

Lehighton Area School District
1000 Union Street
Lehighton, PA 18235
Monday, March 14, 2022 at 6:00 PM
WORKSHOP MEETING - MINUTES



1. Opening Exercises

A. Opening Exercises

Opening Exercises included the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence was observed.

B. Call to Order

Acting Superintendent, J. Corby called the Workshop Meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

C. Roll Call

PR/AB

AB**	Ms. Joy Beers	PR	Mr. Nathan Foeller	PR	Mrs. Kerry Sittler
AB	Mr. Richard R. Beltz	PR	Mr. Jeremy Glaush	AB***	Ms. April Walker
PR	Ms. Barbara Bowes	PR	Mr. Brian Shaner	PR	Mr. Walter Zlomsowitch

***J. Beers attended the live stream online.*

**** A. Walker arrived at 6:17 PM.*

Also Present:

Mr. John W. Corby, Acting Superintendent
Dr. Keith Boyer, Acting Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Edward Rarick, Business Administrator
Ms. Janine Partenio, Recording Secretary

Brad Remig, Dache Zelrick, David Bradley, Suzanne Howland, Floyd Brown and Jarrad Hedes.

D. Meeting Announcements

There was an Executive Session held at 5:30 PM on March 14, 2022 to discuss personnel and legal issues.
An Executive Session will be held following the Workshop Meeting on March 14, 2022 for personnel discussions.
The next Board Meeting will be held on Monday, March 28, 2022, at 7:00 PM.

E. Public Comment

S. Howland explained how WBRE ran a story on Holly Fasching, High School Student, and how she created a video for the Science Olympiad Tournament at Penn State Wilkes Barre. The story also mentioned how she initiated and maintained the High School Instagram account to help keep students engaged and connected during the pandemic.

D. Bradley expressed his concerns with Policy 011 - Governance. He would like to see the Board act in accordance with their oath and asked to add it to the policy for stricter enforcement.

2. Academic Affairs

A. Academics & Adventures Camp

J. Corby explained the District was looking to hold the Academic & Adventures Camps this summer, funded by ESSERs funds, to aid in learning loss. Last year, each week had a fun, creative theme with coordinated educational activities, games and excursions. This summer, the District would like to try to overlap the Elementary and Middle School programs to avoid some scheduling issues and allow for increased participation, use of available facilities and educational outings. The schedule is being fine tuned to coordinate with Title I Camp. Camp dates will be brought to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting.

For some additional information on Academics & Adventures Camp, below are some links from a couple of posts in the Weekly update from last summer's camp adventures.

Academics & Adventures Stars and Stripes Week -

<https://www.lehighton.org/cms/lib/PA02203712/Centricity/Domain/636/Academics%20and%20Adventures%20Camp%20Week%20Stars%20and%20Stripes.pdf>

The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

B. Title I Camp

J. Corby explained the Elementary Center would like to hold camps for Title I Math and Title I Reading for two weeks each over the summer which would be funded through Title I federal funds. These are themed camps that include hands-on learning through educational activities, crafts and projects. The camps may include storytime, special guest speakers and varying use of District facilities for educational play. Students are recommended for participation in the camps by their teachers based on need. The schedule is being fine tuned to coordinate with Academics & Adventure Camp. Camp dates will be brought to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

C. Health & Safety Plan Revisions

J. Partenio explained how the revisions to the District Health and Safety Plan were based on updated CDC guidelines with K-12 Transportation as well as Board request for facility usage and visitors procedures to return to pre-COVID status. B. Shaner asked to update #4 to remove the masking requirement for consistency.

J. Glaush felt some teachers did not understand the term optional and were still insisting on students wearing masks in the building. J. Corby said he would discuss this with the Principals. N. Foeller stated that he also heard a similar situation.

B. Shaner asked about the Contact Tracing requirement under Item E. J. Partenio mentioned that the heading included Contact tracing but the nurses are only required to submit a weekly report to the Department of health regarding positive cases. She said the wording could still remain, even if they are no longer providing contact tracing. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

3. Policy

A. First Reading of Policies

011 - Board Governance Standards/Code of Conduct (New Policy recommended by PSBA to replace current

011. These Standards were utilized at New Board Member training)

B. Bowes stated the verbiage was updated from the previous policy. B. Shaner asked D. Bradley to expand on his thoughts from his public comment earlier. D. Bradley asked to hold the Board Members accountable for not following the law and may be reprimanded. J. Glaush asked if it should be added under "Act Ethically." D. Bradley said yes. He asked to add the consequences to be enforced. The Board discussed the option of adding this and there was not a consensus. D. Zelrick felt it may have already been addressed in the policy.

103 - Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students (New Policy to replace current 103)

104 - Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Staff (New Policy to replace current 104)

J. Glaush stated he was OK with 103 and 104. B. Bowes said it was redundant and felt it needed to be for dealing with sexual harassment. J. Corby reminded the Board that Keith "Jake" Boyer will be on the agenda for compliance and Title IX Coordinator.

226 - Searches

B. Bowes questioned if the wording affected anything with the District Police Force being instituted at Lehighton. J. Corby felt there was more leeway as a District Police Force. B. Bowes asked if students would be advised of their rights. She questioned the K9 searches. S. Howland discussed the annual K9 safety search through the High School/Middle School. She said the date is random based on availability of the state police K9 unit and is standard for districts to run an annual search. W. Zlomsowitch asked what would happen if there was a hit on a locker. S. Howland said the admin would search the locker. J. Corby said they would make any attempt to have the student there. S. Howland said generally, the student would be at the search. She stated if the student was not in the building then they would proceed without them. W. Zlomsowitch felt if a locker was hit and Admin searched, parents should be notified prior to the search of a student or locker if it was not for an immediate threat. B. Bowes asked how often searches find items. J. Glasuh asked to track it. K. Sittler asked if it was being documented. S. Howland stated they do not search unless there was reasonable cause and they do consult with the solicitor. She said there are entry logs and reporting done in Powerschool and explained the form submissions from the Safe2Say App. D. Zelrick stated the Student Handbook states the District is en loco parentis and that they would make every attempt to contact the parent first. J. Glaush discussed the removal of clothing during searches and appreciates that there would be a same sex search. S. Howland said there are no searches done with the removal of undergarments. K. Sittler questioned at what point a parent would be called. S. Howland said if it is for immediate safety a search would be initiated immediately and then parents would be updated. D. Bradley asked if lockers have locks on them. The said students should have the same rights as they have at the park or the library. He mentioned a parent or police officer should be involved if immediate attention would be required. S. Howland said the School does not provide locks and is the responsibility of the student; however, 99% of students do not have locks. B. Bowes asked if a locker was searched, cameras could capture if someone else accessed the locker. S. Howland said that was correct.

227 - Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia (This policy is currently in legal review. If a response is not received by Monday, we will hold this policy to the next Workshop Meeting.)

J. Corby explained that this was in legal review and would be on hold for now.

622 - GASB Statement 34/Capitalization

B. Bowes appreciated the information being reviewed by the Board annually. She said she had previously asked for the information via a Right to Know request and it was difficult to decipher. E. Rarick explained how the audit began a week after his arrival to the District and he had reached out to have the assets evaluated. He said there was no dollar threshold amount in the policy and was asked by the auditors to update the policy to include it.

903 - Public Participation in Board Meetings (This policy was placed on hold due to Board action on November 22, 2021 - Revisions based on legal recommendations)

B. Bowes asked to remove the announcement of public participants' addresses and wished to add the wording of the attachment into the policy. The Board agreed that any agenda item comment should be discussed at the beginning of the meeting from the podium and to add a 3 minute limit to the policy. They had discussions on taxpayers only being allowed to speak. They decided to sit on the policy and see where it goes at the Board Meeting.

The Board agreed to move the policies discussed to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

4. Finance

A. Audit Findings

E. Rarick said the Audit findings were given to the Board. He said there were two procedures recommended for accounts payable and reconciliation. He said the payroll processing was being worked on.

B. PFM

A discussion and presentation to move forward with the process was outlined by Brad Remig, managing Director of PFM, to refinance 2015 and 2015 Series A bond issues in the 2022 calendar year. B. Remig reviewed the municipal market update for interest rates saying that the market had hit record lows and is now trending back upwards. He reviewed the District's Debt Service payments and local effort requirements stating the 2015 last payment would be in the 2040-2041 school year and the 2015 A would be in the 2043-2044 school year. He discussed the subsidies from PlanCon or the federal Stimulus - QZAB.

B. Remig gave the following 2022 Refinancing Plan Overview:

1. While tax-exempt interest rates and treasury rates had remained near all-time lows from 2020 through the beginning of 2022, ongoing concerns regarding Covid-19, as well as other global concerns such as inflation and war in Ukraine have added to recent market volatility.
2. Since PFM has been monitoring the refunding of the 2015 Bonds, the estimated potential net savings has fluctuated from \$0 to \$300,000.
3. Since PFM has been monitoring the refunding of the 2015A Bonds, the estimated potential net savings has fluctuated from \$0 to \$850,000. B. Remig stated they are both interest rate sensitive.
4. Given the current market, PFM would suggest that the District plan to execute a Parameters Resolution for the 2015 and 2015A bond refundings. This would allow the District the flexibility to execute the refunding quickly and efficiently when the market conditions stabilize and produce a favorable net savings amount.

B. Remig explained how the District has two upcoming refinancing opportunities the Series of 2015 Bonds and the Series A of 2015 Bonds.

a. Series of 2015 Bonds:

Outstanding Par: \$4,965,000

Call Date: November 15, 2022

Average Rate: 3.24%

Final Maturity: November 15, 2040

b. Series A of 2015 Bonds:

Outstanding Par: \$30,050,000

Call Date: November 15, 2023

Average Rate: 4.86%

Final Maturity: November 15, 2043

B. Remig mentioned that the District could approve a parameters resolution when and if the rates are most favorable. J. Corby questioned if there were any fees associated with the transactions. B. Remig said the only out of pocket costs would be for the advertisement.

B. Remig stated, given the timing of the call dates, along with the current market conditions, how the District had two possible refinancing options. Both plans would be subject to the market cooperating.

a. Option 1:

Issue refinancing bonds in a two-step plan, with the taxable advance refunding of the 2015A bonds first, followed by a tax-exempt current refunding of the 2015 Bonds Second. A taxable advance refunding of the 2015A bonds could price and settle in May or June, allowing the District to lock in interest rates and savings a few months prior to the August 2022 settlement for the current refunding of the 2015 Bonds (this could decrease interest rate risk).

b. Option 2:

Issue refinancing bonds that are tax-exempt currently refund the 2015 Bonds (Series of 2022) while also issuing a taxable advance refunding of the 2015A Bonds (Series A of 2022) together at the same time. Based on the 2015 Bonds call date, the 2022 issuance would be expected to price in July and settle in August, 90 days prior to the November 15, 2022 call date.

He explained how for both refinancing options, savings could be structured to provide the District upfront budgetary relief, while also potentially smoothing down the District's current annual debt service in Fiscal Year 2027–2032.

B. Remig reviewed the following estimated timeline:

March 14, 2022 (Workshop Meeting) - Initial Presentation

March 28, 2022 (Board Meeting) - Authorization to Proceed

April 25, 2022 (Board Meeting) - Board Adopts Parameters Resolution(s)

May 2022 (or later) - 2015A Bonds Refi Pricing (Taxable Advance)

June 2022 (or later) - 2015A Bonds Refi Settlement

July 2022 (or later) - 2015 Bonds Refi Pricing (Tax-Exempt Current)

August 2022 (or later) - 2015 Bonds Refi Settlement

B. Remig reviewed the details of the 2015 A Bond refunding stating a net savings of \$424,834 and a net savings of \$194,189 with the 2015 Bond refunding. He said this would be with just lower rates and not extending the debt.

E. Rarick asked what would happen if the Board authorized the parameters resolution and interest rates would not be favorable. B. Remig said the Board would not be obligated to move forward. E. Rarick asked if B. Remig knew where the market would be six months from now. B. Remig said he did not know. He mentioned how the effects from the Ukraine situation is a current driving force. J. Corby asked if this could be applied to the 2022-2023 District budget. B. Remig issued caution with banking on that number since it is a very sensitive refinancing. J. Corby asked if the numbers included fees. B. Remig said yes. B. Shaner questioned what the costs were. B. Remig said typically 2% for all costs and fees. He said some costs are fixed so the higher it goes, the less the percent is. N. Foeller questioned how long it could be until the District would be able to refinance again. B. Remig said the District could refinance back to tax exempt if there is a new call date. E. Rarick asked if the refinancing would affect Plan Con State Reimbursements. B. Remig said no, PFM would help to factor that in as well. J. Corby asked if this would go out for bid. B. Remig said the District would have an underwriter. B. Bowes asked if the District needed an underwriter because of the bond rating. B. Remig said yes, that was figured into the plan. He said he believed the refinancing would be viewed as credit positive but did not know until after their thorough review. B. Bowes and B. Remig discussed interest rates and municipal bonds. B. Bowes asked what PE% was. B. Remig explained it was related to PlanCon. W. Zlomsowitch asked about going to bid. B. Remig explained the process of going to bid versus the benefit for the District to utilize underwriting. J. Corby mentioned that he trusted B. Remig with his preference.

D. Bradley stated that PFM is one provider of this service and there were a half dozen more companies that could do it. He said the Board should ask how and why the District got into this and why the callable dates were so far out. B. Remig explained what he does at PFM and how he is a fiduciary. J. Glaush stated the Board had four months to make a decision and could look further into it. B. Remig said they would look to have an approval from the Board in April in order to find the best rates, but did not want to pressure the Board. He thanked the Board for their time.

C. LCCC 2022-2023 Budget

J. Corby said he spoke with Dr. Beiber to discuss the approval and found an error with the Board motion. He said he would like to bring to the Board, in March, a rescinding of the approval of the 2022-2023 Operating Budget for the Lehigh Carbon Community College, including a provision that total budgeted expenditures can be exceeded to the extent that Total Revenue is exceeded and to approve the adoption of the 2022-2023 Operating and Capital Budgets for Lehigh Carbon Community College, including a provision that total budgeted expenditures can be exceeded to the extent that Total Revenue is exceeded. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

D. Title I Reading Program Donations

J. Corby mentioned donations were received from Insurrection Distillery in the amount of \$100.00 and from Griff's Ale Haus and Grill in the amount of \$200.00 to be used towards Title I Reading Programs. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

E. Safe Schools Grant

J. Corby explained the Safe Schools Targeted School Police Officer Two-Year Grant Agreement has been offered to the District. The amount of the grant is \$39,960.00 for year one (up to December 31, 2022) and up to \$19,980.00 for year two (up to June 30, 2023). B. Bowes asked if the grant would pay for their professional development. J. Corby said he could look into it. They discussed selling the police car. J. Corby mentioned that the Police Car was taken to CCTI to have a diagnostic service and they will be calling with a price to fix the vehicle. B. Shaner asked to see the appendices of the grant. J. Corby said he would get the information from T. Tkach to send to the Board. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

F. GASB 75 Valuation & Related Services Agreement

E. Rarick explained this is the GASB evaluation required for the District audit each year. He said this is for post-employment valuation and information is provided to the auditors. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

G. Berkheimer Extension

E. Rarick asked the Board to allow him to vote via the tax committee in favor of extending the current agreement with Berkheimer for 10 additional years at the current rate, which is very minimal. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

H. Industrial Appraisal Company

E. Rarick discussed a proposal to provide an appraisal for Lehigh Area School District for fixed asset accounting control and insurance valuation purposes. He said they would tag everything and create a GASB 34 listing. B. Bowes believed this to be a very worthwhile service. They discussed the cost. E. Rarick stated it was \$6,165.00 and \$950.00 for tagging. B. Shaner asked how many companies were researched. E. Rarick said he reached out to two other companies. He mentioned one did not want to work with school districts and there was no response from the other one. He discussed traceable data for files regarding assets and mentioned it being a fresh start. B. Shaner questioned the \$750 annual fee. E. Rarick said it would be an annual fee to update the listings but the District would be able to maintain the list once it is completed. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

I. Vector Solutions

E. Rarick explained this is a new online platform to complete state mandated employment trainings. The District has been utilizing the platform available through the CLIU however, that option will be dissolved by the end of the school year. The IU had worked on a consortium discount pricing option with Vector Solutions. The District is looking to implement the use of the new training platform for July 1, 2022 and funds will be paid through the 2021-2022 budget. The Board discussed the amount of users. J. Partenio said that it would be utilized by all employees including coaches, substitutes and drivers. She said the trainings are required by law and not optional. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

J. Health eTools Service Agreement

E. Rarick said the Health eTools proposal was approved at the February 28, 2022 Board Meeting for use by the nurses with student informational data. The District received a Service Agreement for review and approval. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

K. CLIU Intergovernmental Agreement

J. Corby explained the Intergovernmental Agreement with the CLIU #21 is an Inter-Entity Agreement for Special Education Services for the 2022-23 school year. He said it included billing and sites and was a standard year to year agreement. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

L. Budget Transfer

E. Rarick requested the Board create a budget transfer in the amount of \$40,000 from 10-1110-271-000-10-200 Elementary Regular Education Medical to 10-2350-331 Districtwide Legal Services. B. Shaner asked why the transfer was needed. E. Rarick stated that the amount of the expenses were not originally budgeted for. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

M. Food Service Transfer

E. Rarick requested a transfer from the General Fund To Food Service Fund Per commonwealth deposit information as follows:

January NSLP State Reimbursement \$3,948.60
January NSLP Federal Reimbursement \$130,812.51
January Child/Adult Food Care Reimbursement \$2,187.36

The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

5. Athletics

None at the time

6. Buildings & Grounds

A. Use of Facilities

J. Corby reviewed some of the following use of facility requests based on timing of the use:

1. 6th Sense - Team Practice - Middle School Classroom - March 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 - 2:30-3:30 PM.
2. Lehigh Area Baseball Parent's Club - Concessions for Baseball Games - Baseball Field Shed - March 16-May 25, 2022 - 4:00-6:00 PM.

3. LABBA - Spring Festival for Band - Middle School Parking, Old Stadium and Outside Fields May 7, 2022 and rain date of May 8, 2022 - 9:00 AM-4:00 PM.
4. Elementary Center Library Summer Hours

The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

B. Summer Workforce Program

J. Corby explained how Carbon County Workforce Training offers a Summer Youth Employment program. Ages 16-24 may apply to Carbon County Workforce to assist the District with cleaning and maintenance positions. Youth are able to work up to 8 hours per day and up to 40 hours per week at \$9.00 per hour. Youth are paid by Carbon County Workforce Training via WIOA funding and there is no cost to the District. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

C. Generations Services

J. Corby reviewed the High School Auditorium Equipment Proposal to troubleshoot the stage lighting followed by a comprehensive report detailing findings, recommended upgrades, and a system upgrade quotation. He said Mr. Spotts went out and received this proposal. B. Bowes agreed the District should find out what is wrong with the system even if it was not completed this year. W. Zlomsowitch asked if any other companies were contacted for a proposal J. Corby said he was not sure but could look into it. W. Zlomsowitch asked if CCTI could do it. J. Corby said he could get more information from CCTI and announced that CCTI would be having a presentation on April 28, 2022 with Brent Borzak.

7. Personnel

A. Western Governors University Affiliation Agreement

J. Corby recommended the affiliation agreement between the Lehigh Area School District and the Western Governors University for the purpose of providing experiential learning for Education students for the 2022-2025 school years. He stated it was for a student teacher affiliation agreement. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

B. Compliance Officer/Title IX Officer

J. Corby requested Acting Assistant to the Superintendent, Keith "Jake" M. Boyer to serve in both capacities of Compliance Officer and Title IX Officer. He mentioned that this would create alignment with the District policies. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

C. Retirements

With appreciation, accept the retirement of Carol Jeanne Weiss, 5th Grade Elementary Teacher, as of June 9, 2022 after 18.48 years of service to the District. The Board agreed to move this item to the March 28, 2022 Board Meeting for action.

8. Miscellaneous

None at the time

9. Communications

A. Public Comment

D. Bradley discussed the policy process and expressed his concern under the Searches Policy. He said a Superintendent was criminally charged for searching a student. He believed this should be reviewed by a solicitor. He mentioned that the Bond savings should go back to the community. He mentioned how the sale of the buildings were supposed to be put aside. He questioned the review of the anti-cronyism policy he proposed. He said the District has to hire an auditor and has to review and disallow anything not in accordance with school code. He claimed L. Stern and W. Wentz changed parameters in a contract. He discussed transferring money prior to spending it and asked to review policy 609 with the Board.

B. Adjournment

MOTION by W. Zlomsowitch, SECONDED by N. Foeller, to adjourn the Meeting.

VOTE: YES - 7 NO - 0 ABSENT - 2 ABSTENTIONS - 0

The March 14, 2022 Workshop Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edward Rarick, Board Secretary
By Janine Partenio, Recording Secretary