

The Board Report

Monday, June 3, 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 person at the Hampton Middle School Library. The meeting was recorded so community members could view it after it concluded.

Members of Administration in Attendance

Dr. Michael Loughead	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Jackie Removcik	Assistant to the Superintendent
Dr. Ed McKaveney	Director of Technology
Mr. Jeff Kline	Director of Administrative Services
Dr. Marguerite Imbarlina	Hampton High School Principal

** absent*

*** attended remotely*

June 3, 2024

Voting Meeting

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

Student Council Representative Report

(3:15)

Mrs. Hamlin introduced Jake Killian, student body president, and Joshua Carr, student body vice president, to present the Student Council Representatives Report.

Mr. Killian reflected on the successful graduation ceremony for the Class of 2024 and mentioned that students are completing their final exams this week. He reported that the Student Council has held its first meeting for the upcoming year, with plans to organize events such as the Back to School Bash, Activities Fair, and Homecoming. He added that the National Honor Society (NHS) is initiating a program called Freshman Forward, which will pair incoming freshmen with an NHS member who will help them get acquainted with the high school.

The Board wished Mr. Killian, Mr. Carr, and the rest of the Hampton Boys Lacrosse team the best of luck in their upcoming state playoff game against Trinity School District. Regarding the graduation ceremony, Dr. Loughhead commented that this year's commencement was one of the highest attended in history. He congratulated the Hampton High School team for organizing a wonderful evening celebrating the senior class.

Student Council Representative Report

(5:48)

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Jarrell congratulated the Wyland Odyssey of the Mind team on placing runner-up at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals for their vehicle solution responding to the theme of "Drive-In Movie." This year, over 700 teams participated in the tournament nationwide and globally. The Wyland team included the following students from Central, Poff, and Wyland: Emma Carr, Jaxon Clark, Julian Geubtner, Santiago Hidalgo-Bowler, Tyler Mooney, Joshua Pearl, and Iona Reigle. The team coach was Ms. Ann Pearl.

The Board also recognized the following students for their achievements at A.W. Beattie Career Center:

- Jacquelyn Deah for winning Gold at the SkillsUSA state competition for Emergency Response Technology.
- Dylan Biddle for winning Gold in the FCCLA state competition for Culinary Arts (Knife Skills).
- Eden Mattiuz for being chosen as the AWBCC Senior of the Year for the Surgical Sciences Program.
- Madeleine Harold for being chosen the AWBCC Senior of the Year for the Veterinary Science Program

The Board also congratulated the Hampton High School performing arts students for their outstanding spring musical performance of “Tuck Everlasting.” On May 25th, students also participated in the 33rd annual Gene Kelly Awards for Excellence in High School Musical Theater at the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh. Hampton’s production of “Tuck Everlasting” received five nominations, ultimately winning Best Dance Ensemble.

The Board expressed its appreciation to Daniel Franklin (musical director, producer), Andrew Halter (technical director), and Jennifer Lavella (assistant director, choreographer) for their time and dedication to creating spectacular performances for the schools and community.

Public Comment

(13:05)

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 June 10th Voting Meeting:

- 2024-2025 Student Handbooks for Hampton High School and Hampton Middle School.

Dr. Imbarlina discussed several changes to the 2024-2025 Hampton High School Student Handbook. Updating the Artificial Intelligence (AI) information under “Cheating and Plagiarism” was a significant change. Dr. Imbarlina emphasized a shift in approach to recognizing AI’s potential use as a learning tool. The new language clarifies when AI could be used and when it should not, emphasizing encouraging students to create their content rather than relying on AI.

Mr. Shages inquired about adding a reference to the pending Board policy regarding AI and whether the same language should be added to the HMS student handbook. Dr. Loughead said that the pending policy is a separate concern, adding that the middle school has yet to experience issues with AI usage compared to the high school. However, Dr. Loughead indicated he would discuss this further with Dr. Marlynn Lux, HMS principal.

Another change included updating the “Electronic Devices” section to include language requiring cell phones to be placed in the classroom cell phone holder during instruction. Dr. Imbarlina said students still have access to their cell phones outside of instruction, such as in the hallways, cafeteria, or study hall. The high school also added language specific to standardized testing, in which students must keep their cellular devices, including cell phones, smartwatches, and headphones, in the hallway outside the testing room.

Additionally, the high school updated information regarding hall passes with the new implementation of the E-hall pass system. Dr. Imbarlina indicated that the high school will continue the E-hall pass pilot.

Regarding “Disciplinary Actions,” a Level III infraction example was added for more than one student in a restroom stall or individual bathroom, and a Level IV infraction example was added for photography or videography in any District restroom or locker room.

Mr. Vasko inquired about adding language relating to the state’s upcoming personal finance requirement. Dr. Imbarlina said that the requirement begins with the Class of 2026 and will be added to the handbook before the 2025-2026 school year.

Educational Programs

(21:01)

Mrs. Perkins recently attended the 9th Grade Honors English and History group presentations on “Envisioning the Future of Hampton Township.” She commended the students on their remarkable work and added that the Township representatives in attendance were also impressed. Dr. Loughead said that the Hampton Township manager, Ryan Jeroski, was excited to have attended this presentation and hopes to increase engagement and collaboration with HHS students.

Mrs. Perkins presented the 2024-2025 Textbook Adoptions that will be considered for Board approval at the June 10th Voting Meeting. Dr. Removcik said the District is considering three textbooks for approval for this upcoming school year:

High School

- Biology II Honors and AP Biology – Campbell Biology in Focus (2025)
- CHS Spanish IV – Contraseña: Your Password to Foundational Spanish

Elementary

- K-5 Math – Into Math

Dr. Removcik explained that all three textbooks are included in the District’s 2024-2025 Budget and have been available for public review throughout May. Mr. Shages inquired about Into Math’s online resources. Dr. Removcik explained that Into Math will feature more robust online resources than the previous curriculum resource, which was 11-12 years old. The District will finance Into Math over the next three years.

Class Companion Pilot Survey

Dr. Removcik, Dr. Imbarlina, Mrs. Shannon Roos, and Mr. Andrew Halter presented the high school’s Class Companion pilot survey results. Dr. Imbarlina explained that the high school faculty recognized the need to learn more about AI after introducing ChatGPT as a public resource for students and teachers in the summer of 2023. The high school’s two instructional coaches, Mrs. Roos and Mr. Halter explored various AI tools and how they could potentially enhance learning and instruction.

Mrs. Roos highlighted the importance of collaborating with the administration and Technology Department to focus on understanding potential risks associated with AI and the responsibility of educators to help prepare students for success after graduation. Ethical use was a primary concern during these discussions, focusing on meeting the District's safety and security standards. Their goal was to explore and implement AI tools designed explicitly for education.

Mr. Halter discussed the implantation of Class Companion, an AI tool based on generative AI that provides feedback on students' writing without creating content for them. He said the tool has various educational uses in all subject areas, including comprehension and high-level research. The tool allows students to revise and submit multiple iterations based on the generative feedback.

Mrs. Roos provided an overview of the Class Companion pilot process. The tool was first implemented in English 9, AP Seminar, and AP Research courses. Parents were sent an informational letter informing them their child would be utilizing Class Companion. Students received instruction on the capabilities and limitations of AI tools and their compliance with the high school's plagiarism policies. Mrs. Roos said they allowed students to use Class Companion to receive feedback on written work, make considerations, and submit their final paper. Class Companion was then introduced to other interested high school teachers, with in-person training sessions available, primarily in English and social studies departments.

Mr. Halter described working with Dr. McKaveney to ensure compliance with COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) regulations. He also discussed how the informational letter for his AP Seminar class emphasized that AI feedback does not guarantee a successful paper; students are instructed to use the tool to supplement their peer reviews before submitting a final research paper. He encourages students to use the tool cautiously.

Further, Mr. Halter explained how teachers use Class Companion. They input prompts and develop rubrics that provide instant feedback for students. He described the tool's ability to comprehend students' writing and offer targeted feedback, encouraging students to make revisions. If students disagree with the feedback, they can dispute it. Mr. Halter said the ability to dispute feedback generates meaningful classroom discussions. He added that the tool is perfect for his AP Seminar class, where he cannot give students feedback on their writing.

Mr. Shages inquired if the College Board approves AI tools such as Class Companion. Mrs. Roos responded that the College Board has a specific AI policy that allows its use for constructive feedback but not rewriting. Class Companion falls under acceptable use.

Additionally, Mrs. Roos presented the Board with an example of how Class Companion works using a ninth-grader's paragraph. She noted how the instant feedback allows her to conference with students during class to discuss their writing. The revisions happen in real-time, allowing students to make edits and resubmit. Mrs. Roos added that students reacted positively to seeing their scores increase upon resubmission.

Mr. Halter discussed the importance of refining their process for using Class Companion. As instructional coaches, they took the time to create assignments and develop a demo class to test the tool before introducing it to students. They used AP samples from the College Board to ensure the tool's effectiveness in AP classes, adjusting the rubrics based on results from high, medium, and low

student responses. Throughout the implementation, they monitored student feedback and adjusted assignments and rubrics.

Mrs. Roos highlighted the successful implementation of Class Companion among approximately 300 students, primarily in English and social studies classes. The tool helped identify students who might have been off-task early on, enabling teachers to help them. Students, particularly struggling learners, benefited from the revision process, while teachers found the tool easy to use.

Regarding the negative aspects of Class Companion, Mr. Halter said the feedback was sometimes too difficult to understand, particularly for ninth-grade students. In other instances, students found that the feedback was too direct. Mr. Halter also noted feedback inconsistencies when submitting the same work twice. Mr. Halter said the feedback was sometimes too lenient regarding lengthy research papers.

Dr. Imbarlina stressed the need to remind students to be careful when mindlessly utilizing AI without doing their own research and fact-checking. Mr. Halter added that their main takeaway from the pilot was that using AI in the classroom must meet the ethical component and clear expectations for when it is appropriate to use and to what degree. He emphasized the need for students to engage with AI under supervision rather than independently, which fosters a process-based approach to learning and allows teachers to monitor student progress.

The discussion shifted to the high school's current policy on how students can use AI for assignments. The current system has three levels: red (no AI allowed), yellow (use with caution), and green (use permitted with citation).

Dr. Removcik discussed the District's next steps regarding sharing the pilot's findings District-wide. A committee of K-12 teachers, instructional coaches, and the Technology Department will collaborate to develop a consistent approach for AI use in the District. Mrs. Roos and Mr. Halter are developing an asynchronous online AI course focusing on instructional and workflow tools for teachers across the district. Dr. Imbarlina thanked Mrs. Roos and Mr. Halter for undertaking this work to understand AI, and carefully considering its implementation in the classroom.

Mr. Shages asked if other school districts in the area are undertaking a similar approach to AI use. Mrs. Roos responded that while some schools they have talked to use it on the workflow end, very few are looking at AI from a student lens like Hampton. Dr. Loughhead added that he believes students were already using AI tools like ChatGPT outside of school, which promoted the District's proactive approach. Further, he said he saw the AP guidelines on AI use as the perfect opportunity for the District to get ahead of the curve.

Mrs. Hamlin inquired if other AI educational tools exist and whether the District has considered them. Dr. Removcik acknowledged that there are other programs but noted that some might be preferred for different levels of instruction. Mrs. Roos added that security and privacy are other concerns when considering these tools.

Dr. Loughhead emphasized the need to be proactive as AI tools are ever-evolving. He also recommends that Hampton present their findings at Penn State University's AI forum in Philadelphia in September. He believes that Hampton is ahead of the curve and that the forum will provide insight into how other schools use these technologies.

Dr. Removcik clarified that the Board is not voting on continuing Class Companion, but rather, this was an update on the pilot and its instructional considerations. Dr. Loughead highlighted the difference between adopting textbooks and using resources like this AI tool.

Into Math Presentation

Dr. Removcik presented an overview of the District's process for recommending Into Math as a K-5 math curriculum resource. The work began in 2022 with attending presentations from publishing companies and visiting several different schools that had already implemented the program. The District also conducted two pilot programs over two years before making the final recommendation for Into Math.

In response to Mr. Shages's question about professional development, Dr. Removcik said teachers will have opportunities over the summer and on the first day back to help ensure a smooth transition. She noted the program's emphasis on mathematical discourse and the abundance of online resources. The program has already been piloted with teachers across grades 1-4, which should also ease the transition.

Finance

(1:00:29)

Mr. Vasko presented the following action items that will be considered for Board approval at the June 10th Voting Meeting:

- Worker's Compensation Insurance Coverage with UPMC through the Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc. at an estimated cost of \$99,999, effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. The District operates an annually certified Safety Committee. The District receives a 5% discount on the annual WC premium by having a certified committee. The annual savings is over \$5,000 per year.
- 2024-2025 District insurance coverage through Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc., effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 as follows:

Property	\$109,688
Package (including Auto & Boiler)	\$60,636
Educators Legal Liability	\$31,800
Umbrella	\$7,409
Environmental Liability (Year 2 of 3) Prepaid	

- 2024-2025 Student Accident Insurance coverage with Bollinger Specialty Group through the Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc., at a cost of \$11,076, effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. There is no increase from the current policy,

- Non-Resident Tuition Rates as follows:

	2024-2025 Yearly	2024-2025 Quarterly	<i>2023-2024 Yearly (Information Only)</i>
Kindergarten	\$8,220.00	\$2,055.00	<i>\$7,483.00</i>
Elementary (Gr 1-6)	\$16,440.00	\$4,110.00	<i>\$14,967.00</i>
Secondary (Gr 7-12)	\$16,646.00	\$4,161.50	<i>\$16,121.00</i>

Mr. Kline noted that the non-resident tuition rates are based on a calculation using the District's actual cost per student based on the previous year's audit, with an inflationary number applied for adjustment.

- Payment of June and July 2024 invoices will be ratified at the August 12, 2024, Voting Meeting.
- 2024-2025 Final Budget, with revenues of \$64,197,548, expenditures of \$64,497,548, and the utilization of the \$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 summarized the changes between the May 6, 2024 Budget and the June 10, 2024 Budget. The budget was adjusted for two additional retirements/resignations, reducing salaries by \$29,117 and benefits by \$13,295. The budget was further reduced by \$32,845 due to the final negotiated insurance rates. Mr. Kline explained that the budget was balanced by adding \$69,257 to the capital projects transfer.

Dr. Loughead added that Mr. Shages's suggestion at a previous meeting to replace the District's HVAC van with an off-lease vehicle should result in considerable savings.

Unrelated to the budget, Mr. Shages mentioned his conversation with Representative Rob Mercuri regarding the state's multi-billion dollar budget surplus. Mr. Shages suggested looking into more one-time grants for school districts and municipalities. Dr. Loughead said that Hampton has applied for a Public School Facility Improvement Grant Program to help fund the middle school roof replacement project, with positive letters of support from local legislators.

Mr. Shages indicated, per his conversation with Representative Mercuri, that cyber and charter school reform legislation is likely to be tied to additional private school vouchers.

- 2024-2025 Homestead/Farmstead Resolution for distributing state gaming funds.

Mr. Kline noted that this year's distribution of state gaming funds features a significant increase of roughly \$38 per homestead.

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

2023-2024 Rebate Program Income Levels and Rebate Amounts	
\$0 to \$8,000	\$440
\$8,001 to \$15,000	\$360
\$15,001 to \$18,000	\$250
\$18,001 to \$30,000	\$190

Proposed 2024-2025 Rebate Program Income Levels and Rebate Amounts	
\$0 to \$8,000	\$1,000
\$8,001 to \$15,000	\$800
\$15,001 to \$18,000	\$300
\$18,001 to \$35,000	\$225

Upon review, Mr. Vasko said that only one community member was at the lowest income level, so the Board decided to raise the rebate amount to \$1,000, with the second lowest bracket receiving \$800

Local Tax Revenue Update

Mr. Kline presented the Local Tax Revenue Update as of May 31, 2024. The District is 100.22% of real estate tax collections budgeted for 2023-2024. Additionally, Mr. Kline noted that earned income taxes are up 5.87% from the previous year, which gave him the confidence to include an aggressive number in the 2024-2025 budget. He noted that delinquent real estate taxes outperformed last year's numbers by 10.09%.

Under new business, Mr. Shages was re-nominated as Board Treasurer for the 2024-2025 school year, effective July 1, 2024.

Personnel

(1:16:54)

Ms. Balason presented the following action items to be considered for Board approval at the June 10th meeting:

Resignation

- Mrs. Kelsey Kowalczyk is resigning after eight years with the District, effective June 10, 2024. Mrs. Kowalczyk is a Grade 6 English Language Arts Teacher at Hampton Middle School.
- Ms. Lena Clary is resigning after ten years with the District, effective June 10, 2024. Ms. Clary is a Special Education Teacher at Hampton Middle School.
- Ms. Margaret O’Laughlin, effective July 27, 2024. Ms. O’Laughlin is a Paraeducator at Wyland Elementary School.
- Ms. Kelly Hashmi is resigning from the District effective June 8, 2024. Ms. Hashmi is a custodian at Central Elementary School.
- Change in resignation date for Ms. LaNette Weber from May 31, 2024, to May 24, 2024. Ms. Weber was a Paraeducator at Wyland Elementary School.

Administration

- Change in status for Dr. Jacquelyn Removcik, whose job title and position will change from Assistant to the Superintendent to Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Removcik will receive a Contract for Employment, subject to the approval by the District Solicitor, for the period beginning July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2029.
- Change in status for Ms. Tammi Kinzel, whose job title and position will change from Business Manager to Assistant Director of Administrative Services. In addition, an addendum reflecting this change will be added to Ms. Kinzel's current contract, subject to approval by the District Solicitor.

Teachers

- Mr. Jeremy Bassett as a TPE Grade 8 Science Teacher at Hampton Middle School, effective August 19, 2024. Salary is Master's Step 1 at \$56,606. Mr. Bassett is replacing Ms. Jill Sladic.
- Ms. Erika Yigdall as the Long-Term Substitute Health and Physical Education Teacher at Hampton High School for the first semester of the 2024-2025 school year, effective August 19, 2024. Salary is \$37,500, prorated. Ms. Yigdall is substituting for Ms. Emily Onik.
- Ms. Alison Pirl as the Long-Term Substitute Art Teacher at Wyland Elementary School and Hampton Middle School for the 2024-2025 school year, effective August 19, 2024. Salary is \$37,500. Ms. Pirl is substituting for Mrs. Elizabeth Howe.
- The following professional employees who have attained tenure status effective June 10, 2024.

Hannah Dunlap	Samuel Flowers	Deborah Hogan
Michael Marasati	Elizabeth Trent	
- Mrs. Patricia Pozza and Mrs. Wendi Hunter as co-sponsors of the Growing Together Club at Wyland Elementary School for the 2023-2024 School Year.
- Dr. Brooke Stebler as the Stock Market Club sponsor for the 2023-2024 School Year. Dr. Stebler is replacing Mrs. Melissa Survinski.

Other

- 3.5% salary increase for the Technology Technicians for the 2024-2025 School Year.
- 3.5% salary increase for the Health Office Nurses for the 2024-2025 School Year.
- 3.5% salary increase for the Safety & Security Specialist for the 2024-2025 School Year.
- 3.75% salary increase for the Executive Assistants for the 2024-2025 School Year.

Custodial/Maintenance

- Change in status for Ms. Jordan Mazzei moving from a Building Substitute Teacher to a 10-month/8-hour custodian at Wyland Elementary School effective June 11, 2024. The hourly rate is \$23.68. Ms. Mazzei is replacing Mr. Brett Balint.

Supplemental Contracts

- The [following](#) conditional appointments for 2024-2025, each at a rate of \$152 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 2024-2025 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 2024-2025.

Technology

(1:20:23)

There was no report this evening.

Policy and Legislative Affairs

(1:20:30)

Mr. Shages presented the following item to be considered for Board approval at the June 10th meeting:

- Second Reading of Policy #202: Eligibility of Non-Resident Students.
- First Reading of Policy #335: Family and Medical Leaves (Administrative Employees).
- First Reading of Policy #435: Family and Medical Leaves (Professional Employees).
- First Reading of Policy #535: Family and Medical Leaves (Classified Employees).

Regarding the Family and Medical Leaves policies, Dr. Loughead said that the majority of the changes are beyond the District's control and fall within state and federal laws. Mr. Vasko suggested combining the three policies since they contain the same language. Dr. Loughead said they would look into this suggestion.

Transportation

(1:23:33)

Mrs. Kennedy presented the following action item to be considered for Board approval at the June 10th meeting: 2024 Summer Transportation.

Mr. Kline said the District is experiencing difficulties finding drivers. However, he is confident in their available resources to have transportation ready for the school year.

Public Comment & Adjournment

(1:24:30)

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

Mr. Vasko reminded everyone that the final HMS Reality Fair of the year is on Tuesday, May 14th. He encouraged everyone who had not yet volunteered to participate.

Mrs. Hamlin motioned to adjourn the meeting, and there was no executive session.