

The Board Report

Monday, March 4, 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 in the Hampton Middle School Library. 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. John Thornton	Director of Student Services
Dr. Ed McKaveney	Director of Technology

** absent*

*** attended remotely*

March 4, 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.

Presentation

(1:50)

Mrs. Hamlin announced that there would be a presentation from Poff Elementary School prior to the Work Session. Dr. Colleen Hannagan, Principal of Poff Elementary, said the presentation would focus on a Learner's Mindset, one of the Portrait of a Talbot competencies. Dr. Hannagan said that during faculty meetings throughout the school year, teachers have discussed connecting content to these competencies.

Dr. Hannagan then introduced first-grade teachers Mrs. Gillis, Mrs. Garrett, and Mrs. Leventis, along with six of their students. Together, they presented how the stories read in class foster a learner's mindset by encouraging curiosity, embracing challenges, and instilling a love of learning.

Dr. Loughead expressed gratitude to the parents for creating an environment for their children that fosters learning, growth, and curiosity within their families. He acknowledged parents' role in fostering these qualities and thanked them for entrusting the school with their children's education.

Student Council Representatives Report

(13:18)

Mrs. Hamlin introduced Ellie Myros and Gary Farrell, who presented the Student Council Representatives Report. Gary highlighted the upcoming Talbot Thon fundraiser event scheduled for Friday, March 22, at Hampton High School. Registered students can attend from 3-11 p.m., while community hours are from 5-7 p.m. During community hours, attendees can enjoy food trucks, a basket raffle, Zumba, games and activities, and more.

Ellie said their primary goal is to raise money to support pediatric cancer research and treatment. She said 350 students have registered to attend. Multiple prizes are available for top student donors. Additionally, Gary noted that efforts in recent years have focused on including more community groups to participate. These efforts include community hours and the 3 vs 3 Basketball Tournament at Hampton Middle School. Over 130 students participated, raising over \$1,500. Ellie added that they plan on advertising for community hours during the elementary school open houses.

Further, they shared some recent athletic accomplishments. In swimming, Gabriella Elk won the WPIAL Girls Class 2A Diving Championship, and Lainey Sheets was a WPIAL Champion in the 200 IM and 200 Back. Overall, the girls placed 7th and the boys 8th at WPIALs, and several student-athletes qualified for states. The Boy's Basketball team finished runner-up in the WPIAL Class 2A Championship and qualified for the state tournament. Additionally, Hampton's Unified Bocce Team 2 won the Allegheny North Division Championship and will compete in the Unified Bocce Regional Championship at Geneva College on March 6th. In wrestling, Dustin Kerr and Alan Diner qualified for the PIAA Class 2A Southwest Regional Wrestling Championships.

Mrs. Hamlin inquired if students can still register for Talbot Thon. Gary said the deadline to purchase shirts has passed, but registration remains open until the event on March 22nd.

Public Comment

(17:36)

Mrs. Hamlin opened the meeting to public comment, but there were no comments at this time.

Student Affairs

(18:02)

Mr. Jarrell presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the March 11th Voting Meeting:

- Hampton High School Club Team: Girls Flag Football

Mr. Michael Gavlik, Director of Athletics, presented information regarding the Girls Flag Football Club team proposal. The NFL and Pittsburgh Steelers sponsor the initiative. Currently, there are 35 teams in western Pennsylvania and approximately 100 statewide. The NFL and the Steelers are providing support by funding equipment, uniforms, and an annual \$3,500 stipend to offset coaching costs. Mr. Gavlik said 15 student-athletes have already signed up. If the club is approved, the District will seek a sponsor to coach the team. Practices are twice a week, with games played on Sundays. The championship takes place at Acrisure Stadium. With an opportunity for girl's flag football to become a sanctioned PIAA sport, Mr. Gavlik said this would be a tremendous initiative to bring to Hampton.

In response to Board questions, Mr. Gavlik stated that girls' flag football is a spring sport, with games beginning on April 7th. A sponsor to coach the team will be sought within the District, but Mr. Gavlik said the Steelers have a pool of candidates as well. The team will utilize the Blue Field for practices. Additionally, Dr. Loughead stated that the stipend would cover the club sponsor's cost without using District funds.

- Hampton High School Lacrosse Team Field Trip

Hampton High School's Boys Lacrosse Team is playing a PIAA-scheduled game against West Chester East High School on April 13, 2024. In conjunction with this away game, a field trip to the West Chester area has been scheduled. Mr. Gavlik said the team will visit Nick's House, which provides housing for families of cancer patients pursuing life-saving treatment in the Greater Philadelphia region. The team will also attend a collegiate lacrosse match. The District will provide transportation.

- Hampton High School Tennis Team Field Trip

Hampton High School's Boys Tennis Team is playing a PIAA-scheduled match against Central High School on April 12, 2024. In conjunction with this away match, a field trip to the Philadelphia area has been scheduled. The District will provide transportation.

Facilities

(27:10)

There were no action items this evening.

Educational Programs

(41:20)

Mrs. Perkins presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the March 11th Voting Meeting:

- Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) K-12 Guidance Plan Presentation

Dr. Thornton presented information about the five-year K-12 Guidance Plan, mandated by PDE, which focuses on academics, career, and social-emotional counseling services. The District last submitted a K-12 Guidance Plan in 2017. Dr. Thornton worked with Hampton's counselors to modify and revise the existing plan, with guidance from PDE, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), and the School Counseling Advisory Committee comprised of various stakeholders.

The Plan encompasses counselor-to-student ratio, job descriptions, and the roles of school counselors. It also emphasizes program delivery, with adherence to American School Counselor Association (ASCA) guidelines. The plan includes a calendar tracking counselors' program delivery in academic, career, and social and emotional domains. Dr. Thornton said that ASCA recommends that counselors spend 80% of their time in direct and indirect student services and 20% in non-student activities. Additionally, the Plan includes a link to the K-12 curriculum action plan, with smart goals for each building level related to the three domains. It also accounts for stakeholder engagement, detailing the District's work with educators, parents, and committees with regard to the Guidance Plan.

In response to Board questions, Dr. Thornton said the District's counselor-to-student ratio meets ASCA recommendations of 1:250. He noted that the addition of a full-time elementary school counselor has helped. Additionally, he noted that social work support is provided through the UPMC mental health specialist.

Class Companion Pilot

Dr. Removcik presented the Class Companion Pilot, an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that provides timely and specific feedback to students to enhance student writing. Dr. Removcik emphasized that the AI tool does not write for students but offers feedback based on the teacher's writing prompt and evaluation criteria. Students submit their writing and can receive multiple iterations of feedback. Additionally, students can discuss with their teacher if they disagree or have concerns regarding the feedback. Further, Dr. Removcik said the district has been interested in piloting an AI tool at the high school level to be used in a safe space within the school. The pilot started in February with AP Seminar and AP Research under the guidance of two instructional coaches. Dr. Removcik noted that the College Board offers Guidance for Artificial Intelligence Tools and Other Services specifically for the AP Capstone on how students can use AI tools responsibly.

Dr. Removcik said there is interest in expanding the pilot to other subject areas. Parents of students using the AI tool were notified by the teachers through parent communication. Teachers have done a great job instructing students on using the AI tool responsibly with proper citations. She said the District's goal is to continue the pilot and then return to the Board with a formal presentation. Early feedback from teachers suggests promising results in enhancing student writing. Since the tool provides real-time feedback, students benefit from the iterative process.

Mr. Stein asked if the AI tool is subject-driven. Dr. Removcik said the pilot is currently used in research and writing and applies to various subjects. However, initial connections are most evident in English and social studies.

Mrs. Perkins inquired about how the AI tool may assist students who struggle with writing. Dr. Removcik mentioned that Mrs. Roos, one of the instructional coaches, has noted that the tool has been aiding students in improving and refining their writing abilities at all levels. If the pilot expands to other subject areas, the instructional coaches will collaborate with teachers to ensure the responsible use of the AI tool.

Mrs. Kennedy asked if teachers could discuss the tool's feedback with students. Dr. Removcik explained that much of the feedback mirrors what the teachers would have provided themselves. The timely and personalized feedback has enabled students to continually enhance their writing and strengthen their arguments.

The AI tool is web-based, and students in grades 9-12 can access it. She highlighted that the District aims to implement best practices with AI tools. Furthermore, Dr. Removcik emphasized that Classroom Companion differs from generative AI like ChatGPT; students submit their writing and receive feedback specific to the teacher's criteria.

Dr. Loughead said the District acknowledges that students are using AI at home. He stressed the importance of finding tools that align with educational standards and teaching students how to use them safely and responsibly. He also noted the necessity for seniors to understand how to effectively utilize these tools as they transition into the workforce. Additionally, Dr. Loughead commended the two instructional coaches' efforts to research and explore Classroom Companion with their students. Dr. Removcik added that the best practices gleaned from this pilot by instructional coaches will be disseminated to teachers across the District.

Finance

(53:10)

Mr. Vasko presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the March 11th Voting Meeting:

- Budget Transfer totaling \$928.04 for the following:
 - HMS, Principal Office Books \$580.00
 - Athletics, Boys Basketball Gen Supply \$348.04
 - Central - Services and Liability Ins. \$ 87.00

- The district initiated appeals for 2024 real estate tax assessments based on property transactions in 2023 in which the difference between the adjusted purchase price and the 2024 assessed value exceeded \$50,000.

2023 - 21 of 223 will meet the criteria

2022 – 79 of 276 met the criteria

2021 – 211 of 369 met the criteria

2020 – 104 of 285 met the criteria

2019 – 93 of 323 met the criteria

2018 – 92 of 295 met the criteria

2017 – 71 of 291 met the criteria

2016 – 71 of 332 met the criteria

Mr. Vasko said the number of appeals had fallen significantly due to the adjusted common level ratio since the previous year. Jessica Crown, Solicitor, said Hampton’s overall assessed property value has remained steady. She mentioned that because of the lower common level ratio following the lawsuit, there has been an increase in property owner appeals. Dr. Loughead expressed gratitude for the District’s careful monitoring of the situation.

In response to Mr. Shages’s question, Ms. Crown said the District has seen an uptick in homeowner-initiated appeals, which may cause a slight contraction of Hampton’s overall assessed value. However, she said Hampton is considered in a better position than other districts.

Local Tax Revenue Update

Mr. Vasko presented the 2023-2024 tax revenue update as of February 29, 2024. He noted collections are up 5.16% from the previous year. Real estate taxes are trending higher (5.06%) than the budgeted amount of 4.1%. Earned income taxes are up 7.91%, while real estate transfer taxes continue to lag at -22.28% due to a reduction in home sales.

Personnel

(1:05:58)

Ms. Balason presented the following action items to be considered for Board approval at the March 11th meeting:

Resignation

- Mr. John Walsh, effective approximately April 19, 2024. Mr. Walsh is the Director of Facilities Management.

- Ms. Breanna Pietropaolo, who is resigning after three and one-half years with the District, effective March 8, 2024. She is a Paraeducator (Class III) at Hampton Middle School.

Teachers

- Ms. Erika Yigdall to continue as the Long-Term Substitute Health and Physical Education Teacher at Hampton High School for the remainder of the 2023-2024 School Year. Her salary will remain at \$36,500. She is substituting for Ms. Emily Onik.
- Change in status for Ms. Diane Thompson, moving from a Long-Term Substitute Teacher in Computer Science at Hampton Middle School to a Building Substitute Teacher at Hampton Middle School, effective February 23, 2024, through the remainder of the 2023-2024 School Year. Salary remains \$36,500. Ms. Thompson is replacing Ms. Rita Smith's position.
- Mr. Matthew Rees as a Long-Term Substitute Music Teacher at Hampton Middle School and Poff Elementary School, effective approximately March 13, 2024, through the end of the 2023-2024 School Year. Salary is \$36,500, prorated. Mr. Rees is substituting for Mrs. Shannon Hetrick.
- Mr. Sean Desguin as a mentor for the 2023-2024 School Year.

Paraprofessionals, Paraeducators, and Administrative Assistants

- Change of start date for Mrs. Kirsten Hall, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education, from February 5, 2024, to February 9, 2024.
- Mrs. Lurilene Preisendefer as a Paraeducator (Class III) at Hampton Middle School, effective February 20, 2024. Hourly rate is \$18.54 for the 60-day probationary period and \$18.79 per hour thereafter. This is an open position due to an employee transfer.

Supplemental Contracts

- Approval of the following conditional appointments for 2023-2024, each at a rate of \$149 per point, with each such appointment being conditioned on the District making a subsequent determination that the supplementary position and work associated with such position is needed and approved. Each appointment shall be effective only where the position is approved and operational and where the work associated with such position is actually being performed. This conditional appointment does not obligate the District to approve some, all, or any of the supplementary positions for 2023-2024 and does not guarantee any of the persons listed in the document below that their supplementary position will be needed and in place or that it will continue uninterrupted, in 2023-2024.

Name	Position	Building	Points	Total Stipend
Kellen Wheeler	Baseball - Head Coach	High School	49	\$7,301
Stephen Swierczynski	Baseball Assistant Coach	High School	38	\$5,662
Jedd Cordisco	Baseball JV Coach	High School	38	\$5,662
Corey Casper	Baseball Assistant JV Coach	High School	32	\$4,768
Jordan Perry	Baseball MS Coach	Middle School	32	\$4,768
Noah Oddis	Baseball MS Assistant Coach	Middle School	20	\$2,980
Andrew DeMichiei	Lacrosse Boys' Head Coach	High School	49	\$7,301
Justin Mayfield	Lacrosse Boys' Assistant Coach	High School	38	\$5,662
Chris DeMichiei	Lacrosse Boys' JV Coach	High School	35	\$5,215
Kelsey Viets	Lacrosse Girls' Head Coach	High School	40	\$5,960
Christine McGrath	Lacrosse Girls' Assistant Coach	High School	35	\$5,215
Morgan McLaughlin	Lacrosse Girls' JV Coach	High School	35	\$5,215
Kate Hedderman	Girls' Softball Head Coach	High School	40	\$5,960
Haylie Dietz	Girls' Softball Assistant Coach	High School	35	\$5,215
Joe Merz	Girls' Softball JV Coach	High School	35	\$5,215
Elizabeth Bright	Girls Softball Coach	Middle School	28	\$4,172
Kaylee Grassmeyer	Girls Softball Assistant Coach	Middle School	20	\$2,980
Heather Dietz	Track Head Coach	High School	53	\$7,897
Nick Panza	First Assistant Track Coach	High School	37	\$5,513
Joe Cangilla	Track Coach Assistant "A"	High School	29	\$4,321
Kim Masarik	Track Coach Assistant "B"	High School	29	\$4,321
Matthew Combi	Track Coach Assistant "C"	High School	22	\$3,278
Greg Shumaker	Track Coach Assistant "D"	High School	19	\$2,831
Jessie Belitz	Track Head Coach	Middle School	34	\$5,066
Stephen Adametz	Track Coach Assistant "A"	Middle School	17	\$2,533
Jenna Rosenfeld	Track Coach Assistant "B"	Middle School	17	\$2,533
Ryan Guidos	Track Coach Assistant "C"	Middle School	17	\$2,533
Grant McKinney	Tennis - Boys' Head Coach	High School	33	\$4,818
Milton Squiller	Tennis - Boys' Assistant Coach	High School	24	\$3,576

Technology

(1:08:11)

Mr. Stein presented the following action item to be considered for Board approval at the March 11th meeting:

- Low bid with Crown Castle for leased lit fiber services connecting all schools to the District Data Center at Hampton High School at a net annual cost to the Hampton Township School District of \$23,760—a total annual cost of \$39,600 less the E-Rate reimbursement of \$15,840.

Dr. McKaveney explained that the District had a 20-year lease agreement to connect the school buildings with fiber optics. The lease expires on June 30, 2024. The District submitted a request

for proposal (RFP), and the current provider, Crown Castle, was the lowest bidder at \$39,600. The District will pay \$23,760 annually, with a 40% federal E-rate reimbursement.

Mr. Vasko asked what the cost was in 2003 when the lease agreement began. Dr. McKaveney said that with reimbursements, the cost was approximately \$12,000 annually. The District can re-bid after five years. Dr. Loughead said an increase was anticipated, highlighting the benefits of the new arrangement with underground connections from the high school to the middle school. This eliminates concerns about damages and outages. Dr. McKaveney said the service start date is July 1, 2024.

Policy and Legislative Affairs

(1:15:22)

Mr. Shages presented the following item to be considered for Board approval at the March 11th meeting:

- First Reading of Policy #251: Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care, and Other Educational Instability

Also, Mr. Shages shared that he recently participated in a meeting organized by the League of Women Voters in Pittsburgh. The meeting focused on how school boards and public libraries make decisions regarding books and materials and strategies for responding to challenges.

Additionally, Mr. Shages attended the Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA) conference in Dallas, Texas, from February 23 to February 25. The event had over 1,000 attendees from school districts representing 25 states. He attended various presentations on parental rights in K-12 education, strategies through community partnerships, embracing the science of reading, artificial intelligence, and more.

Public Comment

(1:47:02)

Mrs. Hamlin opened the meeting to public comment, but there were no comments at this time.

Dr. Loughead announced that the March 11th Voting Meeting will be held at Hampton High School in the Conceptual Thinking Lab. Additionally, he encouraged the community to attend the Hues & Harmony exhibition on March 5th and 6th. The exhibition returns to its traditional two-day format, featuring interactive activities, student artwork, and musical performances for the first time since the pandemic.

Mr. Vasko also mentioned that Hampton students have artwork on display at The Block at Northway until March 21st.

Adjournment

(1:48:55)

Mrs. Hamlin motioned to adjourn the meeting.