

Seneca Valley School District



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION SESSION

Seneca Valley Senior High School Auditorium - 7 p.m.

Minutes

January 13, 2025

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mr. Eric DiTullio, President, called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.
 - A. **Moment of Silence** - We would like to take a moment to honor Dr. Ralph Cianflone, who passed away on Dec. 27. Dr. Cianflone, who retired in 2001, dedicated over two decades of service to Seneca Valley as the Director of Elementary Education and State and Federal Programs. We extend our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to his family and friends during this time.
 - B. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Landry Reach-Sweeney, fourth grader at Rowan Elementary 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. Tim Hester, Mr. Mike Jacobs, Mr. Fred Peterson, Mr. Jeff Widdowson and Ms. Kari Zimmer.
2. **INFORMATION REPORTS**
 - A. **Student/Staff Recognition** –
 1. Last month, 28 Seneca Valley students in grades 7-9 were chosen to participate in the third annual Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 String Fest. This one-day festival was held at Beaver Area High School and featured students from eight school districts across Beaver, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties.
 2. The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh has named James Lucot, a Seneca Valley Senior High School teacher, among this year's Righteous Among the Neighbors honorees. Mr. Lucot is being celebrated for his many years of exceptional teaching on the Holocaust and his dedication to Holocaust education. Lucot joins 10 other individuals in the second class of Righteous Among the Neighbors, an award that honors non-Jewish Pittsburghers who have demonstrated dedication to uprooting antisemitism and supporting the Jewish community. The 2024 honorees will be celebrated at a public event next month at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh.
 3. Auditions were recently held for the 2024 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 Honors Band at Grove City College. Over 200 students auditioned for a band of 125 musicians. This year, Seneca Valley had

36 students earn a position in the Honors Band, more than any other school. District 5 is comprised of all school districts in Beaver, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties. To audition, students must be in at least ninth grade and prepare a piece from a predetermined solo list for each school year. These college-level solos are then selected by the directors of District 5. The three-day festival culminated with a concert in Ketter Auditorium at Grove City College on Dec. 14. Seneca Valley secondary band instructors include Mr. Varden Armstrong, Mr. Robert Babick, Ms. Sara Snyder and Mr. Brian Croach.

4. Jeremy Womer, Haine Middle School Assistant Principal, was recently selected as Pennsylvania's 2025 Outstanding Assistant Principal by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. As a state winner in the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) National Outstanding Assistant Principal (NOAP) Program, Mr. Womer is eligible to be considered for the honor of NAESP National Outstanding Assistant Principal of the Year. The committee chose him for his dedication, professionalism, leadership and love of learning for students, faculty, the school and community.

Mr. Womer was recognized by Ms. Linda Andreassi, Director of Communications. Ms. Andreassi shared that as Haine Middle School's Assistant Principal, Mr. Womer's main focus has been on supporting and assisting all children in their academic, social and personal development. He has been instrumental in leading Haine Middle Schools positive behavioral interventions and multitiered framework to provide core instructional support for students. In addition to his administrative duties, Mr. Womer is actively engaged in mentoring teachers and leads by example consistently demonstrating a strong work ethic and positive attitude. She congratulated him and thanked him for representing his family, school and District so well.

Ms. Zimmer thanked him for all he does for the District and congratulated him on this accomplishment.

Dr. Vitale shared how proud she is for Mr. Womer and his wife, recognizing that this is a team effort. She shared how Mr. Womer has been a shining light and that she is so glad that the state now gets to see how outstanding he is. She wished him well at the national level sharing that she believes that he will win that, too.

Mr. DiTullio recognized how difficult it is to be an administrator. He acknowledged how positive everyone speaks of Mr. Womer and that he makes Seneca Valley a better district and our community a better place. Mr. DiTullio congratulated him on this accomplishment.

- B. **Dates to Remember** - Ms. Linda Andreassi announced the following dates to remember:

January	School Board Director Recognition Month
January 16	SV End of First Semester, Grades 7-12
January 17	Staff In-Service Day, No School for Students
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Act 80 Day – No School for Students
January 20	Staff Day of Service – From 1-4 p.m., staff members may participate in meaningful volunteer activities that have been researched and preapproved by their supervisor
January 24	Report Card Release, Grades 7-12

- C. **All-Star Award, Winner, January 2025** – Josh Phipps, ABC Transit, Inc. Bus Driver, was recognized and presented the All-Star Award by Dr. Erin Wilcher, Haine Middle School Principal. Dr. Wilcher shared that Mr. Phipps is more than a bus driver. She commented how he greets every student with a smile, and is a trusted and friendly person. Dr. Wilcher commented that Mr. Phipps takes a genuine interest in each of the kids' lives and that he attended the student's band/chorus/orchestra concert this past December because the students had invited him. Dr. Wilcher shared how fortunate the District is to have him and congratulated him on this achievement.

Mr. Demkowicz, Director of Transportation, echoed Dr. Wilcher's remarks and shared that Mr. Phipps is an incredible asset to our District. He thanked him for all he does and congratulated him.

Dr. Vitale shared how grateful she is that he shows up every day with a smile. She recognized how difficult his job can be and that parents trust him with their children. Dr. Vitale thanked him for being loyal and professional.

Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Bredl, Ms. Harrison and Mr. DiTullio all shared their appreciation and dedication to the community and the District.

- D. **Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) Student Presentation** – Dr. McKinley introduced this year's Student Visionaries of the Year, Roshini Umesh and Samuel Boyer II. Dr. McKinley shared that Miss Roshini and Mr. Boyer II, both juniors, make a powerful team that, over seven weeks, will network in the community to raise funds to support the LLS mission. The mission of the LLS is to make life better for people affected by blood cancer and to one day find cures.

Miss Umesh explained that her and Mr. Boyer II applied for and were accepted by LLS to be student visionaries where they will be competitively fundraising against other school districts. They have been meeting and planning their opportunities since earlier this school year for the upcoming fundraising dates of February 7-March 28, 2025.

Mr. Boyer II shared that their role as Student Visionaries is to be co-candidates of a multigenerational team, lead a team of peers, raise funds for LLS, develop leadership skills, involve the community and to raise awareness. Their target goal is to raise is \$75,000 and their reach goal is \$100,000. One way that they are hoping to get to this amount is by obtaining business sponsorships ranging from \$15,000 to \$50,000.

Miss Umesh explained what leukemia and lymphoma are, the general effects of having leukemia and lymphoma and the impact that they have on quality of life. A part of the program that has been rewarding to both Miss Umesh and Mr. Boyer II is that they have been able to meet their honored hero, Francesca, a local seven-year-old that has been diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia, whose family has benefited from LLS financial services.

Mr. Boyer shared that one of his reasons for wanting to represent LLS is because as a percentage of the funding that goes to charities dedicated to cancer patients, LLS

receives the least amount of funding at just 7% and he likes knowing that his efforts are going to a charity that is underrepresented. Additionally, they will be focusing on influencing policies in legislature and advocating for patients.

To raise funds and awareness in our District, together with administration, they have planned penny wars, bracelet sales, movie nights, dress down days for teachers, sponsoring a basketball game, pie a teacher and many more.

Mr. DiTullio congratulated and thanked both students for all that they have done up to this point. He asked them how the Board can best support them. They shared that donating and sharing their social media content are the best ways to support them.

Mr. Hester congratulated them and asked them to reach out to him because he is a small business owner and would like to help.

- E. **Presentation of Program of Studies** - Dr. McKinley reported the Program of Studies (POS) for the 2025-2026 School Year. The presentation focused on the additions/changes in the Program of Studies and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

There will be twelve new courses added to the POS for the 2025-2026 school year. Some include Advanced Experience Criminal Investigations, Astronomy 2, Advanced Experience Fashion Design and multiple business classes.

Dr. McKinley shared that there will be two courses offered on AI. Administration has been working with the teachers on AI and how they are using it both personally and professionally, and challenging teachers on how to best use it for assignments and exams. He shared that there will be cohorts started at each building where a building administrator and one technology facilitator will be leading a group in AI. These groups are utilizing Co-Pilot and Magic School.

Additionally, Dr. McKinley shared that there are over 440 courses offered and encouraged everyone to watch the recent video that was created to give an overview of the POS.

Mr. Brower asked for additional information regarding the word processing course and if it will be an elective or mandatory for students. Dr. McKinley explained that this is an elective course.

Ms. Zimmer thanked everyone who was involved in making the POS video, acknowledging how the video showed how to use “off pathway” and how this addresses many questions.

Mr. DiTullio asked for more information regarding Magic School. Dr. McKinley shared that Magic School is a program that has approximately 80 different areas and icons where teachers can get help with lesson plans, assignments, assessments and it is directed toward education. Mr. DiTullio thanked Dr. McKinley and the entire District for everything that they do to challenge one another to always do more.

Mr. Peterson asked if courses are created and then they find someone to teach that course or if teachers bring ideas for new courses that they are willing to teach. Dr.

McKinley shared that the teachers come to administration with ideas or there are needs assessments that are done to create a course.

Mr. Jacobs shared that by using AI, we are not looking to replace anyone's job, but the hope is that by utilizing AI, it will make them more effective at their job. He asked what the hope is for the time saved by utilizing AI. Dr. McKinley shared that teachers do a lot of work from home and that his hope that it is replaced with family time, downtime or for them to reset.

Ms. Bredl thanked administration for everything that they do for the POS. In addition, she suggested offering adult, evening cyber courses.

Dr. Vitale shared that the District has done a lot of work regarding AI and that it can make the workplace more efficient. She shared that often more and more is added to ones desk and that we need to be aware of that. In addition, regarding the idea to offer adult cyber courses, we don't have the capacity to offer them.

F. **Agency Reports**

1. Vo-Tech - Mr. Peterson, Jr. reported that the December meeting was a Reorganization meeting. Mr. Conrad from the Butler School District was re-elected as the JOC Chair and Mr. Peterson was elected as the JOC Vice Chair. He also reported that there are 16 Programs of Study and they are all reporting 90% or better in attendance. Additionally, they recently hired a teacher who will work in the adult education session, certifying students to complete emissions and inspections.

Mr. Hester shared that the Vo-Tech has been pursuing more grants to help with funding. He also shared gratitude from other districts who have asked him to share their appreciation for allowing their districts to participate in our cyber program.

2. I.U. IV - Mr. DiTullio reported that the year-end meeting addressed final business and included a grievance hearing.
3. PSERS – Mr. DiTullio reported that they recently had their year-end meeting and set the new rate at 34%. The funds are continuing to increase. The actual ERY required contribution for the state has been constant for 10 years. The actual ERY ratio is at 64.8% and it is projected that in 2032 it will be at 82.3%. Additionally, the active membership has stabilized at approximately 256,000 active members. Lastly, there is an opening on the Board due to a member resigning from teaching.

G. **Legislative** - Mr. Eric DiTullio reported that there is nothing to report.

H. **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

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

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. **Work Session** – November 4, 2024
- B. **Action Meeting** – November 18, 2024
- C. **Reorganization Meeting** – December 2, 2024

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS**

Grand Total: \$7,216,514.89

7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS**

December Grand Total: \$307,996.98

January Grand Total: \$324,055.22

Ms. Harrison motioned, seconded by Mr. Widdowson, 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. **Committee Assignments** – Approved School Board committee assignments for 2025.

Mr. Hester motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to approve committee assignments. The motion passed on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

- B. **Board Policies** –

1. Approved board policy 616 – Payment of Bills – revised, first reading.
2. Approved board policy 227.1 – Drug and Alcohol Awareness for Athletic Programs, Extracurricular Activities, and Student Drivers – revised, first reading.

- C. **Horizontal Movement and Personal Leave Memorandum of Understanding** – Approved the Horizontal Movement and Personal Leave Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Seneca Valley Education Association.

- D. **Student Adjudications** – Approved the following student adjudications:

1. #2024-25-06
2. #2024-25-07
3. #2024-25-08

Mr. Hester motioned, seconded by Mr. Brower, to approve board policies, Horizontal Movement and Personal Leave Memorandum of Understanding and student adjudications. The motion passed on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

9. INSTRUCTION

- A. **Cray Youth and Family Services Agreement** - Approved the Cray Youth and Family Services Agreement to provide alternative education for students and provision for delivery of special education services for the 2024-2025 school year. Pending solicitor review.
- B. **Student Trips** –
 - 1. Acknowledged Mrs. Carol-Lynn Dubovi to take students to Tokyo, Japan, June 2-9, 2026, at no cost to the District.
 - 2. Approved Ms. Sarah Miller and Ms. Mille Shay, RGMS/IHS Orchestra teachers, to take students to Erie, PA. for Pennsylvania Music Education Association (PMEA) Districts, January 9-11, 2025. Students will miss two days of instruction.
 - 3. Approved Mr. Steve Fortunato, Robotics teacher at the Senior High School, to take the Raider Robotics FIRST Tech Challenge Team to Manheim, PA, January 10-11, 2025. Students will miss one day of instruction. Costs will be covered from budgeted monies.
- C. **Conferences** – Approve conference requests

Ms. Bredl motioned, seconded by Mr. Brower, to approve the Cray Youth and Family Services Agreement, student trips and conferences. The motion passed on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

10. BUSINESS/FINANCE

- A. **Food Service Equipment** - Approved the sale of any food service equipment that is deemed to have resale value and the disposal of any items that are not suitable for resale in a responsible manner.
- B. **Budget Transfers** – Approved budget transfers.
- C. **Budget Resolution** – Approved the budget resolution indicating the school district will not raise the rate of any tax for the support of its public school for the 2025-2026 fiscal year by more than 4%, which is the Act 1 index for the school district as established by the Department of Education.
- D. **Time Clock Proposal** - Approved a proposal from Frontline Education to implement the Absence & Time Solution software system.
- E. **YMCA Corporate 25 Community Partnership** - Approved the renewal Corporate 25 Community Partnership agreement between the Butler County YMCA and Seneca Valley School District to provide membership discounts and benefits for district employees.

- F. **Bid Awards** – Awarded the Evans City Building Demolition contract to Upgrade Demolition. Pending solicitor review and approval.
- G. **IHS/PAC Project** - Approved Addendum #1, as submitted by CannonDesign, for the Contract for Architectural and Engineering Design Services.

Mr. Jacobs motioned, seconded by Mr. Hester, to approve food service equipment, budget transfers, budget resolution, time clock proposal, YMCA Corporate 25 Community Partnership, bid awards and the IHS/PAC Project. The motion carried 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** – *Classified* – Sandra Carlin, Caitlin Bertucci, Katelyn Mustovich, Lauren Sowa-Doku, *Supplemental* – Julie Smith, Elizabeth Cavicchia
- B. **Appointments** – *Professional Substitutes* – Lindsay Bowlin, Jocelyn Gerwig, Cindy Marzock, Jessica May, Eric Rogalsky, Blaine Sotirokos, Taylor Timmons, Lauren Sowa-Doku, Madison Cossin, *Classified* – Janet Antoszyk, Travis Hall, Ku Kartini Tuan Yusoff, Erma Safranek, Michelle Spatafore, Michael Sedgwick, *Classified Substitutes* – Maria Madeja, Nicole Ratliff, *Supplementals* – Jake Stebbins, Isabella Leighty, Natalie Tofanelli, Caden Leighty, Rob Hornick, Caden Leighty, Rob Hornick, Renae Brown, Todd Schoeffel, Valerie McGee, David Reichard, Angela Cardillo, *Practicum* – Jessica Scerbo, *Internships* – Dalashay Williams, Madison Yurich
- C. **Contracted Service** – Connie Wetzel
- D. **Leaves** – *Administration* – Tresa Amoscato, *Professional* – Melanie Snavelly, Margaret Mollura, Leah Vogel, Ashley Pile, Sandra Bilbao, Kristi Seethaler, Deanna Sipp, Stephanie Mattarock, Taylor Marsinetti, Ari Zahavi, Kaitlyn Witt, Hanna Forrester, Mackenzie Gaydosh, Carissa Miller, Cameron Maurer, Jennifer Ramey, Nicole Morrow, Dalashay Williams, Christina Maher, *Classified* – Caitlin Bertucci, Michelle Eppinger, Terri Keasey, Margaret Beggy
- E. **Sabbaticals** – Julie Smith, Julie Smith, Ashley Pile
- F. **Retirements** – *Administration* – DeeAnn Graham, *Professional* – Joseph Koromaus

Ms. Zimmer motioned, seconded by Mr. Brower, to approve resignations, appointments, contracted service, leaves sabbaticals and retirements. The motion carried on a roll call vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

- 12. **LETTERS SENT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD** - The following constituents communicated through the SVSD school board email account after posting the November 18, 2024, public agenda:
 - a. Amanda Razzano-Latham
 - b. Diane Fleming
 - c. Troy Witt
 - d. Sarah Rothrock

13. **ADJOURNMENT** With nothing to come before the board, Mr. Brower motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 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