

**SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
929 Lakeshore Drive
Leesport, PA 19533-8631**

MINUTES

May 24, 2021

- 1.0 The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, G. Dane Miller, in the LGI Room/Auditorium of the Schuylkill Valley Middle School.**

- 1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

- 1.2 ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Paul L. Bendigo, Robert M. Dempsey, Nicoleen M. Kleffel, Linda R. Lash, George H. Mertz III, G. Dane Miller, David E. Moll, Kevin Raudenbush (via Zoom), Alfonso F. Rossi

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Treasurer: Michelle Kauffman (not present)

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Christman

Administrative Staff Present: Dr. Janet Heilman, Michael Billman, Casey Blankenbiller (via Zoom), Stephanie Deibler, Candice Kehres, Phillip Kissinger, Dr. Joshua Kuehner, Changming Wang, Jason Williams

- 1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by David Moll to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 26, 2021, and to approve the minutes of the special meeting of May 17, 2021, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 1.4 EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Miller reported that the Board met in executive session on May 12, 2021 for personnel matters, on May 13, 2021 for personnel matters, and on May 17, 2021 for personnel matters.

- 1.5 RECOGNITION**

Retiring Staff

The Board extends sincere thanks and best wishes to retiring staff members for their service in education and to the Schuylkill Valley School district:

Ms. Katie Heffner	English Teacher	35 years
Mrs. Melissa Kelchner	High School Assistant Principal	23 years
Mr. Chuck Mohn	Technology Education Teacher	28.5 years
Ms. Jo Wert	Special Education Paraprofessional	17 years

High School Cheerleading Competition Team

The Board recognized the members of the High School Cheerleading Competition Team. Highlights of their season include:

- Division winners of the Wilson Competition
- Berks County Competition 2nd place (scored as a girls' team and not a Co-Ed team)
- District III Runners-Up in the Co-Ed Division; Highest scoring 2A team in the competition
- PIAA Championship Qualifiers despite the reduced field
- 7th in the PIAA Championship

2.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

2.1 PRESIDENT – G. Dane Miller

No report.

2.2 SECRETARY – Linda R. Lash

No report.

2.3 BERKS COUNTY I.U. BOARD – Linda R. Lash

Mrs. Lash reported that they met on May 20. The federal government will be helping with broadband and technology costs for families who qualify for free and reduced price lunch programs. Families can receive \$100 in one-time help in paying for digital services, as long as the family contributes between \$10 and \$50 for hardware. The Senate has approved Bill 664 which amends the Public School Code to permit an optional additional year of education at a school entity for the 2021-22 school year due to COVID. The bill would also extend that option to parents of special education students, who may have reached 21 years of age on or after the issuance of the proclamation of disaster emergency, to continue to be enrolled in school for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year. Also, the 39th Annual Secondary Art Exhibit was on display in virtual galleries on the websites of the BCIU and the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts. This exhibit features the talents of Berks County artists in grades 9-12.

2.4 BERKS CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER – George H. Mertz III

Mr. Mertz reported that Dr. James Kraft is retiring as Executive Director and Dr. Michael Stauffer has been selected as his replacement. Dr. Stauffer is currently the principal at the BCTC East Campus in Oley. Their next meeting will be on May 26.

2.5 TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – David E. Moll

Mr. Moll reported that their next quarterly meeting will be held in June.

2.6 PA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION LIAISON – Linda R. Lash

Mrs. Lash reported that she attended the PSBA virtual workshop on May 11. She will also be attending a virtual meeting on cyber education on May 25. It is her understanding that cyber schools are currently sitting on \$32 million in their fund balances. Mr. Miller added that the last PSBA workshop was on School Safety and Security reporting.

3.0 PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Bethany Hoover, Bern Township, stated that she has been a resident and taxpayer of the district for over 20 years and her children have attended the district for the past 11 years. They have had many positive experiences within the district and the district and community have been very supportive of their son during his illness. She is angry and saddened that the residents, taxpayers and students of the district had to find out about the Superintendent's paid leave of absence in the Reading Eagle. She feels that the residents deserved better from the School Board. For something of this magnitude that impacts our educators, students, staff and most importantly our children, no one from the Board had the courtesy to send out an email or phone call. Naming an interim Superintendent should have come from the Board. She asked that the public be considered with higher importance in the future. She also stated that these types of

allegations are not to be taken lightly and all sides must be fully investigated by an independent source. Any potential victims deserve that, and if there was no inappropriate behavior or conduct by our Superintendent, he and his family need to have that clearance as well. Additionally, we do not want these allegations and questions looming over our district and she asked for confirmation whether an independent investigation was being conducted by professionals outside of the district. Ms. Hoover also stated that it came to her attention that there is a middle school teacher that has a gay pride flag and a black lives matter flag hanging in his room. Mr. Miller noted that these are personnel issues and they may not be discussed in public. He stated that Ms. Hoover is not wrong in regard to the communication, but the Board needs to follow the steps and that's what they're doing. One of the things the Board discussed was communicating with the staff immediately, which they did. They also discussed communicating with the community, however the Board must respect the rights of everyone involved, and that's why they chose to wait until it's permissible to do so. Ms. Hoover added that in regard to the social media policy, she does not know if this has been addressed, but there have been videos circulating as well from a certain middle school teacher and stated that she knows this is making children in the district uncomfortable. This is her concern and it needs to be addressed.

Angela Davis, Centre Township, thanked the Board for all they had done to keep the schools open during this unprecedented year. The Board has had to make difficult decisions during the last 14 months and it is appreciated. As parents, we know our children best and we are the ones that have to fight alongside you to change the guidelines that are coming down from the state. Let us choose whether or not we want our children to spend 8 hours in a mask. Given the choice, many parents would remove the masks immediately. Do we think it is because COVID isn't real? No, it is because there is much scientific evidence that say masks do not work. 85% of people who contracted COVID said they wore a mask nearly all the time. Masks don't prevent the spread of COVID but they contribute to other issues such as an increase of carbon dioxide in your blood, headaches, and cognitive decline. Masks impede the necessary volume of air intake required for adequate oxygen exchange. Many students say they find it more difficult to focus with masks on and she's sure teachers would agree that students' ability to focus have declined since masks were mandated. Our teachers have done an amazing job navigating this school year. They are stressed enough with teaching virtual and in person, and now they have the added responsibility to be the mask police. We pay them to educate our children, not enforce ridiculous mandates on them. Children are rarely affected by COVID but yet, as adults, we are forcing our irrational fears on them. Her 14 and 18 year olds continued to go to school with masks because she felt they were old enough to pull them down when needed. She refused to send her 6 year old first grader to school this year and decided to home school him. In her opinion, he was too little to be forced to wear a mask all day. Her goal is to return him to SV this fall mask free. Many of the mandates and guidelines contradict themselves. Why can you take your mask off in a restaurant once seated but students can't take them off once seated in the classroom? Why do professional sports not need masks, but her 8th grade softball player needs to wear one while playing in the outfield. She doesn't have all the answers but she does know that we can work together to do better for our kids.

Marie Perry, Centre Township, stated that she has resided in the district since 2003 and has always been proud to be a part of the district. There have been so many great programs and opportunities for students, and she has always been impressed with how the district handled many issues. She is thankful for all the Board has done. She believes the Board did their best to navigate the circumstances as we entered the 2020-21 school year. Though she disagreed with returning to virtual learning in August, she'll admit that it was somewhat enjoyable. Coming back to in-person learning, she accepted the mask mandates and other cautionary rules. She says "accepted" because she thinks it's worth mentioning that somewhere in this whole COVID mess, our own liberties as well as our rights and authority as parents of our children became somehow unimportant and insignificant. She's not sure at what point it's acceptable to question the irrationality, the complicated statistics, the constant overreach of those elected to govern us, and so much conflicting data coming at us from every angle. For every document in support of,

there's just as much in dispute. She's in no way trying to minimize COVID, and she's not a doctor, but shutting down the world for something with better than a 98% survival rate never seemed justified. Interestingly enough, there are approximately 2,047 students at SV. She has collected 147 signed petitions against the mask mandate, which is 7.18%. She's also collected the data from all the district's tested positive COVID emails which is 4.05% or 83 cases. She will gladly stand corrected if she's missed some data, but add to the fact that there is even debate about the reliability of standard COVID tests as well.

There is sufficient evidence that masks don't work and that in some cases they do more harm than good. In addition, there is also sufficient if not overwhelming evidence that the authorized (not approved) vaccines are any better. Though she's thankful for the opportunities and would choose SV as their school over again, these issues have become a tipping point. She contemplated not allowing her children to participate in sports because of the masks, but who would she hurt by making them choose? She was fortunate enough to have the ability to stay at home to forgo the masks and avoid the vaccine and do virtual or cyber school, but they'd rather be in school. However, she cannot let them be manipulated with the masks. God gave her these children to care for, protect, and to help thrive. Anyone here can put on a mask or take a vaccine, which is your right. But your right to do that doesn't take away her right to not make the decision. She thanked the Board for their time and stated that she appreciated the opportunity to speak to them in defense of her children and others. The Board is here because they want to be involved in children's educations, and they want integrity, honor, respect and pride for this district. She implored the Board to remove the mask mandate for the remainder of the year and going forward to the next year. She asked that they return to them as parents the authority to make those decisions. Be brave and do the right thing by allowing us to choose what's right for our children instead of what the state board recommends to us. Please teach our children to be leaders, not followers.

Brock DeJesus, Centre Township, and sophomore at Schuylkill Valley, stated that he is a three-sport athlete, is involved in clubs, and maintains Principal's List status. He considers himself a generally happy person, but this school year has been extremely difficult. There were many days where he found himself unmotivated, especially during the first half of the school year. He would roll out of bed three minutes before he had to turn on his computer to check in for first period. He had a hard time concentrating on his teachers' lessons and had to force himself to do any homework after sitting in front of a computer all day. He is thankful that the school allowed for the continuation of sports as it was the only thing that kept him moving forward the first half of the school year. When we finally returned to in-person learning in January, he was extremely happy to be back with his peers. But it was not the same environment that he was used to prior to Friday, March 13, 2020. What was a place that used to feel like a second home felt more like an institution with plastic dividers, constant disinfecting of desks, and students that are eyes without faces. Masks are a distraction to learning as they are hot, they fog up your glasses and cause headaches. They hinder his ability to show his feelings whether through a smile or even a frown. Just wanting to stick his nose out for a few minutes to breathe freely can cause a teacher to reprimand him. It feels degrading.

He has many friends that have been quarantined four or five times, and a few even more due to contact tracing. Many of them decided to stay home to do virtual learning so they would not miss playing sports for being completely healthy. None of these mitigation efforts are in the best interest of the students. While they may calm the fears of adults and make them feel like they are doing something in the name of safety, it is damaging to us, the students. He has two close friends who are seniors who haven't been in school for classes all year because they don't want to be forced to wear a mask all day. One of them did not even want to walk for graduation. A famous quote of Thomas Jefferson is "the measure of society is how it treats its weakest members." He thinks our society has failed in the treatment of our youth over the last 14 months. There are some parents that are saying why bother voicing your concerns now with only a few days of school left. His response to them is to "tell that to the seniors." They deserve to be able to walk down the hallways of the school their last remaining days here without

restraints covering their nose and mouths and to show their smiling faces at graduation. He asked the Board to please stand up for them, the students that they were elected to serve, and revoke the mandatory mask requirement for all students here at Schuylkill Valley.

Lynn DeJesus, Centre Township, stated that the primary responsibility for a child's health and welfare lie with the child's parent or legal guardian. Children belong first to their parents and families and not to any government, community, or school district. A child wearing a mask for a medical intervention while in a school setting should bear no distinction than that of a child being administered a dose of Tylenol for a medical intervention. The latter requires a parent's written or verbal consent. She started by referencing the 2020-21 Schuylkill Valley Policies and Procedures Handbook. Policy 806 under child/student abuse states that child abuse is intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following: #8 – engaging in the following acts (e) – interfering with the breathing of a child. This same definition can also be found on the PA General Assembly website. Forcing a child to have a covering over both their mouth and their nose for six plus hours a day, let alone six minutes, is interfering with the breathing of a child and is child abuse per our SV Policies and Procedures book and PA State law.

Under Serious Mental Injury, #1, renders a child anxious, agitated, depressed, and socially withdrawn or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened. Yet here we are forcing a child to wear a face covering, instilling fear that they may get sick or cause someone else to get sick or worse yet, die, in a virus that has over a 99% survival rate in children. Policy 806 also states the Board requirements with regard to training and reporting of child abuse in order to comply with Act 126 of 2012, which makes all school employees mandatory reporters of child abuse. This amendment stemmed from the incident at Penn State University which involved child abuse and the failure of adults to act and report such abuse. We can only speculate as to why no one in the position to do so spoke up for these children. It could have been for loss of financial gains, or concerns of bad publicity, or it could have simply been out of fear. Standing up for what you know is right is sometimes the hardest thing to do and in many cases involves being brave and fearless.

The CDC, PDH, and PDE are not the governing bodies of our state. They do not make laws. Our rights and the rights of our children are protected under the PA State Constitution, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights. The laws are on the side of protecting our rights and our children's rights. Our teachers have unions to stand up for them when they are mistreated, harassed or abused in the work place. Who do these children have to stand up and fight for them? If they are lucky, they may have a parent or guardian to be their advocate. Her purpose is not to pass judgment. She could have and should have been here for every school board meeting over this past school year and she holds herself accountable for not being a voice for her children sooner. We cannot change what has been done but we can and we must make changes moving forward.

Requiring this medical intervention of mask wearing make the school board and district liable for the abuse and harm to the children it serves. The burden is on you, the Board, to prove that masking of our children is beneficial and has been proven in a school setting to curb the spread of coronavirus. As no evidence has ever been provided, she urged the Board to immediately and fully revoke the mask requirement for this school year and thereafter. She also urged the Board to amend Policy 806 in the School Policies and Procedures Handbook under child abuse #8, (e) to include but not limited to the covering of a child's nose and mouth with any material so that this can never by policy happen again in this district. Just last week, the Rockwood School District in Rockwood, Pennsylvania, voted to make masking optional for all students without discrimination and ELCO has also followed suit. She urged the Board to be brave, be fearless and stand up for our children, they deserve it.

Scott Rickert, Bern Township, stated that the CDC website shows 574,046 deaths from COVID. After digging deeper on the website it shows only 6% are from COVID alone, which is 34,042. This number is about the same number of people who die from the flu year after year. The

recovery rate for individuals 0-17 years old is 99.998% and it's unprecedented as to why we're masking these children for that kind of percentage of recovery. As far as vaccines go, you are two to three times more likely to have an adverse reaction if you've had the virus and recovered. He implored the school board not to require the students to have the vaccine to be in school. He understands that the Board must follow the PA Board of Education, but the public school system is going to be run over by the public education system of Pennsylvania if one or two schools don't make a stand. He understands that the district may lose funding but if we don't stand up now, we'll never be able to stand up. Two school districts have already made masking optional for students and if we follow suit we can keep going and open the schools up. If you're scared, wear a mask. They don't do anything but go ahead and wear them. Science proves they don't do anything. Our children have suffered the most from this and he refuses to have his son wear a mask for his senior year next year and not be able to enjoy the social aspect of high school. The face to face contact of students with their friends and teachers is more important than being fearful. He asked the Board to fight for the students.

Grace Gonzales, Centerport, graduate of Schuylkill Valley, stated that she is presenting to the Board the Governor's Orders, Rules and Regulations from the EPA, and Domestic Relations Laws. She is also introducing the subject that her mother will be speaking about. Governor Wolf's Executive Order, Number 2019-05 Subject: Protection of Vulnerable Populations. She quoted, "Whereas, all Pennsylvanians should be safe from harm, mistreatment, and abuse; and, Whereas, the Commonwealth's responsibility for the health and safety of all Pennsylvanians is demonstrated by its commitment to strengthen laws, regulations, and programs that protect its citizens, and to seek out, respond to, and resolve concerns regarding the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens; and Whereas, it is imperative that state and local institutions are properly equipped and individuals responsible for the care and protection of Pennsylvanians are trained and supported so that individuals requiring services or care from state programs and institutions do not fear abuse, neglect, or intimidation from those trusted to provide care."

From the United States Environmental Protection Agency: Rules and Regulations That Impact Children's Health: Executive Order 13-04-5 requires that each Federal agency: "(a) shall make it a high priority to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children; and (b) shall ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address disproportionate risks to children that result from environmental health risks or safety risks." Under this directive, the EPA considers potential impacts for adverse effects on children in its rulemakings. PA title 23, page 251, chapter 63: Interfering with a child's breathing is under the definition of child abuse. By Governor Wolf's own proclamation on his government website, the child protection law and policies, and laws put into place to protect individuals, can and should be presented back to the state when they are trying to implement guidelines for you as a school administration to follow, yet they contradict the laws put into place to protect. And she clarified that a guideline is a recommendation, it is not a law.

The highest authority in Pennsylvania is our constitution and these elected officials have to work within those constraints, so we are the ones that have our hands on the leash of the runaway Wolf. People say, "Oh, but the powers above us are the ones mandating these things. We have to obey the mandates coming down on us." No, we are the ones who put the powers in place. We elected those officials to represent us. If we want to constrain them, that is our right. If we want to have the final authority in our children's education and their well-being, we have the right.

Katrina Gonzales, Centerport, stated that our children are the lowest risk group for catching, spreading and being morbidly harmed by COVID. This virus did not write any new laws of science. Once you have COVID, your body will learn and acquire immunity and that will provide herd immunity. We cannot sacrifice these most important educational and socially impacting years of our children's lives following unscientific and unfounded protocols requiring hiding from each other behind closed doors, or behind masks, waiting for nature to run its course anyway. She has been a diabetic for 39 years and her health has definitely been impacted negatively by

these risky guidelines. The inability to breathe freely almost immediately affects her blood pressure and causes spikes and drops in her blood sugars. These fluctuations kill capillaries, cause irreparable damage, and take time off her life. This damage to her body as a diabetic or to someone with asthma, or COPD, PTSD, etc., wouldn't normally affect us, but have, because of these unsound and dangerous mandates. This damage is caused by the state guidelines and the misguided individuals who are trying to enforce these guidelines. This opposes the laws that are put in place to protect those of us with health concerns.

She has had the police called on her eight times by local store managers for not wearing a mask and refusing to leave the premises although they claim to be open to the public. When the police arrive, she asks them if she's breaking the law, and presents to them the American Disability Act which protects her. She also presents Governor Wolf's "Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health," which states under Section 3: Individuals who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, mental health condition, or disability are exempt. To her it seems our school has ignored this portion of the order. She knows for a fact that her son, who is highly asthmatic, has requested to breath during physical education and has been refused. He should not be wearing a mask, period. In her case, if there is further opposition by store employees, she inquires if they are not breaking the law by discriminating against her. The ADA protects her from any form of discrimination which also applies to our children. She implores the police to enforce the laws that are in place to protect her. After presenting these ordinances, they have always taken her side. She hopes to encourage the Board to do the same and present our laws to the state in defense of our children.

Last week she spoke to some of the board members from the Hamburg School District. She asked them how they were able to proceed with having school starting last August rather than waiting until January. The response from several of them was, "We fought for it." The state decided the numbers of cases were too high for school to begin, but the board decided to research the numbers for themselves. They checked the neighboring counties and districts to find the amount of cases to present to the state and the research proved the cases were lower for Hamburg and the surrounding areas. After presenting the numbers to the state, the state approved in-school learning. The board members mentioned they knew the needs of many families within their district and recognized the importance of having them in school rather than virtual learning only. Likewise, we are looking to support you in seeking the best for our children, as Hamburg did for theirs by pursuing avenues to meet the needs of our district's families by confronting the state. Please do what you were elected to do and fight for us to preserve our freedom and to educate our children, and let them learn, and breathe in freedom.

Kelly Steinke, Bern Township, stated that she is an SV graduate and has two children attending the district in 4th and 6th grade. She thanked the Board for all the great work that they've done. She noted that two weeks ago her daughter got braces. When they were leaving the orthodontist, her daughter saw one of her teachers. Her daughter did not have a mask on at the time. She said hello to her teacher and the teacher looked at her and said that she looked familiar and was she a virtual student? She said no, I am in person. The teacher then asked her name and the teacher named another student by that same name. The teacher said that it was funny and that she didn't recognize her. Mrs. Steinke stated that she told the teacher she did not think it was funny and that it's pretty terrible. The teacher sent an email to them later that evening apologizing and asking if she just got her braces. Mrs. Steinke read her response to the teacher's email which said, "I appreciate the kind note. She did just get her braces yesterday. She is in no way upset with the teacher, but very upset with the situation. Her daughter has some of the same teachers that she had in 6th grade at SV. It breaks her heart that these kids are not able to build relationships due to being faceless every day at school. These masks are incredibly dehumanizing and that was made even more evident by this event. Her child has been in person since November and the teacher didn't recognize her as she has not seen her full face all year. With their faces covered you do not get to see their personalities. You can't possibly see when they are confused, upset or even excited about the topic you are teaching

them. This is no way for them to learn and you to teach. I really hope that things are not this way next school year. Her kids are the third generation of their family to go to SV. She really hopes that they don't have to find another solution that does not include them graduating from SV. She is hopeful that next year the kids will get their identities back and the teachers and the rest of the staff at SV will get to know them and see them as they should be seen." The next morning her daughter woke up and said that she didn't sleep well because her teeth hurt. She gave her some Tylenol and told her to go back to sleep and that she would drive her to school. She took her to the office and as they walked in she saw a sign that said "This School Welcomes You!" Well, she did not feel very welcome. She opened the door and stuck her head inside, not even entering the office. The assistant principal said hello and then it was downhill from there. She was told by the secretary that she did not need to sign her daughter in and that she should leave. She said that she wanted to let them know that she may need to pick up her daughter because one of her brackets has broken off and she is waiting for the orthodontist to call. The secretary again tried to rush her out in a frantic voice and said, ok just call us. She then said she also wanted to let them know that she gave her daughter Tylenol around 6 a.m. in case she needs more from the nurse, and again, the secretary told her ok, we will tell her. Mrs. Steinke was not wearing a mask, and was way more than six feet away from her, and this should not have elicited this type of response. She needed to communicate something about her child's health and she was being rushed out the door. On Monday, she had to pick up her daughter from school to go to the orthodontist. She did not have to sign her child out and they did not even ask her name, just are you here for your daughter. She did not ask who she was and she did not have to show any identification. Any other time she has picked up one of her children there were strict protocols. Anyone could have picked up her child. How is COVID more important than the safety of her child. She asked that masks be made optional so that our children can be seen and breathe. Let parents make decisions for their children as we know them better than anyone else.

Landen Steinke, Bern Township, and 4th grader at Schuylkill Valley, asked that the Board make masks optional and remove the other COVID requirements for the rest of this year and next school year. This school year has been much different than all of the other years at SV. He has never been in trouble at school until this year. He has been yelled at for trying to breathe because his mask is not on properly and it fogs up his glasses. He went from having straight A's to having a D in spelling when we were virtual. Since we have been back in school, he has brought his grades up. We have a lot of rules that do not make sense. School is supposed to be fun, but he cannot even play with his friends that are in different classes at recess. Each class must stay in their own area of the playground. While running around at recess or in gym it is hard to breathe. He has also had to wear a mask to play soccer after school outside and it makes it very hard to play.

He misses seeing his friends and teachers faces. It makes it hard to make new friends and they have to stay at their desks in the classroom. We cannot have groups sit on the carpet. Our seats get changed sometimes, but we still have to sit with the same kids. Last year we would sit with the new kids each time and make new friends. It can be very hard to hear and understand the teacher, especially if you are in the back of the classroom. This makes it hard to learn. At lunch we have plexiglass in the middle of the tables. If you want to talk to someone on the other side, you have to yell so they can hear you. Then you get yelled at by the lunch aides for yelling. Why can he take his mask off at lunch but not anywhere else the rest of the day. They haven't even had very many mask breaks lately. By the end of the day his ears are sore from wearing the mask and it is also very hot wearing it all day now that it is warm outside. Our backpacks are also very heavy and they have to bring everything home with them every day. He is also sad that they have not been able to go on any field trips or have grandparent's day. He asked that the Board please make SV the happy learning environment that it was before COVID.

Heather Yobb, Ontelaunee Township, thanked the Board for their time and service for our students. They love Schuylkill Valley School District and are grateful to be a part of the district and community. She is a high school teacher in another school district and has been an

educator for 16 years. Something that we do not think about are the effects of the entire pandemic including the masking, the protocols that were put into place, and how it is affecting our children. She has had students return back to her as a high school teacher with social anxiety and depression which are things she would never have expected in some of the students that she's gotten to know over the last few years. It breaks her heart to see these students and it's been the hardest school year of her life. When we came back we had all these protocols in place including masking and this does something to our psychological mindset. It's going to affect generations to come. This isn't just about this school year. In terms of her own children, she has a 1st grader who is re-enrolled back into SV next year and she does not want to see him going to school in a mask. She does not want this to be his new normal as he is an active, happy, outgoing little boy. She thanked the Board for their time.

Mr. Dane Miller thanked everyone for being at the meeting. He noted that the Board has been discussing these issues all year. In a lot of ways Schuylkill Valley has been in the forefront as our district did a lot of things before other districts because we felt confident to do so. We felt it was important to do the things that were necessary including sports, activities and clubs to enhance the education of our students. Many of the directors feel exactly the same way, the problem is that we're governed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Department of Education and that's more or less what we're having to follow. That is vaccinated individuals may go without masks and not practice social distancing, however you can use common sense to figure out which group is not vaccinated, which is a problem. That message is what governs the district at this point, but that doesn't mean that they won't have the courage to make a decision and he assured the audience that these conversations will continue.

4.0 BOARD

Election of Secretary of the Board

- 4.1 Mrs. Linda Lash was appointed to a four-year term, effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2021 at the June 26, 2017 Board meeting.

The Board is requested to consider and approve the appointment of Mrs. Linda Lash to serve as Secretary of the Board for a four-year term, effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the appointment of Mrs. Linda Lash to serve as Secretary of the Board for a four-year term, effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 4.2 Schuylkill Valley Elementary School's Schoolwide Title I Plan

The Board is requested to consider and approve ratification of the Schuylkill Valley Elementary School's 2020-21 Schoolwide Title 1 Plan.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by Robert Dempsey to consider and approve ratification of the Schuylkill Valley Elementary School's 2020-21 Schoolwide Title 1 Plan.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 4.3 PSBA 2021 Delegate Assembly Participant

The annual PASA-PSBA School Leadership Conference will be held September 27-29, 2021, and the PSBA Delegate Assembly will be held on October 23, 2021.

The Board is requested to consider appointing Mrs. Linda Lash as the PSBA delegate assembly participant representing the school district on October 23, 2021.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by David Moll to appoint Mrs. Linda Lash as the PSBA delegate assembly participant representing the school district on October 23, 2021.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

4.4 Settlement Agreement and Release

The Board is requested to consider and approve the Settlement Agreement and Release between the parents, individually on their own behalf and on behalf of their minor child, Student #3006, as proposed, and further, authorizes the Board President and Board Secretary to execute the Settlement Agreement and Release on behalf of the District.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Robert Dempsey to approve the Settlement Agreement and Release between the parents, individually on their own behalf and on behalf of their minor child, Student #3006, as proposed, and further, authorizes the Board President and Board Secretary to execute the Settlement Agreement and Release on behalf of the District.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

5.0 **SUPERINTENDENT**

Monthly Reports

5.1 The following monthly reports have been provided to the Board:

- 5.1.1** Enrollment Year-To-Date
- 5.1.2** Principals' Report
- 5.1.3** Dropout Report

Superintendent's Update

5.2 Dr. Heilman noted that the end of the school year is quickly approaching and all SV students have done an amazing job during the 2020-21 school year. SV athletes have gone above and beyond to represent Schuylkill Valley at districts and will do amazing things at states this weekend. The high school chorus' virtual performance was one of memories and lessons as it showcased the talents and gifts of our students. Middle school and elementary school students will take to the field to enjoy outdoor field day events. The PA Youth Education Association will be hosting a milkshake truck on Friday, May 28 in the high school parking lot from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. to benefit the Four Diamonds Organization. Also, we will be sending off the graduating Class of 2021 in Schuylkill Valley style. Commencement will be June 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the stadium and will be streamed live on the NFHS Network. Directions will be posted on the high school and district websites.

6.0 **POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Summary of Committee Deliberations – George H. Mertz III

The Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 21, 2021.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 6.1** Accepts, with regret and best wishes for the future, the following resignation due to retirement effective with the last day of the 2020-21 school term unless otherwise noted:

6.1.1 Ms. Jo Wert, Full-Time Special Education Paraprofessional at the High School.

Board Action: Moved by Alfonso Rossi and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the resignation due to retirement in Item 6.1.1, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.2** Accepts, with best wishes for the future, the following resignation:

6.2.1 Mr. Ean Costenbader, Special Education (Autistic Support) Teacher at the Middle School, effective with the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by George Mertz to approve the resignation in Item 6.2.1, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.3** Approves the employment of the following (all elections are contingent upon receipt and district approval of all necessary pre-employment forms, certification, state-mandated physical examinations, clearances, etc.):

6.3.1 Ms. Allison Schray, ½ Day Long-Term Substitute School Counselor at the Middle School, Master's, Step 1, \$54,705 (prorated for actual days worked), to fill the vacancy created by the leave of absence of Mrs. Janel Smith, effective January 4, 2021, through the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year.

6.3.2 Ms. Danielle Sabulsky, Digital Content & Marketing Specialist, \$53,000 (prorated for actual days worked), to fill the newly created position, pending approval of the 2021-22 General Fund Budget, effective on or after July 1, 2021.

6.3.3 Mr. Scott Horning, Part-Time IT Intern, at an hourly rate of pay of \$14.00, for continued employment in support of District's technology and prepare and implement live streaming of the District's monthly School Board meetings, effective July 1, 2021, through the remainder of the 2021-22 school year.

6.3.4 Extended school year (ESY) staff, with teachers and homebound instructors to be paid at the professional hourly rate of \$27, per the SVEA Collective Bargaining Agreement; paraprofessionals and substitute paraprofessionals to be paid at their regular hourly rate.

6.3.5 Community aquatics staff for the 2020-21 school year.

6.3.6 Substitutes for the 2020-21 school year.

6.3.7 Bus driver utilized by Eshelman Transportation for the 2020-21 school year.

- 6.3.8 Mrs. Susan Christman as the recording secretary to the Board of School Directors, to be paid \$125 per meeting for the 2021-22 school year.
- 6.3.9 Mrs. Michelle Kauffman as the treasurer to the Board of School Directors for the 2021-22 school year.
- 6.3.10 Stipend of \$1,500 to Dana Carter, Ginny Marchut, and Lauren Yoder, Special Education Teachers, for the completion of time sensitive IEP and evaluation support that was not on their caseloads. The stipend will be divided as follows:

Dana Carter - \$1,000
Ginny Marchut - \$250
Lauren Yoder - \$250

- 6.3.11 Panthers-On-Parade salaries for the 2020-21 school year, in the amount of \$8,700.
- 6.3.12 Ms. Kelsey Amidon, Long-Term Substitute School Counselor at the Elementary School, MS, Step 1, \$54,705 (prorated for actual days worked), to fill the vacancy created by the leave of absence of Mrs. Joanna Schlottman and to assist with the transition of Mrs. Schlottman's return from leave, effective January 4, 2021, through the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year.
- 6.3.13 Head coaches for the 2021-22 school year.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by David Moll to approve the employment in Items 6.3.1 through and including 6.3.13, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 6.4 Approves the adoption of the online Policies and Procedures Handbook for Parents and Students for the 2021-2022 school year, subject to any further revisions to policies and/or inclusion of new policies in the handbook.
- 6.5 Approves the following days to be worked between the guidance counselors at each building, from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, paid per diem:

Elementary School Guidance Counselors - 12 total days
Middle School Guidance Counselors - 8 total days
High School Guidance Counselors - 24 total days

Approves a total of 30 days to be worked between the three psychologists, from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, paid per diem.

Total Estimated Cost: \$33,027

- 6.6 Approves the review of present Policy 918: Title I Parent and Family Engagement.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the actions in Items 6.4 through and including 6.6, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

7.0 CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Kevin Raudenbush

The Curriculum and Technology Committee met at 7:37 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 19, 2021.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 7.1 Approves the tuition agreement with Hogan Learning Academy LLC, to provide extended school year education services from June 28, 2021 through August 6, 2021, at the rate of \$420 per day, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement.
- 7.2 Approves the tuition agreement with Hogan Learning Academy LLC, to provide school year education services and extended school year education services from August 23, 2021 through August 19, 2022, at the rate of \$425 per day, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement.
- 7.3 Approves the agreement with the Richard J. Caron Foundation to provide student assistance program services for the 2021-2022 school year, at the rates provided, from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement.
- 7.4 Approves of an optional non-refundable \$15 student device protection plan for the 2021-2022 school year, to be available to purchase for elementary school, middle school, and high school students. Students who are approved for free or reduced lunch status will have the option to pay a reduced non-refundable \$5 student device protection plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Students who do not purchase the protection plan will be liable for all expenses for repair or device replacement.
- 7.5 Approves ratification of the affiliation agreement with Millersville University to provide school health clinical experience to the University's students enrolled in the nursing program, effective May 4, 2021, for a period not to exceed five years, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement.
- 7.6 Approves the proposal from Communications Systems Integrators, LLC (CSI) for the School District's access control system, at a cost not to exceed \$44,507.00, to be paid from the Capital Project Fund, and further, authorizes the Director of Instructional and information Technology to execute the proposal.
- 7.7 Approves the proposal from Don Kauffman's Sewing Machines for the sewing machine service contract for the 2021-22 school year for the middle school and high school, at a cost of \$40.00 per machine for 35 machines (plus parts if needed), and further, authorizes the high school and middle school principals to execute the proposal.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by David Moll to approve the actions in Items 7.1 through and including 7.7, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

8.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE***Summary of Committee Deliberations – David E. Moll***

The Budget and Finance Committee met at 7:44 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 21, 2021.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration**Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:**

- 8.1** Approves/ratifies the payment of bills in the following amounts from April 16, 2021, to May 25, 2021, as presented.

GENERAL FUND	\$614,246.57
CAFETERIA FUND	\$26,871.94
CAPITAL PROJECT FUND	\$29,649.90
TECHNOLOGY RESERVE FUND	\$30,115.00
EDUCATION TRUST FUND	\$577.69
GRAND TOTAL	\$701,461.10

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Alfonso Rossi to approve/ratify the payment of bills in Item 8.1 from April 16, 2021, to May 25, 2021, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.2** Approves the insurance proposal from AXIS Insurance for the 2021-2022 school year, in the amount of \$8,891.00 (same amount as 2020-2021), and further, authorizes the Business Manager to execute the application.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by George Mertz to approve the insurance proposal from AXIS Insurance for the 2021-2022 school year, in the amount of \$8,891.00 (same amount as 2020-2021), and further, authorizes the Business Manager to execute the application.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.3** Approves the adoption of the 2021-2022 General Fund Proposed Final Budget in the amount of \$41,602,809 which includes no increase in real estate taxes.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by David Moll to approve the adoption of the 2021-2022 General Fund Proposed Final Budget in the amount of \$41,602,809 which includes no increase in real estate taxes.

Roll Call Vote

Yeas: Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi, Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.4** Accepts the following donations, in the total amount of \$1,250.00, for Staff and Student Appreciation awards/lunches at the middle school:

\$500 from LA Kehres Building & Remodeling
\$500 from Kohl Building Products
\$250 from Berks Septic Service

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by George Mertz to approve accepting the donations in Item 8.4, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.5 Approves the agreement between the Berks Career & Technology Center and the District to fully administer the 2021-2022 Free & Reduced Lunch program for applicable Schuylkill Valley students, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by David Moll to approve the agreement between the Berks Career & Technology Center and the District to fully administer the 2021-2022 Free & Reduced Lunch program for applicable Schuylkill Valley students, and further, authorizes the Superintendent to execute the agreement.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.6 Approves accepting the donation from the Conner A. Kleffel Memorial Foundation, in the amount of \$2,000.00, for the Conner Kleffel Scholarship Fund.

Board Action: Moved by Robert Dempsey and seconded by Linda Lash to approve accepting the donation from the Conner A. Kleffel Memorial Foundation, in the amount of \$2,000.00, for the Conner Kleffel Scholarship Fund.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.7 Approves the perpetual agreement with the Berks County Intermediate Unit for tax services, and further, authorizes the Business Manager to execute the agreement.

Board Action: Moved by George Mertz and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the perpetual agreement with the Berks County Intermediate Unit for tax services, and further, authorizes the Business Manager to execute the agreement.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.8 Approves the resolution to allow Dr. Janet C. Heilman, Substitute Superintendent, use of electronic signature for the purpose of PDE eGrants.

Board Action: Moved by David Moll and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the resolution to allow Dr. Janet C. Heilman, Substitute Superintendent, use of electronic signature for the purpose of PDE eGrants.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

9.0 BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Alfonso F. Rossi

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met at 8:12 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 21, 2021.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 9.1 Approves the invoice payment to Integrated System Solutions, for control repairs at the middle school, in the amount of \$18,450.00, to be paid from the Capital Project Fund, and further, authorizes the Director of Buildings and Grounds to execute the payment.

Board Action: Moved by Alfonso Rossi and seconded by Kevin Raudenbush to approve the invoice payment in Item 9.1, as presented.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

10.0 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Nicoleen M. Kleffel

The Extracurricular Activities Committee met at 8:15 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2021, in the Schuylkill Valley Middle School LGI Room. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, June 21, 2021.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 10.1 Approves a trial basis for a new school club, No Place for Hate Club – Elementary School.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Robert Dempsey to approve a trial basis for a new school club, No Place for Hate Club – Elementary School.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

11.0 OTHER BUSINESS/GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Miller stated that the district track meet was outstanding. Miss Deibler reviewed the results of the meet including Ashlyn Giles who was a two-event champion for both the discus and shot put, and she set the District III record which was 23 years old. The SV girls are District 3 Class 2A Team Champions. Luke Seymour was a District 3 champion in two events, the 1,600 and the 800; the girls' 4x1 team were District 3 champions; the boys 4x1 team finished second; and our boys' 4x4 team were also District 3 champions. Schuylkill Valley will have 15 athletes participating in states.

12.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Miller announced that there would be an executive session immediately following the meeting for personnel matters and negotiations.

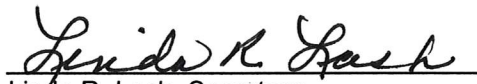
13.0 ADJOURNMENT

Moved by David Moll and seconded by George Mertz, there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned.

Yeas: Bendigo, Dempsey, Kleffel, Lash, Mertz, Miller, Moll, Raudenbush, Rossi

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.


Linda R. Lash, Secretary
Board of School Directors