

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
929 Lakeshore Drive
Leesport, PA 19533-8631

MINUTES

March 24, 2025

1.0 The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, David E. Moll, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School.

1.1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

1.2 ROLL CALL

Members Present: Franklin M. Ammarell, Paul L. Bendigo, Nicoleen M. Kleffel, Linda R. Lash, David E. Moll, Bryan J. O'Donnell, Alfonso F. Rossi, Kelly J. Steinke, Daniel B. Weyandt

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Recording Secretary: Susan A. Christman

Administrative Staff Present: Dr. Cathy Taschner, Dr. Melissa Brewer, Toni Crater, Dr. Jennifer Gabryluk, Dr. Shannon O'Donnell, Jacqueline Rivas, Michael Sobczak, Kristin Wallace, Dr. Patrick Winters

Solicitor: Alicia Luke, Esq., Fox Rothschild LLP

1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 24, 2025, as presented.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

1.4 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Moll reported that the Board met in executive session on March 12, 2025, for personnel and legal matters, and on March 17, 2025, following the Committee meetings, for personnel and legal matters.

2.0 REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

2.1 PRESIDENT – *David E. Moll*

No report.

2.2 SECRETARY – *Linda R. Lash*

No report.

2.3 BERKS COUNTY I.U. BOARD – *Linda R. Lash*

Mrs. Lash reminded everyone that the Annie Sullivan Award and Recognition Event will be held on April 2 at the BCIU from 5-7 p.m. This year's nominee for SVSD is Ms. Christine Nguyen, HS paraprofessional. At their meeting on March 20, the BCIU received a clean audit report from Herbein and Co. Muhlenberg School District has agreed to a 5-year contract with BCIU transportation and other contracts are pending. There is a draft resolution for school district cyber tuition rates which will be distributed to school districts after the April 8 COLA meeting. The BCIU hosted the Academic Challenge throughout the 2024-25 school year which ended with playoffs on

March 4 featuring the top six teams vying for the Berks County regional title. Schuylkill Valley School District, led by academic coach Tod Witman, emerged as this year's Academic Challenge champions. They will represent Berks County at the Pennsylvania State Academic Competition on May 2, 2025, at the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg, where they will compete against top teams from each of the twenty-nine intermediate units across the state. On March 7, 2025, educators, school administrators, and school safety officials from Berks County gathered at the BCIU Main Office for a specialized training session on threat assessment and its practical application in schools.

2.4 BERKS CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER – David E. Moll

Mr. Moll reported that the BCTC will hold *Career Camp 2025* from June 16-20 for 40 students in grades 6-8. Students will rotate through five programs exploring different career paths offered at BCTC. There are 1,214 applications year-to-date, and they are currently scheduled to enroll 901 students for 2025-26. This will make enrollment 2,055 students which is an all-time high. The BCTC budget for 2025-26 does not include transportation which is picked up by the sending schools.

2.5 TAX COLLECTION COMMITTEE – Nicoleen M. Kleffel

Mrs. Kleffel reported that their next quarterly meeting will be held on March 27, 2025. The Berks EIT Bureau received a clean audit.

2.6 PA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION LIAISON – Linda R. Lash

Mrs. Lash reported that President Trump signed an executive order aimed at limiting the size and scope of the U.S. Department of Education. While an executive order was signed, to move forward with the abolishment of this federal agency, an act of Congress is required. PSBA will continue to work with our state and federal partners to monitor how this potential action will impact the core functions and programs of the education department and determine what opportunities exist at a state level to reduce the impact on students, families and school leaders. *College Board* has added two new AP courses collaborating with industry partners such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and IBM. The organization hopes the effort will make high school content more meaningful to students by connecting it to in-demand job skills. It believes the approach may entice a new kind of AP student in those who may not be immediately college-bound. The first two classes developed through this career-driven model focus on cybersecurity and business principles/personal finance, two fast-growing areas in the workforce. Students who enroll in the courses and excel on a capstone assessment could earn college credit in high school, just as they have for years with traditional AP courses in subjects like chemistry and literature.

2.7 SCHUYLKILL VALLEY EDUCATION FOUNDATION – Linda R. Lash

Mrs. Lash reminded everyone that the foundation will be holding their *Inaugural Red & Black Gala* on April 4 at Graystone Farm from 6-9 p.m. This is a semi-formal event and will include an auction/fundraiser.

3.0 PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Louis Shucker, Bern Township – Student Literacy
Carol Weyandt, Bern Township – Student Safety/Quality Education for Students
Joe Brown, Bern Township – RTK Requests/School Safety and Security

4.0 BOARD

There were no items for Board approval.

4.1 SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Ms. Luke reported that the MOU with Northern Berks Regional Police Department has been finalized and services begin this week.

5.0 SUPERINTENDENT

Monthly Reports

5.1 The following monthly reports have been provided to the Board:

- 5.1.1 Enrollment Year-To-Date
- 5.1.2 Principals' Dashboard Reports

5.2 Superintendent's Update

Dr. Taschner provided district highlights from the past month. On March 1, the SV music department held their 31st annual dinner concert with many students and families attending throughout the day. The elementary school celebrated grandparents week from March 10-14 at this popular event shared between students and loved ones. The SV Junior Honor Society Induction was held in February with a large group of students participating in the ceremony. Kutztown Area High School will host the Berks Junior County Festival on March 29. Students representing SV include: Chorus – Lucianna Holben, Brayden Getrost, Maxwell Romig, Manny Adeojo; Orchestra – Hannah Raifsnider, Trent Varner, Alexandra Matz; Band – Samantha Hassler, Hannah Raifsnider, Kendall Gery, Brayden Getrost, Henry Schreiber, Aria Maeder, Amora Bobb, Trent Varner, Megan Angstadt, Alexandra Matz. On April 11-12, the middle school will present *Beauty and the Beast* directed by Mr. Andrew Santoro. Our 7th grade gifted students are participating in the annual *What's So Cool About Manufacturing?* video contest. The students partnered with Easy Pak to create a commercial to increase awareness of career paths and technology in manufacturing. The team will receive the contest results at an awards event to be held in April. The 7th grade family and consumer science students created 60 blankets and donated them to the Hillside SPCA. Congratulations to our varsity cheer team who took first place at the 2025 NCA Beach Bash CoEd Division on February 22. Our girls wrestling team participated in the PIAA Girls' Regional Tournament. As a team, the girls finished 9th overall and went on to compete at States. The regional tournament results were Alexis Foscone, first place in her weight class and Addison Becht, first place in her weight class and received a District III Coaches' Association Book Scholarship. In boys wrestling, Ian Vitalo placed 7th at States and celebrated 100 wins this season. Congratulations to our boys and girls swim teams. Both teams are the 2025 PIAA District III 2A Champions. At the swimming and diving state championships, Owen Eisenhofer was the state champion in the 100 backstroke and took 2nd place in the 200 free. In diving, Charlotte Schwendeman placed 5th and Carly Crills placed 7th. SV participants in the Berks County Senior All-Star Basketball Game were Cooper Hohenadel, Lucas Spotts, CC Reali, Megan Wickersham and Taryn Rittenhouse. Our SV high school team are this year's Academic Challenge Champions, led by Mr. Tod Witman and are only one of two teams to win in SVSD history. The team will move on to compete at the state competition in May. The high school jazz band performed at the Kutztown Jazz Festival where band members received feedback from judges and listened to other local jazz band participants. PYEA members attended the Mini-THON Appreciation Breakfast where they heard from a Four Diamonds family how the funds they raise at events help those impacted by childhood cancer. On March 28-29, the annual Panthers On Parade musical will take place with the presentation of *Once Upon A Mattress*. At the National Association of School University Partnerships, Dr. Shannon O'Donnell, ES Principal, and Dr. Meg Norris, Professor in the Elementary Education Department at Kutztown University, were presented with the Exemplary Program Boundary Spanner Award. Our Teacher Leadership Academy staff members then presented to other educators and university professionals from across the country on the elementary program. Schuylkill Valley Education Foundation will hold their *Red and Black Gala* on April 4 at Graystone Farm, which will aid in their mission to support the students and staff of Schuylkill Valley.

6.0 **POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Paul L. Bendigo

The Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee met at 6:35 p.m. on Monday, March 17, 2025, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 6.1** Accepts, with best wishes for the future, the following resignations due to retirement effective with the last day of the 2024-25 school year unless otherwise noted:
- Ms. Sharon Chelius, Special Education Paraprofessional at the high school, effective April 11, 2025.
 - Mrs. Susan Christman, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent/Board Recording Secretary, effective August 1, 2025.
 - Mr. Mark Horrell, Physics and Mathematics Teacher at the high school.
 - Mrs. Deborah Werstler, Reading Specialist at the elementary school.
- 6.2** Accepts, with regret and best wishes for the future, the following resignation:
- Mr. David McDonaldson, Director of Buildings & Grounds, effective March 24, 2025.
- 6.3** Approves the employment of the following (all elections are contingent upon receipt and district approval of all necessary pre-employment forms, certification, state-mandated physical examinations, clearances, etc.):
- 6.3.1** Ms. Grace Catalanello, Mathematics 7-12 Teacher, Bachelor's, Step 1, \$56,303, effective with the start of the 2025-26 school year, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Jared Guhl.
- 6.3.2** Ms. Kimberly Luigard, Special Education PK-12 Long-Term Substitute Teacher at the middle school, Bachelor's, Step 1, \$54,803 (prorated for actual days worked), effective date to be determined, through the conclusion of the 2024-25 school year, to fill the vacancy created by the leave of absence of Mrs. Anna Martin.
- 6.3.3** Mr. Miles Nessuno, Science 7-12 Long-Term Substitute Teacher at the high school, Bachelor's, Step 1, \$54,803 (prorated for actual days worked), effective date to be determined, through the conclusion of the 2024-25 school year, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Mr. Thomas Evanosky.
- 6.3.4** Ms. Kaitlynn Quillman, Special Education Paraprofessional, 6 hours per day at an hourly rate of pay of \$14.81, effective date to be determined, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mrs. Morgan Schmeck.
- 6.3.5** Extracurricular appointment for the 2024-25 school year:
- Mr. Adam Poper - Track & Field Junior High Assistant Coach - \$2,000
- 6.3.6** Extracurricular appointments for the 2025-26 school year:
- Mr. Joseph Bonfadini - Football Varsity Assistant Coach - \$6,530
 - Mr. Eric Hancock - Football Varsity Assistant Coach - \$6,620
- 6.3.7** Substitutes for the 2024-25 school year:
- Sandra Griffiths - Elementary
 - Madison Haines - Guest Teacher
 - Quin Holl - Paraprofessional
 - Sophia Kambourglos - Guest Teacher
 - John Paul King - Guest Teacher
 - Maricela Moreno - Custodian

Julia Post - Guest Teacher
Samantha Vaccaro - Guest Teacher

6.3.8 Volunteers for the 2024-25 school year:

Sydney Kemper - ES/MS
Hafiza Qadeer - ES
Danielle Smith - ES
Ethan Tucker – MS

6.3.9 Mentor for the 2024-2025 school year at a stipend of \$1,175.00 for full year mentors and \$587.50 for half year mentors:

- Felicia McDevitt - Half-Year

6.3.10 Game worker for the 2024-25 school year, to be paid \$40 per event:

- Jeffrey Zanke

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS APPROVED AT THE MARCH 17, 2025, BOARD MEETING:

6.3.11 Mr. Jason Hansen, Athletic Director, at an annual salary of \$120,000 (prorated for actual days worked), effective date to be determined, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Miss Stephanie Deibler.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Paul Bendigo to approve the employment of Mr. Jason Hansen, Athletic Director, at an annual salary of \$120,000 (prorated for actual days worked), effective date to be determined, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Miss Stephanie Deibler.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

6.4 Acknowledges the following Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leaves of absence:

- Lisa Henry, School Counselor at the middle school, effective February 24, 2025, through April 16, 2025.

- Sarah Hilpmann, Music Teacher at the elementary school, effective approximately May 5, 2025, through October 6, 2025.

6.5 Approves the renewal agreement with Frontline Education for the Absence & Time, Applicant Tracking, and Professional Learning Management products, at a total cost of \$38,146.96 for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

6.6 Approves Ms. Jessica Harle for the position of POP (Panthers on Parade) Set Painter/Designer at a stipend of \$1,200.00.

Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to accept, with best wishes for the future, the resignations due to retirement in Item 6.1, as presented; and to accept, with regret and best wishes for the future, the resignation of Mr. David McDonaldson, Director of Buildings & Grounds, effective March 24, 2025; and to approve the employment in Items 6.3.1 through and including 6.3.10, as presented; and to acknowledge the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leaves of absence in Item 6.4, as presented; and to approve the renewal agreement with Frontline Education for the Absence & Time, Applicant Tracking, and Professional Learning Management products, at a total cost of \$38,146.96 for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026; and to approve

Ms. Jessica Harle for the position of POP (Panthers on Parade) Set Painter/Designer at a stipend of \$1,200.00.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

7.0 CURRICULUM AND TECHNOLOGY

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Linda R. Lash

The Curriculum and Technology Committee met at 6:49 p.m. on Monday, March 17, 2025, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 7.1** Approves the quote from PowerSchool for the Schoology roll over in the amount of \$843.50, as presented.
- 7.2** Approves the proposal from Akko to provide Accidental Damage Protection on 1,350 student Chromebooks, at a cost of \$28,350.00, as presented.
- 7.3** Approves the disposal of textbooks that are no longer in use at the high school, as presented.
- 7.4** Approves the adoption of the Schuylkill Valley School District Comprehensive Plan, effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the quote from PowerSchool for the Schoology roll over in the amount of \$843.50, as presented; and to approve the proposal from Akko to provide Accidental Damage Protection on 1,350 student Chromebooks, at a cost of \$28,350.00, as presented; and to approve the disposal of textbooks that are no longer in use at the high school, as presented; and to approve the adoption of the Schuylkill Valley School District Comprehensive Plan, effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

8.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Nicoleen M. Kleffel

The Budget and Finance Committee met at 7:16 p.m. on Monday, March 17, 2025, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 8.1** Approves/ratifies the payment of bills in the following amounts from February 10, 2025, to March 25, 2025, as presented:

GENERAL FUND	\$2,109,685.90
CAFETERIA FUND	\$67,942.59
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FUND	\$3,738.42
MS/HS ACTIVITY FUND	\$17,461.79
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,198,828.70

- 8.2 Approves the School Nutrition Program (SNP) agreement between the BCTC and SVSD effective for fiscal year 2024-2025.
- 8.3 Approves the disposal of two Cres Cor hot holding units and two POS register carts, due to age and non-working condition.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Linda Lash to approve/ratify the payment of bills in Item 8.1 from February 10, 2025, to March 25, 2025, as presented; and to approve the School Nutrition Program (SNP) agreement between the BCTC and SVSD effective for fiscal year 2024-2025; and to approve the disposal of two Cres Cor hot holding units and two POS register carts, due to age and non-working condition.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.4 Approves the district's share of the Berks County Intermediate Unit's annual operating budget for the 2025-2026 school year, in the amount of \$37,388.75.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Linda Lash to approve the district's share of the Berks County Intermediate Unit's annual operating budget for the 2025-2026 school year, in the amount of \$37,388.75. NOTE: Requires two separate votes.

Roll Call Vote: Board Vote

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote: Individual Vote

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.5 Approves the Berks Career and Technology Center budget for the 2025-2026 school year, in the amount of \$20,223,509; Schuylkill Valley's member share is \$799,720 and \$51,142 for students with disabilities.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Paul Bendigo to approve the Berks Career and Technology Center budget for the 2025-2026 school year, in the amount of \$20,223,509; Schuylkill Valley's member share is \$799,720 and \$51,142 for students with disabilities.

Roll Call Vote

Yeas: Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt, Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.6 Approves of mechanical, plumbing and electrical engineering design services through Gatter & Diehl, Inc., for the high school and middle school kitchen renovations, at a total cost of \$10,400.

Board Action: Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Bryan O'Donnell to approve the mechanical, plumbing and electrical engineering design services through Gatter & Diehl, Inc., for the high school and middle school kitchen renovations, at a total cost of \$10,400.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 8.7 Approves the retention of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys for tax appeal matters.

Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Alfonso Rossi to approve the retention of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys for tax appeal matters.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

9.0 BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Bryan J. O'Donnell

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met at 7:22 p.m. on Monday, March 17, 2025, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 9.1 Approves the AIA documentation for Pending Change Order #9 that was approved in the February meeting. The AIA document references Change Order #G-5 from eciConstruction, LLC, in the amount of \$50,000.00, and is for the costs associated with existing drain repairs during the MS Pool Renovations project.
- 9.2 Approves Change Order #8 from MYCO Construction in the amount of \$5,378.41 to install twenty-two (22) manual volume dampers on the outdoor air ducts supplying fan coil units as part of the HS HVAC Upgrade Project.
- 9.3 Approves the Certificate of Substantial Completion for the HS HVAC Upgrade Project from MYCO Construction dated September 28, 2024.

Board Action: Moved by Bryan O'Donnell and seconded by Paul Bendigo to approve the AIA documentation for Pending Change Order #9 that was approved in the February meeting. The AIA document references Change Order #G-5 from eciConstruction, LLC, in the amount of \$50,000.00, and is for the costs associated with existing drain repairs during the MS Pool Renovations project; and to approve Change Order #8 from MYCO Construction in the amount of \$5,378.41 to install twenty-two (22) manual volume dampers on the outdoor air ducts supplying fan coil units as part of the HS HVAC Upgrade Project; and to approve the Certificate of Substantial Completion for the HS HVAC Upgrade Project from MYCO Construction dated September 28, 2024.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 9.4 Approves the contract for services with Schrader Group Architecture, LLC.

Board Action: Moved by Bryan O'Donnell and seconded by Alfonso Rossi to approve the contract for services with Schrader Group Architecture, LLC.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

- 9.5 Approves the provisions for the SR 0073 project, subject to the final review and approval of all documents by the Solicitor.

Board Action: Moved by Paul Bendigo and seconded by Bryan O'Donnell to approve the provisions for the SR 0073 project, subject to the final review and approval of all documents by the Solicitor.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

10.0 STUDENT SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Summary of Committee Deliberations – Alfonso F. Rossi

The Student Services and Activities Committee met at 7:27 p.m. on Monday, March 17, 2025, in the Auxiliary Cafeteria of the Schuylkill Valley High School. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, April 21, 2025.

Committee Recommendations for Board Consideration

Be It Resolved, That the Board of School Directors:

- 10.1 Approves the service agreements with Lifetouch for the elementary, middle, and high schools for 2025-2028 (three school years).
- 10.2 Approves the 2025 Senior Class trip.
- 10.3 Approves the 2025 High School Student Council field trip.

Board Action: Moved by Kelly Steinke and seconded by Nicoleen Kleffel to approve the service agreements with Lifetouch for the elementary, middle, and high schools for 2025-2028 (three school years); and to approve the 2025 Senior Class trip; and to approve the 2025 High School Student Council field trip.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

10.4 Presentation: Attendance

Dr. Melissa Brewer, Director of Pupil Services, reviewed the student attendance process. PA School Code Title 22, Chapter 11, drives our attendance procedures, and also SV Policy 204: Attendance. *Compulsory Attendance* is the period of a student's life from the time the student's person in parental relation elect to have the student enter school, which shall be not later than six (6) years of age, until the student reaches eighteen (18) years of age. *Excused or Lawful Absence* – the conditions or situations that constitute reasonable cause for absence from school. Examples include illness, family emergency, death of family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities, and educational travel with prior approval, court appearances. Parents/guardians are afforded ten days of request for absence for illness; beyond the 10-day limit, all absences for medical reasons must be excused per a licensed health care provider. An

unexcused/unlawful absence is an absence which does not meet the criteria for an excused/lawful absence and will be permanently considered unexcused. Chronically Absent is defined as students who have missed at least 10% or more of the days in the current school year. SAICs and SAIPs should be considered for chronically absent students regardless of the numbers of unexcused/unlawful days. The district's threshold for SAIC/SAIP chronically absent students is 15-20 days of absence. This is the time for root cause discussions, how is the student performing academically, what are the barriers to school attendance, and is there a Child Find issue. Thresholds for unexcused/unlawful absences include a 3-day warning letter where schools may inform parents of the first and second day of unexcused/unlawful absence, but schools must inform parents when there are three unexcused days (consecutive or otherwise); and 5-day and 10-day letters where the district sends letters to parents when a student has reached 5 days or 10 days of cumulative unlawful absence. This is not required by Board Policy or School Code. Habitually truant is when a student has six or more unexcused/unlawful absences. This threshold typically triggers the school attendance improvement conference (SAIC) and the development of a school attendance improvement plan (SAIP). The SAIC is held for students with six or more days of unexcused/unlawful absence for the purpose of developing the school attendance improvement plan. This plan is to address the root causes of non-attendance and to develop strategies and supports that lead to improved school attendance. After the SAIC has been held and the plan is in place, schools can refer parents/guardians to ASAP (Advancing School Attendance Program) for additional unlawful/unexcused absences. Service Access and Management, Inc. (SAM) oversees the ASAP program and assigns a case manager to referrals.

After the SAIC has been held and the plan is in place, attendance officers can file citations for truant days beyond those memorialized in the SAIP and District Court establishes hearing dates. Once the citation is filed, the attendance officer may not file additional citations until the judgment for the first citation has been determined. Attendance officers may bring additional days of truancy to the hearing. CYS (Children and Youth Services) will only take reports of attendance concerns if the district has followed appropriate attendance protocol (required letters, SAIC, SAIP), the district has referred the parent/guardian to ASAP (SAM, Inc.), and the district can verify the parent/guardian has either refused ASAP services, or failed to respond to SAM caseworkers' attempts to engage in solutions. When a student with an IEP, 504 Agreement or GIEP reaches 15-20 days of absence, excused or unlawful, attention to root causes is paid. Relevant questions are asked to explore barriers to school attendance including have we convened the SAIC/ developed the SAIP (15-20 days of absence or sooner); has notification been given to the Director of Pupil Services (at 20 days of absence); have we convened the IEP/504 Teams (25 days of absence or sooner); do we need to revise the IEP/504; do we need to issue a PTE (Permission to Evaluate) if the student has a 504; do we need a PTRE (Permission to Re-evaluate) if the student has an IEP. The goal for students that have an IEP, 504 or GIEP is that they are receiving their services, and we want to make sure that there aren't other barriers to them not coming to school that may need to be addressed through their IEP, 504 or GIEP. For all other students who reach 15-20 days of absence, excused or unlawful, attention to root causes is paid. Relevant questions are asked to explore barriers to school attendance. Convening the SAIC and developing the SAIP (20-25 days of absence) and is there a need to issue a PTE (Child Find issue; 25+ days of absence).

Mr. Bendigo stated that in the attendance policy under *Habitually Truant*, it states district staff shall refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program and asked Dr. Brewer to describe these programs. Dr. Brewer explained that as part of an SAIC, we could refer students to school-based counseling or institute an SAP referral. Mr. Bendigo asked what the community-based attendance improvement program refers to and Dr. Brewer stated that she will find out the meaning. Mrs. Steinke asked about the letters that are sent out i.e., that a mandatory warning letter is sent at three days, and then we choose to send out a letter at five days and ten days as well, and how long has this been in place. Dr. Brewer answered that it's a good amount of time but she will look into it. Mrs. Steinke asked about the process of sending the letters, who is sending them out, and who is mandating that the letters go out. The reason she is asking is that it seems like a large amount of letters were just sent out because she had several parents reach out to her asking why they were getting the letters. Mrs. Steinke received a 5-day letter for one of her children but did not receive the 3-day letter, and if the 3-day letter is mandatory by the

state, that this process is taking place. Dr. Brewer answered that our student information system tracks attendance and when a student reaches a certain threshold of absence, that letter should be automatically generated and sent to the parent. She would need to look at the process that the principals use to review and sign the letters. Dr. Brewer added that all three of our assistant principals are using their own spreadsheets to track attendance and manage who has a 504, IEP, GIEP etc., so they can take the appropriate steps as needed. Mrs. Steinke stated that some of the parents that received the letters called in to the building administrators who told them that the board mandated that the letters be sent. She does not recall having this conversation and if this is something that has been happening, why would the board be mentioned. Dr. Brewer added that her best understanding is that the district's process with the letters has been the same process for several years if not longer. The new conversations that are taking place revolve around chronic absenteeism. She will follow up regarding the letters; currently the letters being sent are regarding unlawful absences. Mr. Moll asked if there are regular meetings with the assistant principals regarding absenteeism and Dr. Brewer stated that she is in regular communication with the assistant principals regarding attendance. There are no regularly scheduled meetings, but she reaches out to them to get an update on their attendance and receives their spreadsheets.

10.5 Presentation: PREPaRE Workshop

Dr. Patrick Winters, Chief Education and Operations Officer, discussed the recent PREPaRE School Crisis Prevention and Intervention Workshop: Responding to an Acute Traumatic Stressor in Schools. The information for this workshop is from the National Association of School Psychologists and was held on March 18-19 at the BCIU. Presenters were Dr. Danielle Smyre and Mr. Jeff Laubach, who are both school psychologists working for the BCIU, and are PREPaRE trainers through the National Association of School Psychologists. SVSD team members who attended were Dr. O'Donnell, Mrs. Bricker, Mr. Savage, Dr. Gabryluk, Mrs. Koller, Mrs. Musket, Mrs. Rowles-Cranmer and Dr. Winters. The goal of the workshop was to acquire the knowledge and begin to develop the skills required to provide immediate mental health crisis interventions to students, staff, and school community members who are simultaneously exposed to an acute traumatic stressor. The first day they reviewed crisis situations and then worked as a team to identify the type of crisis. On day two, types of interventions were reviewed which included what would work for everyone i.e., an entire building (Tier 1 Support) versus individual or small group interventions (Tier 2 & 3 Support). The workshop included background knowledge, evaluating psychological trauma, providing crisis interventions and responding to mental health needs i.e., social support, psychological education and psychological intervention, examining the effectiveness of crisis preparedness and crisis response, and caring for the caregiver.

10.6 Other (Old/New Business)

Mr. Rossi requested that the new athletic director tour the athletic facilities to become familiar and then generate a list of items that they believe need to be improved or added.

11.0 OTHER BUSINESS/GOOD OF THE ORDER

12.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Moll announced that there would be an executive session immediately following the meeting for personnel and legal matters.

13.0 ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Nicoleen Kleffel and seconded by Paul Bendigo, there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned.

Yeas: Ammarell, Bendigo, Kleffel, Lash, Moll, O'Donnell, Rossi, Steinke, Weyandt

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Linda R. Lash", written over a horizontal line.

Linda R. Lash, Secretary
Board of School Directors