

Seneca Valley School District



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION SESSION

Seneca Valley Senior High School Auditorium - 7:00 p.m.

Minutes

January 17, 2023

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Ms. Kathy Whittle, President, called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.
 - A. **Moment of Silence** – The meeting was opened with a moment of silence.
 - B. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Ruhan Boopathi, third grader at Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School, continued the board initiative, “I Led the Pledge” by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - C. **Roll Call** – by Ms. Julia Benson, School Board Secretary, showed the following members in attendance: Ms. Leslie Bredl, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Tim Hester, Mr. Mike Jacobs, Mr. James Nickel, Ms. Kathy Whittle and Mr. Jeff Widdowson. Mr. Fred Peterson joined the meeting via phone.

2. **INFORMATION REPORTS**
 - A. **Student/Staff Recognition** - Seneca Valley’s High School Mock Trial team recently competed in the University of Pittsburgh’s Cathedral Classic, a mock trial competition featuring 49 teams from across the state. At the conclusion of the event, only three teams went undefeated winning all four of their trials. We are pleased to share that Seneca Valley was one of those three teams, ultimately placing third in the tournament. We would also like to note that Kacy Christensen, a junior, won the Best Attorney Award out of nearly 150 student-attorneys who competed. The SV Mock Trial Team comprises of students in grades 9-12 in the gifted program and is advised by Briana Nassan, Intermediate High School Gifted Support Teacher.
 - B. **All-Star Award Winner** – Ms. Jane Casey, ABC Transit, Inc. Bus Driver, Bus S53 was recognized and presented with the All-Star Award by Transportation Director, Mr. John Demkowicz. Mr. Demkowicz shared that Ms. Casey has been driving for the district for 14 years. Ms. Casey has had the same bus runs that includes driving to Connoquenessing Valley Elementary and to the secondary campus. Mr. Demkowicz read from a letter that was sent on behalf of Ms. Casey from a family in the district that shared how Ms. Casey is kind, welcoming and greets the students with a smile. Ms. Casey continues to go above and beyond the bus driver responsibilities by supporting the students she drives. Mr. Demkowicz thanked Ms. Casey for caring so much for the children that she drives. Dr. Vitale recognized the passion and time that it took for the family to write the letter on Ms. Casey’s behalf. Dr. Vitale expressed how proud she is of Ms. Casey. Ms. Whittle shared that Seneca Valley is lucky to have Ms. Casey as a driver and that she, too, is proud of her.

C. **Dates to Remember**

January 1-31	School Board Director Recognition Month
January 17	School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m., Senior High School Auditorium
January 20	Pennsylvania Music Education Association (PMEA) Jr. Festival hosted at Seneca Valley IHS, Grades 8-9
January 24	Report Card Release, Grades 7-12

D. **Financial Reports**

1. Operations
2. Senior High Activities
3. Intermediate High Activities
4. Middle School Activities
5. Athletics
6. Food Service
7. Tax Collections
8. Capital Projects Funds

E. **Presentation of Hope Squad** - Dr. Jeff Roberts presented to the Board information on Hope Squad and the ways that this program can be a resource and support to the students at Seneca Valley. All materials for this program are provided by Hope Squad.

The focus of the presentation is how we can provide advanced training to a select group of students who are naturally supportive of struggling students to promote wellness district wide. Hope Squad is built on the principle that students are most comfortable confiding in their peers when they are having difficulty.

If approved, the plan is to launch the Hope Squad program at Seneca Valley in the spring of 2023 in grades 9-12, with anticipation of launching at Ryan Gloyer Middle School in late spring or summer. If approved, Seneca Valley School District will be among the first programs of its kind in Western Pennsylvania, and a part of over 1,600 schools that have launched it across the country.

The goals of the Hope Squad program are to create a safe school environment, promote connectedness, support anti-bullying, encourage mental wellness, reduce mental health stigma and prevent substance misuse. The Hope Squad will be led by school staff who have volunteered to serve as advisors. At this time, over 25 secondary staff members have volunteered to serve as advisors. The advisors represent social studies, English, math, special education, science, school counseling, family and consumer Sciences among others. There will be a required one day of training to serve as an advisor.

Student squad members will be nominated by their peers who are easy to talk with, a good listener, someone you would turn to if you needed a friend and someone who does not bully others. The students will not be trained to act as counselors, but instead will learn how to respectfully report concerns to an adult staff member. Hope Squad student squad members will also learn about maintaining appropriate

relationship boundaries and valuing self-care. Parental consent will be required to participate as a student squad member and a parent meeting will be held.

The student squad members will organize school activities that promote inclusion and connectedness which will include an annual Hope Week in the Spring. Our commitment to student Hope Squad members is that they will receive training monthly by staff advisors from across the school. The student squad members will also have access to Hope Squad advisors to answer questions and provide support.

Mr. Jacobs asked if the same program will be in the RGMS as the 9-12 grade buildings and how will students know about this program. Dr. Roberts explained that there will be two different plans: one for RGMS and one for grades 9-12. The plan is to survey students in February by asking them to name three students that they would seek out if they were having difficulties. From this list, they will work to find a group of students that are not involved in everything but that are connected to the student body to be the student advisors.

Mr. Nickel commented that he did a quick search on Hope Squad and sees that it is a national network.

Ms. Leslie Bredl questioned what Dr. Roberts anticipated the time commitment level to be for each student. Dr. Roberts replied with formally the student squad members will meet one time each month during their lunch and additionally formally one or two times. At any time, the commitment becomes too much for a student squad member, they are always able to discontinue their role. The goal is to find approximately 15 student squad members for each grade level.

Dr. Roberts shared that he believes in prevention and that he wants to be able to help students when things are small before they become too big.

Mr. Peterson likes that this is proactive and that it is not reactive.

Ms. Whittle asked how students will know which students are student squad members and how they will communicate with them when the time arises. Dr. Roberts responded with that the student squad members will each have swag that they choose, he is asking for bulletin board space in each of the buildings and that adult advisors will be able to contact student squad members to meet students during study halls, lunch, etc.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – There was no public comment.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Approved the following minutes:
 - A. **Work Session** - November 7, 2022
 - B. **Action Meeting** - November 14, 2022
 - C. **Reorganization Meeting** - December 5, 2022
 - D. **Action Meeting** - December 5, 2022
5. **TREASURER'S REPORT** – Approved the treasurer's report.

6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS** – Approved the general fund bills as follows:
Grand Total: \$8,441,489.76

7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS** – Approved the construction fund bills as follows:
Grand Total: \$4,321,591.74

Ms. Harrison motioned, seconded by Mr. Widdowson, to approve the minutes, treasurer’s report, general fund bills and construction fund bills. The motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

8. **ADMINISTRATION ACTION**

A. **Committee Assignments** – Approved the School Board committee assignments for 2023.

B. **Substitute Rate Extension** – Approved to continue substitute rates across the following job classifications that began on October 11, 2022, until June 7, 2023.

- Any day-to-day teacher substitute that subs in a paraprofessional role in a **multiple support classroom** will receive \$175 per day.
- Any day-to-day teacher substitute that subs as the teacher in a **multiple support classroom** will receive \$200 per day.

C. **Board Policies** - Approved the following board policies:

1. Policy 204 - Attendance, revised, first reading.
2. Policy 233 - Suspension and Expulsion, revised, first reading.

D. **Student Adjudications** - Approved the following Student Adjudications:

1. #2022-23-19
2. #2022-23-20

Mr. Hester motioned, seconded by Mr. DiTullio, to approve the committee assignments, substitute rate extension, board policies and student adjudications. The motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

9. **INSTRUCTION ACTION**

A. **Conferences** - Approved the conference requests.

B. **Grant Disbursements** - Granted permission to apply for and disburse, the following grants:

1. Safety Equipment Grant funded by the PA Department of Education - Office for Safe Schools in the amount of \$49,997.60. Funds will be used for additional portable radios, additional ALICE online training, enhanced emergency management system and training and various safety initiatives throughout the district.

2. TransformedED Teacher Innovation Fellowship Mini-Grant funded through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and in association with the Western PA AASA consortium in the amount of \$1,500. Funds will be utilized in the SV Center for Biotechnology to expand and enhance the technology used to research water chemistry.
- C. **Affiliation Agreement** - Approved the affiliation agreement with *Hope Squad* effective January 9, 2023.
- D. **Student Trips** – Approved the following student trips:
1. Mr. John Mabold, French teacher at RGMS, to take students to France, March 27-April 4, 2024, at no cost to the district.
 2. Sarah Miller, Orchestra teacher at RGMS/IHS, to take students to Brookville Jr/Sr High for Pennsylvania Music Education Association (PMEA) District's, January 26-28. Students will miss two days of instruction.
 3. Mr. Lettiere, JROTC instructor at SHS, to take students to Gary Anderson CMP Marksmanship Center in Port Clinton, Ohio, February 8-11, 2023. Students will miss 2 days of instruction. The trip is at no cost to the district.
 4. Mr. Fortunato, Robotics teacher at the Senior High School, to take the Raider Robotics FIRST Tech Challenge Team to McCaskey East High School in Lancaster, PA, for the February State Qualifier, February 10-11, 2023. Students will miss 1/2 day of instruction. Costs will be covered from budgeted monies and donations.

Mr. Peterson asked if there was an update on how the students were doing that were on the ski trip to Lake Tahoe, CA. Dr. Vitale said that she would check on that and get back to the board members after the meeting.

Ms. Harrison motioned, seconded by Ms. Bredl, to approve conferences, grant disbursements, the affiliation agreement and student trips. The motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

10. BUSINESS/FINANCE ACTION

- A. **Joint Purchasing Agreement** - Approved the Joint Purchasing Agreement Resolution for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.
- B. **Right of Way Agreement** - Approved the Right of Way Agreement between Seneca Valley School District and Penn Power for the electrical service to the new Restroom/Locker Room facility.
- C. **Change Orders** - Approved the construction change orders for Ehrman Crest.
- D. **Budget Transfers** - Approved budget transfers.

E. **NexTier Stadium Upgrades/Replacements**

1. Approve Musco Lighting through the government cooperative purchasing program, (Keystone Purchasing Network) vendor agreement for the LED Field Lighting Upgrades for NexTier Stadium and Meyers Law Group Stadium, to be completed in the Summer of 2023 in the amount of \$492,427.00, pending solicitor review of final agreement.

2. Approve Stadium Solutions, Inc. through the government cooperative purchasing program, (Keystone Purchasing Network) vendor agreement for the NexTier Press Box Replacement, to be completed in the Winter of 2023 in the amount of \$1,086,650.00, pending solicitor review of final agreement.

F. **Budget Resolution** - Approved the budget resolution indicating that the district will not raise the rate of any tax for the supports of its public schools for the 2023-24 fiscal year by more than 4.1%, which is the Act 1 index for the district as established by the Department of Education.

G. **ZFX Service Agreement** - Approved the service agreement with ZFX for the 2023 All School Musical.

Mr. Jacobs motioned, seconded by Mr. Hester, to approve the joint purchasing agreement, the right of way agreement, change orders, budget transfers, NexTier Stadium replacements, budget transfer and the ZFX Agreement. The motion carried on a roll call vote with eight members voting “yes” and Mr. James Nickel voting “no”.

11. **PERSONNEL ACTION** – Approved the resignation, appointments, leaves, sabbatical, retirement, and Memorandum of Understanding that were shared in backup and were discussed in the executive session.

A. **Resignation** – *Classified* – Kimberly Kaper.

B. **Appointments** – *Classified* – Kay Hoch, *Supplementals* – Rob Hornick, Donna Schaeffer, Eric Grove, Stacey Richard, Steve Baldinger, Joe Ehmann, Tim Cammisa, Mackenzie Kacsur, Devyn Brown, Marie McClachlan, Amanda Shaheen and Kevin Wildrick.

C. **Leaves** – *Professional* – Katelyn Gall, Kate Oliver, *Classified* – Lisa Recce.

D. **Sabbatical** – Tracey Clarke.

E. **Retirement** – *Professional* – Donna Schaeffer.

F. **Memorandum of Understanding** – Approved the MOU with Seneca Valley Education Association regarding Tresa Amoscato.

Mr. Widdowson motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to approve the resignation, appointments, leaves, sabbatical, retirement, and Memorandum of Understanding. The motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

12. **LETTERS SENT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD** – No communication has been received since the School Board Meeting on January 9, 2023.
13. **ADJOURNMENT** – With nothing further to come before the board, Mr. Widdowson motioned, seconded by Mr. DiTullio to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.
14. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - An executive session was held prior to this meeting to discuss personnel items.

Ms. Kathy Whittle, President



Ms. Julia Benson, School Board Secretary