

# Seneca Valley School District



## SCHOOL BOARD ACTION MEETING

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

### MINUTES

January 19, 2021

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mr. Eric DiTullio, President, at 7:20 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** – Danesi Okponobi, a fourth grader at Rowan 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 Mislan, Board Secretary, showed the following members in attendance: Ms. Leslie Bredl, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Timothy Hester, Mr. Mike Jacobs, Mr. James Nickel, Mr. Frederick Peterson Jr., Ms. Kathy Whittle, and Mr. Jeffrey Widdowson.

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; Ms. Heather Lewis, Athletic Director; Dr. Marie Palano, Supervisor of Analytics and Federal Programs; Dr. Jeffrey Roberts, Supervisor of Gifted Education and Student Services; Mr. James Pearson, Director of Transportation; Ms. Annie Mersing, Director of Advancement; Ms. Nannette Farmer, Mr. Aaron Johnson.

## 2. INFORMATION REPORTS

- A. **Student/Staff Recognition** – Ms. Andreassi announced that late last year, Seneca Valley's first-ever Women in Engineering CyberPatriot Team, placed in the Gold Division, the second-highest division possible, during the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition. As part of the competition, students were challenged to find and fix cybersecurity vulnerabilities in virtual operating systems. Seneca Valley's team, which was formed by junior Veronica Pimenova, includes juniors Courtney Beals and Vivian Palmer, and senior Dilini Ranaweera. CyberPatriot is the National Youth Cyber Education Program created by the Air Force Association to inspire K-12 students toward careers in cybersecurity or other STEM disciplines critical to the nation's future.
- B. **Dates to Remember** – Ms. Andreassi announced the following dates to remember:

January 26	Report Card Release, Grades 7-12
February 1	School Board Work Session Meeting, SVIHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.

- C. **Financial Reports** – The following reports were provided in the backup materials:
  1. Operations
  2. Senior High Activities

- 3. Intermediate High Activities
- 4. Athletics
- 5. Food Service
- 6. Tax Collections
- 7. Capital Projects Funds

D. **COVID-19 Update** – Dr. Vitale provided a COVID-19 update stating that, as of today, we have eight active staff and 16 active student cases. About two weeks ago, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) ruled that if school is closed on a Friday, the three-day weekend can be counted as a temporary closure. At that point, the number of cases can be reset. Dr. Vitale added that we are working with our technology department to update the Seneca Valley Dashboard so that it is more easily understood. Inactive cases will be removed, though this information will be available upon request. There will now be two active case designations, 1) someone who is out with Covid-19 for 14 days; 2) active cases that count only toward a closure.

Dr. Vitale also provided the following quantitative updates:

**Community transmission rate:** Butler county is still listed as “substantial” related to community transmission. In order to get back to “moderate”, we need to see less than 100 new cases in a seven-day period as well as other benchmarks like PCR rate 10% or less. The district does not make these benchmarks, they are driven by the state.

**PCR positivity rate:** 14.3% which is down just slightly.

**Incident rate:** From January 1 – 7, per 100,000 residents, the incident rate is 294.9. This is down from 317 from the previous week. Numbers are slowly going in the right direction.

In Butler county, we have 32 less cases than the week before.

The difference in weekly confirmed cases is down by 55 cases. This is the most recent seven days vs. the previous seven days.

The Butler county 14-day rolling average is slowly moving in the right direction with 132.4 new cases reported today. In November, before full remote, we were seeing 200 cases per day reported.

Cases within the Seneca Valley zip codes currently total 41 new cases.

**Statewide positivity rate** is at 12.7% which is also down from the week prior.

**Vaccinations**

In Pennsylvania, the 1A level is open to healthcare providers as well as school psychologists, speech and language therapists and one-on-one personal care assistants. A number of SV therapists and psychologists were vaccinated this weekend. About 30 employees have now received their first dose of the vaccine. In order to have all teachers vaccinated, the state must open the 1B category. The vaccine is now open to anyone over the age of 65 and or anyone with a serious health condition.

**Temporary Closures**

Dr. Vitale noted that there still may be temporary closures. We do not have proof of any school-to-school transmission, but two cases were investigated this weekend as possible school transmissions. The district is working with the PADOH on these two cases.

If there are four-to-six cases in an elementary building, which is deemed medium, there would be a three-to-seven-day closure. If there are seven or more cases in our medium buildings, the minimum recommendation is a 14-day closure.

Our secondary buildings are deemed large, with 1,000 or more students. If there are six-to-ten cases in a large building, there would be a three-to-seven-day closure. With 11 or more cases, there would be a 14-day closure.

Lastly, Dr. Vitale noted that staying in Cohort keeps quarantine numbers down and provides the necessary time to contact trace and conduct case investigations. She also reminded the public that the attestation from signed in November means that the state recommendations are now requirements. We need to be in “moderate” for two consecutive weeks before returning to full-time, in-person instruction.

Mr. DiTullio stated that we must follow the guidelines in a controlled way, by the book, so that we can get the children back to full time, in-person instruction as soon as possible. This can only happen if PDE and PADOH determines we are in the “moderate” for two consecutive weeks. Community involvement is critical.

- E. **Program of Studies for the 2021-2022 School Year** – Dr. McKinley and Dr. Palano provided a summary of the program of studies for the 2021-2022 school year. New courses are being added in the Business, Physical Education and Health, Performing Arts and History Departments. The Diverse Voices in U.S. History course is not yet finalized and will begin as an elective. Dr. McKinley stated that the district hopes to create a deeper learning and understanding for all students so they may be successful in life, no matter their chosen path. Customized learning, at the high school level, was also discussed with the goal of helping all students feel ownership for their education.

Still in development is the addition of synchronous courses to the Seneca Valley Academy of Choice (SVAOC).

Dr. Palano discussed Keystone Exam administration and Pennsylvania graduation requirements stating that assessment data provides schools with information about the effectiveness of the curriculum as well as instructional strategies and resources. Pennsylvania’s statewide graduation requirements take effect with the class of 2023, which is this year’s sophomore class. PDE provides five options or pathways for students to meet the state graduation requirements. The options are as follows:

- Keystone Proficiency Pathway
- Keystone Composite Pathway
- Alternative Assessment Pathway
- Evidence-Based Pathway
- Career and Technical Education Pathway

\*The first two pathways are based solely on Keystone Exam scores. Therefore, for some students, Keystone Exams may be directly connected to how they meet the state graduation requirement.

Dr. Palano noted that Pennsylvania’s request to waive state assessments for last school year was approved and state assessments were not administered last spring. Any student enrolled in a Keystone trigger course last school year is now determined to be proficient on that Keystone Exam if the student earned a passing grade in the trigger course. Although any student who was enrolled in a Keystone Exam trigger course last school year is not required to take the associated Keystone Exam(s), Parents/Guardians may opt to enroll their student in a Keystone Exam to earn a numerical score which can then be applied to the Keystone Composite Pathway.

For students previously enrolled in a Keystone trigger course (2019-2020), Keystone Exams will be offered during the winter or spring assessment windows.

As additional information becomes available regarding specific assessment dates and times, the district will communicate directly with the parents/guardians of participating students.

The specifics of each pathway, informational videos and an FAQ document are all available on the district website.

Mr. Peterson asked if the Diverse Voices in U.S. History course will be more expansive to include the younger grades. Dr. McKinley stated that all grades are being considered as the course is still being developed. Dr. McKinley stated that we are looking at the Diverse Voices in U.S. History curriculum through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. We want students to experience diversity, equity and inclusion in every class they attend.

Mr. Peterson also asked how late in a student's high school career can they make their final pathway choice. Dr. Palano stated that there are many opportunities for students to meet their graduation requirements and that there are more options and time permitted within each pathway.

Mr. Nickel asked if students who took the courses in the 2019-20 school year, what is the incremental value of taking the Keystone Exam to get the numerical score. Dr. Palano noted that it is likely that not many students would need the numerical score to find themselves on a pathway to graduation. The district must ensure that students have access to all five graduation pathways.

Mr. Nickel also asked how Personal Finance I and II will interweave. Dr. McKinley stated that investing, debt, identity theft and credit will be more deeply discussed.

Ms. Bredl asked if customized learning courses will be available in grades 7 and 8. Dr. McKinley stated that this will begin with grades 11-12 grade. Ms. Bredl also asked about Internship and Employment parameters. Dr. McKinley confirmed that this would be offered to Juniors and Seniors. Regarding internships, we are looking to place students into healthy situations where they can make decisions about what they may – or may not – want to pursue.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Public comment was made by Mr. Tyler Bintrim who spoke about return to school and confusion around Cohort learning. Dr. Vitale noted that when the attestation form was signed, the recommendations then became requirements adding that instruction models are driven from the attestation form. Context within every district is important to consider, including size. In addition, some districts have declining enrollment, Seneca Valley does not. In a five day in-person model, Seneca Valley would not be able to space children six feet apart. Dr. Vitale will send Mr. Bintrim links stating that the attestation recommendations are requirements.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Approved the following meeting minutes:
  - A. **Reorganization Meeting** – December 7, 2020
  - B. **Action Meeting** – December 7, 2020
5. **TREASURER'S REPORT** – Approved the treasurer's report
6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS** – Approved the general fund bills totaling \$6,316,482.95
7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS** – Approved the construction fund bills totaling \$5,590,141.23

Ms. Whittle motioned, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to approve the minutes, treasurer's report, and bills. Motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

8. **ADMINISTRATION ACTION**

- A. **Board Policies** – Approved the following board policies:
1. Policy 212 – Reporting Student Progress, revised, first reading – Dr. McKinley
  2. Policy 217 – Graduation Requirements, revised, first reading – Dr. Palano
  3. Policy 218.4 – Discipline of Student Convicted/Adjudicated of Sexual Assault, revised, first reading – Dr. McKinley
- B. **School Bus Drivers** – Approved the list of new bus drivers since September 21, 2020 for ABC Transit and Valley Lines.
- C. **Revised Phased School Reopening Health and Safety Plan** – Approved updates to the revised phased reopening health and safety plan.
- D. **Appreciation Letter to Butler Health System** – Approved appreciation letter to Butler Health System for the support they have provided throughout the pandemic.
- E. **Committee Assignments** – Approved School Board committee assignments for 2021.

Mr. Nickel motioned, seconded by Mr. Widdowson, to approve the policies, school bus drivers, revised phased school reopening health and safety plan, appreciation letter to Butler Health System and committee assignments. Motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

9. **INSTRUCTION ACTION** – Approved conference request.

Ms. Harrison motioned, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to approve the conference request. Motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

10. **BUSINESS/FINANCE ACTION**

- A. **Vo-Tech/Vo-Tech Authority Bond Refinancing** – Approved Resolution A and Resolution B regarding an agreement between the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School and the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical Authority regarding a proposed bond refinancing project.
- B. **ABC Transit Agreement Addendum** – Approved the ABC Transit Agreement Addendum.
- C. **Valley Lines, Inc. Agreement Addendum** – Approved the Valley Lines, Inc. Agreement Addendum.
- D. **Change Orders** – Approved the construction change orders for the new K-6 elementary school at Ehrman Road.
- E. **Budget Resolution** – Approved the budget resolution indicating that the district will not raise the rate of any tax for the support of its public schools for the 2021-22 fiscal year by more than 3%, which is the Act 1 index for the district as established by the Department of Education.
- F. **Bond Issue Resolution** – Authorized the incurring of nonelectoral debt by the issuance of general obligation bonds, Series of 2021 in an aggregate principal amount

not to exceed twenty-seven million nine hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$27,975,000); covenanting to pay, and pledging all available taxing power of the local government unit for the payment of, the bonds; establishing a sinking fund and appointing a sinking fund depository; fixing the form, maximum interest rates, maturity, redemption and other provisions for the payment thereof; authorizing the acceptance of a proposal for the purchase of the bonds; authorizing a filing of required documents with the Department of Community and Economic Development; ratifying and directing certain actions of officers; and making certain other covenants and provisions in respect of the bonds.

Mr. Jacobs motioned, seconded by Mr. Nickel, to approve the vo-tech/vo-tech authority bond refinancing, ABC Transit agreement addendum, Valley Lines agreement addendum, change orders, budget resolution and bond issue resolution. Motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

11. **PERSONNEL ACTION** – Personnel items were discussed in an executive session held prior to this meeting.

- A. Resignations – *Director* – Jeffrey James; *Classified* – Jennifer Hosso, Caitlin Galbraith; *Supplemental* – Kristi Gibilisco
- B. Appointments – *Administration* – Trisha Butschle; *Professional Substitutes* – Jeffrey Meyer, Laura Kellar, Lindsey Waldrum, Kristy Long; *Classified* – Katherine Miller, Danielle Magill, Amy Gloeckner, Tara Krepp; *Supplementals* – Eric Semega, Tom Magill, Nick DeSanzo, Bill Parenti, Cam Palmer, Mickey Flood, Brian Pesavento, Katie Smolter, George Trew, Eric Grove, Dan Resetarits, Eli Grove, Walberto Lopez-Aviles, Alden May, Ray Peaco, Brett Poirier, Devyn Brown, Bruce Smith, Tucker Toepl, Stephen Santa, Aaron Magill
- C. Leaves – *Administration* – Robert Raso, Antoinette Mersing; *Professional* – Kristin Schlemmer, Sarah Corona, Kristin Robinson, Jamie Badaracco, Susanna Wanamaker, Christina Karmecy, Adria Herlihy, Alan Witt, Katie Rosatelli, Philip Sassaman, Margaret Tkatch, Alysia Barrett, Emily Burkley, Amanda Horwat, Julie Blackburn, Elizabeth Allen-Boyle, Chelsea Patricca, Jessica Kerr, Staci Hughes; *Professional Substitute* – Nanet Edge, Leslie Bullis; *Classified* – Valerie Draper, Emily Rihely, Valerie Mannas, Christina Dugan, Kelly Bommer, April Householder, Susan Leseman, Nichol Mignanelli, Allisyn Pascarella, Robin Sedlak, Sarah Wagner, Carrie Young, Kristine Hart, Madeline Nowak, Gretchen Haburjak, Christina Utter, Tammy Tape, Lisa Recce, Mary Rasmussen, Barbara Moldovan, Lisa Salak, Sarah Wagner, Irene Young, Catherine Lusty, Larry Foster, Lynn Henderson, Gina Cillo, Margaret Beggy, Amanda King
- D. Retirement – *Professional* – Wendy Carson
- E. Financial incentive program for professional substitutes – A bonus over the substitute rate will be awarded to any professional substitute retroactive to January 16, 2021, through June 7, 2021. Substitutes will be awarded a \$300 bonus for every 30 days (non-consecutive) that they work during this time period
- F. Memorandums of understanding – Approved two MOUs with Seneca Valley Education Association

Mr. Widdowson motioned, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to approve the resignations, appointments, leaves, retirement, financial incentive program for professional substitutes and memorandums of understanding. Motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

12. **COMMUNICATION** – Communication was received from the following:
- A. Mr. and Ms. Jon and Amanda Masuga – Full time in-person instruction
  - B. Ms. Stephanie Lane – Full time in-person instruction
  - C. Ms. Nicole Sylves – New normal
  - D. Mr. Joe Makowski – Full time in-person instruction
  - E. Ms. Holly Badger – Full time in-person instruction
  - F. Mr. Matt Herrick – Full time in-person instruction
  - G. Ms. Lindsey Douglass – Attestation form and full time in-person instruction
  - H. Ms. Amy Gilbert – Full time in-person instruction
  - I. Ms. Alison Irvin – Full time in-person instruction
  - J. Ms. Kristin Mihlfried – Full time in-person instruction
13. **MISCELLANEOUS** – Mr. Eric DiTullio reported that he has been re-elected to the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) board and thanked everyone for their support.
14. **ADJOURNMENT** – With nothing further to come before the Board, Ms. Whittle motioned, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m.
15. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – An executive session was held prior to this meeting to discuss personnel and other items.

Mr. Eric DiTullio, Board President



Ms. Lisa Mislan, Board Secretary