

Lehigh Area School District
1000 Union Street
Lehigh, PA 18235
Monday, July 11, 2022 at 6:00 PM
WORKSHOP MEETING - MINUTES



1. Opening Exercises

A. Opening Exercises

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

B. Call to Order

Board President, J. Beers called the Workshop Meeting to order at 6:05 PM due to the swearing in of Mrs. Christina Fish, Superintendent at 6:01 PM by Judge Matika. J. Corby thanked Judge Matika for coming out to publicly swear in Mrs. Fish in the evening. Judge Matika explained that he had known J. Corby for many years and wanted to do a favor for him.

C. Meeting Announcements

An Executive Session was held on Monday, June 27, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the District Administration Board Room for the purpose of discussing personnel and legal items. It adjourned at 6:55 PM.

A Board Meeting was held on Monday June 27, 2022 at 7:00 PM in the District Administration Board Room. The next Board Meeting will be held on Monday, July 25, 2022, at 7:00 PM.

The Next Workshop Meeting will be held on August 8, 2022 at 6:00 PM.

D. Roll Call

PR/AB

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

*** N. Foeller present via Zoom*

****A. Walker arrived at 7:00 PM*

Also Present:

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

Christina Fish, Steve Ebbert, Floyd Brown, Jarrad Hedes, Kerri Vale, Autumn Abelovsky, Ryan Saunders, D'Ache Zeltick, Samantha Kistler, Rachel Serfass

J. Beers made a statement regarding the Superintendent Search and the selection of C. Fish. She also sent condolences to the Daubert family.

E. Public Comment

S. Ebbert introduced R. Serfass as the new teacher as a Reading Specialist at the Middle School. R. Serfass thanked everyone for the opportunity. Everyone welcomed R. Serfass.

K. Vale said she is a parent of two students in the District. She asked how she could keep aware of the meetings. B. Bowes and J. Beers explained how to get the Board information from the website. K. Vale asked what the priority is of the Board and technology. J. Beers said the plan is to have the website revamped to make it more user friendly. J. Corby stated that he and C. Fish would work with the students to make a team to assist with the website.

J. Beers moved up item 8A to discuss.

2. Academic Affairs

A. Special Education Plan

S. Kistler introduced herself as the Director of Special Services for the District. She said she had been in this position since November 2019 and some of the information in the presentation was collected prior to this position. She gave a presentation on the Special Education Plan.

S. Kistler reviewed the purpose of the plan and members of the steering committee included. She explained the Special Education demographics of Lehigh Area School District which has a total percentage of 19.3% of Special Education students. She reviewed the identification method which uses a discrepancy model of identifying students with specific learning disabilities. She stated how this model compares a student's IQ score with their academic achievement scores. She reviewed the significant disproportionality if the District is not flagged in Placement, Discipline and identification.

S. Kistler explained the special education support services offered by the District, which included District employees as well as contracted services. B. Shaner asked if there was benchmark data comparing information to similar schools. S. Kistler said yes and shared the documentation with B. Shaner. She reviewed the caseloads by building and explained that the goal of the District was to educate the students in the least restrictive environment possible while ensuring the students are able to make progress in their academic, social and behavioral goals. She mentioned that the District would continue to evaluate their inclusionary practices and the support and services provided through District-run programming, in order to improve data. She shared some graphs showing how the District data was above the state and/or target percentages.

S. Kistler reviewed the students educated in outside placements, which included BHA, CLIU 21 and The Centennial School with Lehigh University. She explained the tiered approach that the District uses to address the emotional and social needs of all District students by implementing Positive Behavior Support Programming. She named the Board Policies that address behavioral support. She discussed the staff employed at the District for positive behavior support and the Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team. She also mentioned that there are some contracted staff through LVHN and CLIU 21 as well as a clinical psychologist that assists with behavioral health services.

S. Kistler discussed the District restraint procedure which includes the need to report the occurrence and hold meetings within 10 school days. She explained that this needs to occur even when restraints occur at outside placements. B. Shaner asked why the District would need to report this. S. Kistler explained that the District would be responsible for the student because the District is the sending LEA. She reviewed the non-resident students oversight saying the District is not currently a host for a 1306 facility. She continued to explain the process. She reviewed information on incarcerated students saying there were currently no correctional facilities within the District at this time. She reviewed Intensive Interagency saying there were currently no concerns regarding instruction conducted in the home and had no students in this category.

S. Kistler stated the District was not found to require improvement and planning in any of the following indicators:

Indicator 4B: Suspension/Expulsion by Race/Ethnicity
Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation by Race/Ethnicity
Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation by Race/Ethnicity/Disability
Indicator 11: Timely Initial Evaluations
Indicator 14: Secondary Transition
Indicator 1: Graduation
Indicator 2: Drop-Out
Indicator 3: Assessment
Indicator 5: Education Environments
Indicator 8: Parent Involvement
Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition
Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes
Indicator 15: Resolution Sessions
Indicator 16: Mediation

S. Kistler explained how the Lehigh Area School District completed the Cyclical Monitoring Process in April 2022, and due to the timing of the District's Cyclical Monitoring Process and the creation of the Special Education Plan, the areas found in the monitoring must be included. She said the findings of the monitoring suggest improvements in the following areas, which were because of IU or BHA Placement Documents:

- Least Restrictive Environment - Development of Improvement Plan
- Public School Enrollment - Development of Procedures and Provision of Staff Training
- Assistive Technology - Development of Procedures and Provision of Staff Training
- Positive Behavior Support - Provision of Staff Training
- Provision of Extended School Year - Development of Procedures and Provision of Staff Training
- Parent Training - Completion of Parent Survey and Development of Improvement Plan
- Transition - Provision of Staff Training

B. Shaner asked if the documents were from BHA, how would we correct them. S. Kistler said to increase communication. She said there were 23 in an outside environment.

S. Kistler reviewed the following Special Education Personnel Development:

- Autism - Enhancing Inclusionary Practices
- Positive Behavior Support - Verbal De-escalation and Behavior Management (Initial Training and Refresher)
- Paraprofessional - School Wide Positive Behavior Support
- Transition - Indicator 13 Refresher (C. Fish stated that many districts, statewide, were hit with Indicator 13.)
- Science of Literacy - Enhanced Core Reading Instruction & Data Analysis/Benchmark Assessments
- Parent Training - Transition & Community Resources/Family Agencies
- IEP Development - Essentials of IEP Writing & Functional Behavior Assessment/Positive Behavior Support

B. Student/Parent Handbooks

Handbooks are being finalized for approval at July's Board Meeting. A list of School Board Policies for annual notification are being added to each handbook for consistency.

- Pre-K Program
- Elementary Center
- Middle School
- High School
- LAVA Program

A. Walker arrived at this time.

C. * ATSI Plan

J. Corby said this will be brought to the July Board Meeting for final approval. He said F. Brown was in attendance for any questions. F. Brown stated that this affected the Special Education in the High School because the Keystones did not improve, so an improvement plan was put in place.

3. Policy

A. First Reading of Policies

- 621 - Local Taxpayer Bill of Rights (New Policy)
- 800 - Records Management
- 800.1 - Records Retention/Destruction
- 810.3 - School Vehicle Drivers (New Policy)

B. Second Reading and Final Approval of Policies

217 - Graduation Requirements

B. Shaner asked if there was going to be discussion on lowering the number of credits for graduation. F. Brown said there were basically 4 credits in each subject with 8 available per year. He said there was a possibility to achieve 32 credits total. They discussed the option of early graduation. J. Corby asked if the schedule changed if it would affect the amount of credits. F. Brown said yes, it would then go from 8 to 7 credits per year. J. Corby recommended staying status quo at the moment. J. Beers mentioned that Palmerton had 29 credits to graduate and Tamaqua was at 22. B. Bowes said the Board would look at everything including the schedule and did not believe it was a viable option as of now.

237 - Electronic Devices

220 - Student Expression/Dissemination of Materials (This new policy is to replace the current policy 220, due to the change of the policy name)

913 - Nonschool Organizations/Groups/Individuals

4. Finance

A. Donations

1. \$1,000.00 from the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Inc., to be used for the attendance program.
2. \$3,500.00 from Lehigh Fire Co. #1, Inc., to be used for the Elementary Center: Storyworks, Storywork3, Generation Genius, and Mystery Science.

S. Ebbert explained that Kerri Miller, the Social Worker who resigned, used funds for the program which included a horse riding event that boosted confidence and attendance of the students. He said Carrie Kenny is now looking to continue the program for the students to meet their needs. He mentioned how it was very successful at the High School. B. Bowes asked if there was more of an attendance issue at the Middle School than the High School. S. Ebbert said it is very similar.

B. Shaner asked what the curriculum programs were that were put in the Grant. S. Kistler stated that Storyworks, Storywork3, Generation Genius and Mystery Science were software programs for Elementary students in 4th Grade or as a curriculum supplement.

B. School Lunch Prices

E. Rarick gave an update on School Lunch Prices. He said there was no inclination that the prices would be going up and the Seamless Summer Option was running out after the summer. He said they were trying to push through legislation to extend it but felt it was not likely. J. Corby said reduced participation would be removed and applications would only qualify for Free or Paid. J. Beers expressed the Board was concerned that parents would not complete applications. J. Partenio explained that Mrs. Ahner was currently working on a comprehensive outreach to families.

C. BHA Agreement

B. Shaner asked when the District utilizes an online education with BHA (eBridge). S. Kistler said they currently do not use it but did in the past to provide the opportunity to students who may have needed it.

D. * George's Transportation Agreement

J. Corby stated the contract is being finalized and will be brought to the July 25, 2022 Board Meeting. E. Rarick mentioned that he had received it just prior to this meeting. B. Bowes asked if it could be sent to her for review. J. Glaush asked if E. Rarick could send it to the entire Board.

E. * Assessment Appeal

Summary: This matter involves a 2022 annual assessment appeal initiated by the taxpayer. Following a hearing on the appeal, the Board of Assessment left the property's assessment unchanged at \$1,716,738, and the taxpayer appealed the Board of Assessment's decision to the Carbon County Court of Common Pleas. The School District intervened in the appeal. The matter is currently pending before the Carbon County Court of Common Pleas. The property is improved with a 78-room Hampton Inn.

Property address: 877 Interchange Road in Franklin Township

Tax Parcel No.: 70-12-A8.08,15

Assessment / approximate implied fair market value: For tax year 2022, assessment of \$1,716,738 and implied fair market value of \$5,722,460 (or \$73,365 per room) based on 30% common level ratio

Taxpayer's value: A value of \$3,900,000 (\$50,000/room)

Settlement: A value of \$4,836,000 (\$62,000/room) and assessment of \$1,450,800 for tax year 2022 based on the 30% common level ratio.

The above proposal equates to a value of \$62,000/room for the 78-room hotel and represents the approximate middle point between your requested value of \$50,000/per room and the current value of \$73,365/room based on the property's current implied fair market value.

J. Beers explained that this item failed but believed it was due to a lack of understanding. E. Rarick stated that the appeal went to the courthouse and the solicitor engaged and interviewed them. B. Bowes said there was a tax reduction after Schull David was sold and wanted to see if they could do better. She asked to come to a compromise.

J. Corby asked E. Rarick to give a quick report on the financial situation from the state. E. Rarick said there was a tremendous increase to education through the state. He said statewide there was \$525 million given in Basic Education, \$225 million in Level Up and \$100 million in Special Education. He mentioned for Lehighton that meant \$470,000 in Basic Education and \$159,000 in Special Education. He also mentioned an increase to safety and security.

5. Athletics

A. KRE Security

J. Corby discussed how he and Kyle Spotts went through the contract and worked on the provisions. B. Shaner asked if we used armed guards. E. Rarick said yes, at football games.

6. Buildings & Grounds

A. Stadium Track

B. Bowes asked about the repair of the track. J. Corby said Kyle was on vacation but checked in that it had been completed and will review the updates upon his return.

7. Personnel

A. Substitute Rates

Rates of Pay for Substitutes:

Teacher: \$110.00 per day for up to 20 days. 20 or more cumulative days for one teacher will be increased to \$120.00 per day and will continue at that rate for any year thereafter.

PSERS Retirees \$130.00 per day.

J. Corby said there had not been updates to the substitute rates since 2014.

B. Resignations for Retirement

Robert Rehnert - Utility Custodian after 35 years of service to the District, effective January 13, 2023.

B. Bowes asked if this was expected. J. Corby said yes and there may be one more coming.

C. Resignations

Trevor Miller - High School Business, Computer, and Information Technology Teacher effective August 23, 2022.

Laura Schiffer - High School Social Studies Teacher effective June 29, 2022.

Grace Sterling - Summer Cleaner effective June 27, 2022.

8. Miscellaneous

A. Crossing Guards Discussion

Discussion occurred with Lehighton Borough regarding Crossing Guards. A. Abelovsky mentioned that the crossing guards were brought up at a Borough Council meeting with regard to issues with staffing. She had mentioned that there needed to be a discussion with the School District and she believed Times News blew it out of proportion. She explained how some of the locations do not have coverage. J. Beers asked how often they were missing. R. Saunders said there were 11 locations and 2 of them were vacant the entire year. He said there were a total of 135 uncovered shifts for the year and they were very short staffed. J. Beers asked if the District could have subs fill in. J. Corby was not sure if The District would be able to do that. J. Beers wanted the District to be more active with assisting the Borough.

R. Saunders said they would like to continue to provide the crossing guard services. A. Abelovsky stated that right now they did not have any subs and the administrative secretary for the police does not come in as early for the time that people call out. She said there was also no ability to let people know that the spots were not filled with a guard. J. Beers said they could ask the admin to do a study and review the cost. J. Corby mentioned that they had reviewed many options and that there was a bus stop with 50 kids getting on. He felt that the location should have a guard present. He said he would like to meet with the Borough as soon as possible and work on some solutions. K. Sittler asked how long a shift was. A. Abelovsky said about a ½ hour but they are paid for 2 hours. She mentioned that they could not find an agreement on file. J. Beers asked them to come with information of the regular duties of the Borough and how the District could assist. J. Corby asked A. Abelovsky to contact J. Partenio so they could set up a team to get the ball rolling. A. Abelovsky mentioned there was a new police chief coming on Board and was not sure how he felt about it. J. Beers said they would like to figure this out before the Fall.

B. Board Director Vacancy Discussion

J. Beers explained that deliberation on this subject needed to be public and there were a lot of last minute applications. She said she would like to have a meeting one week from today, advertised in the paper for Thursday and they could either interview Candidates or discuss the Candidates. A. Walker and N. Foeller preferred to interview. J. Beers said they would look at the packets and email tomorrow whether or not to do the interviews.

9. Communications

A. Public Comment

D. Zelrick asked if they could look into the sound on the livestream. She said she could barely hear it. She also asked where the paving was going to be taking place.

E. Rarick explained the location of the paving as from the Alley to the High School and it stops where the lot begins. He said it makes a right to the Elementary Center to where the new paving started, just past the loading dock access. He said the alley to 9th Street is the responsibility of the Borough.

J. Beers asked if it was possible to return to the livestream of Times News as an option. J. Hades believed it had something to do with the internet connection turning off. J. Glaush also asked about having tablets for the Board to use. E. Rarick said it was discussed with Mrs. Volcskai and we would be looking into options.

B. Adjournment

MOTION by K. Sittler, SECONDED by B. Bowes, to adjourn the Meeting.

The July 11, 2022 Workshop Meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edward Rarick, Board Secretary
By Janine Partenio, Recording Secretary