



## **Board of School Directors Committee Meetings Minutes Wednesday, March 8, 2023**

*Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, March 9, 2023*

**Members present:** Nicholas Braccio, William Brong, Janet Flisak, Ken Keith, Andrew Landis, Thomas Kwiatkowski, Stephen Nelson, Donna Scheuren

**Members absent:** Courtney Babieri

**Others present:** Mike Bergey, Todd Burns, Karin Clark, John Franzen, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Dave Purnell, Dennis Stanton, Mike Taylor, Sam Varano, and Megan Zweiback

### **1. Education-Personnel Committee**

#### 1.1 Approve High School Curriculum - Sports Medicine

Mr. Kwiatkowski called the meeting to order at 6:29 P.M.

Superintendent Gallagher announced the introduction of two new courses in the high school PE/Wellness department.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Technology Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced high school teachers Mike Bergey and Karin Clark. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also introduced Supervisor of Curriculum, Mr. Burns who spoke about the new course Sports Medicine. Mr. Burns noted that this course will support the loss of the Allied Health program at North Montco Technical Career Center. Ms. Clark spoke of her experience in the medical field and the unique opportunity she is able to offer to students. She stated that this course will fit within the Health & Human Services Pathway, as it will cover an introduction to the career of a medical trainer, and its associated medical specialties. Ms. Clark also spoke about how the course will the care and response for athletic injuries. Practical applications including therapeutic care and emotional care of an injured athlete. Several areas of anatomy will be taught and guest speakers from the medical community are planned for the classroom.

The Committee agreed to move forward for approval.

#### 1.2 Approve High School Curriculum - Outdoor Adventures and Fitness

Mr. Burns introduced the proposed new course Outdoor Adventure and Fitness. High school teacher PE/Wellness teacher Mr. Bergey spoke about the development of the course as a purposeful course teaching fitness beyond the classroom. The goal is to provide students with life long skills to participate and enjoy the outdoors. Mr. Bergey stated that the course would include instructions for hiking, disc golf, an archery unit, a fishing and casting a line unit as well as aqua adventures including a scuba demonstration and kayaking. High School Principal Dr. Varano stated that the increase in PE/Wellness department requirements credits will be served well by the addition of this course to curriculum.

The Committee agreed to move forward for approval.

#### 1.3 Data Presentation

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly shared a presentation reporting student data post pandemic. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that while the Souderton Area School District has reasons for concern, it also has reasons for optimism.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed a slide defining the popular phrase learning loss. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly was clear to state that learning loss depicts a specific period of time where students exhibit a reversal in their skills or that no academic progress is shown. She indicated that prior to the pandemic, this type of loss had typically been seen during summer months. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly was clear to explain that not all students in all grades experienced learning loss, nor did they experience it in the same ways. She also stated the importance of early recognition of learning loss and intensive instruction for early age or elementary grade learners.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly cited the quick response by the school district in implementing its 1:1 program at all grade levels as well as offering in-person instruction during the pandemic. She also cited the individual and specialized teaching supports that were put into place to support learning loss, including new programs for measuring achievement, professional development for teachers and additional teachers as interventionists. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also explained the district's MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) program which supports the whole child in their academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning. It is a collaborative and systemic approach for student achievement.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained the importance of assessment data which allow for an immediate response to student learning loss as well as student progress. Measuring student recovery is critical for student success. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed several slides of data trends outlining national comparisons of student proficiency as well as PSSA data and Keystone exam results. The results show some loss, but also reflect recovery. The results from Souderton appear to show a recovery that is more rapid than the Pennsylvania state average.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated optimism for student learning as the school district response has been targeted and delivered in a whole child approach using a broad array of supports to recover from learning loss.

Mr. Kwiatkowski praised the curriculum department for its presentation and for having the necessary assessment tools already in place to measure and effectively respond to learning loss. Several board members expressed interest in follow up data that will measure student achievement going forward, specifically from the pandemic time period.

Mr. Kwiatkowski adjourned the Education-Personnel Meeting 7:33 P.M.

## **2. Finance Committee**

### **2.1 Approve Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Budget**

Finance Committee Chairperson Mrs. Scheuren called the meeting to order at 7:38 P.M.

Director Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor reviewed the request for the annual approval of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit member services budget noting an overall increase of 2.3%

As MCIU appointed representative, Mrs. Flisak expressed confidence in the MCIU services. Mrs. Schueren asked about potential MCIU grants and Mrs. Flisak indicated that grants are specifically tied to special programs or issues and therefore not always available for district needs.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated the use of the MCIU by the Curriculum and Technology departments and Dr. Gallagher indicated that the MCIU Government and Community Relations department provide valuable resources for advocacy and charter school reform. KKR reiterated her dept. use of MCIU services, and Dr. Gallagher indicated valuable resources from I.U. that the district uses

The Committee agreed to move forward for approval.

### **2.2 2023-24 Budget Update**

Superintendent Gallagher gave a brief update on the governors budget address as it was delivered yesterday. Dr. Gallagher noted that there was no mention of funding reform for charter schools, and several mentions of building improvements and mental health, although no explanation where the revenue would come from to support any of the items.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide showing the status of development of the 2023-2024 Budget. Mr. Taylor reviewed revenue adjustments and expenditures and reflected a deficit of \$9M.

A slide showing a history of the Act 1 Index versus the tax rate history of the SASD was reviewed and a brief review of Act 1 determination process was shared.

Mr. Taylor shared a slide that translates the millage rate into dollars and its impact to the budget. It also showed the amounts relative to the Act 1 Index of 4.1%. Mr. Taylor indicated that the district is awaiting more data to calculate a firm number on its local revenue sources which include real estate transfer taxes, earned income taxes and earnings on investments.

A slide was shared showing the items highlighted in the Governor's Proposed Budget as presented yesterday. It reflects a 7.8% increase to basic education funding, and a 7.8% increase to special education funding. It also proposed \$100M for school environmental repairs and improvements, \$38.5M for universal free breakfast initiative and \$100M in school-based mental health supports in the form of block grants. Mr. Taylor stated that these proposed numbers are not reflected in the current budget or reflected in the current deficit.

Mr. Taylor reviewed specific department areas and the budgetary considerations for personnel; including retirements and attritional savings as well as expiring compensation agreements. Mr. Taylor outlined the cost drivers in the area of special education noting the individual increased costs of services and year to date and Five Year Actuals for overall services.

Mr. Taylor also outlined the future considerations of revenues noting the positive collection of real estate taxes, the steady revenue generated from earned income taxes and transfer taxes. He also noted that the district will continue to look for allowable investments to maximize its interest earnings.

A slide depicting Debt Service for 5-Year Actuals and 5-Year Forecasted was reviewed. Mr. Taylor acknowledged that debt service remains around \$5.9M through the 2034-2035 school year. A timeline of future budget meetings was shared along with next steps which include a continued review of current financials, budget reviews with each department supervisor and a detailed budget review by department at upcoming Finance Committee Meetings.

A discussion occurred that included interest earnings, increased construction within the community, special education costs associated with increased enrollment. It was acknowledged by the Committee that costs are quickly outpacing the need for services.

Mrs. Scheuren commented on her knowledge as a State Representative concerning the Commonwealth budget and its operating functions. Mrs. Scheuren expressed her advocacy for all of the four school districts she serves, indicating that all of the school districts are experiencing the same issues.

The Finance Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

### **3. Operations Committee**

#### **3.1 Oak Ridge Facade Design Services Proposal**

Mr. Brong called the Operations Committee Meeting to order at 9:05 P.M.

Mr. Taylor explained the Oak Ridge Elementary School project and shared a slide showing the specific areas of the school that are in need of repair and/or replacement due to the deteriorating brick facade.

Mr. Taylor presented information on the remediation from GKO architects. The information included options for replacement in full brick veneer, a combination of new brick and EIFS, a combination of existing brick and EIFS and a stucco option. A lengthy discussion of each of the proposed options, durability and costs were discussed. Concerns were expressed about the costs versus the longevity of the repair.

Dr. Hey reiterated the administration request to approve GKO Architects to design the project details.

Additional discussion occurred and the Committee agreed to move forward for board action.

#### **3.2 Multi-purpose Field Feasibility Study Proposal**

High School Athletic Director Mr. Stanton was in attendance to elaborate on the need for the multipurpose field, giving student athletes an opportunity to practice and play on a turf facility. He indicated that while the high school currently has a turf field, its use is limited, only by its demand. The creation of an additional field would give more athletes additional time as well as permit year round practices and competitions, no longer impacted by weather.

Mr. Stanton explained the current playing environment for the varsity baseball team which rents its field space from Harleysville Community Center. In addition to the field rental, there are also transportation costs associated with this arrangement. A new multi-purpose field would not only create a dedicated baseball field at the high school but also create a field space for soccer, lacrosse and football as the turf field would be designed with markings for all sports.

Mr. Taylor reviewed drawings of the proposed location for the multi-purpose field facing the Lower Road entrance of the property. Mr. Taylor also reviewed a borrowing plan showing the impact of potential borrowing to the budget and its debt service.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a timeline for the proposed field including land surveys, geo technical testing, soil testing and schematic design. At this time the administration is seeking approval for a feasibility study to obtain the overall scope of the project.

The Committee agreed to move the feasibility study forward for Board action.

Mr. Brong adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 10:29 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Taylor, C.P.A.  
Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs