

POTTSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Directors
Board Meeting/Zoom
February 10, 2021
DHH Lengel Middle School Auditorium
7:15 p.m.

Present: Dr. Blankenhorn, Dr. Cardamone,
Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran,
Mr. Quandel, Mr. Shields (via zoom)
Mr. Urban, Ms. Wytovich, Dr. Gerace,
Acting, Superintendent; Mrs. Lombel,
Asst. Business Manager/ Board
Secretary, Atty. Kevin Reid, Solicitor, Corinne
Mason, Interim Business Manager (via zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by President Noble Quandel.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, President Quandel welcomed everyone in attendance.

Mr. Quandel presented the following "Rising Tide" presentation:

Accomplishments

- ✓ Audit completed in the time frame of our goal of December 31, 2020.
- ✓ Fiscal year 19/20 audit (last year's) achieved a \$600,000 surplus which assists in digging out of deficits created by prior Boards from 2012-2019.
- ✓ The forecast for Fiscal Year 20/21 is currently more than a \$1 million dollar surplus despite our decrease in revenue plus the other significant costs of COVID.
- ✓ PASD settled a labor contract with support staff during this fiscal year.
- ✓ PASD settled its labor contract with the teachers during this fiscal year.
- ✓ We are currently finalizing the procurement of a \$1 million RACP grant for the preservation and restoration of our Martz Hall standing seam roof. This grant is also to include other necessary capital improvements on our campus such as the steps from Martz Hall lot up to 16th street.
- ✓ PASD has recently refinanced our 2012 Bonds. This action refunded a prior new money issue and their 2016 Bonds, which was for an ESCO Project, to take advantage of the historically low rates. This allowed the District to reduce their interest rate from 2.78% to 1.18%. Through this refinance, the District did not extend the term of the payoff of debt which is May of 2031. The total savings to the District was \$287,236.

Our Vision

We are developing a strategic plan to achieve consistent "Number One" status academically and in relation to our peers in Schuylkill County and beyond. These goals will extend to extra-curricular activities and to everything we do as an organization.

Mr. Quandel said the District is going in the right direction.

Mr. Quandel reminded the public that the public comment period is not a question and answer period, but rather the opportunity for the public to submit comments to the Board. Public comments will follow our public comment procedures which require members of the public to identify themselves by indicating name and address and we will read comments consistent with all aspects of our public comment policy. With our meetings now being conducted virtually until further notice, you can submit comments via the Q & A feature. Mr. Quandel said next month there will be a Board protocol for answering questions. More information will be forthcoming.

The School Board will strive to answer questions pertaining to the current agenda at the beginning of the school board meeting, in a conscious effort to maintain transparent practices. After the School Board

agenda is posted online, questions may be emailed to plombel@pottsville.k12.pa.us by 2:00 PM the day of the meeting. Questions pertaining to the agenda posted online will be answered in the order received for a period not to exceed 30 minutes. If the questions are not able to be answered during the 30-minute period, the School Board will endeavor to answer the questions at the beginning of the next school board meeting. Questions pertaining to confidential personnel matters will not be addressed. Questions that require some research or further inquiry and might not be answered at the current school board meeting. **The question and answer period does not replace the public's current right to public comment.**

Mr. Quandel asked if there were any Questions or Public Comments.

Dr. Gerace, Acting Superintendent, read the following public comments which were received via email:

Tracey Fidler

To: Pottsville Area School Board Members

"A lot of time and energy has been spent district-wide on efforts to keep both students and staff safe during this pandemic. In the past few weeks, surveys have been sent out to parents and staff of the district that have overwhelmingly showed their preference of not returning to full in-person instruction. According to many of us, parents & faculty included, the consideration of full in-person instruction is premature at best, as there are so many issues that have been brought up in committee meeting after committee meeting that are unresolved and unanswered.

Rushing into this without a well-thought-out plan, may very well lead to not only spikes in our district's COVID cases, but the quarantine/shutdown of entire classes, entire grade-levels, and even schools. How will that be handled not only by the school, but by the families of those students who will also need to quarantine? How will family members work when they have to be home daily for weeks at a time with their quarantined child or children, if they have multiple in the district, as this could occur multiple times? How will the school handle multiple teachers taking leaves of absences when we usually can't find substitutes on a good day? How will social distancing occur with 20-30 people in a classroom for 6+ hours a day, let alone in the cafeteria and on the buses?

If it is being deemed safe to go back, then why does this very meeting have a limit on number of persons that can attend even though it is in a large auditorium, when there is no limit on the number of people in much smaller classrooms?

If it is being deemed safe to go back, then why after being invited have none of you come to visit our classrooms?

If it is being deemed safe to go back, then why all students wouldn't be required to come back full-time, including those virtual?

Listen to the stakeholders and leave your own agendas out of this. The majority of parents, teachers, and administrators do not think that this is a good idea. Do the right thing, and do NOT vote for return to full-instruction."

Tracey Fidler - 4th grade teacher - John S. Clarke Elementary Center

Katelynn Miller

Dear PASD Board of Directors,

I have been an employee of the Pottsville Area School District since 2013, almost right after I graduated from college. I had earned my dream job, teaching middle school in my home district, and throughout the first few years of working in this district, I had never even dreamt of wanting to go somewhere else.

We've had our fair share of unfortunate events over the past several years, but I have stayed the course and remained loyal to the PASD. Sadly, I have never felt less appreciated than I did yesterday afternoon when we received the e-mail with the updated "Return to Full In-Person Instruction" plan.

This plan is so far from what we, as staff members, were made privy to at any time over the past several months. The plan is rushed and has little to no evidence or data for its rushing. Why the rush? Why only one week from vote to implementation? How can the teaching staff, administration, custodians, cafeteria staff, or any other staff member for that matter, prepare in that amount of time while still doing double the work instructing both in-person and virtual students?

There are so many missing pieces of the puzzle in that plan that it's alarming. There are no pending vaccination plans for our teachers and staff. There is no mention of what it would mean for teachers to be quarantined due to exposure from a student. I had my daughter only two years ago and my sick days are still building -- I do not personally have enough sick days to make it through multiple quarantines. To require me, or any other staff member, to take unpaid days due to exposure outside of our control is frankly, inhumane. There is no mention of the outdated ventilation systems in many of our buildings that do not allow for proper airflow. There is no mention about how the teachers will be required to still instruct fully virtual students. There is no mention about how we will not have enough aides to cover our students' needs due to you cutting them all to part time last year. There is no mention of how the custodial staff (which you also cut to the bare bones last year) can appropriately disinfect a building that is constantly occupied. Multiple buildings are working without full custodial staff and are already overworked and underappreciated. Why not, at the very least, leave Wednesdays for deep cleaning at least for a period of time?

At this point, it has been made abundantly clear that you're going to vote to enact this plan this evening and not take any of the staff's concerns into consideration. I've accepted that. What I will not accept is being thrown to the wolves without any planning, preparation, or consideration. We deserve more time to prepare and give our students the best education possible. There is no denying that in-person is the best option for their education, but it needs to be done safely and we as staff members deserve more respect."

"Wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it. Right is right even if no one is doing it."

Katellynn Miller - 6th Grade Teacher - PASD Alumni - PASD Taxpayer

Lucas Bricker

Good Evening,

"First and foremost, I would like to thank you all for taking your time to actively listen to the members of this school community. All these thoughts come from concerned members of that community, all fighting for a better Pottsville Area School District. I've have not written this as an attempt to attack or belittle. I've written this statement from the heart, and I have chosen my words carefully. This school year has presented unprecedented hardships and difficulties for every member of our school community. It has not been easy. I have seen frustrated students. I have spoken to tired and depleted faculty members. And I have spoken to parents whose hearts are breaking over this situation. We all want the same thing, a return to some kind of normalcy: a stability for our students, and a stability for our community. At the end of the day, a decision needs to be made in the best interest of the entire school community. Surveys have conducted, data has been gathered, and committees have met in order to determine the best path forward for the entire school community. There is great concern that opening our schools too early will cause a severe health and safety risk as well as academic detriment to our students. A learning plan in which the health and safety of our school community cannot be guaranteed will cause more instability for our students. In turn, our parents, faculty, administrators, and other staff members will suffer. We all wish to return to some semblance of the status quo, but I argue that it is far more important that we return in a safe and responsible manner.

The current time table proposed is neither safe nor responsible to ensure the health, safety, and academic success of our students. A majority of the staff remains unvaccinated. Custodians, food service,

transportation workers, and aides are spread far too thin. The stresses felt by parents at home are continuing to mount. In order to ease these fears and burdens, we need to make a decision that will best serve the community for the distant future. A patchwork decision made hastily out of a necessity to follow the herd will not best serve our great school district. And, while I do understand that minds have already been made up, I could not in good conscience let this pivotal moment move forward without being able to say that I tried. I appreciate you for your time and I respectfully request that you vote your conscience. Thank you."

Sincerely, Mr. Lucas Bricker, teacher and invested member of the PASD.

Tara Tranquillo Hess

My name is Tara Tranquillo Hess. I am a 4th grade teacher at John S. Clarke Elementary Center, the mother of three children who attend Pottsville Area School District, and a PASD Tax Payer.

I went back and forth about whether or not to write something when I came across this quote yesterday: Don't let anyone that hasn't been in your shoes tell you how to tie your laces.

It reminded me of how many times I've sat and listened to my colleagues and union representatives invite the board members into our classrooms. I have yet, in my fourteen years at PASD, have had one of you step into my classroom.

As I sat here the last few days awaiting the decision of whether or not my classroom will go from hybrid to all-in, it made me think about the laces I tie each and every day in room 401.

If you ever came to my room, you'd know that some of the laces are worn and tattered. It doesn't matter to me because the appearance of the laces will not affect the way they function.

Some of the shoes have one lace shorter than the other. I can make that work because I can stretch the longer lace to compensate for the shorter one.

If you ever came to my room, you would know that some of the shoes have no laces at all. I may not know why the laces are missing. That isn't my problem. My job is to find something to put in the place of the old laces to make those shoes functional.

Some of the laces are too short and just won't stay tied no matter how small of a bow I make. However, each day, when that student comes to me with laces flapping, I try again, hoping that this time the knot may hold.

I am NOT afraid of COVID. I am NOT looking to keep my students out of my classroom. My intention is to keep my students learning in an environment, however unconventional, that they have grown accustomed to until myself and my colleagues can be vaccinated. Until then, I personally feel that we are setting our students up for disappointment. I fear that we will bring them fully back and in a short time have to send them home when a classroom that is 24' wide x 25' long can socially distance 11 students but could never safely distance 28.

You wouldn't know that, because you haven't been here to see my students sitting behind their shields being reminded, all day long, to "pull up their masks," and "spread out in the hallway," and "not touch each other at recess."

Our administrators and colleagues know what is best for our students. Our School Board does not. However, they are the ones making the decision to return to full in-person learning without ever spending a day in our classrooms, joining our zoom meetings, or even bending down to tie a shoe or two.

Kristyn Blum

"Good evening, my name is Kristyn Blum. I am a first-grade teacher at J.S.C., I am the secretary of the PASDEA, I am a tax-payer, and I am a parent of a Kindergarten student in our district.

I wanted to give everyone an idea of what an elementary classroom looks like right now. Many of you are probably not aware of what is happening unless you have a child in class right now.

Picture if you will Group A or Group B coming into school in a typical day. There are anywhere from 9-12 students at a time on these days. Not to mention anywhere from 5-9 students logging in live. They are preparing for the day, getting materials needed, or logging in to Google Meet from home. The teacher is making sure that all technology is working properly while saying good morning to all those in person students and students online who want so badly to tell their teachers and other friends that they lost a tooth, or show them the snack they are eating right now, or putting their poor cat or dog in front of the camera. You may laugh at these anecdotes, but they happen on a daily basis, not just before lessons, but during and after lessons. These lessons are being recorded for those who may need to learn asynchronously. These things distract not only the kids who are in front of us with noises, but also others who are logging in LIVE and anyone who goes back and watches the video.

During our lessons, we are circulating around our classroom to assist the students who are with us, while being beckoned back to the computer to immediately answer questions of those on line. We are literally torn in half to provide attention to those who need it.

We have our desks arranged in such a way that the students who are with us are all 6 feet apart. Bringing more students in to that classroom will make that D.O.H. recommendation impossible. Not to mention our 6-year-olds eating in the cafeteria with no masks on and also not able to space 6 feet apart. Also, may I ask how many 6-year-olds you know that consistently keep their masks on their faces properly?

You are asking that we come back to school with MORE students and LESS time to disinfect high-contact areas! The model that we have now allows for DEEP cleaning to be done during the week AND on weekends. I read in the paper that other school districts are back full-in person, but I also read that they have "extra custodians on duty to help with cleaning efforts." We are short staffed as it is, so I don't see that happening in our schools.

President Quandel, I heard you say that when asked, "When are we sending our kids back to school?" that your response was, "when it is safe to do so." Does this sound safe to you?

Adrian Portland - PASDEA President

"White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday that Biden's goal is for more than 50% of schools to have "some teaching" in person "at least one day a week" - not necessarily fully reopened - by Day 100 of his presidency.

"Hopefully, it's more," Psaki said. "And obviously, it is as much as is safe in each school and local district." When he announced the goal in December, Biden said he aimed to ensure "a majority of our schools" are open within 100 days. This walk back has to do with the release of monies that will become available to schools and allow them too safely re-open. Safely is the key word here. I am not here too necessarily oppose a return to in-person learning, but instead fight for a safe and planned one.

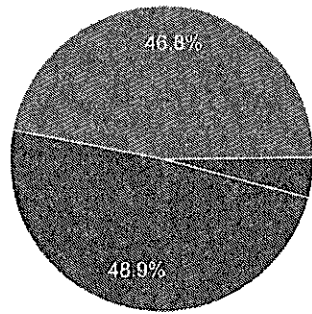
I want to share some information that was collected from a district staff and family survey about instructional modes.

Staff Survey:

154 responses

Pottsville Area High School

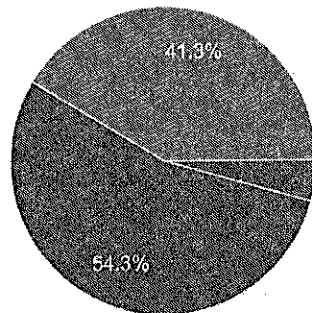
Considering Schuylkill County is designated as having a substantial transmission rate and percent positivity for COVID-19, what do you feel is the best instructional model for our district?



- Full In-Person (social distancing will NOT be observed)
- Blended (current model)
- Full Remote (virtual)

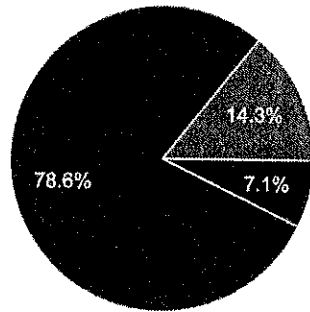
57.4 % surveyed said their level of comfort for full in-person return was completely uncomfortable.

Lengel Middle School



- Full In-Person (social distancing will NOT be observed)
- Blended (current model)
- Full Remote (virtual)

47.8 % surveyed said their level of comfort for full in-person return was completely uncomfortable.



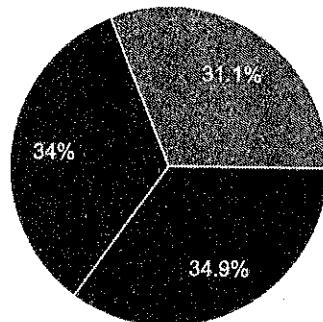
- Full In-Person (social distancing will NOT be observed)
- Blended (current model)
- Full Remote (virtual)

58.9 % surveyed said their level of comfort for full in-person return was completely uncomfortable.

Family Input
748 responses

Considering Schuylkill County is designated as having a substantial transmission rate and percent positivity for COVID-19, what do you feel is the best instructional model for your child(ren)?

748 responses



- Full In-Person (social distancing will NOT be observed)
- Blended (current model)
- Full Remote (virtual)

65.1 % of those surveyed did not feel that the Full In-person mode of instruction was best for their child. 41.9 % of families surveyed said their level of comfort for full in-person return was either completely uncomfortable or uncomfortable.

What can we take from these surveys? Both staff and families have great concerns about returning to full in-person instruction. So, what does the board decide to do with this information? Let's bring the students back to full in person learning and give the families, students, and staff a week to prepare without any type of plan. The only thing that is provided in the "plan" is a schedule as to when each building will return.

Over the last two weeks I was part of a small group of educators that had the opportunity to meet with some board members to discuss our apprehensions and concerns about a full in-person return and to provide solutions to some of those issues. I want to publicly thank those board members for taking the time to meet with us. However, not 1 item from our almost 4-hour discussion was mentioned in the board's Phased Return to Full in-Person Plan. Finally, I would like to address 2 other major concerns: We have been dealing with this pandemic for the last 11 months. One of the most pressing issues associated with it has been the declining mental health of students and staff. Not once has this been

addressed during this time period or has there been any indication of addressing it in the future. This is not acceptable.

Bringing students back to full in person is not going to address the concerns of the cohort of students who are currently failing for the year. Many of these students are now virtual and likely to remain virtual even with a full in-person return. Our district is required by the state to offer a virtual option to students. This is yet another portion of return to full in-person learning that is not discussed in the District's return to in-person learning plan."

We don't need a schedule; we need a plan!

Maria Larish - PASDEA Treasurer

Before I begin my written statement, I'd like to note that 7 people are attending this meeting in-person and over 350 are attending virtually.

Throughout my statement tonight, I will be sharing excerpts from **operating schools during COVID-19: CDC's Considerations**.

The CDC states, "While fewer children than adults have had COVID-19 in the United States, the number of school-aged children with COVID-19 has been increasing.¹

Because children with the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread it to other children and to adults,^{2,5,8,9} it is important to take measures to minimize risk of spread in school settings. Implementation of multiple mitigation strategies can limit the spread of the COVID-19 in many settings.^{10,11}

Resuming and maintaining in-person learning may pose risks to children, teachers, school administrators, and other staff in the school environment, and their families and household members."

It is our understanding that this is what you will vote on tonight. You will make a decision that affects the lives of our children, their families, teachers, school administrators, and staff.

The CDC recognizes three important ways to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Wear a mask.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds. The more people you are in contact with, the more likely you are to be exposed to COVID-19.

Upon a full in-person return, there will be NO social distancing as we will have double the number of students in our buildings during a regular school day. Look around you...we are all at least 6 feet apart in a huge auditorium, but yet we accept having a crowd of 20 or more students in a room a quarter of this size.

What is the plan?

The CDC explains, "...even when a school carefully coordinates, plans, and prepares for reopening, cases of COVID-19 may still occur.

COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay at least 6 feet away from others when possible, even if you — or they — do not have any symptoms."

A plan was sent to us yesterday that did **not** address classrooms, cafeterias, buses, hallways, or cleaning. At the beginning of the school year, the Pandemic Planning Team spent countless hours carefully coordinating, planning, and preparing for a blended reopening. Because of this, we saw a limited number of COVID-19 cases and quarantines. In five school days, we may be engaging in a full in-person return....

Where is our carefully coordinated plan for a full in-person reopening? Members of the Pandemic Planning Team have resigned because they refuse to risk the safety of our students and their families. The team determined that safety was the top priority when planning, and it is clear that it no longer is. Now that social distancing will not exist, what will occur when a positive case is identified in a classroom? A whole class will now be quarantined. How about with a positive case on a bus? Multiple students from multiple classrooms will be quarantined. How about in a cafeteria where masks are not worn? These quarantines will cause significant disruptions in our students' education.

What is the plan?

The CDC alerts, "COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on factors such as sunlight, humidity, and the type of surface. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes." Our buildings are operating without a full custodial staff due to recent cuts and resignations. Increasing the number of students in a school day increases the frequency that a high touch surface should be cleaned in the school building.

Social distancing will no longer exist which means we will be unable to limit opportunities for students and staff coming in contact with contaminated surfaces as well as infected people. We are giving up our best tool that protects us against COVID-19.

What is the plan?

The CDC warns, "It is critical to ensure the use and layering of mitigation strategies."

- **Masks** should be worn at all times, however, consistent and correct use of masks may be challenging for younger students in early elementary school.
- **Social Distancing** where a distance of at least 6 feet between people should be maintained.
- **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette** where children should each wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, especially if they have sneezed or touched their nose or mouth.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched surfaces within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible.

The four mitigation strategies the CDC listed are currently manageable inside a classroom with 10 in-person students. Add another 10 in-person students to that classroom, for a total of 20 in-person students and you will find that these mitigation strategies are no longer as manageable as they once were.

What is the plan?

The CDC indicates that we would fall into a *higher risk* category if we have a full in-person return.

You will make a decision that affects the lives of our children, their families, teachers, school administrators, and staff tonight. Voting to put those lives into a higher risk category is not what our children, their families, teachers, school administrators, and staff deserve.

We need to hear a safe plan.

Greg Schuettler - Vice President, PASDEA, Acting Dean of Students, DHH Lengel

"Are the teachers of the Pottsville Area School District opposed to a full in-person return of our students? No. As long as it is done safely. We can all agree that the best place for all of our students is the classroom, but not at the expense of the health and safety of our students, faculty, administration, and staff. The current hybrid learning model is the best solution available based on current conditions. It

allows students who choose to participate in-person, two days in the classroom, and three days of virtual instruction at home.

The hybrid model is a result of countless hours of work by district, administration, faculty and staff. It provides the greatest level of in-person instruction possible while maintaining proper social distancing requirements. This model has allowed the PASD to maintain the regular and consistent instruction of its students with limited interruptions due to quarantine. If you choose to move the district to a full in-person return, this will no longer be the case.

It is my personal opinion that the PASD has been leading the county with the success of our current hybrid model. When positive cases occur, they usually result in the quarantine of one or two, if any additional members of the school community. This cannot be said of other districts in the county.

Quarantines in other districts who are full in-person are frequent with substantial numbers of affected community members. Are we prepared to stop leading and start following? If this was to happen here, it would add unnecessary burdens onto the families of this school district in regards to employment and child care. Additional quarantines and building shut downs will cause unnecessary disruptions in the instruction of our student's that are currently avoidable.

The proposed return to full in-person instruction is not supported by any facet of the school community. Surveys that were sent out at your request show that two out of three members of the community are opposed to full in-person return. Teachers have voiced their concerns over full in-person return, and school administration also does not recommend the change in instructional model.

Based on our previous discussions with you about this potential change in instructional model, you have established that your main concern is with the high failure rate of our students.

Current data shows that the majority of students that are currently failing two or more classes are students who have selected the full-virtual option. These students will be permitted to remain in the full-virtual model if the district moves to full in-person. This being said, how does returning our hybrid students to full in-person solve this issue? It does not. This also is not a local issue, but a national one. Students all across the country are failing. Many students across the country have not set foot in a school since last year. That is not the case here. Our students have been able to attend in person through the hybrid model.

At this point in time, we do not know for certain how this potential change in instructional model will affect the selection of in-person or full-virtual for our students. We may see some students return to the classroom and we may see some student opt to leave the classroom for full-virtual instruction. I feel it would be prudent to maintain the current hybrid model until circumstances improve.

The teachers of the PASD Education Association have communicated previously that we would be comfortable with the full in-person return of our students once all faculty and staff who wish to be vaccinated were able to do so. Moving to a full in-person return prematurely risks increased teacher absences both from sickness and from extended leaves of absence to care for, or protect children and family members. With the current shortages of both teachers and substitutes, it may quickly become unsustainable. The concern raised by the board in regards to vaccination of staff was that it may take the rest of the year to accomplish. That may very well be true due to the continued shortages of vaccines and delays in distribution. Let us finish the year as we have started, hybrid and consistent, so that we can begin planning how to address

the seemingly insurmountable task ahead of us. Catching our students up to where they need to be.

We have come this far together. We created, approved, and implemented the hybrid model of instruction together. I ask that you consider continuing to meet and overcome obstacles created by this pandemic together. I have long believed that the best solution for any issue among people lies in the middle. The hybrid model is that middle ground. It is not the best or worst option for any party involved, but the best we can do together.

Mr. Quandel thanked everyone for their comments.

Mr. Henry Sallusti, of RBC Capital Markets, spoke (via zoom) about the refinancing of the 2012-2016 Bonds. The rates were very low and it was a good time to refinance. The interest rate went from 2.78% to 1.18 %. The District had a net savings of \$287,000.00. The terms on the bonds were not extended. Moody's was impressed with how the Pottsville Area School District was rebuilding its fund balance and being very fiscally responsible. The bonds were repriced and RBC was able to lock in better rates on January 27, 2021. Closing will be on March 2, 2021.

Mr. Quandel thanked Mr. Sallusti for his presentation.

On motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Board Meeting. Since all members received copies, and there being no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Mason, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the following financial reports the month of February 2021:

1. Treasurer's Report (All Funds)
2. General Fund Condensed Board Summary Revenue Report
3. General Fund condensed Board Summary Expenditure Report
4. Cafeteria Condensed Board Summary Report
5. Payment Summary - General Fund, Food Service
6. Ms. Budget Transfers

Motion carried.

Under Unfinished Business, Mrs. Mason presented a PowerPoint update on the 2021-2022 Budget.

- February/March Board - consider Administrative recommendations for the Proposed 2021-2022 Budget and in April - review proposed Finance Budget for May adoption.
- Revenue
 - ❖ Revenue increased by \$152,628
- Expense
 - ❖ Expenses increased by \$309,961
- Fund Balance
 - ❖ \$638,941 - Is a decrease of \$157,333 from January numbers
 - ❖ Still have to account for the \$2.7 ESSERS II Funds
- Governor's Proposed Budget
 - ❖ Basic Ed Funding - Proposed \$8.1 billion appropriation
 - ❖ Special Ed Funding - Proposed \$1.3 billion in appropriation which would be a \$200 million increase over 2020-21 appropriation. Pottsville's proposed increase \$503,829
 - ❖ Cyber Charter funding reform - Basic tuition of \$9,500
 - ❖ Early Intervention - \$11 million proposed increase
 - ❖ Early Childhood - \$30 million proposed increase
 - ❖ Pupil Transportation - \$16 million proposed increase
 - ❖ PSERS - \$32 million proposed increase

BOARD MEETING OF: FEBRUARY 10, 2021

Mrs. Mason will continue to give budget updates until the final vote in May 2021.

Mr. Quandel thanked Mrs. Mason for this informative PowerPoint on the 2021-2022 Budget Update and the Governor's Proposed Budget.

Under Solicitor's Report, Atty. Kevin Reid had no report this evening.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the **preapproval of the credits** indicated for the following professional employees and be ratified in accordance with the negotiated agreement between the PASD and the PASDEA:

Kendra Boris	-	3 credits
Kimberly Edling	-	6 credits
Christopher Kovaleski	-	6 credits
Peter McDonald	-	3 credits

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the preapproval of the credits indicated for the following administrative employee: Tiffany Hummel - 3 credits. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the following professional employees be reimbursed as indicated for the **successful completion of preapproved credit courses** in accordance with the negotiated agreement between the PASD and the PASDEA:

Jeremiah Lynn	-	\$1,548.00
Paula Jones	-	\$1,695.00
Jennifer Kepner	-	\$4,644.00 (9 credits)
Neil Johnson	-	\$1,725.00

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved that the following Administrative Employee be reimbursed as indicated for the successful completion of preapproved credit courses: Caitlin Mohl - \$4,632.00 (6 credits). Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the revised 2020-2021 School Calendar to reflect snow make-up days as follows:

<u>School Cancelled</u>	<u>Make-up Day</u>
December 17, 2020	February 15, 2021 (Presidents Day)
December 18, 2020	April 6, 2021 (Regular scheduled Make-up day)
January 26, 2021	June 4, 2021 (School Year Extended)
February 1, 2021	June 7, 2021
February 2, 2021	June 8, 2021

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the Acting Superintendent, and on motion of Dr. DiCello, seconded by Mr. Moran, the Board approved the 2021-2022 School Calendar.

The first day of school for students will be Wednesday, August 25, 2021, and tentatively the last day of school will be Monday, May 30, 2022. Teacher In-service days will be held August 18-19, 2021; October

BOARD MEETING OF: FEBRUARY 10, 2021

11, 2021 and January 17, 2022. An Act 80 day will be held November 08, 2021. Early dismissals will be held on Wednesday, November 24, 2021, Thursday, December 23, 2021, Wednesday, April 13, 2022, Friday, May 27, 2022 and the last day of school. Motion carried.

Based upon the discussions among the Board, faculty and public regarding the timing and return of the PASD students to full time, the Board has requested that the administration develop a **return plan for disposition**. This will be a roll call vote so Board members can explain their vote if they wish. The phased return to full in-person instruction plan includes all elementary students returning to in-person instruction 5 days a week on February 18, 2021 and districtwide return to full in-person instruction 5 days a week on February 25, 2021. On motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved to amend the return plan for PASD students. Motion carried by roll call vote: Dr. Cardamone, Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban, Ms. Wytovich, and Mr. Quandel, Aye. Dr. Blankenhorn, Nay.

On the recommendation of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved a phased return to in-person instruction beginning February 18, 2021. John S. Clarke will be all in-person beginning February 18, 2021 with a virtual day on February 24, 2021, DHH Lengel will be all in-person beginning March 4, 2021 and High School will be all in person beginning March 18, 2021. Motion carried by roll call vote: Dr. Cardamone, Mrs. Dewitt, Dr. DiCello, Mr. Moran, Mr. Shields, Mr. Urban, Ms. Wytovich, and Mr. Quandel, Aye. Dr. Blankenhorn, Nay.

Dr. Cardamone commented "We are all concerned with the well-being of our children and we realize we are asking our faculty and staff to assume some level of risk whenever we return to full, in person, instruction. We must balance that risk to the academic, social, and developmental risks our students face in continuing our current mode of instruction. My position, in considering the relative risks is to support the motion to return to full, in person, instruction. I vote aye on the motion."

Mrs. Dewitt commented "When I make my decision tonight I am thinking of:

* the student who does not have parental support at home *the student with no internet or poor internet connection *the student who is crying because he cannot keep up, or because he is completely lost, or simply does not know what to do The longer these students are not in-person, as much as possible, the larger the learning gap will be.

The amended timeline allows for Wednesdays to be held virtually to provide for safety and planning measures which I believe will allow for a phased return. "

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Athletics and Extracurricular Activities Committee** and on motion of Mr. Shields, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board accepted the **resignation of Krista Varano**, Assistant Varsity Girls' Volleyball Coach, effective January 8, 2021. Motion carried.

Mr. Moran thanked Mrs. Varano for her dedication as the Assistant Volleyball Coach.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Finance** and on motion of Dr. Blankenhorn, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the settlement agreement amended motion between the Pottsville Area School District and the Parents, on behalf of student #211120, effective February 10, 2021. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the Family Medical Leave for employee #1107, effective January 29, 2021. All completed paperwork has been received by the District. Motion carried.

BOARD MEETING OF: FEBRUARY 10, 2021

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the Family Medical Leave for employee #1025, effective January 18, 2021. All completed paperwork has been received by the District. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the Family Medical Leave for employee #983, effective January 27, 2021. All completed paperwork has been received by the District. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board accepted the resignation of Daniel Sestilio, bus driver for the Pottsville Area School District, effective January 15, 2021. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the termination of employee #1256, effective February 10, 2021. Notification was sent to employee. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the termination of employee #11, effective February 10, 2021. Notification was sent to employee. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Committee on Personnel** and on motion of Mrs. Dewitt, seconded by Mr. Urban, the Board approved the following Leave Without Pay as per School Board Policy(s): 334, 434 and 534:

- Employee #1537 - lunch aide - January 19, 29, 2021
- Employee #888 - cafeteria aide - January 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 2021
- Employee #1127 - cafeteria aide - January 14, 2021
- Employee #1349 - lunch aide - January 8, 11, 12, 2021
- Employee #1228 - lunch aide - January 25, 2021
- Employee #302 - cafeteria aide - February 15, 16, 2021

Motion carried.

Under **Promotion, Public Relations and Social Media**, Chairperson Ms. Wytovich congratulated the following:

- Congratulations to the following for being named February Rotary Students of the Month: Payton Kleckner and Daniel Braun.

On the recommendation of the **Technology Committee** and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. Blankenhorn, the Board accepted and awarded the 2 GB Bundled Internet Services bid from Comcast Business effective July 1, 2021. Monthly amount will total \$2,505.00. Cost to district after 80% eRate discount: \$501.00. Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Labor Relations Committee** and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Pottsville Area School District Education Association and the Pottsville Area School District to enter into the following agreement for the Health Savings Account Contributions:

- 1) 1. Employees who sever their employment prior to any semi-annual District HSA payment will have it pro-rated accordingly.

BOARD MEETING OF: FEBRUARY 10, 2021

- 2) Newly hired Bargaining Unit Employees shall receive the full contractual District HSA contribution regardless of their date of hire.
- 3) This agreement shall become part and parcel of the collective Bargaining Agreement between the Parties.

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Labor Relations Committee** and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Pottsville Area School District Education Association and the Pottsville Area School District to enter into the following agreement for **President's Day Holiday 2021**:

- 1) The Association shall permit the District to utilize Monday, February 15, 2021 as a make-up instructional day for students.
- 2) All Bargaining Unit Members in the Pottsville Area School District Education Association Bargaining Unit shall work or utilize appropriate leave on Monday, February 15, 2021.
- 3) All Bargaining Unit Members who are guaranteed a paid holiday on Monday, February 15, 2021 shall receive a paid floating holiday to be use prior to April 30, 2021.

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Labor Relations Committee** and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Pottsville Area Educational Support Personnel Association and the Pottsville Area School District to enter into the following agreement for **President's Day Holiday 2021**:

- 1) The Association shall permit the District to utilize Monday, February 15, 2021 as a make-up instructional day for students.
- 2) All Bargaining Unit Members in the Pottsville Area Educational Support Personnel Association Bargaining Unit shall work or utilize appropriate leave on Monday, February 15, 2021.
- 3) All Bargaining Unit Members who are guaranteed a paid holiday on Monday, February 15, 2021 shall receive a paid floating holiday to be use prior to April 30, 2021.

Motion carried.

On the recommendation of the **Labor Relations Committee** and on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the **Vision Agreement** between the Pottsville Area School District and the PSEA Health and Welfare Fund, effective March 1, 2021. Term of agreement is 16 months with a renewal date of July 1, 2022. Monthly contribution: Single \$3.37, Family \$7.97. Motion carried.

Under New Business, **Mr. Moran, Board Member since 2013, will not be seeking re-election** for his third term. Mr. Moran said he has been honored to serve as a Board of Director for the past eight years.

On the recommendation of Mrs. Lombel, and on motion of Mr. Moran, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the Board approved the following Use of Facilities:

HS

1- High School Little Theater

Drama Club Rehearsal

2:45-4:30 on the following dates:

1/25/21, 2/1/21, 2/8/21, 2/18/21, 2/22/21, 3/1/21

3/11/21, 3/15/21, 3/22/21

BOARD MEETING OF: FEBRUARY 10, 2021

2 - High School Wachter Auditorium

Drama Club Rehearsal

2:45-4:30 on the following dates:

2/2/2021, 2/4/2021, 2/9/2021, 2/11/2021, 2/16/2021, 2/23/2021, 2/25/2021, 3/4/2021,

3/9/2021

3/11/2021, 3/16/2021, 3/18/2021, 3/22/2021, 3/23/2021, 3/25/2021, 3/29/2021

5:45-8:00 on the following date:

3/8/2021

3 - High School Wachter Auditorium

PAHS Winter Concert (Choir and Band)

3:00-8:00 on the following dates:

1/27/21 & 1/28/21

4- High School Track & Surrounding Grounds

American Cancer Society Relay for Life

Friday July 30, 2021 12:00-10:00PM

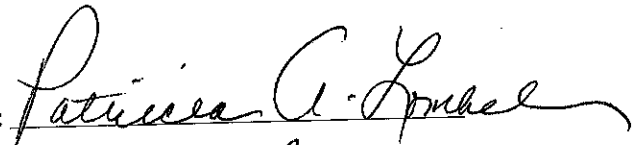
Motion carried.

Mr. Quandel noted that good things are going on and Pottsville Area School District is on the right track. Labor Contracts have been settled, Bonds have been refinanced and the District is finalizing the RACP project for Martz Hall. Mr. Quandel said despite the challenges, good stuff is happening.

An Executive Session was held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for personnel matters.

There being no further new business, on motion of Mr. Urban, seconded by Dr. DiCello, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

ATTEST:



BY:

