

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

March 15, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors was held at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 15, 2021, in the Mt. Lebanon High School Auditorium. Public participation was available through Zoom.

Mr. Wyland called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Hugh Beal, Mrs. Elaine Cappucci, Dr. Aviva Diamond, Ms. Valerie Fleisher, Mr. Andrew Freeman, Dr. Justin Hackett, Ms. Sarah Olbrich, Dr. Stephen Strotmeyer, Mr. Jacob Wyland,
Absent: None

ATTENDING:

Dr. Timothy Steinhauer, Superintendent
Mr. Thomas Peterson, Solicitor
Administrative Staff: Ms. Cissy Bowman, Dr. Ronald Davis, Dr. Heather Doyle, Mr. Robert Geletko, Dr. Marybeth Irvin, Mr. Richard Marciniak, Mr. Christopher Stengel

MINUTES

It was moved by Hackett and seconded by Diamond that the Board approves the minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting held on February 8, 2021; the Discussion Meeting held on February 8, 2021; the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Meeting held on February 15, 2021; and the Regular Board Meeting held on February 15, 2021.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Freeman, Hackett, Olbrich, Strotmeyer, Wyland
Against: None
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Wyland reported that Mr. Geletko, Business Director, presented an in-depth look at the nuances of the 2021-2022 Budget. The presentation is available for the public to view on the District website and provides valuable information to better understand the District's budget process and projections. The presentation also discusses how the pandemic has significantly affected the budget.

Jefferson Middle School students achieved four first place and two second place recognitions at the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition. More than 600 students from around the Pittsburgh area competed by conducting and presenting experiments in various fields of science. Congratulations to first place winners Jessica Yang, Sally Tan, Laila Polat and Michael Zhu as well as to second place winners Sam Wetzel and Clara Sun. The first place winners will now move on to the state competition organized by Pennsylvania State University. Mt. Lebanon students were sponsored and coached by Kathryn Duchin and Ed Petsko.

Mr. Wyland congratulated seniors Jack Horrigan and Kendall Lankford for their first place finish in the Keystone Media Competition, which is run by Pennsylvania's News Media Association.

Jack and Kendall won for a store they ran in the October edition of *The Devil's Advocate* called "A House Divided: 2020 election reveals generation gap." Jack also won second place in the diversity category for a piece published last year called "District creates diversity task force." Jack and Kendall served as co-editors-in-chief of *The Devil's Advocate* during the first semester. The *Devil's Advocate* is in its 54th year of publication. Ms. Dawn Davenport is the faculty advisor.

Mr. Wyland commended Dr. Steinhauer, Dr. Shaw, and her teams concerning their quick response and investigation in the hateful graffiti found at Jefferson Middle School. The Board is committed to fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding in our schools, and we stand in solidarity with the Jewish community in condemning all expression and symbols of hate.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Steinhauer addressed the incidents regarding the two swastika symbols that were drawn at Jefferson Middle School on March 2 and March 9, and the steps taken by the JMS principal, the central office administration and the Mt. Lebanon police. The District has and will continue to act swiftly to address any issues that violate our policies and practices of nondiscrimination. Dr. Shaw, JMS principal, and her team have done an excellent job responding to these incidents-both through the investigation and in the follow-up with parents, and most importantly, students. The District continues to educate our students to understand the full meaning of these hateful symbols and all they represent.

The superintendent expressed his deep thanks and gratitude to Rabbi Aaron Meyer from Temple Emanuel and Rabbis Alex and Amy Greenbaum from Beth El Congregation for their counsel, guidance, and educational support they have generously provided the District in this instance and over the years.

The District is committed to fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding in our schools and work every day to cultivate a place where everyone is treated with kindness, respect, and dignity.

Dr. Steinhauer reported that all of the Mt. Lebanon School District staff and faculty will have the opportunity to access a vaccine by the end of the week, either through the AIU's J&J vaccine distribution program or the other three vaccine programs offered through the District. These vaccination opportunities are just one important part of our Covid-19 mitigation strategy. The administration team, especially Deanna Hess, should be thanked for their tireless efforts to secure these multiple opportunities for MTLSD employees.

Today marked the opportunity for the full-day return for our elementary students. There were lots smiles and excitement from our students, from their families, and from our faculty and staff. The superintendent reassured families and the community that we have implemented our multilayered health and safety protocols to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. Dr. Steinhauer thanked Dr. Irvin, our building principals, teachers, and staff for all that they did to make this a smooth transition for our students today.

Mr. Geletko presented an updated on the preparation of the 2021-2022 Budget.

BOARD REPORTS

Policy Committee – Dr. Diamond reported that the Policy Committee met on March 8 to discuss the draft a social media policy. The Committee will bring forward for approval at the April board meeting.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee – Dr. Hackett reported that the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee met earlier this evening to discuss the JMS incidents and response to those incidents. They also discussed the DEI Task Force meeting and their strategic plan. Dr. Bennett, the DEI consultant from PSBA, will host a training session for the Board.

Municipal Liaison – Dr. Hackett reported the Mt. Lebanon Commission is looking at what stimulus funds are coming from the government and how those funds can and cannot be used. The parking ordinance issue will be voted on at the next Commission meeting. The municipal DEI meetings are in full swing.

Parkway West – Mr. Beal reported that 1,000 students attend Parkway West Career & Technology Center with 50 students attending a ½ day program. NOCTII exams will not be held this year due to Covid restrictions. Industry certifications will be available for current and for 2020 graduates. The 2021-2022 Budget passed unanimously by all participating districts. Senior graduation ceremony will be held on May 12. School will return in the fall to 5-day, in-school instruction. The annual open house will be held on April 6 from 5:00-8:00 pm for potential new students. Mr. Beal encouraged Board members to attend.

Pathfinder School – Ms. Fleisher reported that the Pathfinder School board met on February 17 and approved a capital project list for 2021-2022. Ms. Fleisher reported that head custodian, Rob Lastiter retired after 41 years of service, and is now working under contract for one year as head of building and grounds. The next meeting of the Board will be held on March 17 to review the 2021-2022 budget. Ms. Fleisher reminded the Board that Mt. Lebanon is one of five school districts that own Pathfinder through a jointure agreement and don't contribute to the administrative and operation budget.

PSBA/NSBA – Dr. Strotmeyer reported that the Digital Advocacy Day was held today and there were opportunities to log in to virtual presentations. PSBA is sponsoring the following virtual sectional meetings: Social and Emotional Leadership on March 30, Perspectives in Public Education featuring Governor Wolf on March 31, and Digital Citizen and Leadership on April 1. PSBA will be hosting training session for the Board on the following days: April 8, Superintendent Evaluation and MetricsEd; April 22, What is Equity?; and June 10, Setting Board Goals Workshop. PSBA has released the 2021 State of Education Report and the impact Covid had on education over the past year. The Spring Legal Roundup will be held on March 24.

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

One resident spoke before the Board about the following:

- Questioned how many district employees were vaccinated
- Questioned date of Parkway Open House

NEW BUSINESS

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

- a. Treasurer's Report dated February 28, 2021, and
- b. List of Bills dated February 26, 2021, and March 10, 2021.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Freeman, Hackett, Olbrich, Strotmeyer, Wyland
Against: None

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Olbrich and seconded by Strotmeyer that the Board approves the March 4, 2021, list of personnel changes, as revised March 11, 2021. (Copy in official minutes)

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Freeman, Hackett,
Olbrich, Strotmeyer, Wyland
Against: None
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Fleisher and seconded by Wyland that the Administration is authorized to implement the In-Person Secondary Education plan as recommended by the Superintendent, on March 29 or thereafter, so that students in grades 6-12 will return to full In-Person Instruction, or to elect available hybrid/remote options, as described in the Revised Reopening Education Plan adopted February 15, 2021, provided that the following conditions are verified prior to implementation:

- a. Student desks will be placed to provide at least six feet of separation among students and staff to the maximum extent feasible, but in no event less than three feet, and barriers will be afforded to all students.
- b. Students will be spaced at least six feet apart while eating lunch.
- c. All teacher workstations/teaching spaces will have a distance of at least six feet from any student desk.
- d. The District will continue to comply with the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings, and the Recommendations for Pre-K-12 Schools Following Identification of a Case(s) of COVID-19.
- e. The District will continue to comply with all mitigation measures described in the Health and Safety Plan.

Prior findings and approvals by the Board are only rescinded to the extent that they are inconsistent with this Resolution. The Superintendent continues to be authorized to alter the educational mode for any building, buildings or programs based on his determination that such change is warranted, including consideration of such factors as community spread, positive cases within the District, staffing, new directives and guidances, and other considerations, with prompt notification to the Board.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Freeman, Hackett,
Olbrich, Strotmeyer, Wyland
Against: None
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

It was moved by Diamond and seconded by Strotmeyer that the Board appoints Hugh L. Beal to serve as the District's representative on the Parkway West Career and Technology Center Joint Committee, and Jacob D. Wyland to serve as the alternate representative, for a term expiring in December, 2022.

ROLL CALL: For: Beal, Cappucci, Diamond, Fleisher, Freeman, Hackett,
Olbrich, Strotmeyer, Wyland
Against: None
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Five (5) residents spoke before the Board about the following:

- Questioned the function of the Board
- Board has no finance or budget committee
- Look at SAT-ACT scores
- There is no academic standards committee
- No performance goals are listed for the superintendent on the website
- Asked the Board to consider letting tennis single players play without masks
- Questioned how it will be handled with teachers working from home and getting vaccinated
- Board needs a budget committee
- Thanked teachers for their work
- Swastika incident at JMS happened last week and was disappointed that the issue was not addressed today by the administration
- Questioned whose decision it is to wear mask for outdoor sports

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Olbrich and seconded by Strotmeyer to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Cecile D. Bowman, Secretary
Board of School Director

/js