

The Board Report

Monday, February 5, 2024



Disclaimer: The Board Report is a synopsis of the Hampton Township School Board meetings and is not intended as a replacement for any official Board minutes.

~ A Tradition of Excellence ~

The Hampton Township Board of School Directors

Mrs. Jill Hamlin	Board President
Mr. Matt Jarrell	Board Vice President/Student Affairs Chair
Ms. Denise Balason	Board Secretary/Personnel Chair
Mrs. Jenny Kennedy	Transportation Chair
Mrs. Joy Midgley	Facilities Chair
Mrs. Maureen Perkins	Educational Programs Chair
Mr. Robert Shages	Treasurer/Policy & Legislative Affairs Chair
Mr. Greg Stein	Technology Chair
Mr. Larry Vasko	Finance Chair

This Hampton Township School Board Meeting was held at the A.W. Beattie Career Center. The meeting was held in person and audio/video recorded so that community members could view it after the meeting concluded.

Members of Administration in Attendance

Dr. Michael Loughead	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rebecca Cunningham	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Jackie Removcik	Assistant to the Superintendent
Dr. Ed McKaveney	Director of Technology
Mr. Jeff Kline	Director of Administrative Services
Dr. Joshua Cable	Assistant High School Principal
Dr. Joseph Sebestyen	Assistant High School Principal
Dr. Marguerite Imbarlina	High School Principal
Dr. Marlynn Lux	Middle School Principal

** absent*

*** attended remotely*

February 5, 2024

Work Session

A video recording of the meeting can be viewed [here](#). The time within the video that each section begins is indicated below.

Call to Order & Student Awards

(0:00)

Mrs. Hamlin called the meeting to order, and Mr. Jarrell presented the Student Awards. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Jarrell recognized and congratulated Hampton students who earned positions in the Allegheny Valley Honors Band.

Hampton students in the AV Junior High Honors Band included Logan Brady, percussion; Mabel Buben, flute; Oliver Clark, trumpet; Joy Dakin, tuba; Gab Duarte, bass clarinet; Grace Girard, clarinet; Lucijan Huckle, percussion; Richard Ma, alto saxophone; Jordyn Moyer, horn; Sydney Osborne, trombone; Catie Parker, clarinet; James Parker, trumpet; Aiden Rauso, trombone; Jinwon So, trumpet; Celia Vitiello, bass clarinet; Meredith Wallace, percussion; and Liam Webb, horn.

Hampton students in the AV Senior High Honors Band consisted of Jason Andrews, trumpet; Meghan Armstrong, clarinet; John Bianco, bari saxophone; Aidan Casey, trumpet; Paul Dakin, trombone; Molly Ehman, flute; Brady Fanuele, tuba; Drew Girard, percussion; Branson Himmler, percussion; Braylee Himmler, trombone; Anna Houpt, clarinet; Tim Madden, trumpet; Samantha Nicely, clarinet; Tanner Paczan, tuba; David Poirier, tuba; Peleh Shaltes, trumpet; Nolan Smith, clarinet; and Jinho So, clarinet.

Mr. Jarrell also expressed congratulations to the following students who were selected to various prestigious musical groups:

- Anna Houpt - PMEA District 1 West Band, PMEA Honors Band, and Allegheny Valley Senior High Honors Band for clarinet.
- Nolan Smith - PMEA District 1 West Band, PMEA Honors Band, and Allegheny Valley Senior High Honors Band for clarinet.
- Jinho So - PMEA District 1 West Band, PMEA Honors Band, and Allegheny Valley Senior High Honors Band for clarinet.
- Samantha Nicely - PMEA District 1 West Band and Allegheny Valley Senior High Honors Band for clarinet.
- Celia Vitiello - PMEA Honors Band and the Allegheny Valley Senior High Honors Band for bass clarinet.
- Zachary Jiang - PMEA Honors Orchestra for violin.

Additionally, Mr. Jarrell extended his appreciation to Hampton's musical art educators for their dedication and support to the students.

Public Comment

(6:13)

Mrs. Hamlin opened the meeting to public comment, but there were none at this time.

Student Affairs

(6:30)

Student Council Representatives Report

Mr. Jarrell introduced Brooklyn Eastley and Sophia Nguyen who presented the Student Council Representatives Report. Brooklyn shared that Student Council has been focusing on planning the Talbot Thon fundraiser event, which will take place on March 22nd. Community hours will soon be announced, and more information will be available on the District's website. They also highlighted their excitement that they will be sharing their collections with the University of Pittsburgh to support pediatric cancer research at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. The Student Council will also be promoting Talbot Thon during upcoming Open Houses at Central Elementary and Poff Elementary.

Additionally, Sophie noted that Student Council is proudly partnering with Hues & Harmony to provide helping hands at the event on March 5th and 6th.

Mr. Jarrell presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the February 12th Voting Meeting:

- AIU Memorandum of Understanding between the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Head Start and Pre-K Counts Programs and the Hampton Township School District.

Dr. Cunningham expressed excitement about partnering with the AIU on this annual MOU to support timely kindergarten registration, with planned transition activities for families. The partnership includes a \$500 grant to offset printing costs for educational activity calendars distributed to rising kindergarten families. In response to a question about how families learn about kindergarten registration, Dr. Cunningham explained that letters are sent to local preschools, asking directors to share the information with families. Additionally, information is posted on the website and in the community to encourage early registration for kindergarten.

- Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Field Trip to the Pennsylvania FBLA State Leadership Conference, Hershey, PA, April 7-10, 2024, at a cost to the District not to exceed \$2,800.

Dr. Cunningham said that the students are excited to attend this conference in Hershey, and that they will miss three days of school in order to participate. Their request of \$2,800 from the Academic Competition Fund is to offset costs for families. She noted that there is currently \$5,000 in the Academic Competition Fund, with \$700 remaining pending the two requests which are on the Board's agenda for this evening.

- Hampton High School Forensics Field Trip to the PA High School Speech League State Tournament at Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA, March 14-16, 2024 at a cost to the District not to exceed \$1,500.

Dr. Cunningham said that students will miss half a day of school in order to attend this tournament, but they are looking forward to sharing a bus with students from Fox Chapel Area and Shady Side Academy to offset transportation costs and to continue building relationships and camaraderie with other forensics students in the area.

Facilities

(13:58)

Mr. Eric Heasley, Executive Director of A.W. Beattie Career Center, presented on expansion plans for A.W. Beattie. Mr. Heasley reported that A.W. Beattie's enrollment stands at roughly 950 students. Re-enrollment of 10th and 11th grade students has been completed, totaling just over 600 students, with over 600 additional students having toured the school in the past two weeks. He noted that enrollment at A.W. Beattie has continued to grow year after year.

Mr. Heasley explained that max capacity at A.W. Beattie is based on the program, room size, and equipment. Despite efforts such as hiring teachers and rearranging classrooms, not all students could be accommodated this year. Mr. Heasley also highlighted the limitations of the school's physical space regarding expansion, including drainage systems around the building and a hillside with sliding risks.

Mr. Heasley presented two options for a potential expansion:

1. Two-Story Option

The Two-Story Option would provide two classrooms with a unified lab. The first floor would be designated for Health and Nursing Sciences, with Advertising and Design on the second floor. Increased parking capacity would also be included.

This first floor's layout would accommodate emergency training scenarios through a well-designed hallway system. Practical features, such as an exam room area with instructional facilities and a dedicated training space resembling an emergency room, address the specific needs of the health and nursing sciences program.

The second floor's focus on Advertising and Design addresses the current challenges running students back and forth between two separate rooms in the current program. Consolidating two teachers in one area aims to improve coordination and streamline equipment usage. The design also allows the possibility of subdividing the space on the second floor into two classrooms, offering further flexibility for future program adjustments.

1. One-Story Option

The alternative One-Story Option, while maintaining the same footprint and parking arrangements, would include a single classroom area designated for Advertising and Design to fulfill the need for a high bay classroom.

Mr. Heasley said the Two-Story Option is preferred, with a projected cost of \$17 million. He noted that if they chose the One-Story Option, future expansion of another story would be challenging due to escalated costs associated with a cement roof.

Mr. Vasko explained that the nine school districts who send students to A.W. Beattie would contribute to the expansion cost based on a fixed percentage determined by two weighted factors: the total enrollment of 10th-12th graders and the total assessed property value of each school district. Based on Hampton's contribution to the last A.W. Beattie construction project in 2008, he estimated that the District's contribution would be roughly 8.5%.

Mr. Jarrell inquired about how much enrollment could increase with the expansion. Mr. Heasley said that the Health and Nursing Science program can accommodate roughly 22 students. The expansion could accommodate 30-32 students in this program. However, he noted that the expansion would not fix all their enrollment problems, particularly in programs such as HVAC or Carpentry & Building Construction. The expansion would also potentially create the opportunity for new programs.

Mr. Heasley said the expansion project is still in the early stages, projecting a groundbreaking in the Summer of 2025. In response to Mr. Vasko's question, Dr. Loughead said he and the other eight superintendents felt the need to expand is there and worth considering how it can be accommodated.

Mrs. Perkins inquired about why Health and Nursing Science and Advertising and Design are the two programs designated for the proposed space, and not HVAC or Carpentry & Building Construction. Mr. Heasley noted the challenges of accommodating two programs that require specific space, highlighting limitations in infrastructure movement and changes needed for the HVAC program. The relocation of the HVAC program would incur additional costs of a couple of million dollars, considering the specialized tools and equipment designed for the current space. Constraints also arise from the restricted options for expansion due to the natural gas service line and previous drainage system issues that limit building possibilities.

Mr. Vasko pointed out that to approve the expansion, a favorable vote would be necessary from at least two-thirds of the School Board members representing all nine schools. Mr. Heasley underscored A.W. Beattie's desire for all nine school districts' support and collaboration on the expansion.

Educational Programs

(41:20)

Mrs. Perkins presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the February 12th Voting Meeting:

- Proposed Middle School Program of Studies

Dr. Lux and Dr. Removcik presented several minor changes to the Middle School Program of Studies:

- School Counseling Services — highlights the strategic transitioning counselors focus on from 5th grade to 6th grade, in addition to supporting the transition to high school.
- Reading 8 (Grade 8) — simplified the description based on the new reading teacher.
- Visual Arts III (Grade 8) — added screen printing to the description.
- Career and Financial Awareness (Grade 8) — highlighted the partnership with Clearview Credit Union in the culminating Reality Fair.

- French I (Grade 8) — Clarified that oral proficiency will be evaluated through multiple opportunities to demonstrate facility in oral language skills indicative of a Level I student.
- Introduction to Robotics (Grade 8) — highlighted the specifics of the robots students will work on such as the Lego Mindstorm EV3 robots and coding such as Code.org or beginners Python through Carnegie Mellon University's CS1 platform.

High School Positive Behavior Support Presentation

Dr. Imbarlina, Dr. Cable, and Dr. Sebestyen presented the PBIS initiative that the high school has implemented this year. Dr. Sebestyen explained that a team of teachers assembled during the summer. This initiative is seen as an extension of the middle school's ongoing PBIS initiative. Dr. Imbarlina noted that Hampton now has a PBIS program in grades K-12.

Dr. Cable noted that they were initially skeptical that high school students would engage in the token system associated with the program. However, he emphasized its positive reception and embrace by students. The decision to implement the PBIS program at the high school level emerged as a response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, providing an opportunity to reset and reinforce the high school's cultural and behavioral expectations. Dr. Sebestyen highlighted the desire to identify and highlight the positive aspects of the school coming out of the pandemic, fostering a sense of unity and shared values. The teacher team's collaborative efforts resulted in the creation of a behavior matrix, focusing on three key areas: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Engaged.

The high school identified the hallways and common areas as areas where they wanted to reinforce these expectations. A student team was brought on board, calling themselves the PAW Patrol, to help identify positive behaviors.

Dr. Sebestyen added that the PBIS initiative's focus area has been on: 1.) Cell phone usage in classrooms and 2.) Hallway usage with passes.

A universal expectation was established to address cell phone usage, requiring students to place their phones inside caddies or carriers in each classroom. Dr. Sebestyen said students have embraced this initiative, leading to a reduction in cell phone usage as a form of distraction.

The second focus was on hallway usage, specifically regarding students without passes and their accountability for being in designated areas. To address this issue, the PBIS team introduced a pilot program called E-Hallpass, a digital alternative to the traditional paper hall pass system. This transition aimed to reinforce positive behavior digitally, streamlining the tracking of students' whereabouts while maintaining accountability. The E-Hallpass allows students to request and receive passes digitally, on their laptops or phones.

Dr. Cable pointed out that students have embraced the cell phone caddy system and have stated that they enjoy not having to worry about their phones since their fellow students are not using them either. Dr. Imbarlina said that students are still allowed cell phones in between classes, during study hall, and in the cafeteria. However, the system is teaching students about appropriate cell phone use and encouraging them to interact with each other.

Dr. Loughead highlighted that the E-Hallpass system does not require students to carry phones or laptops, as the electronic passes can be tracked in a digital spreadsheet accessible to staff. This transparency avoids negative interactions, allowing administrators and teachers to monitor student movements efficiently. Dr. Imbarlina noted the strategic use of passes for safety, preventing conflicts in hallways. She emphasized that teachers and administrators do not have the ability to track students' whereabouts. Students can also use the E-Hallpass system to create appointments with teachers or counselors and to make up tests.

Dr. Sebestyen presented data on this school year's reductions in cell phone disciplinary infractions (down 80% from the previous year). He noted that the E-Hallpass is still a pilot program this year and that 92% of teachers are using the system, with 87% stating it is working better or the same as the old system.

In response to Mr. Shages' question, Dr. Imbarlina explained that students use hallpasses to access their lockers, the restrooms, and the nurses office. During study hall, the new media center and Busy Bean have become popular destinations for students.

Dr. Loughead said the high school is recommending that the E-Hallpass pilot continue for the remainder of the school year before a final decision is made to adopt the program formally.

Finance

(1:05:39)

There were no action items this evening.

Local Tax Revenue Update

Mr. Kline presented the 2023-2024 tax revenue update as of January 31, 2024. He noted that real estate taxes are trending higher (5.06%) than the budgeted amount of 4.1%. Earned income taxes are up 6.53%, while real estate transfer taxes continue to lag at -23.92% due to a reduction in home sales. Delinquent real estate taxes are up significantly from last year at 88%. Overall, tax revenue is up 5.06% from last year at this time.

Mr. Kline provided insights into the recent meeting between the District and PA Representatives Arvind Venkat and Rob Mercuri concerning proposed changes by the state's Basic Education Funding Commission. The anticipated budget increases for the District are expected to be limited to 2.5% going forward.

Additionally, he addressed the impact of the Allegheny County Common Level Ratio (CLR) on real estate taxes and the District's assessed value growth. The CLR, currently at a 46% discount factor, is used when assessing properties, effectively reverting the valuation back to 2013. Despite this, Mr. Kline expressed optimism, noting that Hampton, with fewer commercial properties, may experience less impact compared to neighboring school districts.

Dr. Loughead emphasized the unique struggle Allegheny County faces with the CLR. He said Hampton's state representatives are making the case in the state legislature that the CLR in Allegheny County is burdening taxpayers unlike other counties statewide. Dr. Loughead said they

also discussed cyber/charter reform with Representative Venkat and Representative Mercuri, highlighting the high cost Hampton bears to send students to these schools compared to Hampton's own online academy.

Personnel

(1:15:44)

Ms. Balason presented the following action items to be considered for Board approval at the February 12th meeting:

Resignation

- Dr. Gretchen Jones, who is resigning after four years with the District, effective March 29, 2024. Dr. Jones is the School Psychologist for the District.
- Ms. Lisa Somerhalder, effective February 9, 2024. Ms. Somerhalder is a Paraeducator at Hampton High School.
- Ms. Anne Avondolio effective February 7, 2024. Ms. Avondolio is a Library Assistant at Hampton Middle School.
- Mr. Shawn Sloan effective January 23, 2024. Mr. Sloan was a 10 month/6 hour custodian.
- Mr. Richard Ventrice who is retiring after seven years with the District, effective April 5, 2024. Mr. Ventrice is a Custodian at Hampton High School.

Mrs. Hamlin inquired about the replacement of Dr. Jones as School Psychologist. Dr. Loughead said the position has been posted, and the response so far has been encouraging. He noted that this is a very important position to fill, emphasizing the goal of a smooth transition.

Teachers

- Change in status for Ms. Mia Smyers moving from a Paraeducator (Class III) at Wyland Elementary School to a Building Substitute Teacher at Poff Elementary School, effective February 7, 2024. Salary is \$27,500, prorated. Ms. Smyers is replacing Ms. Mary Evankovich.
- Mrs. Hannah Krasnow as a professional employee who has attained tenure status effective February 12, 2024.
- Mrs. Kaitlyn Stoltz as a Guest Substitute Teacher for the Hampton Township School District, effective January 26, 2024. Salary is \$100 per day for days 1-30 and then \$120 per day thereafter. Guest Substitute Teachers will be utilized on an as-needed basis.

Paraprofessionals, Paraeducators, and Administrative Assistants

- Ms. Christine Knudsen as a Paraeducator (Class III) at Hampton High School, effective February 12, 2024. Hourly rate is \$18.54 for the 60-day probationary period and \$18.79 per hour thereafter. Ms. Knudsen is replacing Ms. Lisa Somerhalder.

- Ms. Dawn Biernacki as a Paraeducator (Class III) at Hampton High School, effective February 1, 2024. Hourly rate is \$18.54 for the 60-day probationary period and \$18.79 per hour thereafter. Ms. Biernacki is replacing Ms. LaNette Weber who is moving to Wyland Elementary School.
- Ms. Paige Hartle as a Substitute Paraeducator/Paraprofessional/Administrative Assistant, effective January 25, 2024. Salary is \$15.00 per hour for days 1-20, and \$15.50 per hour thereafter.

Custodial/Maintenance

- Mr. Zachary Crow as a 10 month/6 hour custodian at Hampton High School, effective January 29, 2024. Hourly rate is \$23.68. (Mr. Crow is replacing Mr. Shawn Sloan.)
- Ms. Kelly Hashmi as a 10 month/8 hour Custodian at Central Elementary School, effective February 12, 2024. (Ms. Hashmi is replacing Mr. Chad Fabian.)
- Mr. Josh Stockert, effective February 5, 2024, and Ms. Maya Cannon, effective February 7, 2024, as day-to-day custodial substitutes. Hourly rate is \$14.00 an hour for the first 20 days and \$14.50 thereafter.

Technology

(1:18:50)

There were no action items this evening.

Mr. Stein remarked that he had attended the recent Technology Council meeting, and asked Dr. Cunningham to provide an update on the meeting and Hampton's upcoming Remake Learning Day. Dr. Cunningham shared that the Technology Council meeting included teachers, building principals, parents, Mr. Stein, administrators, and members of the Technology Department. Discussions at the meeting focused on Hampton's Remake Learning Day, which is scheduled for May 14, 2024, from 6-8 pm at Hampton High School. The council began planning for the various ways the District will celebrate its tradition of excellence with the wider community.

Policy and Legislative Affairs

(1:19:51)

Mr. Shages presented the following items to be considered for Board approval at the February 12th meeting:

- Second Reading of Policy #254: Educational Opportunity for Military Children.
- Nominations for Election of Trustee to the Allegheny County Schools Health Insurance Consortium Board.

Mr. Shages shared that he will be a panelist on an upcoming Zoom meeting organized by the League of Women Voters in Pittsburgh. The discussion will focus on how school boards and public libraries make decisions regarding books and materials, as well as strategies for responding to challenges. Mr. Shages will also be attending the Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA) conference in Dallas, Texas, from February 23-25th.

Additionally, Mr. Shages discussed the Board policy relating to affiliated groups and booster organizations, which are required to provide a financial report to their members on an annual basis. The organizations are also required to submit their financial report to the district. He said that the district has yet to receive financial reports from several organizations from the 2022-2023 school year, expressing the need to ensure accountability for how these organizations spend their money. Mr. Shages mentioned an incident at a local school district related to these concerns, emphasizing the importance of protecting the District's reputation.

In March, Mr. Shages said he plans to propose a motion to disassociate the use of the Hampton name from organizations that fail to provide the required reports. In response to a question, Dr. Cunningham shared that booster leadership changes often contribute to delays in submitting the financial reports, and efforts are being made to communicate the importance of submitting the reports. It was also noted that the athletic department has been actively working with athletic booster groups to ensure the proper steps are taken.

Transportation

(1:31:32)

There were no action items this evening.

Public Comment

(1:31:58)

Mrs. Hamlin opened the meeting to public comment, but there were none at this time. Mr. Vasko shared that A.W. Beattie is hosting an Open House on February 29th from 5:15 p.m. to 8 p.m. for students and families to learn about various programs. This will be an opportunity for students and families to talk to teachers and visit the school.

Adjournment

(1:32:55)

Mrs. Hamlin motioned to adjourn the meeting.