

Seneca Valley School District



SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION

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

Minutes

May 5, 2025

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mr. Eric DiTullio, President, called the meeting to order at 7:28 p.m.
 - A. **Moment of Silence** - The meeting was opened with a moment of silence.
 - B. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Amorabella (kindergarten) and Calvin Jason (second grade), Ehrman Crest 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, Ms. 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. Dr. Marie Palano, Seneca Valley Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Assessment, was recently named the recipient of the 2025 Emerging Woman in Education Award, presented in memory of University of Pittsburgh Professor Emeritus Dr. Jean Winsand by the Tri-State Study Council. The award recognizes an educational trailblazer who has made a significant impact and positive difference through her leadership activities and initiatives.

Dr. Vitale shared that there are over 60 districts represented in the Tri-State Study Council and many woman are nominated for the Emerging Woman in Education Award each year. She shared how proud she is that Dr. Palano received this award and that it is well deserved, congratulating her.

Mr. DiTullio shared that it is a privilege to have her as an SV employee and congratulated her on a well-deserved award.
 2. PMEA & Music Excellence
 - a. **Grand Champions**

The Seneca Valley Marching Band was named the Grand Champions in the Norfolk North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Festival's "Parade of Nations" in Norfolk, VA, on April 26. In addition to the Grand Champion award, which is the highest overall score of any ensemble at the festival, the

marching band also earned the best percussion award, best auxiliaries award, and a gold rating. This marks Seneca Valley Marching Band's fifth appearance in the parade, and they proudly earned the title of Grand Champions every time. There were over 100 parade units in attendance; Seneca Valley was one of only eight high school bands selected nationwide to participate.

b. District 5 Junior High Band Fest

Eighteen SV Band students participated in the PMEA District 5 Junior High Band Fest on March 25 at North Catholic High School. The seventh/eighth grade ensemble featured 13 SV students.

c. Region 1 Band Festival

Nine SV Band students participated in the March 6 - 8 PMEA Region 1 Band Festival with two students advancing to the All-State Festival.

d. MPA Adjudication – RGMS and Elementary Bands/Orchestras

On March 18, sixth and seventh grade instrumental students participated in an adjudicated Music Performance Assessment (MPA) event. The RGMS seventh grade band and orchestra and Ehrman Crest sixth grade ensembles earned Superior and Excellent ratings.

e. Western Region Orchestra Festival

Six SV Orchestra students participated in the PMEA Western Region Orchestra Festival held Feb. 20–22. Four students advanced to the All-State Orchestra, setting a new school record.

f. Region Chorus Festival

Ten SV high school chorus students participated in the March 19-21 PMEA Region Chorus at Waynesburg University. Six advanced to the All-State Choir Festival.

g. Music Performance Assessment (MPA) – Choral Department

Approximately 800 chorus students in grades 6-12 participated in an MPA event on March 13. All choirs received "Superior" ratings.

h. PMEA All-State Festival Participants

Thirteen SV students advanced to the state level and attended the PMEA All-State conference in April. Participants represented Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble and Choir. Conductors included national and university-level professionals.

3. Media & Technology Distinction

a. Digital Media Arts Consortium (DMAC) Festival

SV Video Production and SVTV students earned seven awards at the April 9 DMAC Festival.

b. SVTV Award-Winning Program

On March 9, SVTV earned second place in the High School Live Sports Broadcast category at the Myron Cope High School Athletic

Communication Awards. Crew members also received an honorable mention for Sports Broadcasters of the Year.

c. Aspirational Students Receive Recognition

Two seniors were selected as Western PA Affiliate Winners of the 2025 National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) for the Aspirations in Computing High School Award. The award celebrates students with achievements and leadership in technology and computing, with support from institutions like Carnegie Mellon, Pitt, and Penn State.

4. Congratulations to two Seneca Valley students for placing at the SkillsUSA Pennsylvania State Competition held in Hershey earlier this month. SkillsUSA, offered through the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School (BCAVTS), welcomed hundreds of top-performing students from across the state to participate in real-world job challenges across a range of industries. Mr. Gavin Uber, junior, received bronze for his participation in the TeamWorks contest of the Building Construction program. Miss Elizabeth Semenenko, a sophomore graphic design student, received bronze for her photography submission.
5. Seneca Valley is proud to announce that two student teams from Haine Elementary School have earned invitations to the KidWind World Championship, taking place May 18–21 in Phoenix. The competition is the culminating event of the KidWind Challenge, a hands-on design competition that encourages students to explore the power and promise of clean energy through building and testing small-scale wind turbines and solar structures. This year, six teams of fourth-grade students from Haine Elementary participated in KidWind events. Following impressive showings at these events, two Seneca Valley teams earned tickets to the prestigious world finals.

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

May	Mental Health Awareness Month
May 6	National Teacher Appreciation Day
May 5-16	Advanced Placement Testing
May 8	Remake Learning Days RGMS to host Stream Guardians Professional Development, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Secondary Campus SVAOC to host Scan & Play: Step into VR, open to teens ages 14-18, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., SVAOC Drop-In Center
May 9	Act 80 (Professional Development) Day – No School for Students
May 9	Graduation Project Day – SVSHS
May 10	Prom – Grand March begins at 5 p.m. – SVSHS Auditorium
May 11	Mother's Day
May 12	2024-2025 SV Retirement Reception & Recognition, 6:30 p.m., SVIHS Cafeteria
May 12	School Board Regular Meeting, 7 p.m., SVIHS Auditorium
May 12-15	Keystone Exams
May 15	SV Job & Opportunities Fair, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – SHS

May 17	Armed Forces Day
May 22	Center for Biotechnology Open House, 6-7:30 p.m., SVIHS Library and Labs; RSVP by May 16 to svfoundation@svsd.net
May 26	Memorial Day Holiday – No School for students and staff
May 29	Graduation Day (May 30 is the Rain Date)
May 31	Seneca Valley 2 nd Annual Best Buddies Walk, 9 a.m. – Noon, North Boundary Park; Signup at Seneca Valley Best Buddies Walk (runsignup.com)
June 6	Last Day of School for Grades K-11
June 9	Staff In-Service Day

- C. **School Nurse Appreciation Day** – In recognition of National School Nurse Appreciation Day on May 7, we proudly recognized our outstanding team of school nurses.

Mr. Jacobs thanked each of the nurses for being great at communicating with parents and for always taking such great care of all the students.

Mr. Brower and Mr. DiTullio thanked the nurses for all they do.

Dr. Vitale shared that she is forever grateful for the team of nurses that our District has and how they strive to go above and beyond to provide the best care to every student.

D. **Agency Reports**

1. Vo-Tech - Mr. Brower reported that Mr. Hester and Mr. Brower attended the Annual Recognition of the Students where over 35 were recognized. He shared that many seniors currently have jobs lined up in the trade that they studied during their time at Butler County Area Vo-Tech and that many others have interviews in place.
2. I.U. IV - Mr. Eric DiTullio reported that he will provide an update at the June 2 meeting.

- E. **Legislative** - Mr. Eric DiTullio reported that the Legislature was returning on May 5. Additionally, he shared that there was a bill passed by the House that would provide cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for a small group of retired public-school teachers and state employees.

F. **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. **ACTION AGENDA**

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- A. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.
- B. **Student Adjudications** – Approved the following student adjudications:
1. #2024-25-13
 2. #2024-25-14
- C. **SV Community Sign Project** – Approved the SV Community Sign Project under the direction of Ms. Lisa Graham and Mr. Dan Guerra as presented by students in the District’s Learn, Explore, Act and Develop (LEAD) committee on April 7, 2025.
- D. **Student Trip** – Approved the Academic Decathlon Team to travel to Des Moines, Iowa, from April 30-May 3, 2025, under the supervision of Mr. David Reichard. Students will miss three days of instruction. The trip was at no cost to the District.
- E. **Personnel** – Approved the following personnel items that were discussed in executive session held prior to the meeting:
1. **Resignations** – *Administration* – Rebecca Bosley, *Classified* – Susan Link, Shana Morrison, Carla Rearick
 2. **Appointments** – *Professional Substitutes* – Richard Abbott, Myriam Clermont, Jenna Frontino, Jamie Madder, Susan Meyers, *Classified* – Kati Becker, *Classified Substitutes* – Derek Bush, *Supplementals* – Don Barclay III, Scott Jugan, Mike Pelloni, Gabe Miller, Elliott Pater, Kevin Trost, Dorothea Epps, Brian Blackwell, Kevin Wildrick, Kurt McNaught, Emily Thorton, Jennifer Exler, Eric Fogle, Margaret Kishbaugh, Elizabeth Allen-Boyle, LaVarr Stephens-Howling, Darla Ramirez-Lightner, Deanna Christopher, Michelle Kostlich, Halley Alexander, Carey Beachem, Jen Durst, Kalene Ireland, Lisa Kasper, Kasey Kraus, Karissa Lambert, Valerie McGee, Tracy Richards, Christine Roe, Ron Butschle, Deanna Christopher, William Crummy, Nancy Graham, Michelle Kostlich, Aaron Magill, AJ May, Jeanna Pournaras, Chad Robertson, Rebecca Bosley, Susan Berlin, Kimberly Magill, Jennifer Exler, Adenlina DiTullio, Ashley Salman, Shannon Perry, Melissa Cipollone, Julie Glenz, Chris Titus, *Practicum* – Angela Uplinger
 3. **Leaves** – *Administration* – Cynthia Davenport, *Professionals* – Michelle Ramage, Jenny Caputo, Elizabeth Lahm, Elizabeth Meinert, Lynne Rodrigues, Carin Vokes, *Classified* – Jennifer Smith
 4. **Memorandums of Understanding** – Approved three MOUs with the Seneca Valley Education Association.

Mr. DiTullio motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to approve student adjudications, the SV Community Sign Project, student trip and personnel. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

- F. **Proposed Final 2025-2026 General Fund Budget** - Approved the proposed final general fund budget for 2025-2026 in the amount of \$180,611,403 with a proposed millage increase of 5.53 mills (4%) and authorize the budget to be made available for public inspection.

Mr. DiTullio shared that the vote is for a proposed budget and that the final budget will be voted on in June, which will allow the public time to view the budget, either online (www.svsd.net) or in-person. He shared that part of the budget is a \$2.4 million increase in healthcare costs that had to be absorbed. Over half of the 5.53 mills is because of the increase in unexpected healthcare costs. A great deal of time went into preparing the budget, and the Board and administration worked hard to avoid a tax increase that went above inflation. Twelve percent of the budget comes from income taxes, while the majority is funded through property taxes. Mr. DiTullio encouraged everyone, while they are reading the budget, to take into consideration how SV compares to neighboring districts, especially those in Allegheny County, not just on the tax rate, but also to look at all the opportunities afforded to our students.

Mr. DiTullio motioned, seconded by Mr. Jacobs, to approve the Proposed Final 2025-2026 General Fund Budget. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. **Action Meeting** – April 7, 2025

5. **TREASURER’S REPORT**

6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS**
Grand Total: \$2,384,706.29

7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS**
Grand Total: \$426,314.60

8. **ADMINISTRATION**

- A. **Board Policy** – Approve board policy 626.2 – Conflict of Interest – revised, first reading.

- B. **Research Studies** - Approve the following research studies:

1. Doctoral Candidate, Hannah Hamilton to conduct a case study at Seneca Valley entitled “*Sustaining Change: Teacher Perspectives on PBIS Implementation in Year Two.*” This qualitative case study aims to explore the perspectives and experiences of elementary educators regarding the implementation and sustainability of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in the district.
2. Doctoral Candidate, Jeremiah Friday to conduct a case study at Seneca Valley focusing on teacher understanding and implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL). This study aims to learn more about elementary teacher understanding of PBL and to create professional development training to support the implementation of PBL in elementary classrooms.

9. **INSTRUCTION**

- A. **Grant Disbursement** – Grant permission for and to disburse, the following grants:
1. The Seneca Valley Academy of Choice (SVAOC) Functional Fitness Lab Grant in the amount of \$7,500 funded by Highmark Foundation and requested by SVAOC Physical Education Teachers. Funds will be used to purchase strength and conditioning equipment.
 2. The Robotics Before and After School Programs Grant in the amount of \$30,000 funded by Arconic and requested by Ms. Annie Mersing, Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) Director of Development. Funds will be used for continuing the opportunity of having Robotics Clubs for middle and elementary school students.
 3. The Healthy Start Smoothie Cart Grant in the amount of \$2,000 funded by the National Dairy Council and requested by Dr. Erin Wilcher and Ms. Mersing. Funds will be used to purchase a Healthy Start Smoothie Cart.
 4. The Ehrman Crest Middle School Movement Studio Grant in the amount of \$6,854 funded by Highmark School Grants and requested by Ms. Mersing and Mr. Tim Eiler. Funds will be used to enhance Ehrman Crest Middle School's existing Movement Studio.

Dr. Vitale shared that she is proud of the number of grants that have been applied for in the last 24 years. Ms. Mersing works on applying for grants with the Assistant Superintendents and Principals. She explained that the District identifies initiatives it plans to pursue and then seeks grants that align with these efforts. Next week, the Board will vote to approve grants for over \$46,000, and she recently signed a check for the SVF for \$60,000 that goes back to the District. In addition, the Educational Tax Improvement Credits (EITC) help offset some teacher salaries in certain departments. She explained that anytime the District can offset spending with grants or from the SVF, it helps reduce what is needed in the budget, ultimately minimizing any tax increase.

Ms. Bredl asked what the “hit” rate is for receiving grants. Dr. Vitale shared that she sees very few that are not funded. When the grant is not awarded, the District will then ask the SVF for their support. Dr. Vitale shared that fundraisers, like the SV Foundation Golf Outing, are important so that the SVF can support the requests when they are made.

- B. **Book Disposal** – Approve the sale, donation, or recycling of obsolete books from the Intermediate High School and Haine Middle School.
- C. **Student Trips** – Approve the following student trips:
1. Mr. Jeremiah Friday and Ms. Linda Weismann to take six students to Phoenix, Arizona, for the KidWind World Challenge, May 18-21, 2025. Students will miss three days of instruction.
 2. The secondary chorus trip to Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida, February 25-March 1, 2026, under the supervision of Ms. Bobi-Jean Alexander, Ms. Claire Barker, and Ms. Chessa Crum. Students will miss three days of instruction. This trip is at no cost to the district.
- D. **Conferences** – Approve conference requests.

- E. **Bradley Center** - Approve the agreement with The Bradley Center to provide special education programming for enrolled students during the 2025-2026 school year. Pending solicitor review.
- F. **Resource Adoption** – Approve the adoption of the K-6 Amplify math resource.

10. **BUSINESS/FINANCE**

- A. **Budget Transfers** – Approve budget transfers.
- B. **Bid Awards** – Award the following bids for the 2025-2026 school year:
 - 1. General Supplies
 - 2. Print Supplies
- C. **Depository/Treasurer** – Appoint NexTier Bank as depository for the 2025-2026 school year.
- D. **Bond Issuance Resolution** – Authorize the incurring of nonelectoral debt by the issuance of general obligation (limited tax) bonds. Series 2025 in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$39,500,000 covenanting to pay, and pledging all available taxing power of the local government unit for the payment of, the bonds; establishing a sinking fund and appointing a sinking fund depository; fixing the form, maximum interest rates, maturity, redemption and other provisions for the payment thereof; authorizing the acceptance of a proposal for the purchase of the bonds ; authorizing the filing of the required documents with the Department of Community and Economic Development; ratifying and directing certain actions of officers; and making certain other covenants and provisions in respect of the bonds.
- E. **Xerox Business Solutions Agreement (previously AmCom/ComDoc)** - Approve an addendum to the existing document management agreement with Xerox Business Solutions for a 60-month lease covering a total of twenty-five (25) devices. All existing devices will be replaced with new machines. The addendum further includes 587,000 black/white impressions and 73,000 color impressions per year.
- F. **Ryan Gloyer Middle School Quarry Tile Replacement Phase IV** - Award the General Construction Contract, per COSTARS, Commonwealth of PA cooperative purchasing program, to Allegheny Installations in the amount of \$454,000. Pending solicitor review of final agreement.

Mr. DiTullio shared that the bond issuance resolution is for the opportunity to refinance some bonds that will allow savings. If for some reason there will not be any savings, the Board will not refinance them.

11. **PERSONNEL**

12. **LETTERS SENT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD** – The following constituents communicated through the SVSD school board email account after posting the April 7, 2025, public agenda:

- a. Sandy Ferrainola
- b. Zach Zimmerman

Mr. Peterson wanted to remind everyone that the School Board members are the stewards of significant resources for the community. He shared that many people will ask what the return of investment is for the budget that will be voted on next month. He reminded everyone about the incredible student success stories that were shared at the beginning of the meeting, that there are two doctoral candidates that are looking at our District to become hosts for their studies and the increasing interest from other districts to study Seneca Valley. Mr. Peterson shared that these are some of the many offerings for the return on investment.

13. **ADJOURNMENT** - With nothing further to come before the board, Mr. Widdowson motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 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