



Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Members present: Nicholas Braccio, William Brong, Janet Flisak, Andrew Landis, Ken Keith, Stephen Nelson, William Formica, Michael Barnacz

Members absent: Kimberly Wheeler

Others present: John Franzen, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Joe Messmer, Damion Spahr, Michael Taylor, Sam Varano and Megan Zweiback

1. Education-Personnel Committee

Mr. Landis called the Education Personnel Meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Dr. Gallagher stated that the first item to be discussed was the Program of Studies for high school curriculum. He indicated that the refining of the process of revisions to curriculum has become much easier as it is closely aligned to the Pathway 360 program.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that in addition to Program of Studies, end of year and Summer Curriculum projects would be discussed as well as the kick-off to The Comprehensive Plan, an update on elementary Progress Reports and Digital Assessments. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced High School Principal Dr. Varano.

Dr. Varano noted that there were three significant changes to the Program of Studies and outlined the following:

- Advanced Placement Physics: Mechanics course will now offer the opportunity for students to earn 4 college credits as a result of a new dual partnership with the University of Pittsburgh.
- The high school Math Department will return to traditional sequencing in its programming of Math courses; Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II. It has been determined that students are intellectually prepared to handle this sequencing better than the Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry as previously in place.
- The Business course Finance and Investing: Principles and Applications will now offer on-site visits to financial institutions and businesses as well as shadowing opportunities to students, similar to what is offered in the Medical Applications course.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed a slide that outlined the 2024-2025 Curriculum Projects. She noted that while there are no new courses. Revisions to existing courses will be presented in future Curriculum Council meetings. She also noted that there will be a minor revision to the High School Foundation Math course, including a name change.

Additional projects include revisions to the World Language program, ESL course revisions, expansions and revisions to the Guidance Curriculum, and introduction to a new ELA program with full implementation for the 2025-2026 school year. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted a revision to the Instrumental Music program for grades 5 through 12.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly briefed on the Elementary Curriculum projects including the implementation of a phonics program titled Heggerty, ELA Intro to Reading with full implementation in the 2025-2026 school year. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also spoke to the development of the kindergarten Playshop program and its alignment toward the Pathway program with revisions to the elementary Science and Social Studies curriculum.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed a slide that outlined the Comprehensive Planning process, noting the PDE requirement for a 3-year review and update. A Steering Committee has been created and will be meeting to bring the plan updates to the Board and for public comment in February of 2025. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also stated that the revisions to the Elementary Progress Report are almost completed and the expectation is that the platform will be ready to go live at the end of the first trimester, in December.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated the final Curriculum project is the management of digital assessments. She noted the new platform Performance Matters which warehouses data, and allows the hosting of digital assessments. As requirements are added for digital literacy, this platform allows the district to host AP exams and others on line.

Mr. Landis praised the dual enrollment course offering. Mr. Keith inquired about the sequencing of Math courses and Dr. Varano responded that the skills that are taught in Algebra I and Geometry in that order, better prepare students for Algebra II. Mr. Nelson reiterated his experience, having taught Mathematics, that this sequencing is preferred for student success.

Mr. Formica inquired about the shadowing and student visits for the Finance and Investment course and offered his financial company as a placement opportunity for students.

Mr. Landis adjourned the E-P Committee Meeting.

2. Finance Committee

2.1 2024-2025 Budget Update

Finance Committee Chairperson, Mr. Nelson called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 6:44 PM.

Mr. Nelson offered commentary that the district has strived this budget season to provide as much data and detail as possible in an effort to educate the community on the budget process. He noted however that the proposed budget includes a tax increase in the amount 5.3% and reiterated that the school district does not make light of that proposal or the impact that it may have on its community.

Dr. Gallagher stated that a budget bill has been passed in the House of Representatives and is hopeful that something will happen in regards to cyber charter reform and will continue to advocate for reform of charter school funding.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor stated that the budget this evening does show an Act I increase and the district is optimistic that the increase in this current school year will not become a norm, but allow the district to prepare for future financial challenges.

Mr. Taylor shared a slide that depicted the tax rate history of the school district. Historically, the school district has been significantly below the Act I Index.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide of Local Revenues that real estate interims are trending behind this year, however Earned Income Taxes are ahead of projections. He noted that delinquencies are projected to be less than last year. Per Capita taxes are steady, and earnings on investments are also steady and increasing, however the district remains cautious as federal rate changes could quickly impact those projections.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide showing State and Federal Funding with percentage increases of 2.7% to Basic Education and 3.6% to Special Education Funding. Federal programs are showing a reduction of \$44, 956 to Title programs.

A slide outlining Revised Budget Projections since the last Finance Committee presentation show revenues adjustments that include increases to tax assessments, local revenue projection increase, investment earnings increase, and decreases to district staffing and federal funding. Expenditure adjustments reflect a decrease to the Operations budget and an expectation for a decrease in cyber charter reform costs.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide that outlined the proposed savings to school districts should the cyber charter reform bill be approved in Harrisburg. The slide also reflected the cost increases for charter school tuition rates for both brick and mortar schools as well as cyber charter schools.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide that listed the considerations of revenue that will continue to be monitored including earned income, transfer taxes, and the maximization of interest earnings. Future considerations on the expenditure side of the budget include the review of district positions and the factoring of potential employee retirements. Medical benefits trends, charter school costs, special education costs and five year forecast and trend analysis.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide that highlighted the district's current debt service as it relates to its future capital improvements. He noted that the debt service will remain at approximately \$6.3M through the 2034-2035 school year, prior to future borrowings.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide that gave a Budget Overview for the 2024-2025 school year. It showed a final budget of \$153,386,125 and a proposed millage increase of 5.3% to balance the deficit, without significant cuts to the organization. He stated that the final budget is scheduled for approval at the June 26, 2024 Board Action Meeting.

Mr. Formica thanked Mr. Taylor for the work and the concise presentation.

Mrs. Flisak asked about the delinquent real estate tax collection and why the amount is lower? Mr. Taylor noted that it is lower because there are less delinquencies and more taxes being paid on time.

Mr. Keith commented on the cyber charter school reform and noted the increases over the years. Mr. Keith stated to continued advocacy for funding reform.

A member of the public asked if the cyber funding is reformed would that be the end of budget concerns and Dr. Gallagher responded to the contrary, noting that the next layer would be to reform the funding of brick and mortar charter schools.

Dr. Gallagher thanked Mr. Nelson for his leadership through the budget process.

3. Operations Committee

3.1 Board Meeting Calendar 2024-2025 School Year

Mr. Brong called the Operations Committee Meeting to order at 7:08 P.M.

Dr. Gallagher recommended the approval of the proposed 2024-2025 Board Meeting calendar.

There were no concerns and it was agreed to move forward for Board action and approval.

3.2 Update on plans for Salford Hills Elementary and Indian Crest Middle School Renovations

Mr. Taylor gave an overview of the upcoming proposed projects noting that Mr. Messmer from GKO Architects and Mr. Spahr from SitelogIQ were in attendance this evening. He also stated that proposed funding and approvals would allow for construction to begin at the end of the 2025 school year.

Mr. Messmer stated that the GKO team met with Ms. McCoy and staff of Indian Crest Middle School as well as Mr. Burns and staff at Salford Hills. These meetings allowed for refining the ideas and scope of work for each of the schools.

Mr. Messmer reviewed slides showing site plan drawings depicting the proposed renovations. The major renovations at Indian Crest Middle School include renovations to the locker rooms, Family Consumer Science and Art Rooms, Lifeskills classrooms, the music suite and toilet room renovations. Minor renovations include replacement of casework in classrooms, refinishing the gym floor and bleachers, kitchen equipment, auditorium seating and lighting and elevator replacement.

Second floor renovations are proposed to the Library / IT Support space that would include additional classroom and MTSS spaces. Both first and second floors would be scheduled for MPE (mechanical, plumbing, electrical) replacement / piping and ductwork. Windows and finishes to walls, ceilings and flooring throughout the building. Mr. Messmer that the proposed renovations will create parity between Indian Crest and Indian Valley Middle School.

Salford Hills Elementary School is proposed for renovations that would include a new secure and accessible entry, renovations to kindergarten classrooms, the renovation and relocation of the administrative suite, the renovation of the circular portion classrooms that the addition and relocation of the library and Lifeskills classrooms. Additional parking spaces are also planned for the property.

Minor renovations will include replacement of casework in classrooms and MPE replacement. Windows and finishes throughout the building.

Mr. Messmer reviewed a slide showing a schedule for each of the proposed school renovations. Bids for both projects would be due in early September and October, anticipated Board approval at the October Board Action Meeting and construction could begin in June of 2025.

Mr. Spahr of SitelogIQ was in attendance to review the experience and efficiencies that SitelogIQ would be bringing to the overall project success. Mr. Spahr commented on the advance work that his firm is doing in an effort to prevent as many unforeseen conditions as possible. He noted the numerous meetings and coordination that has kept SitelogIQ working along side GKO and the school district during the design process.

Mr. Spahr also noted that they have begun some contractor outreach to learn about their availabilities in advance. He commented on compliance and continual estimations as the GESA is prepared and presented. Mr. Spahr also noted that SitelogIQ will be creating swing spaces and continue to allow for work and production to occur in the buildings with limited interruption to instruction.

Mr. Spahr also noted that all bidding documents will be made available to the public on the school district website. He also reviewed the process of construction once projects are underway to coordinate and resolve any issue related problems. SitelogIQ will also support setting up service contracts upon completion, contract close-out and the verification of punch list completion.

Mr. Taylor thanked SitelogIQ for their work on the project and the increased collaboration with GKO to improve the process.

Mr. Taylor noted that the Project Budget Estimates on the next slide are based upon schematic designs and not final drawings. The district's financial advisor, PFM will be in attendance at the August Finance Committee Meeting to present borrowing options that would occur as the result of a bond issuance in January of 2025. The numbers reflected are total costs that GKO, SitelogIQ are comfortable in estimating at this time. Mr. Taylor noted that all of the borrowing does not need to occur simultaneously.

West Broad Street Elementary School total project costs estimated at \$29,869,941. Salford Hills Elementary School total project costs estimated at \$24,324,000 and Indian Crest Middle School total project costs estimated at \$35,515,000. BS

Mr. Formica commented that the scope of work seems very comprehensive and questions at this time. Mr. Braccio commented on the gas line to Indian Crest and West Broad Street and Mr. Taylor stated that those costs would be borne by the utility, PECO.

Mrs. Flisak thanked everyone for the presentation and acknowledged the planning and preparation of facilities.

Mr. Taylor praised Supervisor of Operations, Mr. Ball for his knowledge and input on the process.

Mr. Nelson thanked for the regular updates on current projects.

Mr. Brong thanked GKO for their work and commended the team for work towards the projects.

A member of the public asked about the renovations of the circular space at Salford Hills and Dr. Gallagher noted that it is really inadequate for use as a library as it exists. The library will be repurposed for small group instruction and individual classroom space. Mr. Taylor also commented that the new library and its relocation to the front of the building will make it accessible and equally useful to the school community.

Mr. Taylor also noted that this renovation will address the needs of special education and make the school equitable in its services to all students.

3.3 Multi-purpose Field Discussion Update

Dr. Gallagher noted that planning continues for the possible installation of a multi-purpose turf field at the high school. He also noted that he has had discussions with other school districts about their newly installed fields and all are reporting good results.

Mr. Taylor noted that the any previous concerns regarding drainage have been resolved. He also noted that the project is scheduled for a review by the Franconia Township Planning Commission on July 1. As the process continues to advance through local approvals, construction documents could be prepared in August and Request for Proposals could be issued shortly thereafter.

Mr. Taylor stated that options are still being discussed that would allow for the creation of an additional grass practice field on the high school property. The creation of a new grass field would require a variance for use.

Mr. Braccio expressed frustration in the extensive process to obtain storm water management approvals. Mr. Taylor indicated that Montgomery County has been helpful and the proposed installation of underground filtering will address those storm water issues.

Mr. Brong thanked administration for the update.

Mr. Brong adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 7:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Taylor" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Taylor, C.P.A.

Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs