

**Lehighton Area School District**  
**1000 Union Street**  
**Lehighton, PA 18235**  
**Monday, November 14, 2022 at 7:00 PM**  
**WORKSHOP MEETING - MINUTES**



## **1. Opening Exercises**

### **A. Opening Exercises**

The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence was observed.

### **B. Call to Order**

Board President, J. Beers called the Board Meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

### **C. Roll Call**

#### **PR/AB**

|           |                             |           |                           |           |                           |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| <b>PR</b> | <b>Ms. Joy Beers</b>        | <b>PR</b> | <b>Mr. Nathan Foeller</b> | <b>PR</b> | <b>Mr. Brian Shaner</b>   |
| <b>AB</b> | <b>Mr. Richard R. Beltz</b> | <b>PR</b> | <b>Mr. Jeremy Glaush</b>  | <b>PR</b> | <b>Mrs. Kerry Sittler</b> |
| <b>PR</b> | <b>Ms. Barbara Bowes</b>    | <b>PR</b> | <b>Ms. Heather Neff</b>   | <b>PR</b> | <b>Ms. April Walker</b>   |

#### **Also Present:**

Dr. Christina Fish, Superintendent  
Mrs. Mary Figura, Assistant to the Superintendent  
Mr. Edward Rarick, Business Administrator  
Ms. Janine Partenio, Recording Secretary

Melissa Volcskai, Aaron Sebelin, Stephen Ebbert, Sue Howland, Sue Benczkowski, D'Ache Zelrick, Lloyd Walters, Jarrad Hedes.

### **D. Public Comment**

None at the time.

## **2. Finance**

### **A. Solar Proposal**

L. Walters from Novitium Energy gave a solar energy project presentation to the Board. He explained that they normally do an assessment call. He said the company had been around for 14 years, which was a long time for solar companies. He stated that the company had done solar projects for over 100 schools in New Jersey and felt very comfortable bidding against other companies. He explained how most projects are done with PPA. E. Rarick mentioned how the Borough does not allow sell back of energy. L. Walters said the District could get a credit for the months of low consumption and asked if he could provide the Board with a proposal and asked for the bills to review. He asked if there was a possibility of land panels.

B. Bowes asked where the panels were made. L. Walters said they use american made goods and the supply chain was phenomenal. K. Sittler asked if they would be looking to sell the District the panels. L. Walters said they would be installed through the PPA and then purchase energy through the company. He said there was a 25 year contract. He also mentioned there would be a kiosk for the Lobby with a monitoring system. He said if something is not working correctly, you could see it right away and it would be fixed right away. K. Sittler asked what the turnaround time was for repairs. L. Walters said he could not answer that question without the rest of the team. K. Sittler asked if it worked off of the internet. L. Walters explained that it worked off of cellular data and they were one of the only turn-key companies. K. Sittler asked what their longest contract was for solar panels currently. L. Walters said 13 years. K. Sittler asked what would happen if the roof needed work. L. Walters mentioned that they could put the roof into the project. He said they do inspections and assess the life of the roof. He also stated that there were ways to do repairs between the panels. He said the panels sit on tracks that sit on rubber ballasts. The average system is 4-5 lbs per square foot, which is lighter than a human walking on the roof.

J. Beers asked E. Rarick to work with the company to get similar data together for a proposal. L. Walters said it would take 7 days to get a proposal together after receipt of the bills. E. Rarick stated he would send the information over this week. L. Walters mentioned they would set up a call to discuss the project after they receive information.

## **B. Nutrition Group**

S. Benczkowski, Regional Manager from Nutrition Group, gave a presentation to the Board updating the Food Service for the District for the 2022-2023 school year. She reviewed the summer required trainings and professional development that were completed. She reviewed the opening meeting day with Nicole Hayes and updates to staffing which included the retirement of Mona Lorah at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. She reviewed the goals for the 2022-2023 school year of increased participation at breakfast for High/Middle schools and increased District a la carte sales. She discussed some popular menu items and the new overall program and revised concepts for the school year. Some of these include: Fruity Fridays, Snack Attack, Vary Your Veggies, Savor the Flavor, and What's on Your Plate. She explained the marketing calendar and some of the opening events catered by The Nutrition Groups. This included the September 1st & 2nd teacher in-service and the Meet the Teacher/Open House Event. She discussed the new transitional standards where they may now offer flavored low fat milk, 80% of whole grains weekly, and new sodium standards. She explained the state and federal funding for 2022-2023. B. Bowes questioned how much the meals cost the District. S. Benczkowski said there was not a cost per meal to the District. She said there was a charge based on inventory, usage and wages. She explained a snapshot of the average daily participation rate through October 2022. She said the District was over budget in Breakfast and Lunch and a la carte was doing well also. She reviewed the TNG Charities which focuses on Student Grants and Employee Emergency funds. She explained that student workers of the Nutrition Group could receive a grant in the amount of \$1,000-\$5,000. B. Shaner asked if the District had any student workers. S. Benczkowski said not right now. B. Shaner felt that could be a nice opportunity for the students. C. Fish stated she could open up a discussion with the Nutrition Group on student workers.

## **C. Donations**

Discussion on the approval of the following donations:

1. Pencil Box Contents from the Leighton Lioness/Lions Club delivered by Don McConnell

J. Beers thanked the community for supporting the school.

## **D. United Concordia**

Discussion on the acceptance of the proposed budget rates for United Concordia Dental program effective January 1, 2023.

B. Bowes mentioned that the rates went down. E. Rarick said there would be a reduction in rates beginning in January of 2023.

## **E. CLIU #21**

Discussion of the approval of the 2022-2023 Use of Funds Agreement – – IDEA Part B, Section 611 in the amount of \$429,364.20.

## **F. PenTeleData**

Discussion on the acceptance of the agreement from PenTeleData for \$97.00/month for two Middle School Emergency Lines.

J. Glaush stated that this was over cable modems that were dedicated lines and that was why it cost more, they would no longer be relying on the internet.

## **G. Surplus**

Discussion on the approval of the surplus list.

B. Bowes questioned some items on the surplus list being new and asked how much they cost. S. Ebbert explained that some items were not a design that was anticipated and were never able to be used. J. Beers asked why they were not returned if they could not be used. J. Glaush questioned the whiteboards. S. Ebbert explained that many items wound up at the Middle School portables. He felt this would bring in decent revenue. E. Rarick mentioned that this was brought on in an effort to remove the portables. He said he reached out to BHA and they showed interest in the purchase of items. He said some items were broken or showing their age and needed to be disposed of. B. Bowes asked them to look into a previous motion for online auctions. E. Rarick explained how last year they took sealed bids for a van and a lawn mower. He felt a negotiated sale would be better. He said he reviewed the policy for the process on how to handle the sale. B. Bowes believed the motion was done in the past because people would not pick up the items. J. Glaush asked if anyone went through and appraised the items. E. Rarick said S. Ebbert could attest to the age and wear of the items. S. Ebbert explained that if someone was giving an offer that the Board should consider accepting the offer. He said the modulars had no climate control and one had a leaky roof. He said they could probably get better money for the filing cabinets by scrapping them. N. Foeller believed the online auction would not be beneficial to the District. S. Ebbert mentioned that the lighting could be used by BHA. J. Glaush stated it sounded like a plan was in place. He thanked them for their work. B. Bowes said she would like to know how much the teepee tables cost and asked if the snowblowers were unusable. S. Ebbert explained that they may have been used for parts and have not been used for some time.

## **3. Academic Affairs**

### **A. Final Comprehensive Plan Presentation**

Review of the final Comprehensive Plan to be brought for action at the November 21, 2022 Board Meeting. M. Figura said the Board would be voting on the Comprehensive Plan on November 21, 2022. She said it had been posted online since October 21, 2022. She stated there had been some comments received by the community and some pieces of the communication had been updated.

M. Figura reviewed the Steering Committee and the LEA Profile. She reviewed the District Strengths, Challenges and Goals. B. Shaner asked what it meant by "students with needs." M. Figura said it would be for students with special education needs, ELL or other subgroups. She reviewed the District Mission and Vision. A. Walker questioned the term equity and inclusion. M. Figura said it meant that every student would have their needs met with making accommodations in order for them to be successful and building positive relationships. S. Howland discussed cultural differences and how some students do not feel understood. She mentioned how this was voiced a lot in the High School. A. Walker asked if Equity and Equal Opportunity would be interchangeable. She felt that equity was not possible as it leads to an equal outcome instead of an equal opportunity. C. Fish discussed 504 accommodations, gifted and low socioeconomic students. S. Ebbert mentioned how the Middle School learns at different levels and they use the data from CDT's to teach students at their level in order to be successful. A. Walker said she preferred the term equal opportunity. J. Glaush agreed. S. Howland recommended the update to say inclusive practices and equal opportunity for all students. M. Figura reviewed the Educational Value Statements for Students, Staff, Administration, Parents and Community. J. Glaush suggested adding a #4 to Students saying accountability for actions. He mentioned that he really liked this page.

M. Figura reviewed the Summary of Strengths and Challenges. She recommended updating the information under Most Notable Observations/Patterns to replace the term equity with equal opportunity. B. Shaner asked if staff was looking for professional development and had not been done because of the budget. C. Fish said yes, in prior years. M. Figura added that this was with the curriculum also. She reviewed the Analyzing Strengths and Challenges and Goal Setting. B. Shaner said he would like the measurable goal statement to be more specific as far as what is measured. M. Figura said she would discuss this with the District's Representative from the state to see how to tweak it. N. Foeller recommended using the number of how many programs or students attaining certifications. B. Shaner and S. Howland agreed. M. Figura reviewed the District Action Plans, the Communications Action Steps and Communications Activities. She said all of the information would be updated and posted next week and if there were any changes requested or questions, to please let her know.

## **B. 2022-2023 Calendar Updates**

Discussion on the approval of the updates to the 2022-2023 School Year Calendar. B. Bowes questioned the term Holiday versus break. She said she would prefer the term holiday. She also asked if there was a purpose to the 1502. C. Fish said she would find out and change break to Holiday. B. Shaner asked what changed. M. Figura said January 20 will be an early dismissal and March 17 will be an Act 80 day for an in-service for safety training and curriculum development. B. Shaner questioned why there was an early dismissal. M. Figura said there were over 50 schools coming for a wrestling tournament. S. Howland said they would begin arriving around 12:00 PM. B. Shaner was concerned about learning loss for students. C. Fish said this was a concern with students and transportation, not staff. B. Bowes asked if the District makes any money. E. Rarick said the District does not but the Parents club does and that would go back to the players. S. Howland explained that there was a concern with getting our students in and out without affecting them and staff would stay for the day to work on grading for the end of the marking period.

## **4. Policy**

### **A. First Reading of Policies**

Discussion on the approval of the following policies for First Reading and Public Review:

#### **102 - Academic Standards**

#### **150 - Title I Comparability of Services**

#### **216 - Student Records**

A. Walker asked why, in Policy 216, student info would need to be shared with PDE. C. Fish explained it would be shared with PDE for Safe Schools reporting. A. Walker asked if the parents would be notified. C. Fish said no, it is for discipline or student identifiable information. S. Howland said it was dependent on individual cases. M. Figura mentioned how this whole policy had to be redone since it was so old. A. Walker questioned what PDE did with the student information. C. Fish said they did not report it out. She said the information would be a back up to the numbers reported for verification. She said it could cross reference to Special Education reporting. B. Shaner asked if there was a running list of all policies and when they would expire. C. Fish explained that the District did not have policies expiring but there was a recommendation to bring some policies annually for updates or review.

### **B. Second Reading and Final Approval of Policies**

Discussion on the approval of the following policies for Second Reading and Final Approval:

#### **204.1 - Truancy Procedures** (recent additions to this policy)

#### **309 - Assignment and Transfer**

#### **331 - Job Related Expenses**

#### **917 - Parental and Family Involvement**

#### **918 - Title I Parent and Family Engagement**

B. Bowes questioned the requirement for parents to volunteer in the classroom in Policy 918. M. Figura said she would look into it. C. Fish said she would like to see more parents come in but understand their restrictions.

### **C. Rescind Policies**

#### **248 - Unlawful Harassment -Students**

#### **348 - Unlawful Harassment -Staff**

These policies have been replaced by the new policies 103 and 104 Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students and Staff.

## **5. Athletics**

**None at the time.**

## **6. Buildings & Grounds**

### **A. Use of Facilities**

These events are occurring prior to the November 21, 2022 Board Meeting:

1. **LAMS Drama Club (Lydia Delong)** - November 15, 2022 - 2:45-3:45 PM/November 30, 2022 - 2:45-5:45 PM  
Middle School Auditorium - Drama Production Informational Meeting and Auditions.
2. **LASD (Mary Figura/Amanda Citro)** - November 15, 2022 - 3:30-5:00 PM - Elementary Center LGI Room -  
Department Head Meeting.

## **7. Personnel**

### **A. Staffing Attendance Report**

C. Fish reviewed the Staffing Reports for September, October and November 2022. She said she would be using this during budget meetings. She also said she would be looking at trends of absences and the impact it has on the teams. She was interested in looking at what could be done to help them. She felt part of the school culture is morale and wanted to know what could be done to support the staff.

### **B. Organizational Chart**

C. Fish reviewed the Organizational Chart of the District showing the chain of Command. She explained that any change would require an update to this chart. E. Rarick said he had to make one previously to submit with the AFR. B. Shaner asked about why Melissa Hunsicker was ½ Athletics and ½ Buildings and Grounds and also a full time 12-Month Secretary. C. Fish and J. Partenio explained that there are actually two separate individuals named Melissa Hunsicker working for the District. C. Fish said one Melissa Hunsicker should actually be 33% Athletics, 33% Buildings and Grounds and 33% High School.

### **C. Candidates for Employment**

Discussion on the approval of the following candidates for employment in accordance with the respective contracts:

**Kacey Rankovich** - 4th Grade Teacher at a Bachelor's Step II with an annual salary of \$, prorated for the 2022-2023 school year and a date effective of November 12, 2022.

**Brie Holst** - ESL Teacher at a Master's Degree Step III with an annual salary of \$45,850.00, prorated for the 2022-2023 school year and a date effective of December 1, 2022, pending any necessary paperwork.

**Mollie Watts** - High School Guidance 12-Month Secretary at a Step I with an annual salary of \$28,028.00, prorated for the 2022-2023 school year and a date effective November 21, 2022, pending any necessary paperwork.

**Mark Moulthrop** - Utility Custodian at a Step I with an annual salary of \$30,395.00 prorated for the 2022-2023 school year and a date effective of December 1, 2022, pending any necessary paperwork.

**Carlino Osvaldo** - Utility Custodian at a Step I with an annual salary of \$30,395.00 prorated for the 2022-2023 school year and a date effective of December 1, 2022, pending any necessary paperwork.

**Dorothy Farkas** - Custodian at a Step I with an annual salary of \$26,169.00, prorated for the 2022-2023 school year and a date effective of December 1, 2022, pending any necessary paperwork.

**Thomas McGinley** - Part-Time Cleaner at the High School at a Step I with a rate of \$10.02 per hour and a date effective of December 1, 2022, pending any necessary paperwork.

**Denise Gerber** - Mentor for Kacey Rankovich at \$31.00 per hour

**Kristel Orsulak** - Mentor for Lauren Marks at \$31.00 per hour

**Susan Maloney** - Mentor for Lori Hoppes at \$31.00 per hour

**Melissa Blocker** - Mentor for Jolynn Gazo at \$31.00 per hour

**Amanda Yusella** - Mentor for Jessica Wiese at \$31.00 per hour

J. Glaush mentioned that the salary for Kacey Rankovich was blank. J. Partenio said it was a typo and would be added for the Board Meeting. B. Shaner asked what a Mentor Program was. M. Figura explained how a mentor would assist a new hire. S. Howland said sometimes they assist during their prep period or before and after school. C. Fish explained that it was currently capped at 12 hours. B. Shaner felt it should be an added responsibility for a teacher without additional pay.

### **D. Candidates for the Substitute List**

Discussion on the approval of the following list of requested candidates for the 2022-2023 Substitute List, pending any necessary paperwork:

**William Schoener** - Substitute Student Teacher

**Mackenzie Rosenberger** - Substitute Student Teacher

**Stephanie Carter** - Substitute Student Teacher

**Madison Russ** - Substitute Student Teacher

**Brandon Jones** - Substitute Student Teacher

**Julie Diehl** - Substitute Teacher

## **E. Candidates for Athletic Coaching/Manager or Extracurricular Activities**

Discussion on the approval of the following requests for Athletic Coaching/Manager Candidates and Extracurricular Positions, as per contracted rates, pending any necessary paperwork:

**Tim Sharrow** - Winter Game Manager at \$19.29.per hour

**Chris Knappenberger** - Winter Game Manager at \$19.29.per hour

**Diane Brownmiller** - Winter Game Manager at \$19.29.per hour

**Thomas McCarroll** - Winter Game Manager at \$19.29.per hour

**Nick Costantino** - Winter Game Manager at \$19.29.per hour

**Michael Feifel** - Winter Weight Room

**SarahJean Rotenberger and Lydia Delong** – splitting \$2,087.85 for the Middle School Theater extra-curricular position

B. Bowes asked to add the stipend amount for Michael Feifel.

## **F. Pre-Approval of Employee Continuing Education Courses**

Discussion on the approval of the following requests for pre-approval of courses/Programs of Study for employee continuing education:

1. **Employee #1315** – November 2 - December 21, 2022/Leadership for Student Achievement

(Principal Certification/CLIU 21) (\$975.00 )

2. **Employee # 1609** - January 23-May 13, 2023/ENG 517 Studies in Biography (English Master's/Kutztown) (\$1,548.00)

## **G. Professional Development**

Discussion on the approval of the following Professional Development requests:

**Employee # 1246** to attend the 2023 Advanced Placement (AP) online training for AP Psychology at Northeastern State University in July, at cost not to exceed \$715.00.

**Employee # 1795** to attend the Strategic Leadership - Guiding Schools to Excellence Program at the SES Institute Conference from December 5-7, 2022 registration not to exceed \$150.00 and lodging at the Hershey Lodge not to exceed \$350.00.

**Employee # 99** to attend the Strategic Leadership - Guiding Schools to Excellence Program at the SES Institute Conference from December 5-7, 2022 registration not to exceed \$150.00 and lodging at the Hershey Lodge not to exceed \$350.00.

**Employee # 1041** to attend the Strategic Leadership - Guiding Schools to Excellence Program at the SES Institute Conference from December 5-7, 2022 registration not to exceed \$150.00 and lodging at the Hershey Lodge not to exceed \$350.00.

## **H. Uncompensated Leave**

Discussion on the approval of the uncompensated leaves for the following employees:

**Employee # 1794** for 3 days from November 16-18, 2022.

**Employee # 1141** for 3.5 Days from December 19-December 22, 2022. Employee will return on January 3, 2023.

B. Shaner asked if employees were required to use all paid time 1st. C. Fish said yes, depending on their use, if it would be personal or sick time.

## **I. Resignations**

Discussion to accept, with regret, the resignation of the following employees:

**Peter Salerno** - Police Officer effective November 11, 2022

**Lori Hawk** - 12-Month Guidance Secretary effective November 21, 2022

**Janine Partenio** - Open Records Officer stipend position effective November 7, 2022

## **J. Clinical Experience Placement**

Discussion to accept the Clinical Experience Placement request with Western Governors University for a 60 day placement with the estimated dates of 12/5/2022 to 2/10/2023.

The placement will be for one student teacher at the Elementary Center

## **K. District Open Records Officer**

Discussion on the approval of Dr. Christina Fish as the District's Open Records Officer effective November 7, 2022.

B. Bowes asked if the District could get away from the mindset that we look for ways to not give information. C. Fish explained the challenge is some Open Record requests are easy to comply with right away and some are very extensive. J. Beers stated she had a conversation with Jeff Sultanik regarding transparency of open records requests. C. Fish mentioned that some are difficult to comply with within the timeframe to legally comply in. B. Bowes mentioned with the six years of financials, can the District keep it so it is available for the future. C. Fish explained how that one went to court and was negotiated for a settlement. She stated how in one week that request took 8 employees and 71 hours of redaction work. She discussed the issue with redaction with software versus hand redaction. She said currently the digital redaction was done page by page. She said they still need to be read through for redactions, it's not like you would be able to search for a word and redact it. There are multiple items of personally identifiable information needing redaction.

## **8. Miscellaneous**

### **A. December Workshop Meeting**

Discussion on combining the December Reorganization and Workshop Meetings for December 5, 2022.

C. Fish asked not to have three meetings, three weeks in a row for December. J. Beers said she was ok with it. The Board agreed. C. Fish said it would be brought to the Board Meeting for a vote.

### **B. Portnoff**

J. Beers reminded that she would like to see a report from Portnoff under Miscellaneous. E. Rarick said they do produce one and he would add it to the Board Meeting for review.

## **9. Communications**

### **A. Public Comment**

A. Walker stated how she had a very positive experience at the parent/teacher conference and wanted to thank Mrs. Howland, Ms. Shober, Mrs. Reichard, Mrs. Slaby and Mr. Shay for their positive discussions and passion for teaching.

B. Shaner congratulated the students involved with the NHS induction.

S. Ebbert said all information was completed for staffing enrollment on wednesday. He said the parent/teacher conference had a great response with participation in-person and virtually. He said there was lots of participation by students with the Veteran's Day service. He explained the services they had at the Middle School. He reviewed the food drive being done through Aavidum and said items could be donated to the Middle School office since today was the first day of collection.

### **B. Adjournment**

MOTION by J. Glaush, SECONDED by K. Sittler, to adjourn the Meeting.

VOTE: YES - 8 NO - 0 ABSENT - 1 ABSTENTIONS - 0

The November 14, 2022 Workshop Meeting was adjourned at 9:17 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Edward Rarick, Board Secretary  
By Janine Partenio, Recording Secretary