



Seneca Valley School District

SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION

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

MINUTES

March 1, 2021

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mr. Eric DiTullio, President, at 7:17 p.m.
 - A. **Moment of Silence** – The meeting was opened with a moment of silence in memory of the lives lost due to COVID-19, and in reflection of those who are mourning loved ones, recovering from the illness or have been negatively impacted during this time.
 - B. **Pledge of Allegiance** – John Visoiu, a fourth grader at Haine Elementary School, continued the board meeting initiative, “I Led the Pledge,” by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance
 - C. **Roll Call** – Roll call by Ms. Lisa Mislán, Board Secretary, showed the following members in attendance: Ms. Leslie Bredl, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Timothy Hester, Mr. James Nickel, Mr. Frederick Peterson Jr., Ms. Kathy Whittle, Mr. Jeffrey Widdowson. Mr. Mike Jacobs was absent.

Others present included Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Matthew McKinley, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary; Dr. Sean McCarty, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary; Ms. Kyra Bobak, Human Resources Director; Ms. Lynn Burtner, Business Manager; Ms. Linda Andreassi, Director of Communications; Mr. Gerald Miller, Special Education and Gifted Director; Mr. Randy Miller, Director of Buildings and Grounds; Dr. Marie Palano, Supervisor of Analytics and Federal Programs; Dr. Jeffrey Roberts, Supervisor of Gifted Education and Student Services; Ms. Annie Mersing, Director of Advancement; Ms. Heather Lewis, Athletic Director; Mr. James Pearson, Director of Transportation; Dr. Regina Hiler, BSAVTS Executive Director; Ms. Rebekah Davis, BSAVTS Business Manager; Mr. Stanley Heffner; Mr. Matthew Hoffman, Solicitor

2. INFORMATION REPORTS

- A. **Seneca Valley All-Star Club Member** – Ms. Andreassi announced a new staff recognition program, the SV All-Star Club, that will comprise of classified staff members who go above and beyond in their roles within the District. Each month, a new member of the club will be announced. Mr. Stan Heffner, a bus driver for SV and employee for ABC Transit, was recognized this evening. Mr. James Pearson, Director of Transportation, introduced Mr. Heffner noting that he is a model for other bus drivers and a role model for the students. Dr. Vitale congratulated Mr. Heffner as the first member of the SV All-Star Club and extended her appreciation for all that he does for the District and for the students.

B. Student/Staff Recognition – Ms. Andreassi announced the following recognitions.

1. Seneca Valley Seniors David Choi, Zachary Garcia, Simren Jayaraman, Parker Logue, Ananya Rao, Avani Salunkhe, Anoop Savio and Dora White, have been named finalists in the 66th Annual National Merit Scholarship Program held by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). These seniors are eight of approximately 15,000 finalists and will now advance to the next level of the program where they will have the opportunity to earn a National Merit Scholarship and, ultimately, the Merit Scholar® title.
2. Possessing a 3,000-point lead and a total score of 32,631 points, the Seneca Valley Academic Decathlon team placed first and took home 12 medals at the recent Western Pennsylvania Regional Academic Decathlon Competition. The students competed in eight events: essay, art, economics, literature, mathematics, music, science and social science. The next competition will be against the top schools throughout the state later this month.

C. Dates to Remember – Ms. Andreassi announced the following dates to remember.

March 3	End of K-6 Second Trimester
March 8	Start of Spring Sports
March 12	K-6 Report of Student Progress release
March 13	SAT Testing, Senior High School, 7:30 a.m.
March 14	Daylight Savings Time begins
March 18	End of 7-12 SVAOC Third Nine Weeks
March 20	Spring begins
March 23	End of 7-12 Third Nine Weeks
March 27	Passover begins
March 31	7-12 Report Card release

D. Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School 2021-2022 Budget Presentation

– Dr. Regina Hiler and Ms. Rebekah Davis presented a summary of the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School’s budget in the amount of \$6,075,289 for the 2021-22 school year which shows an increase of \$122,810 over last year’s budget. The total budget increase from 2020-21 to estimated 2021-22 is \$109,369. Dr. Hiler noted that there is a \$30,000 budgetary reserve for any catastrophic event that may occur. Districts would not be billed for this unless there is such an event. Dr. Hiler reviewed the increases by description as shown in the following chart.

Object	Description	2021-2022 Budget (\$)	Percent of Budget (%)	2020-2021 Budget (\$)	Percent of Budget (%)	Increase or (Decrease) (\$)
000	Budgetary Reserve	30,000	0.49	30,000	0.50	0
100	Salaries	2,628,617	43.05	2,572,901	43.01	55,716
200	Employee Benefits	1,989,827	32.59	1,936,632	32.37	53,195
300	Purch Prof & Tech Services	84,951	1.39	85,146	1.42	(195)
400	Purch Property Services	115,244	1.89	106,500	1.78	8,744
500	Other Purchased Services	181,350	2.97	198,800	3.32	(17,450)
600	Supplies	773,700	12.67	779,700	13.03	(6,000)
700	Equipment	294,200	4.82	266,700	4.46	27,500
800	Other Objects	7,400	0.12	6,100	0.10	1,300
900	Other Uses of Funds	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
	Total	6,105,289	100.00	5,982,479	100.00	122,810

Mr. Nickel asked if we could include the budget as an agenda item for further discussion in a future meeting.

E. **Agency Reports**

1. Vo-Tech – Mr. Fred Peterson Jr. asked Board members to complete their ballot and mail as soon as possible.
2. I. U. IV – Mr. Eric DiTullio reported that a new Director of Business Services has been hired, Ms. Maureen Werwie. The 2019-2020 audit was also presented at the last meeting and the auditors were pleased with the communications and help received from the MIU IV staff. Mr. DiTullio noted that MIU IV general operating budget is on the agenda to be approved in our March 8, 2021 action meeting, with a 4.6% reduction.

F. **Legislative Report** – Mr. Eric DiTullio reported at the state level, the Excellence in Education for All Act is being drafted. Key components include education opportunities for the most vulnerable students, charter school reforms and a protection from Coronavirus learning clause. Up for consideration is Senate Bill 73 School Mandate Waiver Program which would allow public schools to apply for a waiver of many, but not all, of the state-imposed mandates. Also up for consideration is Senate Bill 252 which would allow for public notices to be advertised either electronically or in printed format. The legislation would provide flexibility in meeting certain requirements which will improve efficiency and reduce costs. Mr. Nickel added that the Department of Education has given permission to delay standardized testing to the Fall of 2021. Mr. DiTullio noted that the District received a letter from the senate with the reminder that pandemic relief is a one-time funding offer, not a recurring funding source.

G. **Financial Reports** – The following reports were provided in the backup materials.

1. Operations
2. Senior High Activities
3. Intermediate High Activities
4. Athletics
5. Tax Collection Reports
6. Capital Projects Funds

H. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Update** – Dr. McCarty provided an update stating that February 9 was the most recent community conversation, which was focused on creating an equity statement for the District. The goal of this statement would be to communicate our priority of providing equitable opportunities and support for all students. Furthermore, it was discussed how to hold ourselves accountable if we fall short of the expectations we are trying to accomplish. The K-12 curriculum and resources are under audit and we are working with teachers to vet additional resources. Finally, members of our CORE team continue to work with our DEI consultant, Dr. Gadson, to address our non-instructional departments who support our students.

- I. **COVID-19 Update** – Dr. Vitale provided an update noting that, as of today, the Pennsylvania travel restrictions have been lifted and some additional indoor/outdoor occupancy leniencies will be in place. Governor Wolf is to hold a press conference on Wednesday, March 3, to address “education worker” vaccinations in more detail. Even so, we must remain vigilant by maintaining six feet distance which includes both indoor and outdoor sports. To date, about 110 employees (out of 980) have been vaccinated either with one or two doses. Dr. Vitale added that we continue to work diligently to find vaccine slots for our staff.
- **PCR Positivity Rate** (most recent seven days February 19-25) = **4.8%** (down from 5.2%) – This is one of several thresholds to move us to “moderate” as a county. We need to be at 10% or lower. We have met this threshold for five weeks in a row.
 - **Incidence Rate** (most recent seven days February 19-25, per 100,000 residents) = **60.7** (down from the previous week at 64.4) – We have met this threshold of 100 or less to move our county to “moderate” transmission for the third week in a row.
 - **Difference in confirmed cases** (most recent seven days vs. previous seven days) = **-8** last week it was **-44**.
 - **Butler County Daily COVID Rate** [Pennsylvania Data \(pa.gov\)](#) The 14-day rolling average is **33.9** (this is up slightly from yesterday’s average of 33.4). However, we track this on an internal spreadsheet for another view. Unfortunately, it is not how the state tracks COVID cases for their transmission level thresholds. Therefore, refer to the second bullet above on Incident Rate.
 - **Zip Code COVID Cases** [Pennsylvania Data \(pa.gov\)](#) click on the tab at bottom to see specific zip codes in our school district. 25 new cases new cases reported today at noon for this past Friday, Saturday & Sunday) across all seven of our school district zip codes. Keep in mind, there are approximately 50,000 people that live in our school district.
 - **SV COVID Dashboard** [COVID-19 / SV COVID-19 Dashboard \(svsd.net\)](#)
 - **Five days per week in-person instruction** – We will continue to monitor the numbers with the hope of starting five days of in-person instruction on March 9. The board would vote on March 8.

We received notice from the press today that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which was approved on Saturday, will be reserved for “education workers.” We will await official notice from the Governor’s office.

- J. **Instruction, Teaching and Learning During COVID-19** – Dr. Vitale stated that we are focused on making sure there are no learning gaps by using much of our federal money to conduct specialized summer programming. Dr. Palano provided details first noting that the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds are one-time funds provided to help schools respond to COVID-19 impacts. She also stated that ESSER II funds will be used to develop summer programming to ensure students are making adequate progress toward proficiency in the essential standards for each grade level and/or course. Essential standards are priority standards that connect to multiple disciplines and have a greater impact beyond the current grade level or course. Additional anticipated summer programming details are as follows:

Students entering grades 1-6

- Summer programming will focus on developing academic skills and positive attitudes to improve learning outcomes.

Students entering grades 7-8

- Math Essentials Camp
- ELA Essentials Camp
- Science Essentials Camp

Students entering grades 9-10

- High School Biology Essentials Workshop
- High School Algebra 1 Essentials Workshop
- High School English Essentials Workshop

Students entering grades 11-12

- SAT/ACT Strategies
- Algebra 2 Skills Refresher
- Math Essentials Using Excel
- Writing Workshop
- Senior High Chemistry Lab Experience
- Senior High Physics Lab Experience

In addition to academic camps, we hope to enhance this opportunity by providing transportation (upon request) and extending the breakfast and lunch programs throughout summer programming.

We will continue to offer other typical summer programs.

Mr. Nickel asked if there would be a mix of cyber and physical in-person instruction. Dr. Palano confirmed that there would be.

Mr. Nickel asked if we would be making course recommendations to students to help them decide if and what courses they should be considering. Dr. Palano noted that evidence of student learning and teacher input would be reviewed. She added that Seneca Valley is always looking at data to determine where deficit skills may be and providing interventions. We are always monitoring student growth and achievement to ensure progress is being made to meet grade-level expectations.

Dr. Palano stated that only students who meet the program criteria will qualify to participate in the summer programs funded through ESSER at no cost.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Approve the following meeting minutes.
 - A. **Work Session** – February 1, 2021
 - B. **Regular Meeting** – February 8, 2021
 - C. **Special Meeting** – February 17, 2021
4. **TREASURER’S REPORT** – Approve the treasurer’s report.

5. **GENERAL FUND BILLS** – Approve the general fund bills totaling \$3,639,649.71
6. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS** – Approve the construction fund bills totaling \$1,810,611.31
7. **ADMINISTRATION ACTION** – Approve the following board policies.
 - A. Policy 209– Student Health Examinations, revised, second and final reading – Dr. Roberts
 - B. Policy 247 – Hazing, revised, second and final reading – Ms. Bobak
 - C. Policy 249 – Anti-Bullying, revised, second and final reading – Ms. Bobak
 - D. Policy 426 – Complaint Process, revised, second and final reading – Ms. Bobak
 - E. Policy 824 – Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries, revised, second and final reading – Ms. Bobak
8. **INSTRUCTION ACTION**
 - A. **Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School 2021-2022 Budget** – Approve the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School budget for the 2021-22 school year in the amount of \$6,075,289.
 - B. **MIU IV Intergovernmental Agreement** – Approve the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV Intergovernmental renewal agreement for the 2021-22 school year. – Mr. Jerry Miller
 - C. **Grant Disbursement** – Grant permission to apply for and disburse, if approved, the Highmark Foundation School Grant in the amount of \$7,500 for health and wellness initiatives that promote a positive school climate. Specifically, funds will be used to create wellness rooms in the Senior High School and Ryan Gloyer Middle School for students to have a suitable space to decompress from stress; learn and practice coping strategies; and utilize tools to improve mental and physical health. Requested by Ms. Annie Mersing, Director of Advancement.

Mr. Peterson asked why the Senior High and Middle School were chosen to receive this funding for wellness rooms. Ms. Mersing confirmed that there is already such a room in the Intermediate High School, and upon consulting with administrators, it was determined that these age groups were in greatest need of support.

9. **BUSINESS/FINANCE ACTION**
 - A. **Budget Transfers** – Approve budget transfers.
 - B. **MIU IV General Operating Budget** – Approve the 2021-22 Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV general operating budget in the total amount of \$3,443,512 with Seneca Valley’s contribution being \$145,973.

- C. **Change Orders** – Approve the construction change orders for the new K-6 elementary school at Ehrman Road.

Mr. Randy Miller confirmed that underground utilities, buried conduit, would be used when running wires from the street to the new Ehrman Road school.

10. **PERSONNEL ACTION** – Personnel items were discussed in an executive session held prior to this meeting.
11. **COMMUNICATION** – Communication was received from the following.
- A. Ms. Gina Zigrossi – Snow days
 - B. Ms. Beth Lauer – Two-hour delays and staying in Cohort model
 - C. Ms. Erin Donahue – Moving grades 7 and 8 to 4-and-1 model
 - D. Mr. Mark Bidoli – SOP for snow days and moving secondary to 4-and-1 model
 - E. Ms. Nicole Sylves – Honoring music department
 - F. Ms. Rachel Homick – Possible in-person instruction on 2/19
 - G. Mr. Brandon McKenzie – Snow days
 - H. Ms. Julie Jones – Set schedules, curriculum by grade, “essential” classes, snow days
 - I. Ms. Whitney Corrigan – Moving secondary to 4-and-1 model
 - J. Mr. Mike Mortier – Social distancing in the classrooms
 - K. Seneca Valley Juniors and Seniors – Concerns about reopening too soon
 - L. Ms. Kelly Scott – Two-hour delays and 4-and-1 model for all students
 - M. Ms. Breanna Callender – Note of thanks
 - N. Ms. Stephanie Lane – Long-term effects of mask wearing on children
 - O. Mr. and Mrs. Dave Silvester – Note of thanks
 - P. Mr. Mike Bontaibus – Weight of backpacks
 - Q. Ms. Brenda McVicker – Graduation and Prom
 - R. Ms. Susan Baer – Graduation and Prom
 - S. Mr. and Mrs. Greg Clawson – Graduation and Prom
 - T. Ms. Patti Ditmore – Graduation and Prom
 - U. Ms. Dawn Servello – Graduation and Prom
 - V. Ms. Stephanie Lane – Restrictions

Dr. Vitale noted that prom and graduation plans are underway. Senior high staff and students have been working together on ideas and parents will be notified when details are available and decisions have been made.

12. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – There was no public comment.

13. **ADJOURNMENT** – With nothing further to come before the Board, Mr. Peterson motioned, seconded by Mr. Widdowson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative and Mr. Jacobs absent.

Mr. Eric DiTullio, Board President



Ms. Lisa Mislán, Board Secretary