



Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, February 13, 2025

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

Members absent: Nicholas Braccio

Others present: Todd Burns, Tamara Ferlick, Tom Ferlick, John Franzen, Frank Gallagher, Jon Graf, Sue Hadfield, Laura Heineck, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Josh Klimovich, Fran Masin-Moyer, Katie McCoy, Michelle Noga, Tia Schwab, Michael Taylor, and Megan Zweiback

1. Education-Personnel Committee

Mr. Landis called the E-P Meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.

1.1 2024-2025 Fall to Winter Data

Superintendent Gallagher stated that an update on student data would be presented this evening and noted that school principals were also in attendance.

Superintendent Gallagher introduced Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly read aloud the school district mission statement;

The Mission of the Souderton Area School District is to prepare students to demonstrate competencies needed to contribute and to succeed in a changing world by building on a commitment to excellence and innovation, by working in partnership with family and community, and by assuring a quality education for all students in a safe and nurturing environment.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that the mission really does drive the work that the school performs and was pleased to share the following information on student achievement.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly shared a slide from the presentation titled Data Literacy, likening it to a flashlight that illuminates the path forward using data. This evening's presentation will reflect data from Fall to Winter using MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) data. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly highlighted the four general areas of focus:

- Academic Achievements & Interventions
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Support
- Extended Opportunities
- Engagement

A slide was shown with pictures of students, and a reminder that while data is represented in numbers, it is our students and while not all growth looks the same, the goals are the same for growth and achievement.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained MTSS - Multi-Tiered System of Support - which ensures the use of a collaborative and systematic approach to empower, challenge and support all through shared ownership in the growth of the whole child. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained that the MTSS is a district-wide, school inclusive protocol that includes principals, teachers, assistants, aides, and food service employees, all working together to support students.

A slide depicting Teaching and Learning and tiers of support was shared along with a Coherence Map which Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained as a guideline for how specific supports are put in place as students needs are identified. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that the collaborative process that involves all levels of instruction and leadership in the buildings and through-out the district.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly shared a slide that reflects the diverse make up on a classroom, stating that instruction is delivered to align with curriculum, however individual student needs are met with differentiated instruction and tiers of

support.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed fall and winter data measurements, explaining that MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) data is accessible to teachers almost immediately, allowing them to make necessary adjustments to instruction and meet students needs without waiting for testing results. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed a scatterplot noting that the desired goal is the upper right hand corner where high achievement and high growth are reflected. She also explained how other points of data are used to measure but also to adjust instruction and implement intervention as needed.

School principals were invited to share the individual actions that they have implemented in their schools to foster motivations and engagement. Each Principal spoke accompanied by a slide highlighting some of the varied practices and procedures that they have implemented in each of their schools to support staff and students as well as methods to engage families. Educational strategies and purposeful instruction were at the foundation of each presentation, while acknowledging the critical importance of cultivating belonging for each child in the classroom.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly thanked the Curriculum staff, Principals and teachers for all of their work on behalf of the students.

Mr. Landis thanked everyone and commended everyone on the reported data. Mr. Landis asked about specific challenges experienced by middle schoolers and Mrs. McCoy responded that one of the biggest challenges is simply where the students are in life. Their individual growth and finding their place. Indian Valley Middle School Principal Mr. Klimovich also reiterated the age difference and maturity between an incoming sixth grader and an eighth grader heading to the high school. Ms. Wheeler also acknowledged the age gap and commented positively on the principals engagement with the students. She also praised the incentives that are working.

Mr. Nelson commented on the Curriculum Council meeting reinforced by the enthusiasm of principals and teachers. Mr. Nelson reminded that there is no cookie-cutter program and each school addresses its own individual needs and adapts as needed. He challenged principals to find one word and/or one sentence that describes their school.

Mr. Formica expressed appreciation for principals work and asked about the sharing of information between schools. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that district administrators meet on a regular basis along with MTSS facilitators and are able to share data and information on a regular basis. Mr. Formica inquired about a district plan for Artificial Intelligence and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that the the district has several teams working on a plan for ethical use of Artificial Intelligence.

Mr. Keith praised the emphasis on renewing partnerships with parents. Mrs. Flisak praised the vision of the school district mission and its implementation in each school. Mrs. Flisak noted her appreciation for the uniqueness of each student. Mr. Barnacz praised the presentation and cited the creation of community development within each school.

Mr. Barnacz commented on the excessive societal use of cell phones and wondered how the school district can support parents who may be struggling with this particular issue. Ms. McCoy stated that the middle school does have rules concerning cell phones and devices and those rules are enforced. Mrs. McCoy also noted that the book *The Anxious Generation* had been read by some staff and some parents. Superintendent Gallagher noted that the district can share information to families, however families have to have their own awareness and goals to monitor cell phone/device usage.

Mr. Brong praised the report and the detailed data available to teachers, principals and parents.

Superintendent Gallagher praised the team of principals and expressed pride in the entire administrative team.

A member of the audience asked about how much time is spent on SEL (Social Emotional Learning) for each child and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that SEL is a network of support across all layers of instruction.

A member of the audience asked about the availability of additional data and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that the information is hosted in a software program titled Performance Matters.

Mr. Landis adjourned the Education-Personnel Meeting at 7:49 P.M.

2. Policy Committee

2.1 First Reading of Policy 006.2 - Broadcasting Board Meetings

Ms. Flisak called the Policy Committee to order at 7:55 P.M.

Mr. Nelson read from a prepared statement: we are pleased to announce that on this evening's agenda, the Souderton Area School Board will consider the addition of live streaming our board meetings. We have always valued and appreciated Community involvement, engagement and input and we have always tried to conduct our committee meetings in a very open and comprehensive manner.

We hope that by broadcasting our meetings in real time, we can increase the level of access and give parents, staff, students and community members another way to receive information about the school district and listen to board discussions and decisions, even if they are not able to be physically present at our board meetings.

In addition to live streaming, the recommended policy revisions include the archiving of record recorded videos of each meeting on our district website for a three-year period. This change would give community members an additional opportunity to view meetings at their convenience.

As a board, we want to acknowledge that a concern was raised by a Community member that the school district is legally required to live stream meetings. The law does not mandate that and we have not been out of compliance. However, we do value community feedback and our goal is to create a collaborative environment. It is also our hope that as we move forward, the school community will focus on the many important decisions, achievements and initiatives related to student success and academic achievement.

While politics may receive newspaper headlines, it is important to retain a focus on our student-centered work, of which we are very proud of.

I also want to share with the public that we have asked the administration to complete a comprehensive review of district policies to bring recommended changes to our Policy Committee. We are looking forward to holding Policy Committee meetings on a more regular basis moving forward. The Board remains committed to listening to the concerns of the community and acting efficiently and effectively to the best interests of our students and our families.

I just want to add one other comment. I was on the (North Montco Technical Career Center) Joint Operating Committee with Mr. Brong and we did this over the last two years. It took a while to go over all the policies. Often policies aren't looked at just because things haven't changed. So we're just taking this opportunity right now to go through them. There are a lot of policies. I know that the administration is looking all of them over to see if they should be reviewed and there'll be some procedures that that we will change if needed.

Assistant Superintendent and Director of Human Resources, Dr. Hey noted that there are currently 257 policies related to the Pennsylvania School Code. Dr. Hey reiterated the protocol of three readings of a policy before its final adoption. He also noted, that on occasion, a policy may be fast-tracked directly to final adoption. He also stated that the First Reading of Policy 006.2 - Broadcasting of Board Meetings is one that will be fast-tracked in order to permit live-streaming to occur at the March Committee meeting.

Dr. Hey stated that a link for live-streaming of meetings will be posted to the district web site on the day of the meeting. The platform for streaming will be Zoom. Meeting videos will be archived for three years.

Mrs. Flisak read aloud from the policy and asked about edits to video. Dr. Hey stated that any edits would be extremely limited and only used in the event of defamation or confidentiality. Mrs. Flisak also asked about the transmission of the live-stream and Dr. Hey responded that the video is one-way communication, viewing only. He stated that the school district continues to encouragement in-person attendance.

Mrs. Wheeler asked about the location of the live-streaming link and Dr. Hey responded that the link will be posted on the school district website on the Board Meeting page.

Mr. Barnacz asked about the beginning of the archival process and Dr. Hey stated that it will begin upon approval of the policy. Mr. Brong expressed concerns that the video content be protected. Dr. Hey responded that guidance to that could be sought out through the Solicitor.

A member of the audience suggested that the live-stream meeting link appear under District Announcements on the web site.

The Board agreed to move Policy 006.2 for adoption at the February 27th Board Action Meeting.

2.2 First Reading of Policy 113.1 - Discipline of Students with Disabilities

2.3 First Reading of Policy 113.2 - Behavior Support

Dr. Hey noted that there are minor language changes to Policy 113.1 and 113.2. A brief discussion occurred concerning the specifics of the language changes. Ms. Flisak stated that all of the policies are presented under the direction of PDE School Code and serviced by PA School Board Association.

Mr. Nelson acknowledged the frustration and sometimes difficult content of policy, reminding everyone that the specific wording is not school district wording, but language supplied to the school district.

The Board agreed to waive second and third readings of Policy 113.1 and Policy 113.2 and move for for final adoption at February Board Action Meeting.

2.4 First Reading of Policy 610 – Purchases Subject to Bid

Dr. Hey noted minor language changes that will incorporate increases to dollar amounts for items subject to bid as published by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

The Board agreed to three readings and final adoption.

2.5 First Reading of Policy 626.1 - Travel Reimbursement - Federal Programs

Dr. Hey stated that the administration is recommending revisions to this policy which include standards for pre-approval and routine vs. out-of-town travel. A brief discussion occurred about reimbursement rates.

The Board agreed to three readings and final adoption.

2.6 First Reading of Policy 254 – Education Opportunities for Military Children

Dr. Hey noted that this is a new policy relating to students whose families are serving in the military. He stated that a key point in the policy, offering a simplified enrollment process to facilitate the student getting into classroom quickly, upon a move into district.

The Board agreed to three readings and final adoption.

Mrs. Flisak adjourned the Policy Committee Meeting at 8:41 P.M.

3. Finance Committee

3.1 Approve Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Budget

Mr. Keith called the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:43 P.M.

Mr. Keith introduced the agenda item for the proposed annual approval of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Budget.

Superintendent Gallagher noted the over all increase this year is \$2300. Superintendent Gallagher spoke in support of the functions that the intermediate unit supplies to the district in its Government Relations, Office of Organizational and Professional Learning, and Office of Technology Services, noting that these services are utilized by our Pupil Services Department and our Curriculum and Technology departments.

It was agreed to move the M.C.I.U. budget forward for board action.

3.2 2025-26 Budget Process - Expenditures

Mr. Keith stepped out of the meeting at 8:49 P.M. and Mr. Nelson assumed the position of Finance Chair.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor announced the Budget Process presentation which would focus on Expenditures. Mr. Taylor stated that as the budget process progresses, it is important to understand the procedure, and as last month focused on Revenue, this month is Expenditures. He indicated that some of the information being provided this evening was provided by the Pennsylvania Association of School Board Officials (PASBO) noting that school districts across the Commonwealth all have the same expenditure demands and constraints on their budgets.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a school district expenditure slide which depicted budget percentages by code; Personnel Services, Purchased Professional & Technical Services, Purchased Property Services, Other Purchased Services, Supplies, Property, Other Objects and Other Uses of Funds. He noted as a service organization, the largest percentage is salaries (personnel services).

A slide was shared that reflected the changes to expenditures over the course of ten years, within Montgomery County school districts. A Share of Salaries slide and Change in Employee Benefits Costs was shared which depicted a flattening of salaries and an increase in the cost of employee benefits. Mr. Taylor also explained a percentage change in the total employer contribution rate for the PSERS program.

Mr. Keith returned to the meeting at 8:59 P.M.

A slide was shown highlighting Charter School Tuition costs over a ten-year period, along with a slide explaining the Charter School Tuition Calculation. An additional slide showing Charter School Tuition in Montgomery County over a ten-year period was presented. It delineated the growth of charter schools as well as the type of growth; brick and mortar, cyber charter and regular ed and special ed enrollments.

Mr. Taylor shared slides that explained the costs associated with Special Education instruction and the rapid changes to those instructional costs over a ten-year period.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the knowledge of budget drivers and the ability to adapt and change within those areas of demand. Mr. Taylor cited the district decision to hire staff to provide some of its services rather than seeking outside sources to support those needs.

Slide were shown showing Ten Year Comparison's of Expenditures by Object and Special Education costs.

Mr. Taylor reported on the initial information that the school district had received from the Governor's Budget Proposal Basic & Special Education Funding. An increase of 1.14% is anticipated for Basic Education funding and a 4.77% increase to Special Education funding.

A Budget Calendar was shared with the following dates reflected:

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|-----------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2/12/2025 | Finance Committee Meeting | Budget Process - Expenditures |
| 3/19/2025 | Finance Committee Meeting | Budget Presentation |
| 4/9/2025 | Finance Committee Meeting | Present Proposed Final Budget |
| 4/24/2025 | Board Meeting | Approve Proposed Final Budget |
| 5/14/2025 | Finance Committee Meeting | |
| 6/11/2025 | Finance Committee Meeting | Present Final Budget |
| 6/19/2025 | Board Meeting | Approve Final Budget |

Dr. Gallagher spoke briefly about the funding formula and the justification of the allocations to school districts which had historically been raising their taxes every year.

Mr. Barnacz reiterated the importance of public advocacy to legislators concerning fair funding to school districts.

Mr. Taylor offered his contact information for anyone who has additional questions concerning the budget.

The Finance Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael Taylor, C.P.A.
Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs