

MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Budget and Finance Committee Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

Facilities and Transportation Committee Meeting – Immediately following Budget and Finance

Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Committee Meeting – Immediately following Facilities and Transportation

Administration Building – Board Room

MINUTES

Present

Board: Mr. Bilker, Mr. Dezzi, Mrs. Harvey, Mr. Maalouf, Mrs. Tomasco

Administration: Dr. Tina Kane, Mr. Joe Driscoll, Mr. Jake Gallagher, Mr. Jim Orwig,

Press: 0

Audience: 0

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mr. Bilker called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Bilker led the Pledge of Allegiance and asked that everyone remain standing to observe a moment of silence for September 11th.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

3.01 Committee Report – Tracy A. Alberti, Chairperson

Mr. Bilker turned the meeting over to Mr. Driscoll

3.02 Additions to the Agenda

There was none.

3.03 Approval of Section 3 of the agenda relating to Budget and Finance

3.04 Approval of Minutes

With no discussion minutes were approved.

3.05 Bills for Payment

Mr. Driscoll explained September is a light month. We have the bills for payment the, general fund bills. This is a preliminary bill list, final bill list will come out with the with the agenda in two weeks and we have a little bit of food service as food service starts to gear up with the new school year

MOTION: To approve and authorize payment of General Fund bills in the amount of \$1,227,778.35 and Food Service bills in the amount of \$750.00

3.06 Financial Reports

Mr. Driscoll explained financial reports for July 2023 and budget transfers, the final cleanup some for prior year's budget transfers. Just so you know we'll start gearing up now for the audit and probably we'll start talking about the budget. It's my estimation from what I'm hearing the Act 1 index will probably be over five percent. It's the highest that I can recall, it's the highest that I think it's ever been especially since we've been using it since 2006. I believe it comes out this Saturday officially but I'm from what I'm seeing between five and maybe five-point two percent. So we would I would be likely wanting you to think about whether or not you would like to pass a motion not to exceed that index. Obviously, it changes the whole process for us during the budget. It sets the tone, it sets the timeline more specifically where we don't really start digging into budget till we get better estimates in the or in the early winter so most likely we'll be talking about that in about four weeks.

MOTION: To approve the monthly financial reports for July 2023 and Budget Transfers.

Informational item monthly financial report for August 2023.

All motions will go to the full Board for approval.

3.07 Other Business

There was none.

3.08 Public Comment

There was none.

3.09 Adjournment

4. FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

4.01 Committee Report – Nicholas J. Reynolds, Sr., Chairperson

Mr. Bilker turned the meeting over to Mr. Gallagher

4.02 Additions to the Agenda

There was none.

4.03 Approval of Section 4 of the agenda relating to Facilities

4.04 Approval of Minutes

With no discussion minutes were approved.

4.05 Facilities Discussion Items:

1. Performing Arts Center sound system and infrastructure replacement, Marple Newtown High School.

Mr. Gallagher explained a few discussion items tonight. We would be looking at replacing the Performing Arts Center sound system and some infrastructure. We're going on 14 years now since the renovation up at the high school you'll see another line item here in 407 that will piggyback off that as well. There was some large Replacements done during that time but right now we're looking to involve Mr. Beltrante, the lighting and sound coordinator and a few of the production teams to dig in exactly see what we need up there. also with the IT Department some members of my department as well to see for lighting for sound for all the infrastructure to make that Performing Arts Center what it what it can be and what it should be and I'd like to get a few numbers on that, we're working with a few different companies now to keep it going but I'd like to get some numbers and bring it to the board maybe by the end of the month or next month.

2. Boiler and chiller replacement, Russell Elementary School.

Mr. Gallagher explained the boiler and chiller replacement for Russell Elementary School. Right now they're 23 to 25 years old. The life expectancy for chillers is right around 20 years old so we are at our last leg. What I would like to do is size those accordingly, as if there was going to be an addition put there in a three to five year plan just in case if there is anything there we don't have to add to those chillers add to the boiler and I'd like to get pricing on that, maybe something we could do and start for next summer along with that item four we should be good until next summer with the cooling season done right around the corner I believe we'll be fine.

4.06 Bathroom Renovations, Gauntlet Center

Mr. Gallagher explained that he would like to make a motion next week for Bonnett Associates to design and advertise for The Gauntlet Center bathroom renovation. This will be paid for through the Leisure Service. This is something that's been very much needed over there. Those bathrooms are in very poor condition for the students and the children throughout the community that use those facilities.

MOTION: To approve Bonnett Associates to design and advertise for the Gauntlet Center bathroom renovation project. Project will be paid for by the Marple Newtown Leisure Services.

Motion will go to the full Board for approval.

4.07 Intercom and Public Announcement System Replacement, Marple Newtown High School

The other thing that I mentioned from item number one in discussion, this piggybacks the intercom and public announcement system replacement at the high school. So that is also 14 years old. Some of that was replaced during the renovation, some wasn't. There were some parts that were still left during the original building, and we'd like to replace all of that with that it would be it'd be a complete renovation, all new wiring, all new speaker system, all new guts on behind the scenes. We'd like the current one to be running, it would be a second shift project that we would kind of have going, so both the intercom system and the PA system will be working as it is and then we would turn it over. We're looking maybe during the Christmas break, but that would be completed by Goldhorn Electrical Construction in the amount of two hundred ninety-eight thousand four hundred eighty dollars and that will be paid through the capital reserve.

MOTION: To approve the installation and equipment for new intercom and public announcement system throughout the Marple Newtown High School. This will be completed by Goldhorn Electrical Construction under Costars contract #008-638 in the amount \$298,480.00 paid from the capital fund.

Mr. Bilker asked the restrooms at The Gauntlet Center motion 4.06 is that all the restrooms at The Gauntlet center or is it just particular ones that are getting renovated?

Mr. Gallagher explained when you walk into the main lobby the bathrooms to the right there's a single stall right now, they're going to be large and hand handicapped accessible. There's also if you keep going to the right there there's a little locker room that's going to be renovated with a single bathroom for the faculty of Leisure Service and then on the back side of the gym there is a men's and women's restroom with roughly eight to ten stalls those will be fully gutted and renovated with all new fixtures all new plumbing, all new lighting, paint throughout in that whole back area as well.

Mr. Bilker asked how are the systems in that building?

Mr. Gallagher responded, when boiler, chiller or the things that you don't see so they were new during this renovation. There are mini splits in during this renovation meaning the building we're sitting in right now was new, so, they're 10 or 11 years

old. The only thing they don't have air conditioning in the gym so the gym is definitely hot.

Mr. Bilker, I've heard it, I know there's talks of that with Leisure Service as well so I guess that's it's our building, but they are responsible for I guess offsetting a lot of the costs because they use it right which is why they're paying for the bathroom project.

Mr. Gallagher ~ yes, I mean I've been in those classrooms and they are they are ancient right and not that this would be anywhere near our priority but is that really all that would be left as far as making that like newly renovated building. Now you can say no if it's no, I mean the gym is in a nice shape. I know they added some bleachers. We redo the floor every winter. Sometime in the summer the bathrooms will be fully renovated. I mean they could definitely be painted, you know give it a little love. As far as the air conditioning unit in the gym that would be a top Capital project for Leisure Service and all the exterior was done on this building. I know they have MN Rec programming there regularly. I just kind of picture if something goes wrong somewhere we've got some space that's usable and also has them put on the backup generator, so they enjoy that too. The fire alarm Life Safety got updated recently.

Motion will go to the full Board for approval.

4.08 Transportation Discussion Items:

Mr. Orwig advised the Board that we had a smooth opening of school with the transportation department again the office staff led by Joe Sheehan and the drivers and the transportation aides themselves in cooperation with the parents and the students it was just a may have been our smoothest opening.

Mr. Bilker ~ I've been a School Director and a parent here for a while now and it was the best opening. Nobody came to me with issues which they do if there are any and my observations of my kids buses, I was very pleased. That is great to hear again that's our drivers every year either step up or bail us out, they do one of the two. They're just fantastic employees, please pass that along.

Mr. Orwig explained the following:

1. As of September 5, 2023, we are providing bussing to 107 schools daily, which totals 385 daily bus routes.
2. 2023-2024 bus route notifications were available to parents on Monday, August 28.

3. "Here Comes the Bus" module has been successfully integrated with Transfinder Plus Bus Routing system and will be rolled out to all MNSD parents no later than Monday, September 18, 2023. Information regarding the "Here Comes the Bus" application will be sent to all MNSD parents and information and enrollment instructions will be placed on the district web page.
4. To date, 56 "hazardous routes," as deemed by PennDot, have been identified within our school district boundaries and have been "geo-coded" into the Transfinder bus routing program. The identification of these areas results in providing additional bus routes to have our children arrive safely to school.
5. Mandatory Bus Evacuation Drills will be conducted during the month of September.
6. Transportation vehicle inventory:

72 passenger buses	42
48 passenger buses	9
30 passenger buses	30
Vans	<u>16</u>
	97 vehicles in the fleet
7. The District is still experiencing extreme difficulty obtaining new/used vans. Costars pricing is not being recognized by vendors and the inventory is low and the prices are extremely high.

4.09 Other Business

There was none.

4.10 Public Comment

There was none.

4.11 Adjournment

5. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

5.01 Committee Report – Nicholas V. Siano, Chairperson

Mr. Bilker turned the meeting over to Dr. DiBartolomeo

5.02 Additions to the Agenda

There was none.

5.03 Approval of Section 5 of the agenda relating to Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology

5.04 Approval of Minutes

With no discussion minutes were approved.

5.05 Information Items

Presentation on Marple Newtown School District Goals for the 2023-2024 School Year, by Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Joel DiBartolomeo.

Dr. DiBartolomeo ~ Tonight I am presenting the 2023-2024 district goals. There are three parts of tonight's presentation, the first part is overviews the purpose and how these goals are being used. Second, we'll look at last year's goals and how we did achieve those goals and then finally we'll take a look at this year's goals.

I'll start with a statement that has been distilled from our comprehensive plan. This is a statement that really does summarize all of what you're about to see, all our work centers on this we want our students to leave Marple Newtown with the ability to compete in the 21st century whether that be a college career, wherever it is that their interests take them. You're going to see here our goals and through the design of our programming is intended to prepare our students for those different opportunities here. These goals are used for the purpose of the goals we saw to use, make sure our students are prepared. These goals are used to align our administrative goals. They are found in our comprehensive plan they really do direct our daily operations with our administrative staff and our teachers and the activities that we are following in our schools to make sure that our students are achieving, and our teachers have the capacity they need so that they can deliver instruction through best practices and the best programming available. We're looking at these four categories here, student achievement, curriculum instruction, school culture well-being, and then finally policy and governance. So first we're going to look at the goals from last year and how we did. I'm going to start here on the left, I'll go down this column and then I'll come to the right. Last year the goal for our first and second graders was to see at least two to three years of growth in their reading under the year reading assessments as per the diagnostic reading assessment. We exceeded the goal we were up near 92 percent. This one here last year IXL, this program here a digital program that is used in our K through Keystone. It was a pilot year for that and it's a technical matter where you see 73 are sample size there because it was a pilot year had an end for ELA of 73 that was the number of students who IXL was able to capture in what they call a pinpoint. Students must do at least 30 minutes a week for them to maintain what they call a pinpoint. If they don't do that, and because we were at a Pilot, you're not seeing what all the students are doing, that they extend down to what they call a range and eventually they get lost from the sample size and that's what we see there in the ELA last year. The focus was really in the math area that we had a much larger sample size it was used much more vigorously in the math and according to the IXL program we see that 74 percent of our students hit the proficient and or advanced benchmarks in the IXL. This year full implementation three to eight, so when we come back next year, we'll report out on this these numbers will be all valid, they'll be much more reliable as far as decisions Keystone for literature that number is really preliminary, our numbers haven't come out yet we won't know that until October, you could look forward to seeing a presentation on state scores in November, so really until we have solid information for what our state scores look like that number could be plus or minus about six percentage points, so anyway we'll come back to that but that's what we have now 85 percent, we hit for our students proficient in advance on Keystone. The Benchmark we had

85 percent of our students. One of the problems with Keystone is the state has now offered multiple Pathways for students to graduate from high school without taking Keystone and many of our students are opting out of the Keystone exam and they're pursuing these different avenues acceptance of four-year University, passing one of the career Readiness tests, those are just two examples. These are very because of these multiple avenues. Pathways students are no longer Keystone, just doesn't have the same gusto it once did which is why when we look at this year's goals, you'll see the measure is the internal IXL digital program summer learning. We did that 1-18 this year tutoring we offered that in the winter and spring this year. Social emotional learning that has been embedded for year two now with our students taking design thinking. I'm going to talk more about that. That deserves a lot of praise, what's going on in that program as does this last item here which my colleague here Mrs. Brooke Tocci is going to talk a little bit more. We see some additional goals from last year 90 students will apply to the STEM Academy, we had over 95 two weeks after, we were probably up over a hundred. We had about 104 was the final number. Once it closed and we had our number set we had students from outside the district still applying, that's something that we should be very proud. I think as a District K-12 with the work we're doing now here we see the design thinking K-8, you know Mrs. Amodei and her work in this area in under a year. She has been a springboard for this program we're in year three with this program we're the only District who has a K to 12 program like this and the transition that we made from introducing it was two short years ago to what happened last year and over this summer writing the program designing the program bringing teachers to professional development getting our teachers trained. We heard a lot about how excited students were for this class last year, these classes last year when they go into school, and they start experiencing this class, this year it's going to knock their socks off. It is really going to be a joy for those kids in that classroom and that takes us to Future Ready index. I talked about that the data for that has not been released by the state phasing in digital assessments. The warehouse performance matters, something you'll hear repeating through tonight's presentation, that I'm making we are now in full Phase One by next year we do expect that the common assessments are summative assessments. In performance matters which will which is a nexus for lots of other things that we'll be talking about tonight as far as data meetings goes data informed decision-making providing interventions planning for programming aligning curriculum etc. so, that's very exciting for us. We've gotten that off the ground, the pilot, and we are really taking that to a place where I know the team, the administrative team and the teachers are very excited about. What it offers them the credit recovery for students. We had over well 105 courses taken on our password it was 88 percent not too bad we wanted 90 but 88 is close. You know we could do better, and we will. Middle and high schools have updated their schedules to provide our students with greater access. We look at this with the middle school with their win time at the end of the day their activity period and the high school at the end of the day their fifth block were advisory period activity period which has already been a real exciting opportunity for the kids. I heard today about how some of the PE teachers are working with some of the kids, you know during the first couple of days when the structure is not quite there the support classes aren't necessarily needed and things how our teachers have been creative in using that time to really keep the kids from well keep the kids doing the things that they should be doing having fun at school taking advantage of the time there building culture, building relationships that's what our teachers have stepped up to do you can see the activities already are taking root. The teachers are communicating with each other the hall pass has been very helpful for that program as well. Here we'll talk a little bit more about this. So we introduced it, we will be introducing, well we already have introduced but we don't know the final numbers yet it's another two weeks before we know this year's numbers we expected 150 last year we had 150 students

enrolled in dual enrollment courses this is both academic and vocational the academic courses at Delaware Community College and the electrical carpentry eight-track vocational courses where students can enter dual enrollment at Delaware Community College at earn college credit that's a very exciting opportunity for our students. Then we had the safety audit completed last year in addition over the summer at our administrative retreat we had our second annual safety Symposium which we have all Marple and Newtown police officers and others from around the district and area come in and review our safety plans and give us some pointers and good very healthy discussion back and forth. That's last year, we're going to go and again just a reminder that the state scores are not here. We don't have those yet; they'll be coming in November.

So next we're going to take a look at the upcoming we're going to start with student achievement. I mentioned that we're going to be looking at the district reading assessments IXL. These are going to be the programs that we use, we have so many students opting out from the state test right now these are going to give us, we feel more accurate information, in addition this is the program we're using to help us make decisions about how to intervene or enrich student activity, so here you see the percentages this is now 95. We're looking at 90 percent here 70 and 90 of our bio students on the Keystone we'll be reporting back on these numbers next year this time once we have our end of the year results next so curriculum instructions so we're looking here at design thinking STEM classes so here we see, I talked a little bit about Mrs. Amodei's work in the professional development. She has offered and brought in our teachers have been very excited with the work they've been doing; it really has been a transformational summer the last five months going back to probably may have been a very exciting time for those teachers getting lots of resources. They're able to use in the classroom really developing the four C's that we want to encourage our students to be able to use as a skill set in the 21st century. The family information night we've already started talking about these things here last year we wanted 90 this year we're hoping for 95 students at least from Marple to apply for the STEM Academy high school so here we see that again. This is our third year, so we now have all four years freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in the STEM Academy so that's very exciting. After approximately 200 students in the academy right now and the collaboration between the teaching and learning the school and the administration in general has been very supportive making sure that the courses are aligned, and we take this to parent surveys and the student surveys very serious. We've made adjustments so we can really fit the needs of our students and families while also maintaining the standards that are required for the Capstone and what else is involved in the STEM Academy and here, we see the Future Ready index which we know is something we need to address. We're looking to get that about 95. The State average is 86. We believe we can get to 95, that's something that you'll be hearing more about in November. Moving into curriculum and instruction, here we see just want to point to this area here so the evaluation development and alignment of our programming, teacher instruction delivery and that's what the next two slides are this is all about, the work we have been doing for the last two years and this being a year where we really expect to capitalize on the groundwork that we've laid the first two years with performance matters with data meetings with aligning our systems with getting our programming structured so that across third grade not just in a building but across all four schools, everybody's using the same tools they're delivering similarly, the schedules look the same and interventions look the same. How do we use performance matters and those sorts of things as far as data goes what is the purpose of the performance matters, you know and data that is so that we could make decisions about how our students are performing and what are their needs. How do we design small groups and how do we design interventions. This work we've done this summer our data meetings

with the principals this summer have been very powerful and then when we've also turned this around to the teachers, there's a need and they are welcoming it, they're embracing it, and they're looking for more and this year we will really be pushing that out much more vigorously. This year surveys so far have been very positive, we've surveyed teachers on our professional development opening days orientation, opening days, I will say that you know the surveys we've we have about 350 teachers, we had about a hundred responses pretty good ratio, and we've had the satisfaction rate with those have been over 80 percent as far as what they're getting, how practical, how useful the information is the results have been encouraging very encouraging, so the start of the school year, Mr. Bilker as you mentioned, we do feel like it has been a nice start for us as well here we see correct instruction, the cyber school and dual enrollment cyber school, will continue as it has with MN ConnectEd at the Edmentum program that we use credit recovery program. We will go again this summer. I said that Delaware County was the dual enrollment University that we partnered with this year, we've also I guess adopted but we're working with Immaculata University, and we are able to offer close to 30 classes that we can now offer college credit dual credit. So now we have academic courses from Delaware County Community College and Immaculata and the vocational courses from Delaware County Community College, so you know we expect the number of students who are enrolling in these dual credit courses to increase. I wouldn't be surprised we're shooting 175 we hit 155 last year, you know I'm hoping we can get 20 more students at least.

Question ~ Joel, the academic courses for dual enrollment are located on the college campus or are they administered by our teachers?

Response ~ our classroom, our material. They have to meet a teacher who just has to be certified in that area of whatever they're teaching math science or whatever. A student has a choice between taking the AP exam or paying to get college credit, it's not like an asynchronous. Just a clarification: Students must take the AP test in said AP course in which they have enrolled. There is no choice in taking the AP exam or paying for college credit.

I had heard from some schools who have dual enrollment programs and it's it sounds very much like how I did college classes which you'd have a video and you'd watch it laying on your bed so it's not so this is our teacher students don't report to our classrooms they stay in our buildings they don't travel for our academic course and all of them take the AP exam right.

This year has been a big focus of ours over the last couple of years for obvious reasons coming out of covid and a lot of the needs that we see arising from our students the classroom meetings. We had two additional trainings this summer, they were held at Loomis we had 30 seats at each training so that has been fully rolled out and adopted now it's just maintaining teacher training and alignment to the expectation for that direct instruction to social skills programming at the middle school and high school. The middle school has Second Step embedded in their design thinking this is direct instruction of social skills and then down here K-12, I mentioned earlier the use of performance matters and data to inform our decision making about you know interventions enrichment this year, stage one of our interventions and enrichment programming we are going to be rolling out well by the end of the year. We want to have common interventions across the buildings across the grade levels something in place K to 12 so that when a student needs additional support, he or she has access to that support and that's the that's sort of the end product about performance matters the safe to say here down here so this is our safe to say outlet

anonymous reporting device. I want to take a moment and just talk a little bit about this last piece here. Our keynote speaker, Suzanne Daley, came to us and presented at the opening day when our teachers returned. She's a teacher from Bucks County that does a lot of presenting around the region. We brought her in building off Dr. Kane's, theme trying to again sustain some of the momentum we have been making and really making our culture a more positive culture across the schools and across the organization and Suzanne was brought in for that purpose. She also is an author as I mentioned of a book called Teach Happier this school year and she'll be the first to tell you when she's talking Teach Happier she's not talking about a Disney movie where it ends and people are holding hands seeing somebody out walking down you know into the sunset that's not at all what she means it's science-based it really does go into for teachers serves as a strategy and provides them with practical activities that will help them really be better teachers, it will help them get closer to what brought them into the profession, how to build habits to keep their classroom positive to keep themselves positive through some of the turmoil that we know affects all of us in our different positions, the results in the survey when you when you scroll down and you read through the feedback when people you know what teachers were sharing some open-ended feedback with us was overwhelmingly positive.

Comment ~I heard that as well she was great, our schools each School is doing some version of follow-up.

We have book studies going on at schools there will be excerpts and passages shared at faculty meetings so the teachers can again sort of work, in collaboration with each other to build on the messaging that we are really trying to share and push out there for our teachers. It was well received, you know and I think the whole morning really went off with was a big hit it really was so you know that was something that we'll be hearing more about, but you might be hearing more about this year from teachers and things I hope so and then finally policy and governance we're always looking for grant money that's always something we're doing and how do we use it wisely and public work and in communication through public board meetings messages sent from our buildings include District messages our Tigers pride and then of course the websites which are updated regularly when information warrants it as will this presentation which will appear on the superintendent's page tomorrow,

Mrs. Tomasco ~ I don't have any questions, but I just want to say thank you that was excellent. I feel very informed, great job. So, thank you so much to the whole Administration for putting that together. I'm sure it took a team.

Presentation on Writing K-8 program, by Teaching and Learning Supervisor, Mrs. Brooke Tocci.

Ms. Tocci ~ Good evening! Thank you so much for inviting me to talk about our wonderful K-8 Writing Workshop. Tonight, we're going to go through some statistics, discuss the need for writing, why we decided to put so much time and effort into writing, and then we will look at the benefits. We will then review our rollout plan from last year and we will move into this year.

I always think it's important to start by giving some hard-hitting statistics and these were very eye-opening to me as someone who has taught writing my whole career. In 2020 the National Report Card said that 27 percent of students in grades 4 to 12 measure at the proficiency level. That's only 27 percent of students nationally. Another 2020 report by the

Learning Lab Agency said 25 percent of middle schoolers and 31 percent of high schoolers nationally write about 30 minutes a day. That is the minimum recommended amount of minutes spent writing for a kindergartener, yet 30 minutes is what a lot of our middle schoolers and high schoolers are receiving. The recommendation is 60 minutes for first graders on up. We know we only have so many minutes in a day, so we are trying to work with that without adding time to the clock, and we'll talk about that in a moment.

Interestingly enough, one of the things employers look for most is the ability to write. In fact, here is a study that says 73.4 percent of employers say they want to hire candidates with strong written communication skills. It's the third most desired quality according to this poll right behind leadership and the ability to collaborate and work as a team member. So, if you're looking at writing as one of the most sought after skills, why aren't we doing more as educators to prepare our students?

Writing has been shown in study after study to show all kinds of benefits. It is no longer just a time where kids sit and write creatively and listen to music. I mean, that's great, but there is so much more that comes out of writing. Among them: self-expression, communication skills, and the ability to reflect the goals and receive feedback. A huge part of writing is having someone be able to be critical of your writing and you take the suggestion and run with it without feeling offended. That's something our students are doing every day. Being able to take feedback is a life skill and they're working on that from kindergarten on up. Another benefit to writing is a deeper understanding of reading, as reading and writing go hand in hand. A good writer is a good reader, and a good reader is a good writer. And so how do we really get the most out of our students with literacy? It is through providing access to both writing and reading. There are a lot of different models out there and a lot of different curriculums for writing. Thank you to our school board for selecting writing workshop units of study. I have to say, I believe so strongly in writing workshops. There are many benefits to this approach, and these are the top six. First, it gives kids an opportunity to receive instruction, explicit instruction, in a mini lesson format. Following the minilesson, off they go to practice their writing. Our students are also writing for real audiences and no longer just their teacher's red pen. They are writing for their classmates, for their parents, and for community members. They are writing about topics that matter to them. For example, if they're writing an informational text, the teacher isn't saying everybody must write about panda bears, they're saying you're writing an informational text about something of interest to you. Teachers provide the framework and encourage students to select the topic. Of course, they're automatically empowered and engaged in their writing. In writing workshop, students are also working on the writing process and how to cycle through it. Students are also given plenty of opportunities to read as writers. There are a ton of opportunities for teachers to use mentor texts to show what really good writing looks like and discuss what makes a piece of writing solid. Students have the opportunity to read through the eyes of an author. Finally, as I stated before, they're also working on individual goals and they're taking feedback throughout the writing process via conferences with teachers, peers, and during small group instruction. In time, it becomes second nature to have somebody give you feedback on the grows and grows of your writing.

In year one, writing units of study were purchased for K to eight in the summer of 2022. In September of 2022 early adopters were identified. In talking with teachers, I quickly learned that they also wanted to be a part of writing workshop. It ended up that every single teacher in K to five decided that they wanted to be early adopters! That is huge and it's something to be celebrated. It speaks a lot to our Marple Newtown teachers. Our K-8 teachers received ongoing training around the writing workshop approach and our focus for the entire year was on how we do effective mini lessons. Every unit was launched at the exact

same time across the elementary buildings. For example, every second grade teacher started the next unit at the same time so they could be consistent and support one another and collaborate. Students in grades one to eight wrote daily for extended periods of time. I spoke with many teachers who said in the beginning of the year some of the students would struggle to hold a pencil to write a sentence and in no time, they were writing a full page and sighing at the end of writing workshop because they wanted to keep going. What a compliment to a program and to a teacher when you teach children a strategy and they become so invested in it that they sigh when the teacher asks them to put their pencils down. That's stamina! Our students studied and wrote in various genres such as opinion and argument, informational text, narrative and memoir. At the end of every single unit, teachers hold a writing celebration. This could be big or small. It's a time for them to really know what it's like to be an author. They're reading for their classmates, for parents, and so on. The teachers got very creative with their celebrations. Last year, our K-12 students received numerous awards throughout the county in various writing contests.

I think this year we're going to surpass what we achieved last year. At the elementary level, writing occurs every single day in grades one to five and in kindergarten, because of a half day schedule, we are asking them to do writing workshop at least two days out of the five day cycle. Each grade level at the elementary level will be writing an opinion piece, an informational piece, and narrative pieces. Some grades will write fiction and even graphic novels. Text-dependent analysis will also be taught, allowing students to write about their reading. This is particularly crucial when it comes time for State Testing. Again, there will be continued exposure to mentor texts. We're not just putting any old book in front of students. These are powerful pieces of writing. Last year, classes were required to complete three units of study. This year, students in grades one to five will be completing five units of study. The whole scope and sequence has been laid out for our teachers. Like last year, there will be a celebration at the end of every unit. This year we will be implementing lessons for grammar, usage and mechanics. In meeting with individuals at different conferences and planning sessions, we came up with the idea to do a "Fine Tune Friday" where teachers will pull back from the unit of study and teach a research-based lesson at a grade level standard for grammar, usage, and mechanics. Students will then go and apply it into their actual piece of writing. The middle school schedule has been adjusted to include a period of writing each day in grades six and seven. That's huge! Students will have a period of reading and a period of writing every day. Writing instruction will be integrated into the ELA instruction in grade 8 and in enrichment classes. The teachers are really working to determine how best to embed more writing into the ELA curriculum at the eighth-grade level. Middle school students will be writing argument pieces, informational texts, narratives, and they're going to do text dependent analysis. Sixth grade will be doing a unit on graphic novels. If you have middle schoolers at home, you probably know how popular graphic novels are. This year, they will get to write their own. The reading and writing teachers are working collaboratively to determine ways for students to do a deep dive into a genre and all it entails. The middle school will also be focusing on grammar, usage, and mechanics using research-based strategies.

I would like to end with a couple pictures from some of our writing celebrations. It's exciting to showcase the students and how hard they're working, and I will say the feedback we've gotten from teachers and from students has been phenomenal. I'm excited to see where this continues to go. Thank you.

Dr. DiBartolomeo asked that the following motions be taken to the full Board for approval.

5.06 Policy

MOTION: To approve the first reading of School Board Policy 216.1, Supplemental Discipline Records, as recommended by Pennsylvania School Boards Association, as presented.

5.07 Purchase

MOTION: To approve the purchase of novels for Paxton Hollow Middle School English Department, as presented.

MOTION: To approve the purchase of books for Culbertson Elementary Library, as presented.

5.08 Affiliation Agreements

MOTION: To approve the Affiliation Agreement with Cabrini University for field experience and student teaching, as presented.

MOTION: To approve the Affiliation Agreement with Neumann University for field experience and student teaching, as presented.

5.09 Donations

MOTION: To approve the donation of an elevator door decal at Marple Newtown High School to promote public service announcements for wellness, as presented.

MOTION: To approve the donation of a tent for the Cross-Country Track and Field teams, as presented.

5.10 Administrative Trips

MOTION: To approve Dr. Tina Kane to attend the Board of Governors Conference on September 7-8, 2023 in Harrisburg, PA. The cost to the District is \$70.49.

MOTION: To approve Dr. Tina Kane, Superintendent, to attend the DCIU Chief School Administrators' meeting and retreat in Annapolis, Maryland from October 1 to October 3, 2023. There is no cost to the District.

MOTION: To approve Michelle Lydon to attend a conference November 7-10, 2023 as part of the Pennsylvania Fellowship Program. The cost to the District is not to exceed \$1,480.82.

5.11 Disposals

MOTION: To approve the disposal of outdated English workbooks and textbooks from Marple Newtown High School. Newer programs have been approved and implemented as replacements.

MOTION: To approve the disposal of books from Culbertson Elementary Library, as presented.

All the above motions will be taken to the full Board for approval.

5.12 Other Business

There was none.

5.13 Public Comment

There was none.

5.14 Adjournment

With no further business for the Board, Mr. Bilker adjourned the meeting at 7:19 PM.