lebanon has received a Safe Communities America designation from the National Safety Council, placing it among an elite number of United States cities dedicated to preventing injury and death. Mt. Lebanon is one of only 30 communities in the country with this accreditation. The District is proud to have been a member of the coalition that contributed to the application. The application and site-visit required best-in-class performance in a multitude of areas.

Dr. Steinhauer announced upcoming fine arts performances. The Mt. Lebanon High School Bands in Review concert will be held on October 19 at 7:30 in the high school auditorium. The High School Choral Concert will take place on October 24 in the high school auditorium, and the

Mt. Lebanon High School Evening and Technical Theatre Companies will present *You Can't Take it With You* directed by Jennifer Majetic on November 8-11 in the High School Fine Arts Theatre.

The superintendent congratulated the fall sports teams for an exceptional season. Though the playoff games are not set, he wanted to wish the boys and girls soccer and the football team the best of luck as they move on to the playoffs. Congratulations to the boys and girls cross country teams who are competing in the WPIALS next week, and congratulations to the girls tennis team for their 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish in the WPIAL qualifying them for the PIAA tournament.

## BOARD REPORTS

Policy Committee – Mr. Moorhead reported that the Policy Committee met on October 9 to review revisions to policies JED, Student Absences, Tardiness and Excuses, and IHBB, Gifted Education. The Board will be taking action on approving these revisions at tonight's meeting.

Board Development – Dr. Strotmeyer reported that he spoke with Briana Crowley from PSBA regarding a self-assessment of the Board. Starting this month, PSBA will be offering online training for Board members.

Facilities – Mr. Remely reported that everything is done—high school renovations, tennis courts, and elementary and middle school air conditioning.

Parkway West CTC – Mr. Remely reported that Parkway West CTC has an enrollment of 844 students. Due to the increased enrollment, an instructor has been added to the veterinary technician program. Parkway is looking at adding a welding and diesel mechanic program next year. The Art Institute of Pittsburgh will rent the kitchen and culinary room for evening programs for \$2,500 a month. Parkway received a \$12,000 grant for ongoing development and the summer program.

Pathfinder School - Mrs. Olbrich reported that the enrollment numbers are up at the Pathfinder School. The only concern right now is a leaky roof that needs replaced. Mr. Marciniak has been asked to visit the school to look at the roof and provide an opinion on the cost to repair.

NSBA/PSBA – Mr. Beal reported that Kelly Pollitt has joined NSBA as the Chief Advocacy Officer for Federal Advocacy and Public Policy. The annual convention will be held in San Antonio, TX, April 7-9, 2018.

Mr. Beal reported that he along with Dr. Steinhauer, Mrs. Birks, Mrs. Bowman and teacher Mrs. Sullivan will be attending the annual PSBA Conference in Hershey. Dr. Steinhauer, Mrs. Birks, Mrs. Bowman and Mrs. Sullivan will be presenting at the conference.

Revenue Generation/MLFE – Dr. Strotmeyer reported that MLFE is still selling stadium blankets, and can be ordered on the MLFE page on the District website. The Taste of Lebo will be held in April, 2018.

The Board will be voting tonight on disbursements from the Capital Campaign totaling \$98,000. Twenty thousand will fund a Hall of Champions mural on the second floor of the High School Athletics Building, \$58,000 for elementary Maker Spaces for materials, equipment, and furniture, and \$20,000 to establish a Technology Student Association at the High School for the next two academic years.

Municipal Liaison – Mr. Lebowitz reminded the community about the annual Halloween Parade on October 28, 2017.

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Two residents spoke before the Board about the following:

- Treasurer's Report
- Philanthropic Advisory Board
- Capital Campaign Disbursements
- Urged the Board to vote yes on disbursements

NEW BUSINESS

It was moved by Strotmeyer and seconded by Remely that the Board approves, ratifies, and accepts the following financial reports: (Copy in official minutes)

- a. Treasurer's Report dated September 30, 2017,
- b. List of Bills dated September 29, 2017, and October 11, 2017,
- c. Year End Budgetary Transfers dated October 9, 2017
- d. List of Budgetary Transfers dated October 9, 2017
- e. List of Unusable Equipment dated October 1, 2017.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely, Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Strotmeyer and seconded by Cooper that the Board approves the following disbursements from the Capital Campaign:

- a. \$20,000 to fund a Hall of Champions mural on the second floor of the High School Athletic Building
- b. \$58,800 for elementary Maker Spaces for materials, equipment, and furniture.
- c. \$20,000 to establish a Technology Student Association at the High School for the next two academic years (2017-18 and 2018-19).

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely, Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Beal and seconded by Lebowitz that the Board approves the October 5, 2017, list of personnel changes, as revised October 12, 2017. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely, Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Beal and seconded by Olbrich that the Board approves revisions to Policy IHBB, Gifted Education, in the form presented. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely, Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Cooper and seconded by Olbrich that the Board approves revisions to Policy JED, Student Absences, Tardiness, and Excuses, in the form presented. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely,  
Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Moorhead and seconded by Remely that, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the following members of the Student Assistance Team are memorialized by the Board of School Directors for the 2017-2018 school year:

*Central Office Representative*, Dr. Ronald Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, *Mellon Middle School Student Assistance Program Team*, Christopher Wolfson, Principal; Ben Canan (pending completion of training) , Assistant Principal; Kara Gillespie, Counselor; Amy Whealdon, Counselor; Do Sabol, Nurse; Erica Harrington, Teacher; Eve Kollar, Teacher; Heather Rehrig, Teacher; Dan Ridge, Teacher; and Sue Wilcher, Teacher, *Jefferson Middle School Student Assistance Program Team*, Kelly Szesterniak, Principal; Jeff Zeiders, Assistant Principal; Peter Berg, Counselor; Allison Levinson, Counselor; Susan Suess, Nurse; Erika Vasquez, Psychologist; Susan Anstandig, Librarian; Ashlee Beckett, Teacher; Janice Cherry, Teacher; Kristen, Hertzog, Teacher; Gwen Kassep, Teacher; Beth Luptak, Teacher; Ed Petsko, Teacher; Stephanie Ross, Teacher; Nicole Welsh, Teacher; Molly Wetmore, Teacher; and John Young, Teacher, *Mt. Lebanon High School Student Assistance Program Team*, Brian McFeeley, Principal; Joel Thompson, Unit Principal; Natasha Dirda, Unit Principal; Carlie McGinty, Dean of Students; Diana Becker, Counselor; Chad Johnston, Counselor; Tara Leja, Counselor; Joy Rullo, Counselor; Shelly Saba, Counselor; Beth Schneider, Counselor; Frank Cremonese, Teacher; Jodi Dunlap, Teacher; Todd Forsyth, Teacher; Lisa Hoover, Teacher; Tim Kirsch, Teacher; Jen Marnick, Teacher; Keary McFeeley, Teacher; Darren McGregor, Teacher; Ann Sartorio, Teacher; Rich Schmitt, Teacher; Stu Snodgrass, Teacher; Elizabeth Tighe, Teacher, and Joe Tighe, Teacher.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely,  
Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Remely and seconded by Olbrich that the Board approves an agreement with Continuum Pediatric Nursing Services for the 2017-2018 school year to provide skilled nursing services for a special needs student, including providing services during transportation, at a cost of \$40 per hour and will not exceed \$60,000. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely,  
Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Lebowitz and seconded by Cooper that the Board approves the following student trips:

- a. High School German students to Estes Park CO, September 29-October 1, 2017,
- b. High School Winter Guard to Bethlehem PA, March 16-18, 2018,
- c. Jefferson Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students to Washington, DC, March 26-27, 2018,
- d. Mellon Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students to Washington, DC, May 3-4, 2018, and
- e. High School Winter Guard to Wildwood, NJ, May 3-6, 2018.



ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely,  
Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved Olbrich and seconded by Lebowitz that the Board approves the Settlement Agreement with Cleon Kordistos in the form presented.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cooper, Lebowitz, Moorhead, Olbrich, Remely,  
Riemer, Strotmeyer, Birks  
Against: None  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

#### COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Three residents spoke before the Board about the following:

Suggested that the District should host WPIAL & PIAA events  
State Budget  
Policy on not allowing drones to be used during school events  
More information needs to be given to residents regarding the Capital Campaign  
Questioned who he could talk to about the Capital Campaign  
Commented on the ranking of the #4 ranking of the high school in the Pittsburgh  
Business Times but disappointed we weren't #1  
Article on the number of school districts approved for Act 1 exemptions  
WTAE story on the stock pile of reserves in Pennsylvania school districts; be careful  
spending down reserves  
Requested change in annual auditors; wants an outside audit of the Capital Campaign

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Birks announced that an Executive Session was held this evening for the purpose of personnel and litigation matters.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved by Olbrich and seconded by Remely to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Cecile D. Bowman, Secretary  
Board of School Directors

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