

# The Board Report

*Monday, May 6, 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**

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

*This Hampton Township School Board Meeting was held in person at the Hampton Middle School Library. It was recorded so that community members could view it after the meeting.*

## **Members of Administration in Attendance**

<b>Dr. Michael Loughead</b>	<b>Superintendent of Schools</b>
<b>Dr. Rebecca Cunningham</b>	<b>Assistant Superintendent of Schools</b>
<b>Dr. Jackie Removcik</b>	<b>Assistant to the Superintendent</b>
<b>Dr. Marguerite Imbarlina</b>	<b>Hampton High School Principal</b>
<b>Dr. Ed McKaveney</b>	<b>Director of Technology</b>
<b>Mr. Jeff Kline</b>	<b>Director of Administrative Services/Transportation</b>

*\* absent*

*\*\* attended remotely*

**May 6, 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**

(2:50)

Mrs. Hamlin opened the meeting by announcing that the Board extends their deepest sympathy to the Kirsopp family on the passing of Robert Kirsopp, a parent in the District and a dedicated Hampton Township police officer who worked closely with the school district over the years, contributing to the safety and well-being of the community. Mrs. Hamlin noted that Mr. Kirsopp had been a familiar presence at sporting events and other school functions and that the Board sends their heartfelt condolences to his family.

### **Public Comment**

(3:58)

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

### **Student Affairs**

(4:09)

Mr. Jarrell presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the May 13th Voting Meeting:

- Hampton Middle School Club: Hampton Middle School Voices

Dr. Cunningham said this would be a new club at HMS that would meet after school and support the middle school choral program. Dr. Loughead added that Dr. Marylynn Lux (HMS Principal) and Ryan Meyer (Music Teacher) envisioned this club as a way of reenergizing student interest in choral participation.

- Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) trip to the FBLA National Leadership Conference (Competition) in Orlando, Florida, from June 27, 2024, to July 3, 2024, at a cost to the District not to exceed \$700.

Dr. Cunningham said the District was excited to receive this request to help offset the cost for two students, Reed Perry and Joseph Nelson, to compete in the competition. Mr. Perry and Mr. Nelson qualified for the national competition based on their accomplishments at the state level.

### **Student Council Representatives Report**

Mrs. Hamlin introduced freshman Madelyn Rossi, who presented the Student Council Representatives Report. Miss Rossi noted that the Hampton High School prom was well attended and

that students enjoyed the evening. Dr. Imbarlina said that approximately 400 students attended prom, which marks a return to pre-COVID numbers. Miss Rossi also announced that the Student Council has planned a pickleball tournament on May 8th during lunch to raise money for events such as prom and the senior dinner dance. Mrs. Midgley commended Miss Rossi for her report and her work on the Student Council.

## Facilities

(11:20)

There were no action items this evening; however, the Board heard a presentation on Phase II of the Hampton High School Renovation Project.

### High School Renovation Project Phase II

Dr. Loughead began the presentation by expressing enthusiasm for the Hampton High School renovation project, noting the extensive subcommittee meetings and planning over the past year. He emphasized how the District revisited the original 2018 academic redesign vision that drove the ongoing renovations.

Dr. Loughead outlined the project's journey, starting in February 2018 with an academic redesign vision presented by Dr. Imbarlina. This vision revealed instructional limitations of the building and the need for physical updates, including a new roof and other safety upgrades. Following that presentation, a district-wide feasibility study examined building conditions and revealed that the high school needed the most substantial work. In November 2019, the District authorized proceeding with the Hampton High School renovation project, originally a single-phase redesign. However, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the Board to take a cautious, phased approach, with Phase I authorized in October 2020 and completed in early 2023.

Dr. Loughead emphasized that during August 2022, the District developed its Portrait of a Talbot and Strategic Planning Pillars, which would guide future renovations at the high school. The 2018 academic redesign vision highlighted the need for collaborative spaces, as some of the high school's programs and departments were disconnected. Dr. Imbarlina discussed the 2018 vision's focus on deeper learning, integrating skills such as project-based learning, problem-solving, and inquiry-based science standards. Additionally, the 2018 vision emphasized wellness, with connected health and counseling services, improved facilities, and an environment of respect and dignity for all students.

Dr. Loughead pointed out that the 2018 vision was to realign the high school to current academic needs rather than accommodate increased enrollment. While Phase I brought some new collaborative spaces, such as the Library Media Center, key issues remained, including undersized and outdated science and music rooms and limited collaborative and flexible classroom spaces. He also said that the vision consists of creating a "Fab Lab" space for design and innovation utilized by various departments, not limited to just technology education.

Dr. Imbarlina noted the outdated state of health and fitness facilities, such as the auxiliary gym and restrooms, which date back to 1969. She also stressed the importance of integrating natural lighting for student well-being, which many interior classrooms lack. Dr. Loughead also discussed the

building's outdated kitchen and cafeteria facilities, including equipment that needs replacing. While Phase I improvements addressed safety aspects such as external lighting and parking, Dr. Loughead noted that other safety and security issues remain. One of those concerns is the lack of a captured vestibule connected to the main office. Dr. Imbarlina also mentioned the need for enhanced safety features in the chemistry labs, dedicated storage space for the drama department, and an upgraded intercom system for emergency communication.

Mr. Stein inquired about the 2018 vision, which found that the current schedule limits class time. Dr. Imbarlina said that the District is investigating a modified block schedule for the high school. This approach would provide students individual practice time with a teacher who could support their learning. Dr. Loughead said there will be an upcoming board presentation detailing a proposal for a modified schedule that aligns with the vision for academic redesign.

Additionally, Mr. Vasko asked how flexible spaces would be added without expanding the building footprint. Dr. Loughead explained that the redesign involves realigning existing spaces to bring technology education spaces to the center of the building, fostering collaboration among departments. This also would include moving the administrative spaces and some classrooms to other spaces in the building. Dr. Imbarlina added that flexibility in space usage includes moving between rooms and how rooms are utilized in terms of flexible seating.

Dr. Loughead and Dr. Imbarlina presented photos highlighting the transformative impact of Phase I renovations. Students actively utilized new spaces, such as the Library Media Center and Busy Bean Cafe, for various activities and collaboration. Dr. Imbarlina mentioned introducing new programs like Honors Biotech Research and Sports Psychology, which encourage applied learning and collaboration. They also praised the impact of the new Busy Bean space, which provides career learning opportunities, particularly for special education students. Dr. Loughead added that the proposed Fab Lab aims to expand these opportunities.

## **Phase II Project Summary**

Cassandra Renninger of Draw Collective presented the current proposal for Phase II of the renovation project, which would include work to the following areas of the building:

- **Science Area:** Currently, there are seven chemistry labs. The proposal calls for reducing that number to five by making the rooms 1.5x larger. Areas within the room would be designated for both the lecture and lab components, adding opportunities for flexible instruction. Two physics rooms would be relocated to the engineering and design area of the building.
- **Music & Performing Arts:** Plans include relocating existing music classrooms to the current engineering & design area to expand the band and choral rooms. In addition, an area would be created that would consist of storage, office space, and a relocated space for set design and costume storage. Additionally, flexible health classrooms would be created for various physical education functions.
- **Auditorium:** Plans include modernizing the original 1969 auditorium by improving accessibility of aisles, creating an improved stage area, modifying and significantly improving access to the stage, eliminating low walls that obstruct prime viewing areas, creating a new orchestra location

for school musicals, and updating lighting and sound systems with safer accessibility to these systems for students and staff.

- Kitchen/Cafeteria: Renninger said that kitchen upgrades have been a top priority of the renovation project. Plans include replacing outdated equipment and adopting a food court-style serving layout with multiple stations and flexible seating.
- Administration/Wellness Area: The proposal includes creating a single-location entrance with increased security connected to a new administrative suite. Plans also call for reorganizing the administrative, counseling, and nursing areas and adding a large group instruction room and flexible spaces for meetings and events. Mr. Vasko asked about renovating the restrooms adjacent to the auditorium, and Renninger said the proposal calls for renovated and expanded restrooms in that area.
- Engineering & Design: Creating a “Fab Lab” space, a small-scale workshop offering digital fabrication, along with flexible areas for group work, establishing a multifunctional hub for technical education, art, engineering, computer science, robotics, physics education, and entrepreneurship to improve efficiency in scheduling. Dr. Loughead noted that many High-performing and future focused high schools have Fab Labs like the one proposed, adding that the new space would support Hampton’s curriculum.
- Softball/Multipurpose Field: This portion of the project is being considered for Phase II as an alternate bid, depending on the overall final cost of the project. This field could include dugouts, fencing, a portable outfield fence, bleachers, and synthetic turf.

Ms. Renninger provided an overview of the project’s cost, detailing the progression from a 50% design development stage in 2020 to recent inflation adjustments by PJ Dick in September 2023. Over the three years, inflation rates ranged from 5% to 9%, primarily driven by commodities. Ms. Renninger said that PJ Dick applied these inflationary percentages to various project segments, such as steel and concrete. Phase II construction costs were initially estimated at approximately \$26 million, adjusted to a current range of \$25.4 million to \$28.1 million. Additionally, budgetary considerations for a new softball field added approximately \$1.3 million to \$1.4 million to the overall cost. Including soft costs, the total projected budget now stands between \$30.0 million and \$33.2 million.

Mr. Shages inquired about the possibility of running into issues with Township approvals similar to what occurred with Phase I. Ms. Renninger said she did not foresee any issues, adding that a permit for the new softball field was approved as part of Phase I. Dr. Loughead added that the District meets monthly with the new Township manager, indicating the township team is fully aware of the plans for Phase II of the project. Mr. Stein noted that costs never go down with inflation, stating that the cheapest the District would ever complete Phase II is now.

During discussions, Mr. Vasko asked if the five-year feasibility study conducted in 2018 should be updated. Ms. Renninger acknowledged the possibility and said they reviewed the study’s findings, with no critical issues highlighted for the high school. Mr. Vasko expressed concern over the District’s declining fund balance and ability to finance further projects. He added that the District is likely facing maximum real estate tax increases under the Act 1 index for the next few years. While he supports the Phase II renovations, he said he does not want to spend \$30 million and suggested scaling back

aspects of the project, such as new auditorium seating. Dr. Imbarlina noted that the current auditorium seating dates back to the 1999 renovations. Ms. Renninger added that they may be able to salvage some of the seats in good condition while refurbishing others.

Mrs. Hamlin noted that the feasibility study from 2018 indicated no major upcoming projects. Mr. Vasko expressed concern that circumstances may have changed since the study was conducted. Ms. Renninger said that all of the unaddressed items were insignificant in scale, highlighting the flat roof portion of Hampton Middle School as the largest item to be considered. However, she was unsure how imminent that needed to be done. Dr. Loughead emphasized the district has secured local legislative support for state grants to support such projects.

### Project Sequencing

Jason Day and John Taormina of PJ Dick provided an overview of the sequencing for Phase II, with construction proposed to begin in the spring of 2025. Preliminary sequencing indicates the following:

- Phase 1 - New Administration Area (6 months, April to October 2025)
- Phase 2A - Auditorium Renovation (8 months, April to December 2025)
- Phase 2B - Refresh Classrooms (3 months, June to August 2025)
- Phase 2C - New Engineering & Design Area (7 months, October 2025 to June 2026)
- Phase 3 - Performing Arts Area (6 months, June 2026 to December 2026)
- Phase 4A - Kitchen/Cafeteria Upgrades (4 months, April 2026 to August 2026)
- Phase 4B - Science Area (6 months, June 2026 to December 2026)

Mr. Day indicated that multiple sequences would be ongoing at the same time. He also highlighted that Phase 4A would require the kitchen to be shut down at the end of the school year, with lunches being supplemented from HMS kitschen for a few weeks at the start of the 2026-2027 school year. Ms. Renninger noted the advantage of scheduling this phase towards the end to accommodate long lead times for materials.

Mr. Shages inquired about the potential need for portable trailers to be used as instructional space during the renovations. Mr. Day mentioned potential options within the building, including existing rooms that could be repurposed. Ms. Renninger suggested utilizing the LGI space from the first phase for classrooms as needed.

### Borrowing Scenarios

Dr. Loughead outlined the District's plans to finance the project through bond issues in November/December 2024, July 2025, and January/February 2026. Mr. Kline said the first \$10 million issue would be included in the District's 2024-2025 budget. The goal would be to execute the issue before the calendar year ends to do a bank-qualified issue of up to \$10 million. The next borrowing would take place in the summer of 2025 to align with the bank-qualified borrowing calendar for 2025 and part of the 2025-2026 budget, potentially totaling \$12 million. Mr. Kline said the final borrowing is anticipated in early 2026, ideally another \$10 million under bank qualification.

Dr. Loughead reiterated that the first borrowing would be included in the District's 2024-2025 budget but noted that no decisions have been made regarding the contract. He expressed his appreciation for Draw Collective and PJ Dick for working with the District without being under contract. Mrs. Hamlin inquired about the voting process to advance Phase II of the high school renovation project. Dr. Loughead responded that the first step is to authorize contracts with Draw Collective and PJ Dick to proceed with architectural services and pre-construction work to advance the project. Renninger added that the project's cost will depend on the bid and that the board's authorization will need to define the project's scope, timeline, and expected budget.

Mrs. Midgley asked about the timeline for work on the softball/multipurpose field. Dr. Loughead responded that the project could begin at the start or end of the phasing, ultimately depending on the projected costs and contract with the architect. He added that authorizing the project is a commitment with associated risks, such as paying for the design even if the project is canceled. Additionally, Dr. Loughead said that Phase II is an addendum to the completed Phase I, building on the previous 50% design development.

Regarding the softball/multipurpose field, Mr. Vasko questioned the need for a turf field. Dr. Loughead explained the need for additional field space and a consistently available field for the softball team. He also emphasized the year-round availability of turf for all Hampton School District sports teams.

Mrs. Hamlin said the Board will vote on authorizing Draw Collective and PJ Dick to advance the project at the May 13th Voting Meeting.

## Finance

(2:32:35)

Mr. Vasko presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the May 13th Voting Meeting:

- Resolution for the sale of parcel 1076-E-393

Mr. Kline said the resolution is to sell the property along Hollywood Drive and Maplehurst Avenue. He said the District had been joint property owners with Hampton Township and Allegheny County since 1991. An adjacent property owner would like to purchase the vacant property for \$3,300. The District would receive \$1,100, splitting the purchase price with the Township and County.

- Budget Transfer totaling \$6,528.10 for the following:

Dist; Tech Supplies & Fees & HS Equip.\$	\$4,063.00
HMS; General Fund	\$2,465.10

- 2024-2025 Consumable Supply Bids at a total amount of \$231,353.23

Mr. Vasko inquired about an approximately \$45,000 increase in janitorial and pool supplies. Mr. Kline explained that some products the bidder specified were inadequate in past bids, and the bids were rejected. The products were purchased through other methods. However, paper supply costs decreased because fewer quantities were needed.



- 2024-2025 A.W. Beattie Career Center Budget with the District's Share as follows:

Capital Budget	\$0
Operating Budget	\$758,339
Debt Service	\$119,094
<hr/>	
Total	\$877,433

Mr. Vasko said that the AWBCC budget needs to be approved by six out of the nine sending districts and 41 out of 81 school board members. Hampton's contribution increased from the previous year by \$9,031.00, while the per-student cost decreased by \$27. Mr. Vasko added that the budget does not include funding for the AWBCC expansion project. Dr. Loughead said that some superintendents have financial concerns as they are considering projects of their own.

- Renew the Senior Citizens Property Tax Rebate Resolution for 2024-2025

2023-2024 Rebate Program Income Levels and Rebate Amounts		Proposed 2024-2025 Rebate Program Income Levels and Rebate Amounts	
\$0 to \$8,000	\$440	\$0 to \$8,000	<b>\$460</b>
\$8,001 to \$15,000	\$360	\$8,001 to \$15,000	<b>\$380</b>
\$15,001 to \$18,000	\$250	\$15,001 to \$18,000	<b>\$265</b>
\$18,001 to \$30,000	\$190	\$18,001 to \$35,000	<b>\$200</b>

Mr. Vasko believes the rebate amounts should be raised higher since the District is expected to levy a 5.3% real estate tax increase. He noted that the number of applicants has fallen from 40 in 2017-2018 to 23 in 2023-2024. He attributed this decrease to not keeping up with inflation, as residents are making more money, thus pushing them over the income levels. He suggested raising the income limit to \$40,000 and increasing the rebate amounts accordingly.

Mr. Kline also noted that the state increased their top income limit to \$45,000. Mr. Vasko emphasized the importance of supporting the less fortunate and argued that the District should increase the budgeted amount from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Ultimately, the Board agreed to raise the 2024-2025 rebate program to \$500, \$400, \$300, and \$225, with the top income limit of \$35,000.

- 2024-2025 Proposed Final Budget

The 2024-2025 Proposed Final Budget includes revenues of \$64,203,548, expenditures of \$64,503,548, and the utilization of \$300,000 from the Stabilization Fund. Under this proposal, the real estate tax rate will increase from 21.85 mills to 23.00 mills, an increase of 1.15 mills or 5.3%.

Mr. Kline said there were only two budgetary alterations made since April 29. He noted that the Proposed Preliminary Budget included a 1.11 mill increase, but a change was made to increase the millage rate by 1.15 or 5.3%, the maximum amount under the Act 1 Index. However, he said the state property tax allocation saw a 20% increase over the previous year, raising the property tax reduction from \$199 to \$238 per homestead. Despite the proposed budget, Dr. Loughead added ongoing efforts to find further reductions and savings.

### **Local Tax Revenue Update**

Mr. Kline presented the Local Tax Revenue Update as of April 30, 2024. The District is at 100.21% of real estate tax collections budgeted for 2023-2024. Additionally, Mr. Kline noted that earned income taxes are up 6.59% from the previous year, while real estate transfer taxes continue to lag. He noted that delinquent real estate taxes outperformed last year's numbers by 16.42%.

### **Personnel**

(3:00:32)

Ms. Balason presented the following action items to be considered for Board approval at the May 13th meeting:

#### **Teachers**

- Mrs. Amy Holtz as a mentor for the 2023-2024 School Year.
- The following Guest Substitute Teachers will be employed by the Hampton Township School District on an as-needed basis, effective May 1, 2024. The salary is \$100 per day for days 1-30 and then \$120 per day thereafter.

Nancy Kimmel  
Lindy McGee  
Alexandra Nulf  
Aimee Usher

### **Technology**

(3:00:54)

There were no action items this evening. However, Mr. Stein said there will be a discussion regarding a proposal to pre-order student laptops prior to the final budget approval in June. This will expedite the acquisition of devices and ensure distribution at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

Dr. Loughead said this approval is usually given verbally and precedes that actual budget vote. Mrs. Hamlin asked and received confirmation from the board if there was a consensus on ordering the necessary devices.

## Policy and Legislative Affairs

(3:02:25)

Mr. Shages presented the following item to be considered for Board approval at the May 13th meeting:

- AIU Mutual Assistance Group Memorandum of Understanding

Dr. Cunningham explained that this MOU between HTSD, the Allegheny County Intermediate Unit (AIU), and several local school districts establishes that in an emergency, HTSD can request assistance from neighboring districts through the AIU.

- Second Reading of Policy #808: Food Services
- First Reading of Policy #202: Eligibility of Non-Resident Students

Dr. Cunningham said minor wording changes to Policy #202 come from Pennsylvania School Board Association (PSBA) guidance.

- Mr. Greg Stein and Ms. Maureen Perkins will be appointed as Hampton Township School District's representatives for the 2024 PSBA Delegate Assembly, PSBA's annual association-wide business meeting on Saturday, November 2, 2024. Mr. Stein will attend virtually, and Ms. Perkins will attend in person.

## Transportation

(3:06:25)

There were no action items this evening.

## Voting Meeting

(3:06:42)

Mrs. Hamlin opened the Voting Meeting and provided an opportunity for public comment, but there were none.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the 2024-2025 Proposed Final Budget, with revenues of \$64,203,548, expenditures of \$64,503,548, and the utilization of \$300,000 from the Stabilization Fund. Under this proposal, the real estate tax rate will increase from 21.85 mills to 23.00 mills, an increase of 1.15 mills or 5.3%.

## Adjournment

(3:08:10)

Mrs. Hamlin motioned to adjourn the meeting.