

Seneca Valley School District



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION SESSION Seneca Valley Senior High School Auditorium - 7 p.m.

Minutes

November 18, 2024

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mr. Eric DiTullio, President, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
 - A. **Moment of Silence** - The meeting was called to order with a moment of silence.
 - B. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Greg Nguyen, sixth grader at Ehrman Crest Middle School, continued the board initiative, "I Led the Pledge" by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - C. **Roll Call** - by Ms. Julia Benson, School Board Secretary, showed the following members in attendance: Ms. Leslie Bredl, Mr. Nick Brower, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Mike Jacobs, Mr. Fred Peterson, Mr. Jeff Widdowson and Ms. Kari Zimmer. Mr. Tim Hester was absent.

2. INFORMATION REPORTS

- A. **Student/Staff Recognition** – Choral students, grades 9-12, from Beaver, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties are annually invited to audition to be a part of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 Honor Choir. This year, 22 of the 96 chosen for that honor choir are Seneca Valley students. The three-day festival was held at Westminster College and concluded with a public concert on Saturday, Oct. 28. Congratulations to all who were selected.
- B. **Dates to Remember** - Ms. Linda Andreassi announced the following dates to remember:

November	
November 21	Children's Grief Awareness Day
November 27- December 2	Thanksgiving Break: District Holiday, No school for students and staff
November 29	Release of Reports of Student Progress, Grades K-6
December 2	School Board Reorganization Meeting, IHS Auditorium, 5 p.m.

- C. **All-Star Award, Winner, November 2024** – Audrey Goode, Administrative Assistant at Rowan Elementary School, was recognized and presented the All-Star Award by Dr. Tina Wentz, Rowan Elementary School Principal. Dr. Wentz shared that Ms. Goode is the heart of Rowan Elementary, supports the staff, is welcoming

and demonstrates an unwavering commitment to the school and community. Dr. Wentz congratulated Ms. Goode on this recognition.

Dr. Vitale congratulated Ms. Goode and shared that Ms. Goode has been the glue holding Rowan together, thanking her for her dedication.

Mr. Brower thanked Ms. Goode for all she has done.

Mr. DiTullio recognized Ms. Goode for being the face of Rowan, a calming presence in the building, and thanked her for her dedicated service.

D. Financial Reports

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

E. Social Media Litigation Update – Mr. Hoffman shared that in April 2023, the Board authorized the District's participation along with other school districts across the nation, in initiating a litigation against various social media companies frequented by students, arising by the adverse impact on them from their use of these sites.

The defendants in this litigation, including Instagram and Snapchat, challenged the complaints and sought to have them dismissed by the court. Recently the court ruled on those motions granting them in part and denying them in part. There is a provision in the federal law that provides immunity to social media companies from legal liability for third party content, information that others post on their sites. Based on that statute, the court found certain aspects of the claims brought against the social media companies to be barred:

1. Failure to put protective limits on the length and frequency of sessions.
2. Failing to institute blocks on usage during certain times of the day.
3. Allowing private content that can be averse to adolescents.

The court found that the general allegations were barred by that federal statute. The court denied the defendant's motion to dismiss on various aspects of social media sites. The items that the court are not barred by the statute are:

1. Failure of the social media companies to provide meaningful age verification and processes.
2. Failure to implement affective parental controls and notifications whenever adolescents log onto or join the sites.
3. Failure to enable protective limits on the length and frequency that adolescents can use the sessions which can create an addictive engagement on social media sites.

The court determined that those features of social media sites are viable claims and that they can proceed toward trial. As a result of those remaining claims, the discovery prelitigation is about to close and they will move from there onto the expert witness stage of the litigation.

The essential claims brought forth by the school district against the social media companies remain viable and will be further litigated.

Mr. DiTullio asked Mr. Hoffman what the remaining timeline is. Mr. Hoffman shared that he does not have this information and that the next phase will be expert witness litigation, which may take several months. The next time we would get information on the case would most likely be late spring or early summer.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Public comment was made by Ms. Amanda Latham regarding race relations.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Work Session – October 7, 2024
- B. Action Meeting – October 14, 2024

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS**
Grand Total: \$4,470,712.70

7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS**
Grand Total: \$251,187.75

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

8. **ADMINISTRATION**

- A. Board Policy - Approved board policy 622 – GASB Statement 34 – second, final reading.
- B. Student Adjudication – Approved student adjudication #2024-25-05.
- C. Transportation Contract - Approved the transportation contract for one family to transport their child to and from The Watson Institute – 301 Camp Meeting Rd, Sewickley, PA 15143 retroactive to September 30, 2024.

Mr. Widdowson motioned, seconded by Mr. Brower to approve board policy, student adjudication and transportation contract. The motion passed on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

9. **INSTRUCTION**

- A. Conferences – Approved conference requests.

- B. **Grant Disbursements** - Granted permission for and to disburse, the following grants:
1. The PARSS Grant in the amount of \$5,122 requested by Mr. Todd Pesavento. Funds will be used to purchase a XTool S1 40W All-in-One Color Bundle (Laser Engraver).
 2. The Water Play and Outdoor Learning Grant in the amount of \$3,500 requested by Ms. Annie Mersing. Funds will be used to purchase Triple Waterway Exploration Station to enhance outdoor and structured learning opportunities at Haine Elementary School.
 3. The Raider Robotics Grant in the amount of \$2,000 requested by Ms. Annie Mersing. Funds will be used to cover costs associated with registration fees and transportation for the Raider Robotics Team to participate in competitions.
 4. The Little STREAM Explorers Grant in the amount of \$5,000 requested by Mr. Ken Cahall and Ms. Annie Mersing. Funds will be used for supplies, equipment and construction related to outdoor education at Haine Elementary School.
 5. The Learning Without Limits Moonshot Grant in the amount of \$20,000 requested by Dr. Marie Palano. Funds will be used to implement the "Learning Without Limits" initiative for vulnerable, under-served and economically disadvantaged students.
- C. **Astronomy Club** – Approved the establishment of the Astronomy Club at no cost to the District and under the supervision of volunteer sponsor Ms. Veronica Mortier, effective for the 2024-25 school year.
- D. **Unified Champion Schools Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** - Approved the MOU between the Special Olympics Pennsylvania and Haine Elementary for Unified Champion Schools Indoor Bocce and Inclusive Young Athletes program for the 2024-2025 school year.
- E. **Student Trip** – Approved the Academic Games League trip to Washington, DC, April 25-29, 2025, under the supervision of Ms. Julie Smith, Mr. Jeremiah Friday, Mr. Mike Stebbins and Ms. Jen Exler. Students will miss two days of instruction and the trip is at no cost to the District.

Ms. Bredl thanked Dr. Doggrell for implementing the Unified Champion Schools Indoor Bocce program at Haine Elementary School. Ms. Bredl asked if it is possible to also have the program at Ehrman Crest.

Dr. Doggrell shared that the goal is to start at Haine and then expand into other schools. Dr. Doggrell also shared that they are implementing the Young Athletes portion of the program which, in addition to bocce, will be able to provide students through age 8 to focus on gross motor skills.

Mr. DiTullio asked Dr. Palano to share more information regarding the Learning Without Limits grant. Dr. Palano shared that there is a lot of research that correlates opportunities to extend learning beyond the school day in student achievement. This grant will give them the opportunity to work with some regional partners to create opportunities for learning to occur beyond the school day for both students and their families.

Ms. Harrison motioned, seconded by Ms. Zimmer to approve conferences, grant disbursements, astronomy club, Unified Champion Schools Memorandum of Understanding and student trip. The motion passed on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

10. **BUSINESS/FINANCE**

- A. **Budget Transfers** - Approved budget transfers.
- B. **December Bills** - Authorized administration to pay December bills.
- C. **Supplies and Equipment Bids** - Authorized administration to seek bids for supplies and equipment for the 2025-2026 school year.
- D. **Joint Purchasing Agreement AIU** - Approved the Joint Purchasing Agreement Resolution for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit for the 2025-2026 school year.
- E. **Joint Purchasing Agreement MIU IV** – Approved the Joint Purchasing Agreement with the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV for 2025-2026 school year.
- F. **Bid Awards** – Awarded the Evans City building asbestos abatement contract to Canfield Development. Pending solicitor review and approval.

Mr. Jacobs motioned, seconded by Ms. Bredl to approve budget transfers, December bills, supplies and equipment bids, Joint Purchasing Agreement AIU, Joint Purchasing Agreement MIU IV and bid awards. The motion passed on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

11. **PERSONNEL** – Approved the following personnel items that were discussed in executive session held prior to the meeting:

- A. **Resignations** – *Supplemental* – Elizabeth Porco, Bethany Witt, Ron Butschle
- B. **Appointments** – *Administration* – Sarah Parish, *Professional Substitutes* – Diana Dorland, Jaclyn Matascik, Vandana Rana, Souad Richani, Rita Verona, *Classified* – Kara Butler, CSM John Kortz, Ryan Cleaver, Jennifer Moulton, Lisa Goddard-Smith, *Classified Substitutes* – Michele Aymar, *Security* – Karen Christy, *Supplementals* – Caden Leighty, Rob Hornick, Veronica Mortier, Wendy McQuiston, Bethany Witt, Jennifer Lamoreauex, Marianne Aboutanos, Suzanne Aboutanos-Fellerman, *Internship* – Joshua Sektnan
- C. **Leaves** – *Professional* – Sandra Bilbao, Chelsea Risch, Mackenzie Gaydosh, Jennifer Ramey, *Classified* – Tracy Semega, Carol Jamison, Amy Gloeckner, Amy Gloeckner, Jennifer Bartley, Nicole Parson
- D. **Retirements** – *Professional* – James Mileski, Stacey Richard, *Classified* – Susan Greco
- E. **Affiliation Agreement** - Approved an Affiliation Agreement with Seneca Valley School District and the University of New England.

- F. **Memorandums of Understanding** – Approved the MOUs with Seneca Valley Education Association regarding the AP/College Board Supervisor Supplemental Position and the MOU regarding the Athletic Coaching Positions.

Mr. Widdowson motioned, seconded by Mr. Brower to approve resignations, appointments, leaves, retirements, affiliation agreement and Memorandums of Understanding. The motion passed on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

12. **LETTERS SENT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD** – No communication has been received since the School Board Meeting on November 4, 2024.
13. **ADJOURNMENT** With nothing to come before the board, Mr. Widdowson motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.
14. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – An executive session was held prior to this meeting to discuss personnel items.

Mr. Eric DiTullio, President



Ms. Julia Benson, School Board Secretary