

- CALL TO ORDER** At 7:02 p.m. the February 16, 2021 meeting of the Susquehanna Township Board of School Directors was called to order by President Jesse Rawls, Sr.
- SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS** Mr. Majid Ali, Ms. Josie Byzek, Mr. Scott W. Campbell, Dr. Michael Cohen, Mr. John F. Dietrich, Ms. Julieann Newill, Mr. Jesse G. Gantt, Mr. Jesse Rawls, Sr., President, Ms. Zoe Jackson, Student Representative, Miss Paige Mullen, Student Representative
- DISTRICT OFFICE PRESENT** Mr. Olswen Anderson, Jr., Mr. Justin Green, Mr. Mark Holman, Dr. Richard Kaskey, Dr. Douglas L. Nyce, Ms. Ann-Marie Rathmell, Dr. Tamara Willis, Superintendent
- ABSENT** Mrs. Ilecia C. Voughs
- EXECUTIVE SESSION** The President announced that executive session was held immediately prior to the meeting for the purpose of personnel matters.
- REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS** **Ms. Zoe Jackson and Ms. Paige Mullen, Student Representatives,** reported that SL/AC Primary held a second virtual education night on February 4th, including reading, math and PBIS sessions. They reported that the February newsletter was posted from the school. The students noted that for February 16th, the 100th day of school, STHS students dressed up a 100-year-olds and paraded. They also reported that the STHS Girls and Boys Basketball Teams as well as the STHS Swimming Team held senior nights, honoring and recognizing their seniors. Student achievements were noted by Ms. Jackson and Ms. Mullen, including Jake Heller who was honored as WGAL Athlete of the Week, performing amazingly for the Swim Team in the 1st week of February. They also noted that Stephanie Shippi was honored by PennLive and other media outlets for her participation on the STHS Girls Basketball Team. She was singled out and featured in the article “Met the Challenge” for her performance as a deaf athlete playing against hearing teams with excellence. The representatives reported that Nkemdilin Taft Nnochirionye, STHS senior, was recognized as the winner for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of the Black History Month Writing Contest for his piece “Black Mother Dearest.” They noted that a description of events honoring Taft are on PennLive. They concluded their report by noting that, for Black History Month, placards have been placed around STHS with information and pictures of black people who excelled in different subjects and pictures of inventions by black people.
- Mr. Jesse Rawls, Sr., DCTS Representative,** reported that the DCTS is moving forward with the purchase of a house on Wiconisco Street in Harrisburg which will be renovated by DCTS students as part of a relationship established with the City of Harrisburg.
- Dr. Willis, Superintendent,** thanked the student representatives for the wonderful job they are doing of representing the student body, K-12, not just STHS. She thanked them for highlighting student athletes that she will also recognize:

Stephanie Shippi and Jake Heller, and also for highlighting Taft's winning of the poetry contest. Dr. Willis went on to read an official statement regarding issues around the challenges of budget development for the 2021-2022 school year. She expressed that she believes it is fitting to address a challenge.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

"As we continue to develop our budget for the 2021-22 school year, I would like to share a major challenge that the Susquehanna Township School District and all public-school districts continue to face.

The average Pennsylvania school district spends millions of dollars in taxpayer money annually in mandatory payments to brick-and-mortar and cyber charter schools; and these payments are calculated in a manner which requires districts to send more money to charter schools than is needed to operate their programs and places a significant financial burden on districts' resources and taxpayers.

The current charter school funding formula was established in 1997 under the state's Charter School Law and has not been changed in the 23 years since it was first created; and the formula for regular education programs is unfair because it is based on a school district's expenditures and not what it actually costs to educate a child in the charter school.

Because the tuition rate calculations are based on the school district's expenses, they create wide discrepancies in the amount of tuition paid by different districts for the same charter school education and result in drastic overpayments to charter schools; and these discrepancies in tuition rates for regular education students can vary by almost \$13,000 per student and by \$39,000 for special education students.

According to the data retrieved from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, in 2014-15 school districts paid charter schools more than \$100 million for special education services in excess of what charter schools reported spending on special education.

The costs of charter schools for school districts continue to grow significantly each year; and on a statewide basis are the most identified source of pressure on school district budgets.

The budgeted charter school tuition expenditures for Susquehanna Township School District for the 2020-2021 school year are \$2.74 million or the equivalent of 5.0% of the total district general fund budget.

The need for significant charter school funding reform is urgent; and school districts are struggling to keep up with growing charter costs and are forced to raise taxes and cut staffing, programs and services for their own students in order to pay millions of dollars to charter schools.

This administration calls upon the General Assembly to meaningfully revise the existing flawed charter school funding systems for regular and special education to ensure that school districts and taxpayers are no longer overpaying these schools or reimbursing for costs the charter schools do not incur. Later this evening, we will ask

members of our School Board of Directors to approve a resolution calling upon the General Assembly to address the inequities in charter school funding.”

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS FOR FEBRUARY 16, 2021

MOTION TO APPROVE

2.A. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve the meeting agenda as presented for February 16, 2021.
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

2.B. Board Member Comments

SPEAKER

None.

III. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

SPEAKER

None.

IV. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

PRESENTATION

None.

V. MINUTES

None.

VI. PROGRAM

None.

VII. PERSONNEL

MOTION TO APPROVE

7.A.B.C. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve Items 7.A.B.C.
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

7.A.1. Approve Stephanie Sowers-Waros as Social Worker at the Susquehanna Township School District at a salary of \$52,368.00 (M, Step 1), pro-rated, effective March 15, 2021. Ms. Sowers-Waros will be replacing Cecelia Pharris.

7.A.2. Approve Rebecca DeLisio as Speech Pathologist at the Sara Lindemuth / Anna Carter Primary School at a salary of \$74,289.00 (M + 15, Step 14), pro-rated, effective date to be determined. Ms. DeLisio will be replacing Trista Rhoads.

7.B.1. Approve Charles Henderson as Part-Time Food Service Worker at the Susquehanna Township Middle School at a rate of \$12.00 per hour, effective February 4, 2021. Mr. Henderson will be replacing Shirley Carter-Winfield.

7.B.2. Approve the employment of Lalita Bajgai as Assistant III Life Skills at the Thomas W. Holtzman, Jr. Elementary School at a rate of \$15.53 per hour (Tier 2-1), effective February 16, 2021. Ms. Bajgai will be replacing Kayla Low.

7.C. Approve the retirement of Pamela Mowery as Physical Education Teacher at the Thomas W. Holtzman, Jr. Elementary School, effective June 11, 2021. Ms. Mowery has been with the district since 1986.

FOR THE RECORD

Mr. Dietrich thanked Pamela Mowery for 35 years of extraordinary service to the STSD.

FOR THE RECORD

Mr. Rawls, Sr. congratulated and thanked Ms. Mowery for her outstanding service.

VIII. FINANCES

MOTION TO APPROVE

8.A.B.C.D.E.F. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Ms. Byzek, to approve Items 8.A.B.C.D.E.F.
Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

8.A. Approve the payment of Activity Fund bill from the First National Bank Activity Fund Checking, as listed on the Computer Check Summary, totaling \$711.25. (attached to BoardDocs)

8.B. Approve the payment of Capital Reserve PSDLAF checking bills from the Capital Reserve PSDLAF Checking, as listed on the Computer Check Summary, totaling \$141,524.55. (attached to BoardDocs)

8.C. Approve the General Fund Cash Balance of \$18,054,312.59. (attached to BoardDocs)

8.D. Approve the payment of First National General Fund Checking bills from the First National General Fund Checking as listed on the Computer Check Summary, totaling \$1,553,927.23. (attached to BoardDocs)

8.E. Approve the payment of Food Service bills from the Food Service Checking, as listed on the Computer Check Summary, totaling \$207.17. (attached to BoardDocs)

8.F. Approve the Food Service Condensed Cash Balance of \$413,254.39. (attached to BoardDocs)

MOTION TO APPROVE

8.G. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Mr. Gantt, to approve Item 8.G.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Aye:	Mr. Campbell, Mr. Ali, Mr. Dietrich, Mr. Rawls, Sr., Ms. Byzek, Dr. Cohen, Mr. Gantt, Ms. Newill
Nay:	None.

Abstain: None.
Absent: Mrs. Voughs

Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

8.G. Approve the 2021 Susquehanna Township School District Board of Directors Resolution calling for Charter School Funding Reform. (attached to BoardDocs)

IX. CONTRACTS

MOTION TO APPROVE

9.A.B.C. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Mr. Ali, to approve Items 9.A.B.C. Motion passed 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

9.A. Approve the agreement between Active Internet Technologies, dba Finalsite and Susquehanna Township School District to develop the district's website for launch during the 2021-2022 school year. (attached to BoardDocs)

9.B. Approve the Local Education Agency Letter of Agreement (LEA), Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program Roles and Responsibilities between Susquehanna Township School District (STSD) and Region 2 - Berks County Intermediate Unit. This Agreement ensures compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. (attached to BoardDocs)

9.C. Approve motion to commit to being part of the WAN and internet consortium with CAIU. (attached to BoardDocs)

Note: In an effort to contain costs and meet the demand for more bandwidth and reliability, the WIRT (WAN and Internet Rebid Team) rebid our existing contract. The WIRT filed an E-rate Form 470/RFP on behalf of all the member districts and is soliciting bids for a 5-year contract with two 1-year extensions for WAN services and a 3-year contract with two 1-year extensions for Internet services, beginning July 1, 2021.

DISCUSSION

9.D. Discuss a confidential contract with Comcast to provide Susquehanna Township School District with metro ethernet connectivity between the High School & District Office, High School & Middle School, and High School & Thomas W. Holtzman, Jr. Elementary School in the amount of \$3,750.10 per month for all three circuits for a period of 36 months, effective July 1, 2021. This agreement increases the Wide-Area Network (WAN) bandwidth between the identified locations from 1GBps to 3GBps.

Note: The additional bandwidth is necessary to support the increased number of devices and higher internet usage experienced with the district's ARA and HCA educational delivery models. In accordance with Comcast confidentiality and proprietary contract language and recommendation by the district's solicitor, the actual contract is not posted to the February 16, 2021 School Board Agenda, but has been provided to each Board Member for review.

X. POLICY

None.

XI. OTHER

None.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN

13.A. Moved by Mr. Dietrich, seconded by Mr. Gantt, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion passed: 8-0, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.


Julieann Newill
Board Secretary