

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

March 20, 2017

A Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors was held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 20, 2017, in Room D205, Mt. Lebanon High School.

Mrs. Birks called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Howe Elementary student council members Brody Barber, Riley Farabaugh, Gus Kollar, Kylee McKay, Ryan Stuart, and Maura Tatomir. The students reported on the Olweus bullying program at Howe and the lessons learned from the flying habits of a flock of geese working together as a group.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Hugh Beal, Mr. William Cooper, Mr. Lawrence Lebowitz, Mr. William Moorhead, Ms. Sara Olbrich, Mr. Daniel Remely, Mr. Michael Riemer, Mrs. Mary Birks
Absent: None

ATTENDING:

Dr. Timothy Steinhauer, Superintendent
Thomas Peterson, School Solicitor
Administrative Staff: Mrs. Sloane Astorino, Ms. Cissy Bowman, Mr. Kenneth Cross, Dr. Ronald Davis, Ms. Kathryn Devine, Dr. Marybeth Irvin, Ms. Janice Klein, Mr. Richard Marciniak, Mr. Christopher Stengel, Dr. Michelle Murray, Mr. Jason Ramsey

MINUTES

It was moved by Beal and seconded by Remely that the Board approves the minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting held on February 13, 2017; the Discussion Meeting held on February 13, 2017, and the Regular Meeting held on February 27, 2017.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORTS

Jefferson Middle School Executive Board members, Madeline Wine and Anna Schwartz, reported on the events at Jefferson Middle School. Pop Tab Wars was a week long, fun competition between homerooms. Students collected \$1,000.50 in quarters and 210 pounds of pop tabs. The Ronald McDonald House will receive a check for \$1,000.50 to be used to ease the burden of families who are staying in the Pittsburgh area to be a child in need of extended medical services. The pop tabs will be sent to Sewing Hope in Uganda. Sewing Hope is an organization with the objective of helping young women in South Sudan and Uganda. The pop tabs will be used to promote trendy global fashion, while at the same time giving these young women jobs, hope and a chance to live meaningful lives.

Wish Week is currently happening at JMS, and the Wish Week Committee has been working feverishly over the past months preparing to fulfill as many JMS wishes as possible. The scope and variety of wishes is long and wide, but the committee will try to grant them all. Some are as small as a package of ketchup, others as strange as a potato. There are students who will be principal for part of a day and students will act as teachers' assistants. This is a very popular event at Jefferson Middle School.

The Student Council had the opportunity to attend the PASC Spring District Conference hosted by Northgate High School. Madeline and Anna, as well as two other Executive Board members, act as Middle Level Representatives on the District Board of PASC. JMS Student Council presented eight workshops at the conference. Forty-seven students attended who experienced many facets of leadership training. Overall, it was a successful and motivating day for all.

Mary Augenstein, Co Treasurer, and Zach Dewit, Co Vice President, presented the Mt. Lebanon High School Student Council report. Eighteen students attended the Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils District 3 Spring conference at Northgate High School last Friday. The group consisted of juniors and freshmen and they greatly enjoyed the “unplugged” nature of the event. All students stepped out of their comfort zone by participating in a wide variety of leadership workshops and they made an extra effort to meet students from other school districts.

The Senior Executive Student Council is busy organizing the Spring Spirit Assembly that will take place on March 31st. The friendly competition between the elementary school teams during the games of knock out basketball, dodgeball, musical chairs, and running relays is a tradition that all of us love.

Fourteen members of the junior class have become candidates for one of the eight Senior Class Student Council offices. On April 7th a “Meet the Candidates” forum will take place during all three lunch periods and the General Election will take place on April 21st. The juniors will also be hosting a board game bonanza at Children’s Hospital at the end of this month. The sophomores have organized and delivered treat bags based on the theme “Earth Day Birthdays” to the Beverly’s Birthday organization. Fifty five young children whose family doesn’t have the financial resources to host a birthday party will be able to enjoy sharing treat bags with their guests at their next birthday party. They are also conducting a drive to collect signatures of students who will pledge to “Spread the Word to Stop the Word” relating to the derogatory use of the word retarded. And during the last two weeks of this month, the freshman and sophomore class councils are coordinating the “Sack Hunger, Pack Hope” campaign in support of the South Hills Interfaith Movement. These two classes will ask for the seniors to donate soap and shampoo, the juniors to donate toothpaste, the sophomores will donate toothbrushes, and the freshmen will be asked to donate deodorant so that SHIM can continue to support 600 families who live in the South Hills. And the final blood drive for this school year will take place on Friday, April 7th. We have moved the location closer to the main school building, room D205, in hopes that it will encourage more students to donate blood.

The students are encouraging the Board, the administration and the community to consider nominating Mt. Lebanon High School alumni for the 2017 Great Alumni award. This honor recognizes alumni who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments either personally or professionally. The deadline to submit a nomination is April 15th and the nomination form can be downloaded from the School District’s website or by contacting the Student Activities Office.

BOARD PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Mrs. Birks reported on her visits to Mellon Middle School and Jefferson Elementary School. At Mellon, Principal Chris Wolfson and his faculty were excited to host the visit, and she found a vibrant, focused learning community, and a warm and inviting school. We experienced “Gameifying the classroom” occurring in real time in both an 8th grade US History class and an ELA class, leading to an increase in student engagement in the learning process. While visiting both an 8th grade Math classroom and an 8th grade Conceptual Physics classroom, we were part of a more traditional setting that had solid examples of higher order questioning and active student responses.

Art students were actively engaged in art projects producing high quality work that is on display throughout our building, and the chorus classroom was soliciting student input on the final pieces

being selected for the spring concert to keep student engagement high. In 7th grade biology, students were patiently waiting for “something” to grow in the Petri dishes in the back of the room showing the type of hands-on, STEM related activities prevalent throughout the curriculum. 7th grade English students were actively involved in the writing process, discussing what it meant to plagiarize others’ work and how to avoid it. The school’s administration and teachers embrace the opportunities presented by the ever-changing student body with a commitment of providing “the best education possible to each and every student.”

At Jefferson Elementary, Principal Sarah Shaw led the tour. We observed 1st grade’s Lebo Time, where we saw flexible grouping meeting the needs of all learners. 2nd grade students were “warming up their brains” for the day by answering brain quest trivia questions; in a 2nd grade science class, students were learning about liquids and solids, having read Bartholomew and the Oobleck in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday. In the Kindergarten classroom, students had just finished a weather project in science class, discussing March coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb.

FLES was alive in well in 3rd grade, where students have been learning verbs and telling time. 3rd Grade art students were learning about David Kracov, an American painter, animator and sculptor. Another 3rd grade was reviewing comparative and superlative adjectives using classroom discussion and the smart board. The students were excited to participate in describing the difference between these adjectives. The JES 5th Grade class had students working in groups to develop directions about how to solve the problems of multiplying and dividing exponents. JES 4th Graders were learning about fractions in a set in math class.

We completed our tour by checking out a raised bed vegetable garden on the back playground, thanks to a grant from Let’s Move Pittsburgh and Phipps Conservatory and to a very generous donation from Yard to Table Garden Builders (Mt. Lebanon based small business).

My thanks to the Dr. Davis and Dr. Irvin for making these visits possible; to our school principals for welcoming my visit, to all of the teachers who greeted our brief interruption as an opportunity to highlight their students’ work, and to the students....our bosses....for exhibiting teamwork, showcasing problem solving, reveling in creativity, and thriving in both group and independent activities. You are all doing fantastic work! Learning is alive and well in Mt. Lebanon Schools!

Mrs. Birks introduced Sloane Astorino, Director of Advancement, who presented the 1st annual Sue Harper Endowed Teaching Award to Lincoln Elementary art teacher, Jill Majestic. Mrs. Majestic was nominated and selected as a teacher who exemplifies the outstanding qualities and characteristics that defined Mrs. Harper. Mrs. Majestic's enthusiasm for teaching, her love of art and her dedication to veterans’ causes, such as the Lincoln Veterans Day celebration, is an inspiration to all who know her. This \$250 award is for professional development and will be given annually.

Jason Cheskawich was honored with the School Board's Extra Mile Award for March. Nominated by Mrs. Jodi Kubit, her nomination states, “Mr. Cheskawich continues to be a strong advocate for fine arts education in our district. At concerts he often speaks about how thankful he is that Mt. Lebanon supports Fine Arts the way they do. To summarize, I am nominating Mr. Cheskawich because I think that he goes the Extra Mile for our students every day and this year he probably went an Extra Few Miles! He does it because of his love of teaching music and of fine arts and I would love to see him be recognized for what he did for our students and our district this year.” Mrs. Birks presented Mr. Cheskawich with a certificate and pin in appreciation for all that he does for the students of Mt. Lebanon.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steinhauer recognized the high school's Unified Bocce Team on their successful first season. Director of Special Education, Ken Cross, started the process of forming the team. Mt. Lebanon, along with five other Allegheny County schools, partnered with Special Olympics Pennsylvania to take part in a fully inclusive Unified Sports Indoor Bocce program this winter. The goal of this program was to create an environment where students with and without disabilities were able to compete in a competitive and inclusive environment while having the opportunity to build friendships, attend practices and competitions, be a part of a team, and most importantly, to have fun. Ms. Nicole Eshleman, a Personal Care Assistant at Washington Elementary School, was the District's coach and is commended for her outstanding performance and leadership with our student athletes. Congratulations to the following team members and their coach on their successful first season: Lily Dalzell, Alex Demsky, Jessica Demsky, Robert Demsky, Jerry Rutledge, CJ Petruccelli, Giovanna Morello, Jack Broadhust, Coach Nicole Eshleman, and Ken Cross.

Elementary parents are invited to an informational meeting for the *Dare to Dream: Reimagining Our Elementary Libraries* initiative on March 21 at 7 p.m. in their school library. The event will be hosted by the principal and school librarian. This event will be an opportunity for parents to learn more about makerspaces and how they can become involved in the development of a makerspace in their school library. This library initiative is made possible due to the generous initial gift of \$175,000 from Mt. Lebanon alumni and parents David and Noelle Conover to help establish a maker-centered learning space in each library to be named Matt's Maker Space after their son Matt who lost a courageous battle with cancer in 2002. The gift will be disbursed over a 3 year period, with each library receiving \$8,600 each year.

Dr. Steinhauer presented an update on the 2017-2018 budget. As presented at the Discussion Meeting and posted on the district website, the current draft of next year's budget showed about a .53 mills difference between anticipated revenues and expenditures. Since that time, the administration has continued to work to refine revenues and expenditures. If the Board determines to move ahead with the bond refinancing as listed on the agenda - and with about \$1M in additional reductions, we will be at .27 mills. This would put the millage rate increase at its lowest level in five years while making no significant reductions to programs or staff. It should also be noted that PSERS increase alone is .28 mills. We will continue to look for reductions, efficiencies, and refinement of projected revenues to ensure that we are giving the board the best possible information. The Board will continue to discuss the budget for the next couple of months.

BOARD REPORTS

Policy Committee – Mr. Moorhead reported that the Policy Committee did not hold a meeting this month. The next Policy Committee will be held on April 3, 2017.

Board Development – Dr. Strotmeyer reported that PSBA will help facilitate a Board workshop in the spring.

Facilities – Mr. Riemer reported that the contractor is laying gravel preparing for the paving stones on Horsman. The road and tennis court surfaces will be completed when the asphalt plants open in April. The landscape contractor will continue to concentrate his efforts on filling in the sidewalk areas with stone and installing topsoil in designated areas. The concrete work is 99% complete, the "rock pile" is being compacted, and the North parking lot is close to opening.

Parkway West Career and Technical Center – Mr. Remely reported that Parkway West was audited and there were no departures from standard accounting procedures and no significant deficiencies. A 339 Vocational Education On-Site Review was conducted at Parkway. The

evaluator was quite complimentary of the program and noted that it was more enthusiastic than five years ago.

Mt. Lebanon junior Emma Luther was the AM student of the month in February. Emma is a cosmetology student at Parkway.

A career exploration day was held on February 18 where 7th, 8th, and 9th graders can visit the school to get a feel of what Parkway has to offer. This year 542 students attended the event. This is the highest attendance ever.

The following Mt. Lebanon students will be inducted into the National Technical Honor Society on Tuesday, April 4: Arron Burger, Lia Hanberry, Briana Kratoval, Johathan Kemmler, Benjamin Minet, Kathleen O'Reilly, Elaina Palka, and Irina Karpenka.

Pathfinder School – Mr. Cooper reported that the Pathfinder School was audited and there were no findings. The budget for the year was approved for \$123,540. Mr. Cooper noted that the program at Pathfinder is run without any costs to the five participating districts. Mt. Lebanon has the largest percentage of students of the five schools participating at Pathfinder. Enrollment at Pathfinder is 77 with 29% from Mt. Lebanon. Mr. Cooper accredits the new principal at Pathfinder for being aggressive with new programs. One new program is the Pride program—a school to work training program. Six students are now enrolled. The Pathfinder Fair will be held on April 29, and Mr. Cooper invited Board members to attend.

PSBA/NSBA – Mr. Beal reported that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees met separately with Education Secretary Pedro Rivera. Among the key topics that were discussed Charter schools, graduation requirements associated to Keystone exams, and a moratorium on Plancon funding.

On the national level, there is concern that with the possible demise of the Affordable Care Act, will effect funding to the Access program. Currently Mt. Lebanon receives approximately \$325,000 for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language services, and more.

The U.S. Senate approved two measures passed earlier by the House of Representatives to repeal education regulations that had been finalized by the Obama Administration last year. The measures will be headed to the White House for approval and the president is expected to sign the measures.

The President presented a budget that will reduce educational funding by 13.5% or approximately 7 billion dollars.

SHASDA – Mr. Cooper attended the last SHASDA meeting where the annual student forum was held. Mt. Lebanon senior, Courtney Byrne, represented the high school. Students from the participating districts got a chance to tell board members what they were doing right or wrong in education. Some students talked about having more advanced placement courses and some requested courses on how to do a mortgage, car payment etc. Mr. Cooper commented that it was a very good session.

Revenue Generation/MLFE – Dr. Strotmeyer reported that the 3rd annual MLFE Taste of Lebo will be held on Saturday, April 22 from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. Tickets are available on the website at \$25 for adults and \$10 for students. Restaurants on Washington Road will be participating along with our own food service. District student groups will be performing throughout the day.

Dr. Strotmeyer highly recommends the community attending the Reimagining our Libraries Makerspace event to see how our libraries are being transformed from the traditional library to the current makerspaces involved in STEM and STEAM learning.

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 Moorhead that the Board appoints Tom Peterson as Solicitor for the refinancing of the 2009 Series A General Obligation Bonds at a fee of \$10,000.

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 Lebowitz that the Board approves the March 9, 2017, list of personnel changes as revised March 16, 2017, and March 20, 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 Cooper that the Board approves the AIU Program of Services Budget for 2017-2018 in the amount of \$2,034,004 with an estimated cost to the District of \$84,394. (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 Remely and seconded by Cooper that the Board authorizes the extension of the agreement in the Western Pennsylvania Electricity Consortium for the purchase of electricity from Direct Energy from January 2019 for a period not to exceed 24 months if the rate is at or below current contractual costs. (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 Olbrich and seconded by Strotmeyer that That the Board votes for Mary D. Birks as a trustee for the Western Region to the Allegheny County Schools Health Consortium Board for one year beginning March 29, 2017.

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

It was moved by Moorhead and seconded by Cooper that the Board approves the Ski Club trip to Jay Peak Resort in Vermont from January 25 to January 29, 2018.

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

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Two residents spoke before the Board about the following: Bond Refinancing

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Birks reported that an Executive Session was held before this evening's meeting for the purpose of personnel and litigation matters.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved by Cooper and seconded by Lebowitz to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Cecile D. Bowman, Secretary
Board of School Directors

/js