



Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, June 12, 2025

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

Members absent: Nicholas Braccio

Others present: John Franzen, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Brittany Mercado, Michael Taylor, Alison Todd, Sam Varano, Christine Yardley, Megan Zweiback

1. Education-Personnel Committee

1.1 Curriculum Revisions - Heritage Spanish

Mr. Landis called the Education-Personnel meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

Superintendent Gallagher announced the agenda items and introduced Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, & Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced High School teachers; Christine Yardley, Brittany Mercado and Alison Todd who spoke about the creation of the Heritage Spanish course. World Language Coordinator, Ms. Yardley explained that the Heritage Spanish course has been in development for several years and explained the difference between a Native Spanish speaker; a student whose first language is Spanish and a Heritage Spanish speaker; a student who speaks Spanish at home, and receives their education in English.

Ms. Todd spoke to the similarities of heritage language speakers within the Latino culture and Ms. Mercado spoke about the comparisons and connections within the cultures, noting the diverse population and the refinement of the written and spoken language. Ms. Mercado also spoke to the real-life and professional language uses.

The four units contained in the Heritage Spanish course were reviewed. Content includes *Celebrating Culture and Family*, *Caring for the Earth, Community, Care and Citizenship* and *Exploring a Global World*. Ms. Todd and Ms. Mercado explained how the four units serve to teach the everyday skills that support different cultural dialects and language learning.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that this course is about celebrating different cultures and using authentic resources for ESL students at all learning levels. Mr. Landis praised the work to bring the course to fruition. High School Principal, Dr. Varano noted the addition of the Advanced Spanish course that will be discussed during the Program of Studies agenda item later this evening.

Mrs. Flisak asked about what prompted the creation of the course and Mrs. Yardley noted that it was organic in its creation to meet the need of students. Mrs. Flisak praised the recognition and meeting the needs of students.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted that this course builds on its standards for learning the language. Mr. Formica asked what grade levels are eligible for the course and Ms. Todd responded that it is available to juniors and seniors, noting that typically freshman are not prepared for this level of learning.

Mr. Nelson also commented on the recognition of the need for this course. Mr. Keith asked about possible modification of the course to permit offering to middle school students. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly indicated that it could be modified for middle school. Mr. Barnacz also acknowledged the recognition of need. Mr. Brong spoke to the variety of students within the classroom that will be supported through this type of learning. Ms. Todd spoke to the commonalities and the differences within the Spanish language.

Mr. Landis asked if there are any prerequisites for the course and Ms. Mercado said at this time there are no prerequisites.

A member of the audience asked about the number of Spanish speakers and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that the current ESL population is approximately 4% of enrollment.

The Committee agreed to move forward for approval.

1.2 High School Program of Studies Revisions

High School Principal, Dr. Varano introduced the proposed changes to the Program of Studies for the 2026-2027 school year. If approved these courses would be available for student course selection in February 2026.

In the Technology Education Department, it is proposed to add a *Game Design* course. This would be a one credit course giving students to the opportunity to learn about the environment of design, which compliments the existing coding classes. The *Computer Hardware and OS* course will be deleted. Due to cybersecurity, the opportunities for real-world applications of this course are very limited.

In the Family Consumer Science Department, it is proposed to change the Pre-School Lab from a half credit course to a one credit course by increasing the consistency of high school students teaching in the pre-school class, instead of changing every quarter.

In the Art Department, an *Alternative Material* course is proposed. This experimental course would allow students to explore materials that are not conventional and offer an avenue for students who do not typically consider themselves artists.

In the Business Department, a change is being proposed that will support NMTCC students in meeting the Commonwealth's Financial Literacy requirements. NMTCC students who may not have been able to fit *Personal Finance* into their schedule will be required to take *Financial Algebra* which will meet state requirements.

In the World Language Department, it is proposed to add an Advanced Spanish course which will allow native Spanish speakers, heritage Spanish speakers and advanced Spanish learners to explore cultural studies and language development. This course will also serve as a complement to the AP Spanish program.

Mrs. Wheeler commented favorably on the addition of the Game Design course and the Alternative Materials Art course. Mrs. Flisak also praised the development of the courses. Mr. Formica acknowledged the identified need and the development of the courses. Mr. Formica asked about 3D Printing and Dr. Varano responded that it is being utilized within the Engineering and Technology Education course.

Mr. Nelson acknowledged the appreciation of existing Personal Finance course and inquired about the possibility of incorporating a welding component into the Art Department.

Mr. Keith also praised acknowledgement and appreciation. Mr. Keith asked about a coding and Artificial Intelligence (AI) course? Dr. Kennedy-Reilly replied that Technology Education Coordinator and High School teacher, Mr. Bender, could be brought into a conversation about the development of that type of course. Dr. Varano noted that the High School currently has 5 coding courses.

A member of the public (Mr Rothholz) asked about adding an American Sign Language (ASL) course. Dr. Varano responded that the World Language Department is currently in discussion and consideration of an ASL course.

The Committee agreed to move forward.

1.3 Continuous School Improvement

Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Mr. Franzen spoke about Continuous School Improvement. Mr. Franzen explained that the High School and Indian Crest had been previously identified as Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools.

Mr. Franzen shared how the high school ESL department has worked with district staff developers to compile and increase shared resources which will support differentiating instruction for EL learners. The high school continues to increase opportunities for EL student for social-emotional growth. The Heritage Spanish, Newcomer Curriculum, Professional Development for all teachers, and ESL consultants were all cited as action items.

Mr. Franzen shared that the Indian Crest teachers will participate in professional development in the area of best practices in instruction for English Learners. Teachers will analyze MAP data to provide intervention where needed.

Mr. Landis asked about the timing of ASTI designation and Mr. Franzen responded that is is a three year plan.

Mrs. Wheeler about a designation at Indian Valley Middle School and Mr. Franzen responded that it focuses on sub groups of students and Indian Valley does not have the same number of students.

Mr. Nelson spoke to the measures of effectiveness that are already being reported.

Mr. Brong asked how close we are to meeting or reaching the targeted outcomes. Mr. Franzen responded that data is measured against other schools and indicated that the comparisons will reflect growth. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly cited the exit of students from the ESL program.

Mr. Nelson expressed his appreciation for the individual approach for improvement within a model of comparison.

Mr. Landis adjourned the Education-Personnel meeting at 7:21 P.M.

2. Policy Committee

2.1 Second Readings of Policies 805, 806

Mrs. Flisak called the Policy Committee Meeting to order.

Assistant Superintendent & Director of Human Resources, Dr. Hey commented on the 15 policies that have been recently reviewed, noting the the administration and Board will continue to accelerate the process.

Dr. Hey spoke to Policy 805 - Emergency Preparedness and Response, noting the clarification within the School Code for the training and professional development for school police officers.

Dr. Hey spoke to Policy 806 - Child Abuse, noting the updated language from law enforcement to local law enforcement.

Mrs. Flisak reiterated that changes as relatively straight-forward.

A member of the audience asked about a student who is age of 18 and how they are impacted by Policy 806. Dr. Hey responded that as long as a student is enrolled in school they still fall under the laws and policies of the school district. Director of Pupil Services, Mrs. Zweiback added that in the event of an emergency incident, there are several different resources that can be accessed based upon the student's age.

It was agreed to move forward for Third Reading and Board Approval on June 19.

Mrs. Flisak stated that there are a lot of policies and while it may appear that some are older, it does not mean that they have not been looked at or reviewed. Mrs. Flisak stated that traditionally, only policies that had changes were brought to the Committee for action. Going forward it has been decided that the Policy Committee will be reviewing more policies in an effort to make sure that they are still appropriate for day to day education practices.

Mrs. Flisak adjourned The Policy Committee at 7:28 P.M.

3. Finance Committee

Mr. Keith called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:29 P.M.

3.1 Approve Fox Rothschild as District Solicitor for 2025-2026

3.2 Approve Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams as District Special Education Counsel for 2025-2026

Superintendent Gallagher stated that the agenda items to approve Fox Rothschild as District Solicitor and Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams as District Special Education Counsel are annual approvals. Dr. Gallagher noted that in 2022, a Request For Proposal for legal firms was issued by the district. It was determined that Fox Rothschild continues to meet the needs of the district. Dr. Gallagher noted that Sweet Stevens has served as special education legal counsel since 2015.

Mrs. Flisak commented that the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit recently performed a request for proposal process and they also selected Fox Rothschild and Sweet Stevens.

Mr. Formica affirmed the importance of a review of firm costs and services. Mrs. Wheeler acknowledged appreciation for the annual approval.

Mr. Nelson praised Fox Rothschild for their services.

The Committee agreed to move both items forward for approval.

3.3 2025-2026 Budget Update

Mr. Keith stated the intention to pass a balanced budget next week on June 19th, while acknowledging challenges.

Dr. Gallagher gave kudos to the Cabinet team for their work on department budgets, particularly the special education budget. He noted impact from the decrease in Early Intervention (EI) enrollment as well as the recent retirement of a veteran teacher.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor presented a Budget Presentation.

He reviewed a slide which depicted the Act 1 Index, current year is 4.0%, and the tax rate history of the school district.

A Local Revenues slide was shared and impact items were reviewed. Real Estate Taxes which comprise the bulk of revenues reflected a conservative projection increase for real estate interim taxes. Transfer taxes and Earning on Investments projected safe increases.

Mr. Taylor stated that the State & Federal Funding projections had not changed from the previous presentation, despite a few changes to Federal programs, the changes do not appear to be significant at this time.

Mr. Taylor spoke to the potential impact to the school district budget if the Pennsylvania House Bill 1500 - Cyber Charter School Reform is approved. He noted that while it had been approved by the House, containing strong consequences, it is highly likely that the PA Senate could revise with its own proposed legislation.

Mr. Taylor reviewed a slide of Revised Budget Projections that reflected adjustments to real estate tax assessments, earned income taxes, pupil transportation subsidies and medical assistance. Expenditure Adjustments were itemized from Operations, District Staffing and Supplies and Special Education Contracting and Staffing.

Mr. Taylor spoke to the continued work and review of department budgets that will continue over the next 8 days. Review of positions and additional retirements, medical benefit trends, charter school enrollment changes, and special education costs.

Mr. Taylor reviewed Debt Service & Future Capital Improvements in a slide that listed 5 Year Actual's and 5 Year Forecast. Debt Service Trends were plotted on a slide which reflected the current construction projects.

A slide with a Budget Overview reflected the 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget at \$158M and a deficit of \$5M. The slide also reflected millage increase percentages and their impact to the deficit.

Mr. Keith thanked Mr. Taylor for his work on the budget and stated that it is always the intent of the school district to meet students needs without cutting programs. Mr. Keith reiterated that there were no proposed cuts to the special education program.

Mrs. Flisak expressed hope on the cyber charter funding bill and appreciated the work on the budget. Mr. Formica also praised the budget work. Mrs. Wheeler asked about the number of special education placements and associated costs. Dr. Gallagher responded that the services vary by individual students and those specifics could be provided.

Mr. Nelson praised the work going into the budget. He also commented on the Act 1 Index and the advance announcements surrounding projected percentages for years to come. Mr. Nelson also reiterated the advocacy for cyber charter reform, acknowledging rising operating costs, and that no one wants a tax increase.

Mr. Landis and Mr. Barnacz reinforced the need for advocacy on cyber funding. Dr. Gallagher reiterated Senator Pennycuik and Senator Collett as legislative contacts on the Senate bill.

Mr. Brong spoke to the requirement of the school district to balance a budget when neither the state nor federal government are held to the same standards. He also expressed the concern that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a surplus of funds which they do not provide to the school districts.

Mr. Keith thanked Mr. Taylor and acknowledged Mr. Taylor's desire to understand the homeowner and the impact of a tax increase.

Mr. R. (member of audience) mentioned track renovations for Indian Valley Middle School. Mr. Taylor responded that it is a targeted consideration by the Board. A facilities proposal of all outdoor athletic facilities will be brought for review in the fall.

A member of the public asked about the cost of the tax increase to the average homeowner. Mr. Taylor noted that while the Homestead exemption has not been calculated yet, it is estimated an annual increase of \$200 - \$220 for a median assessed valued home.

Dr. Gallagher thanked Mr. Rothholz for his advocacy in facilitating the school visits by Representative Fitzpatrick and Representative Dean.

Mr. Keith adjourned at 8:14 P.M.

4. Operations Committee

4.1 West Broad Elementary, Salford Hills Elementary and Indian Crest Middle School Renovations Progress & Summer Schedule

Mr. Brong called the Operations Committee Meeting to order at 8:18 P.M.

Mr. Brong announced that John Young from ICS was in attendance and would be providing updates on the West Broad Street project and Damion Spahr from Site LogiQ would be giving updates on the Salford Hills and Indian Crest projects.

Mr. Young reviewed a slide that showed a scope of work summary which itemized the classroom addition and removal of modular classrooms. It included new finishes to ceilings, floors and casework. A resurface of the gym floor, curtain and AV system. Replacement of exterior windows and doors. The bus loop and site circulation will be altered as well as new parking locations. He noted extensive site work and the demolition of the S.A.V.E. buildings.

A color-coded construction schedule was shared which listed the phasing of the project along with corresponding dates. The project is scheduled for completion in August of 2027.

Mr. Young gave an update of completed tasks which included the construction fencing and safety signage. He stated that the Bus Loop had been established and site prep had begun for tree removal and initial grading. Upcoming tasks include site preparation and the installation of electrical, water, and gas utility service. Photos were shared of demo and site work.

Mr. Brong asked about Phase 4 of the project and the impact to classroom spaces during this time. Mr. Young responded that the team is working closely with Principal Hadfield to optimize larger spaces and there will be the use of carts for some of the specials (art, music, technology) traveling into classroom space.

Mr. Brong noted the installation of natural gas to the building, alluding to potential utility cost savings.

Mr. Spahr of Site LogiQ shared a slide which showed the phasing of the Indian Crest project. He noted the specific areas of work for Summer of 2025 which include the removal of masonry walls and sanitary lines in the locker room area. He also noted the removal of casework and saw cutting of slabs in gang bathrooms. He noted the installation of domestic water lines in corridors

and HVAC branch lines in classrooms.

Photos were shared of electrical rough in classroom spaces and the demolition of the locker room area.

Mr. Brong asked about the schedule for chiller installation and Operations Director Mr. Ball responded that the chiller is scheduled for install during the heating season (winter months) to be ready for operation in the spring of next year.

Mr. Formica asked about the completion date of the project and Mr. Spahr stated the summer of 2027.

Mr. Spahr reviewed a slide which showed the construction phasing plan for Salford Hills Elementary School. It showed specific work areas for the Summer of 2025 and the new addition.

Mr. Spahr reviewed completed work listing set up erosion and sedimentation controls, site fence installation and the removal of asphalt paving. He noted that excavations for new basin and storm piping have begun. Planned Summer work includes the construction of the new addition as well as demolition of existing classrooms and renovations.

Photos of site work and the rock removal were shown.

Mr. Brong asked about the amount of rock being excavated and if it will impact schedules. Mr. Spahr responded that at this time, the schedule has not been impacted.

Mr. Brong expressed the importance of communication to parents informing them of what students may encounter upon their return to school.

Mr. Nelson expressed concern about the noise associated with rock removal and Mr. Spahr indicated that scheduling will have to be done to avoid interrupting instruction.

Dr. Gallagher thanked Site LoqiQ for their service leading up to and on field day at Salford Hills, keeping students and staff safe while enjoying their activities.

Mr. Brong adjourned the Operations Committee Meeting at 8:42 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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