

# MERCER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

## MINUTES OF APRIL 28, 2025 BOARD MEETING

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

ARTHUR AMOS  
DAVID LENGEL  
DEREK STOTSKY  
J. JARRETT WHALEN

RODNEY BOBBY  
SHANE NUGENT  
STEVEN VanWOERT

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

MATTHEW HAZI

AIMEE PETERS

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

DR. RONALD R. ROWE, JR, SUPERINTENDENT  
DR. MICHAEL G. PIDDINGTON, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
ERIC MAUSSER, HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
GREGORY ACRE, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
AMANDA SIMPSON, MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
SHIRLEY SPIEGEL, ASSISTANT ELEM. PRINCIPAL/SPEC. EDUC. COORD.  
MICHAEL STABILE, BUSINESS MANAGER/BOARD SECRETARY

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mr. David Lengel, at 7:40 p.m. in the high school library. The Pledge of Allegiance followed. There were seven members present.

**MINUTES:**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by Shane Nugent, the Board approved the minutes of the regular meeting on March 17, 2025 and the budget meeting on April 15, 2025. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:**

On a motion by Shane Nugent, second by Rodney Bobby, the Board approved the Treasurer’s Report, all bills as listed and financial reports. On a roll call vote, members Amos, Bobby, Lengel, Nugent, VanWoert, and Whalen voted yes. Member Stotsky abstained.

***Motion:*** Passed

**STUDENT DISCIPLINE:**

On a motion by David Lengel, second by Rodney Bobby, the Board approved of student discipline as recommended by the discipline committee. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**MINUTES FROM APRIL 28, 2025 CONTINUED:**

**PERSONNEL:**

**Retirement:**

On a motion by Steven VanWoert, second by Derek Stotsky, the Board accepted, with regret, the retirement of Mr. Jonathan Freidhoff as Band Director, effective June 3, 2025. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**Hires:**

On a motion by Steven VanWoert, second by Derek Stotsky, the Board approved the following hires. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

Granted approval to hire Mrs. Amanda Simpson as Director of Special Education for 260 days, at an annual salary of \$95,000, effective July 1, 2025.

Granted approval of Mr. Justin Haynie as a volunteer baseball coach effective immediately.

Granted approval of Mr. Brent Gailey as a volunteer Jr. High Soccer Coach beginning with summer conditioning, pending clearances.

**Educational Staffing Solutions:**

On a motion by Steven VanWoert, second by Derek Stotsky, the Board approved to hire substitute teachers and/or aides & paraprofessionals and/or accept, with regret, the resignation of such employees submitted by Educational Staffing Solutions (ESS), as attached.

**Creation of position:**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by Rodney Bobby, the Board approved the creation of the position of elementary Dean of Students, beginning with the 2025-26 school year. This position will include working 15 additional days beyond the teacher's contract, and will be paid a stipend of \$7,500.00. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**STUDENT TRAVEL:**

On a motion by Rodney Bobby, second by J Jarrett Whalen, the Board approved the following requests for student travel. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

Granted approval to add Mr. Andrew Burk as a chaperone for the Junior Class Trip to Cedar Point on May 29, 2025. (There is no additional cost to the school district)

Granted approval for Mr. Jonathan Freidhoff to accompany Concert Band and Wind Ensemble students to Norwin High School on Monday, April 28th for their annual MPA evaluation. The cost to the district is bus transportation and a substitute teacher for the day. (\$100)

Granted approval for Miss Emily Peffer or Mr. Eric Mausser to accompany the RYLA students to the Rotary luncheon on April 30, 2025. The only cost to the district is the use of a school van.

**MINUTES FROM APRIL 28, 2025 CONTINUED:**

**STUDENT TRAVEL (Continued):**

Granted approval for Mrs. April Edney's and Mr. Kevin Reese's classes to participate in the Shenango Valley Special Games on Wednesday, May 7, 2025 for bowling at Ten Pin Alley (9:30-1:00) and Thursday, May 8, 2025 (9:00-1:00) for track and field events at Hickory High School. Special van transportation is needed. One substitute nurse at \$100.00 and transportation are the only cost to the district.

Granted approval for Mrs. Delaney Munnal to accompany six (6) students to the Mercer County Career Center on May 7, 2025 from 3:45 – 5:15 p.m., to participate in a United Way STEAM program event. One van is requested for transportation.

Granted approval for Mrs. Meghan Glass to accompany the Art Club to the Mattress Factory and Randyland in Pittsburgh on Thursday, May 8, 2025. The cost to the district is a substitute teacher for the day. (\$100)

Granted approval for Mrs. Marlena Priester to accompany the Culinary II students to the Strip District in Pittsburgh, May 12, 2025 for the cultural foods project. The cost to the district is the use of a school van and a substitute for the day. (\$100)

Granted approval for Mrs. Erin Ellis and Mrs. Marlena Priester to accompany the Garden Club to Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens on Thursday, May 15, 2025. The cost to the district is the use of two school vans and two substitute teachers for the day. (\$200)

Granted approval for the fourth grade class (approximately 99 students) to travel to the New Castle Playhouse in New Castle, PA to watch a production of "Mary Poppins" on May 21, 2025. Two busses and one van are requested for transportation. The cost of tickets (\$7 per student), transportation, and snacks will be paid for by the PEP Association. (There is no cost to the district)

**FACILITIES REQUESTS:**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by Derek Stotsky, the Board approved the following facilities requests. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

Approved Community Counseling Center to use Mercer School District's building for the summer months, June 1 – August 22, 2025, Monday through Thursday between 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Approved Mercer Midget Football program to use the back-practice field from April 29 through May 31, 2025 for flag football practice.

Approved Mercer Midget Football program to use the football field on Saturday, May 10, 2025 from 11am to 3pm for flag football games. A rain makeup date of Saturday, May 31, 2025. All aspects of the facilities policy will be followed.

**MINUTES FROM APRIL 28, 2025 CONTINUED:**

**MHY FAMILY SERVICES:**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by Rodney Bobby, the Board approved an addendum to the agreement with MHY Family Services for extended school year (ESY) services in the summer of 2025, as attached. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**(ESS) EDUCATIONAL STAFFING SOLUTIONS ADDENDUM:**

On a motion by J. Jarrett Whalen, second by Rodney Bobby, the Board approved an addendum to the agreement with Educational Staffing Solutions (ESS) for the 2025-26 school year, as attached. On a voice vote, members Bobby, Lengel, Nugent, VanWoert, Whalen, and Amos voted yes. Member Stotsky abstained.

***Motion:*** Passed

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT:**

On a motion by Rodney Bobby, second by Steven VanWoert, the Board approved the Intergovernmental Agreement between Mercer Area School District and MIU IV for the 2025-26 school year, as attached. On a voice vote, all members voted yes.

**ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY:**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by Derek Stotsky, the Board approved the dual enrollment agreement with Robert Morris University for the 2025-26 school year, as attached. Robert Morris courses will include BIOL 1210/1215 and STAT 2110. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**ST. FRANCIS UNIVERSITY:**

On a motion by Shane Nugent, second by Arthur Amos, the Board approved of a cooperative agreement between Saint Francis University and the Mercer Area School District for the “College in High School Program” for the 2025-2026 school year. St. Francis’ courses will include CHEM 113, FREN 112 & 201, SPAN 112 & 201, MATH 110, MATH 112, and PHYS 104. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**STAR TECH, INC.:**

On a motion by Steven VanWoert, second by Arthur Amos, the Board approved the Technical Support Services Agreement between Mercer Area School District and Star Tech, Inc., beginning August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2028, in the amount of \$79,800 annually, as attached. On a roll call vote, members Lengel, Nugent, Stotsky, VanWoert, Whalen, Amos, and Bobby voted yes.

***Motion:*** Passed

**GoGUARDIAN:**

On a motion by Shane Nugent, second by J. Jarrett Whalen, the Board approved renewing the agreement with GoGuardian in the amount of \$9,350.00 to provide security software for student devices for the 2025-2026 school year. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**MINUTES FROM APRIL 28, 2025 CONTINUED:**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH MEA:**

On a motion by Rodney Bobby, second by Shane Nugent, the Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding between Mercer Education Association and Mercer Area School District for the collective bargaining agreement, effective July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2028, as attached. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**BUCS (Better Unemployment Compensation System):**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by Steven VanWoert, the Board approved the Agreement between PSBA Insurance and Mercer Area School District, to participate in the Better Unemployment Compensation System BASIC Program. (BUCS Basic) On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**INDEPENDENT SECURITY CONTRACTORS:**

On a motion by J. Jarrett Whalen, second by Shane Nugent, the Board approved a three-year contract, beginning July 1, 2025, with the following independent security contractors to provide armed school security, as scheduled by the District, as follows. On a roll call vote, members Nugent, Stotsky, VanWoert, Whalen, Amos, Bobby, and Lengel voted yes.

***Motion:*** Passed

Marcus Kohan	Tony Moses
Mark Kasiorek	James Puskar
Russell Chase	Warren Whetzel
Donald Cataldi – substitute	

**BASEBALL FIELD IMPROVEMENT:**

On a motion by J. Jarrett Whalen, second by Derek Stotsky, the Board approved for Mercer Area School District to pay the remaining cost associated with baseball field improvements, approximately \$7,000.00, to be submitted by the Baseball Boosters. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**PSBA DUES FOR 2025-26:**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by J. Jarrett Whalen, the Board approved the PSBA dues for the 2025-26 school year, in the amount of \$7,821.77 as attached. On a roll call vote, members Stotsky, VanWoert, Whalen, Amos, Bobby, Lengel, and Nugent voted yes.

***Motion:*** Passed

**PA ONE BOOK DONATION:**

On a motion by Steven VanWoert, second by Derek Stotsky, the Board approved the elementary library to receive the PA One Book donation for student circulation. This title was donated by the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning and the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

- *Arlo Draws an Octopus*, by Lori Mortensen

**MINUTES FROM APRIL 28, 2025 CONTINUED:**

**SPEECH & LANGUAGE SERVICES:**

On a motion by Arthur Amos, second by Rodney Bobby, the Board approved an agreement with Michele McChesney to provide speech and language services at the elementary school from May 5 – May 28, 2025. On a roll call vote, members VanWoert, Whalen, Amos, Bobby, Lengel, Nugent and Stotsky voted yes.

***Motion:*** Passed

**2025 PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH SURVEY (PAYS):**

On a motion by Derek Stotsky, second by Arthur Amos, the Board approved participation in the 2025 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), a state-funded, anonymous survey that provides essential data on student well-being for grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. On a voice vote, all members present voted yes.

**RESOLUTION DENOUNCING MISUSE OF TAXPAYER FUNDS/CYBER SCHOOL FUNDING:**

On a motion by Rodney Bobby, second by Shane Nugent, the Board approved of a “Resolution Denouncing the Misuse of Taxpayer Funds in PA Cyber Charter School Funding and Urging Legislative Reform”, per the attached. On a roll call vote, members Whalen, Amos, Bobby, Lengel, Nugent, Stotsky and VanWoert voted yes.

***Motion:*** Passed

\*Discussion concerning athletic ticket sales prices (Tabled until May)

\*Discussion of the millage rate for the 2025-26 school year (Tabled until May)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no additional business, Rodney Bobby motioned to adjourn the meeting, J. Jarrett Whalen seconded. On a voice vote, all members voted yes.

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Michael H. Stabile, Board Secretary

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David R. Lengel, Board President