

January 5, 2021

Scranton, Pennsylvania

The Scranton School Board of Directors held a Public Hearing regarding the closing of George Bancroft Elementary School on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 via Zoom.

President Gilmartin called the meeting to order at 7:04PM with a Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Ms. Gilmartin asked for a moment of silence in honor of Pvt. Stephen Sunday who recently passed away.

Roll Call: By the Secretary.

Present: Directors Cruz, Dempsey, Fox, Hume, Malloy, McAndrew, Welby, Yanni
And President Gilmartin.

Absent: All Present.

President Gilmartin announced the purpose of the public hearing is to hear public comment regarding the closing of George Bancroft Elementary School. Ms. Gilmartin asked school solicitor John Audi to explain the process of this evening and the statute that governs this proceeding.

Mr. Audi explained the following:

The Board of School Directors does have broad discretionary powers for school closings and the decision to close the school is within the Board's discretion unless its action is fraudulent, arbitrary or capricious. The Board may close a public school building for any of the following reasons: small number of people in attendance, the condition of the existing school building, for purposes of better graduation or classification or for other reasons. Both declining enrollment and reducing overhead or savings are proper means for closing schools. The Board may not close any school building during the school term unless it's absolutely mandatory. Public Hearing prior to school closings in the event of a proposed closing the Board of School Directors must hold a public hearing on the question not less than three months prior to the Board's decision regarding the school closing. The notice must be at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing and that has been done as Secretary Virginia Orr can attest to. If there are any furloughs or notices the suspension of the teacher is in reality a possibility. The Board of School Directors may suspend any necessary number of professional employees for the following reasons: substantial decrease in enrollment in the school district, curtailment or alteration of educational programs, economic necessity or consolidation of schools. A school closing amounts to a curtailment of an educational program and finally if there will be any furloughs the district must provide both professional and temporary professional employees affected by the closing with a 60 days' notice in writing and that shall not happen mid-term, it shall happen at the end of a school year. Those are the statutory school code requirements that the district must adhere to and the rights of both the community and staff.

Superintendent now had a presentation regarding the closing of George Bancroft:

[..\..\Downloads\New Public hearing for Bancroft - Jan. 5, 2021.pdf](#)

The district has proposed the closing of George Bancroft Elementary School at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. All K-4 students from Bancroft will attend Isaac Tripp Elementary in the Fall of 2021. All 5th grade students from Bancroft will attend Northeast Intermediate School in the Fall of 2021. Reasons: Part of the PDE and School Board approved recovery plan, low student population of approximately 200 students and significant capital improvement needs of approximately \$1.9 million dollars. Benefits: All K-4 students from Bancroft will be provided daily transportation to Isaac

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Tripp, 21st century classrooms, full time guidance counselor, full time school based behavioral health team, full size cafeteria and gym, full size Art and Music rooms, spacious air conditioned school, and large outdoor spaces for recess and gym.

All 5th grade students in the district regardless of placement will receive the same related arts courses and report card format for the 21/22 school year. Related arts will be Physical Education/Health, Art and Music. Starting 22/23 school year all 5th grade students will participate in Industrial Arts, Family and Consumer Science, Spanish, Art, Music and Physical Education/Health.

Public Comment

The following spoke against the closing of George Bancroft.

Ann Bray	Paul Lukasiewicz
Stephanie Golosky	Ruth Wisenburn
Margie Holmes	Rosemary Boland
Frances Regan	Holly Meade
Ty Holmes	Jenn Schwartz
Lisa Suda	Isabella Stanton
Kristen Novak	Tori Giombetti
April Butler	Jill Cadden
Aureliz Ortiz	Jessica Thibodeau - unavailable

During public comment a brief discussion was held regarding language barriers and getting word out to the Spanish community.

President Gilmartin announced that written public comment was received and asked Mrs. Orr to read those names into the record adding that written comment was provided to the board in advance of the meeting.

Written comment was received from Jeff Boris, Danielle Chesek, Kate Elliott, Christopher Estevez, and Christopher Chesek.

[Written Comment 1.5.21.pdf](#)

President Gilmartin thanked everyone for coming forward this evening and appreciates their input.

There being no more public comment a motion to adjourn was made by Director Cruz, seconded by Director Dempsey and the meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

By: _____