



Board of School Directors Committee Meetings Minutes Wednesday, April 9, 2025

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

Others present: Frank Ball, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Damion Spahr, Michael Taylor, and Megan Zweiback

1. Policy Committee

1.1 First Reading of Policy 916 – Volunteers

Mrs. Flisak called the Policy Committee Meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

Superintendent Gallagher stated that there were two items on the Policy Committee. A first reading of revisions and second readings to policies that were brought forward at the March meeting.

Assistant Superintendent / Director of Human Resources introduced the revision to Policy 916 which covers Volunteers. He stated that the policy is being revised now, so that it is adopted for the 2025-2026 school year. He also stated that procedurally there are no changes to the policy. Dr. Hey stated that the revisions update the terminology for the types of volunteers the school district utilizes. He defined the Guest Volunteer as someone who volunteers in the classroom or at a school event or activity and does not have supervision of students. The Position Volunteer is defined as someone who would have direct supervision of students such as a field trip chaperone. Dr. Hey clarified the volunteer types and the various clearances required for each. Dr. Hey also reiterated the confidentiality and maintenance of said clearances.

Mrs. Flisak expressed thanks to the volunteers for all they do to serve our students.

Mrs. Wheeler asked about the length of clearances and Dr. Hey stated five years.

A member of the public questioned the duplication of the confidentiality guidelines listed in the document. Dr. Hey responded that it was a duplication.

The Committee agreed to move forward for a second reading.

1.2 Second Readings of Policies 105.1, 105.2, 218, 218.1

Dr. Hey stated that these policies revisions are language revisions as recommended by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (P.S.B.A.) and the School Code. No procedural changes.

Mrs. Flisak also reiterated that revisions come from PDE through the School Code, and P.S.B.A. assists in facilitating the changes to school districts.

The Committee agreed to move these policies forward for a Third Reading and Final Adoption.

Ms. Flisak adjourned The Policy Committee Meeting at 6:46 P.M.

2. Operations Committee

2.1 Board Meeting Calendar 2025-2026 School Year

Mr. Brong called the Operations Meeting to order at 6:47 P.M. announcing the agenda items.

Dr. Gallagher outlined the calendar, noting its consistency of Committee meetings on the second Wednesday of the month and the Action meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month. He noted that changes to that schedule are

because of the holidays and to accommodate the annual budget approval in June. Dr. Gallagher also stated that changes to the calendar could be made as needed by giving a 24-hour notification.

It was agreed to move forward for approval.

2.2 Cooperative Purchasing Agreements for Indian Crest & Salford Hills Renovations

Mr. Taylor introduced Mr. Spahr of SiteLogiQ, the construction manager for the Indian Crest Middle School and the Salford Hills Elementary School projects.

Mr. Spahr reviewed a slide that outlined the Purchasing Strategy to procure some materials for the above referenced projects through cooperative purchasing rather than public bid. Mr. Spahr noted that the advantages allow for quality contractor selection, the ability to confirm scopes of work through the process, prior to signature. He also stated that there is lower risk for change orders when using the cooperative purchasing model as it allows for negotiation when needed.

Mr. Spahr reviewed a slide showing the recommended contracts to be awarded for Salford Hills which included ceramic tile, toilet partitions and accessories and window treatments.

Mr. Spahr also reviewed the recommended contracts to be awarded for Indian Crest which included wood flooring, residential appliances (FCS classrooms), toilet partitions, flagpole and window treatments. Mr. Spahr noted that some items are not yet finalized and it is the opinion of SiteLogiQ to wait and finalize those numbers rather than rush a vendor for an estimated price.

Mr. Barnacz asked for a breakdown of the pending items and Mr. Spahr stated that it would be provided to the Board before the action meeting.

Mrs. Flisak inquired about the life span of toilet partitions and accessories. Mr. Spahr noted that it is approximately 25-30 years in Souderton.

A member of the public asked if the estimated price fell within the budget and Mr. Spahr responded it did. This same member of the public asked about potential price fluctuations and Mr. Spahr stated that these prices are locked in.

A member of the public asked about installation costs and Mr. Spahr said those costs are included.

The Operations Committee agreed to move forward for approval.

Mr. Brong adjourned the Operations Committee meeting at 7:04 P.M.

3. Finance Committee

3.1 2025-26 Budget Update

Mr. Keith called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:06 P.M.

Mr. Keith stated that a Proposed Final Budget would be presented tonight.

Mr. Keith also stated that the district had reviewed its revenues at the January Finance Committee meeting and its expenditures at the February meeting in an effort to explain both sides of the school district budget. He noted the consistency in the services being provided as well as the trends that are impacting the budget preparation. Mr. Keith introduced Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Taylor noted the procedural formality of the Proposed Final Budget which gives the public the opportunity to review the budget, as well as allowing for continued work on the budget right up to its final approval in June.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide titled Significant Revenues 2023-24 which outlined local, state and federal revenue sources. It was noted that local earned income taxes remain on a positive trend. A reduction in property taxes was reflected in gaming revenues.

A slide showing a Tax Rate History against the Act 1 Index was reviewed. Mr. Taylor explained the Index which is set annually by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, as the maximum tax increase permitted by a school district. The rate for the 2025-2026 school year is set at 4.0%. The slide reflected a year-by-year review of the Index and the percentage of tax rate for the Souderton Area School District over a ten-year period.

Mr. Taylor reviewed the Local Revenues slide detailing the collections, interims, earned income taxes, delinquent real estates taxes, per capita taxes, transfer taxes and earnings on investments. He noted that the proposed final is showing an increase in revenue assessments.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide titled Governor's Budget Proposal showing a 1.14% increase in Basic Education Funding and a 4.77% increase in Special Education Funding. Mr. Taylor stated that the budget of the Commonwealth does not anticipate any changes to school district funding.

A slide was reviewed showing Federal Revenues and Mr. Taylor noted that Title Funding Allocations are made annually and will not be known possibly until July.

Significant Expenditures were reviewed. Those include salaries, social security and PSERS retirement benefits, health insurance, transportation and principal debt payments. Mr. Taylor noted important trends that show increases to special education costs explaining that while special education costs have increased over 78% in ten years, the increase in state and federal funding has only increased at 37%. He also explained that it remains a challenging budgetary item as students needing special education services are increasing and the needs are also more expensive.

A brief discussion occurred regarding Debt Service and how it impacts planned borrowing for future capital improvement. Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide that depicted Debt Service 5 Year Actual's and a 5 Year Forecast. A slide showing debt service trends over the course of ten years. It reflected the cost of the high school being paid off and therefore allowing for the borrowing to make necessary improvements at Indian Valley Middle School and Franconia Elementary School, followed by West Broad Street, Salford Hills and Indian Crest. This purposeful planning is done to have minimal impact on the operating budget.

A slide showing the 2025-26 Budget Overview with expenditures at \$162.7M and revenues at \$158.7M reflects a \$4M deficit as the school district is committed to staying within the Act 1 Index of 4%. Mr. Taylor also noted that work will continue on the budget and is anticipating that the current deficit will be lowered by the April 24th approval of the Proposed Final Budget.

The Budget Calendar was reviewed showing two upcoming Finance Committee Meetings on May 14 and June 11. Final budget approval is scheduled for June 19, 2025.

Mr. Keith thanked Mr. Taylor for the presentation. Mrs. Flisak commented on the presentation of information and commented on the growth of special education needs and costs. Mr. Formica commented on the lack of funding from state and federal entities to support student needs.

Mr. Nelson spoke to the state mandates and its lack of funding to support the mandates. Mr. Nelson also reiterated the philosophy of the Board and the Administration to continue to support its programs without making cuts and not to burden the taxpayers.

Mr. Barnacz noted the substantial increase to the special education side of the budget and the reality of the deficit. He also spoke to contacting legislators on behalf of the school district needs.

A brief explanation occurred on the Act One Index and how it is calculated by the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO). The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) provides revenue projections along with objective analysis of fiscal, economic and budgetary issues to assist Commonwealth residents and the General Assembly in their evaluation of policy decisions

Mrs. Wheeler commented on the significant expenditures and the associated costs, but reiterated the importance of paying living wage to teachers and supporting their health care. Mr. Taylor acknowledged those costs are 2/3 of the budget.

Dr. Gallagher noted Mr. Rothholz in attendance, in the audience, is a regular advocate for public school education and in response to his question of what is needed most, Dr. Gallagher responded funding.

Mr. Rothholz acknowledged that he will be advocating soon in Washington D.C. and asked for projected costs and student stories to share the needs of our school district to legislators.

Mr. Rothholz also commented on competitive salaries. Assistant Superintendent and Director of Human Resources, Dr. Hey stated that the SASD is not the highest paying employer in Montgomery County, but also not the lowest. He stated that the SASD falls somewhere in the middle third of the county range.

Mr. Rothholz also inquired about renovation to the track at Indian Valley Middle School. Mr. Taylor stated that it will be considered by the Board for proposed Summer 2026 work when we present the renovation of the track at Indian Crest

Middle School.

A member of the public asked what was driving special education costs and Dr. Gallagher responded that while enrollment has not increased, more students are being identified, and being identified at an earlier age. This member of the public also inquired about new positions and retirements. Dr. Gallagher noted the addition of an Autistic Support teacher and a new Orchestra teacher at the high school. Dr. Hey responded that retirement numbers will be reflected in May.

A member of the public asked what the Board & Administration is doing to "get loud" and express their concerns regarding funding to legislators. Several board members commented on their personal actions of making phone calls and writing letters. Mr. Nelson spoke of Montgomery County Intermediate Unit measures and his conversations with Senator Pennyquick and Representative Scheuren.

Dr. Gallagher stated that he is the Legislative Chair of The Montgomery County Superintendents Legislative Committee which meets regularly with legislators. He also reiterated the importance of establishing relationships with legislators and noted that several education-related organizations host advocacy days at the state capitol, of which he is an attendee.

Mr. Keith adjourned the Finance Committee adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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