

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

MINUTES

December 15, 2025

**1.0 The Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Board President, Carol E. Weyandt, 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, Joseph M. Brown, Linda R. Lash, Lauren J. Matthews, David E. Moll, Alfonso F. Rossi, Kelly J. Steinke, Carol E. Weyandt, Daniel B. Weyandt

Secretary: Linda R. Lash

Recording Secretary: Azucena Macedo

Administrative Staff Present: Dr. Patrick Winters, Robin Brightbill, Jennifer Godtfring, Dr. Joshua Kuehner, Stephen Mickulik, Jenny Rexrode, Michael Sobczak, Kristin Wallace, Dr. Shannon O'Donnell,

Solicitor: Alicia Luke, Esq., Fox Rothschild LLP

**1.3 EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mrs. Weyandt reported that the Board met in executive session on November 24, 2025, following the Board meeting, for confidential student information, legal, and personnel matters.

**2.0 PRESENTATIONS**

Superintendent Search Process:

**Presented by Dr. Jill Hackman, Executive Director and Mrs. Mary Franciscus, Director of Human Resources, BCIU**

Mrs. Hackman began the presentation by stating that they were presenting the presentation to the Board to talk about process and best practices that the IU completes.

Mrs. Franciscus stated that the selection for superintendent remains solely within the authority of the Schuylkill Valley School District Board of Directors. She noted that if the Board chooses to engage a search consultant, the consultant's role is advisory only and limited to providing guidance and coordinating the search process. Mrs. Franciscus emphasized the importance of the superintendent as the district's educational and operational leader, responsible for setting vision, culture and priorities in alignment with Board goals. She outlined leadership qualities for consideration in the search process, including high ethical standards, strong work ethic, effective and transparent communication, educational experience combined with financial acumen, a clear vision for continuous improvement, visible and community-engaged leadership, strong relationship-building skills, a commitment to supporting students and staff, and prioritization of safety and security.

Dr. Hackman outlined the five (5) phases of the superintendent hiring process and emphasized that community engagement is integral throughout. Phase I includes planning and preparation, identifying committee participants, defining roles and responsibilities, establishing a competitive salary range based on budget and market data, developing a search timeline, and gathering stakeholder input through tools such as an online survey.

Phase II focuses on search and recruitment, including posting the position locally, statewide and nationally, utilizing an online application system, and ensuring a consistent and transparent application process. Applicant packets would include an application, cover letter, resume, transcripts, and reference letters. Dr. Hackman noted that a four-to-five-week advertising window is recommended, as applications are typically received early in the posting period and again near the closing date. All application materials would be provided to all Board members.

Phase III involves identifying qualified candidates through application review, credential verification, development of candidate profiles, and notification of applicants. She emphasized the importance of maintaining confidentiality and protecting applicant data through the process.

Phase IV includes the interview and selection process, with potential screening, second-round, and final interviews. Dr. Hackman shared a recommended interview structure involving Board members, staff, and community representatives, while noting that final decisions regarding interview participation remain at the discretion of the Board. Best practices include standardized interview questions, clear participant roles, alignment with district priorities, and consistent evaluation criteria.

Phase V consists of appointment and post-search activities. The School Board selects the superintendent and works with the Board Solicitor to negotiate and draft a legally compliant contract. Additional steps include maintaining confidentiality until a final decision is made, coordinating public communications with the district Communications and Digital Media Specialist, and developing an onboarding and transition timeline to support a smooth start for the new superintendent.

Mrs. Franciscus reviewed sample materials used in a superintendent search process including position posting, a community survey, interview questions for multiple rounds, interview rating forms, and a candidate ranking form.

Mrs. Weyandt asked for recommendations on how to distribute the community survey to reach a broader audience.

Mrs. Franciscus stated that surveys are typically posted on the district website and shared electronically.

Mrs. Hackman added that paper copies may also be distributed at community locations such as churches, senior centers, and local gatherings, and sent home with students for distribution to households without children in the district.

Mr. Brown requested information on superintendent salary ranges and asked about practices related to community forums with finalists and the use of third-party background checks.

Mrs. Hackman explained that the IU can provide public salary data for Berks County superintendents, including years of experience and district size, and reviews comparable data from neighboring counties. She noted that superintendent salaries in Berks County generally range from \$150,000.00 to \$250,000.00. She further stated that due to a limited candidate pool, confidentiality is critical and current practice is to present a single finalist to the community rather than multiple candidates. Mrs. Hackman added that the IU works with the Board Solicitor to conduct comprehensive reference and background checks, including outreach beyond references listed by the candidate.

Mrs. Luke noted that law firms typically conduct extensive reference and background checks, explaining that at Fox Rothschild, a dedicated knowledge management department, handles comprehensive background research across practice areas.

Mrs. Lash asked for clarification on the importance of maintaining confidentiality during the superintendent search process and why discussions should remain within the Board. She also

asked whether Board members could visit a finalist's current school district to observe the environment and interactions with staff and students. She stated that, in past searches, Board members have visited a finalist's current district as part of the evaluation process.

Mrs. Franciscus discussed confidentiality and transparency, noting that open communication applies to the search process (including timelines, progress, and next steps), while candidate information must remain confidential to ensure access to top-quality applicants. She emphasized that community input is central to the search and informs the superintendent profile. She also outlined considerations for engaging a search consultant, including specialized expertise in superintendent searches, impartial guidance, process management, stakeholder engagement, cost effectiveness, and Board oversight, noting that final decisions remain with the Board.

Mrs. Steinke asked about the costs associated with engaging in the IU for superintendent search support.

Mrs. Hackman stated that there is no cost for IU consulting services for member school districts. She explained that the only expenses would be advertising, copying and postage, typically ranging from \$750.00 to \$2,000.00, depending on the scope of outreach. She reiterated that, as one of the IU's 18 member districts, Schuylkill Valley would receive these services at no charge, with all materials tailored to the district's culture and branding.

Mr. Weyandt asked what percentage of school districts countywide use a search consultant versus conducting a superintendent search in-house.

Mrs. Hackman stated that during her tenure with the IU, at least 25 superintendent searches have been conducted, with only two (2) completed in-house. The remaining searches engaged consultants, with the IU facilitating approximately 20-21 of those processes.

The Board discussed alternative search options, including conducting the search in-house or using multiple services.

Mr. Ammarell expressed interest in gathering candidate pools from more than one source.

Mrs. Luke noted that while there is no legal prohibition against using multiple consultants, doing so could present logistical challenges, as a consultant typically partners with the district throughout the entire process.

By consensus the Board agreed to proceed with the superintendent search with support from the BCIU. Dr. Winters will notify the IU of the Board's decision.

### **3.0 PERSONS WHO WISH TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Alice Hinkle, Bern Township – Improving quality and accountability of students

### **4.0 COMMITTEE WORK SESSION DATES: 2026**

The Board approves the Committee Work session dates for 2026

**Board Action: Moved by Frank Ammarell and seconded by Joseph Brown to approve the Committee Work Session dates for 2026 as presented.**

**Yeas: Ammarell, Brown, Lash, Matthews, Moll, Rossi, Steinke, C. Weyandt, D. Weyandt**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

### **5.0 POLICY, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

#### **5.1 EXTRACURRICULAR**

Approves the following extracurricular appointments for the 2025-26 school year. Approval is subject to the satisfactory receipt of all required clearances, background checks, and executed employment contracts:

Justin Thompson – Wrestling High School Assistant Coach - \$4,680.00

**Board Action: Moved by Linda Lash and seconded by Frank Ammarell to approve the extracurricular appointment for the 2025-26 school year as presented. Approval is subject to the satisfactory receipt of all required clearances, background checks, and executed employment contracts.**

**Yeas: Ammarell, Brown, Lash, Matthews, Moll, Rossi, Steinke, C. Weyandt, D. Weyandt**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## 5.2 OTHER (OLD/NEW BUSINESS)

### Organizational Chart:

Mrs. Weyandt discussed Policy 008 and shared the organizational chart currently utilized by Governor Mifflin as a reference for possible inclusion in the District's policy manual. She noted that some job descriptions already identify reporting relationships. The Board discussed the Athletic Director reporting structure and how it compares to other districts.

### Hiring Procedures:

Mrs. Weyandt stated the District does not currently have a comprehensive written hiring policy. Existing guidance includes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SVEA requiring teacher participation in interviews for teaching positions, and a detailed policy governing Athletic Department hiring effective November 12, 2024. She requested the Policy, Personnel and Public Relations Committee review hiring and interviewing practices districtwide to ensure consistency, including the Athletic Department policy.

### Unfilled Budgeted Positions:

Mrs. Weyandt raised concerns regarding unfilled paraprofessional positions.

Mr. Moll explained that paraprofessional staffing is driven by student need and that positions are budgeted to allow flexibility should student needs arise. He noted that not all budgeted positions require filling if the need no longer exists.

Mr. Rossi agreed, stating that conservative budgeting allows the District to respond quickly to changing student needs without creating budget deficits.

Mrs. Lash added that paraprofessional positions are in high demand countrywide and are difficult to fill.

## 6.0 BUDGET AND FINANCE

### 6.1 Approves and ratifies the Certification of Sterling Act Tax Credit for Calendar Year 2024 in the amount of \$10,466.00.

**Board Action: Moved by Frank Ammarell and seconded by Kelly Steinke to approve and ratify the Certification of Sterling Act Tax Credit for Calendar Year 2024 in the amount of \$10,466.00.**

Mrs. Wallace explained that the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) requires each school district to annually certify the Sterling Act Tax Credit. This credit applies to district residents who work within the City of Philadelphia and pay the Philadelphia wage tax. Through Berks EIT, 0.5% of the tax is returned to the district, and taxpayers may also claim the credit on their individual tax

returns. The district typically received approximately \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 per year through this credit.

Mrs. Matthews asked how someone would know if they were eligible for this tax credit.

Mrs. Wallace stated this applies to any resident who would be working within the limits of Philadelphia.

**Yeas: Ammarell, Brown, Lash, Matthews, Moll, Rossi, Steinke, C. Weyandt, D. Weyandt**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**6.2 OTHER (OLD/NEW BUSINESS)**

None

**7.0 OTHER BUSINESS/GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Curriculum Survey:

Mrs. Weyandt presented a draft sample survey compiling preliminary questions intended for faculty to evaluate the newly implemented language arts, math, and science curriculum.

Mr. Moll inquired whether existing evaluations had been conducted with faculty since implementation.

Mrs. Weyandt explained the survey would service as a tool for both the Board and administration to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Dr. Winters stated the survey would be developed collaboratively with the Director of Curriculum and Learning and distributed to faculty and staff once approved by the Board.

Mrs. Matthews requested access to unfiltered survey data and raised concerns regarding whether instructional materials adequately met teacher needs, noting feedback in support of supplemental programs such as Accelerated Reader.

The board reached consensus to continue discussion of survey questions at Curriculum and Technology Committee meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup>, and to have the finalized survey and related data presented to the Board by Mrs. Rexrode.

Flexible Instructional Days (FID):

Mrs. Weyandt raised the topic of Flexible Instruction Day (FID) usage, noting that many districts utilize FID days while the district has not formally done so. She stated the district would need to apply for FID approval and either work toward implementation or provide a rationale for not doing so.

Mr. Rossi referenced prior parent survey feedback indicating limited support for at-home instructional days. He noted the district has authority to use FID days but emphasized the need to assess current technology access, recalling internet access challenges during COVID.

Dr. Winters explained that the current calendar designates the first three (3) snow days as traditional snow days and allows for FID use as needed. He stated snow days and FID days could be used interchangeably, provided teachers have sufficient preparation time. He noted device distribution would be required and suggested a pilot or test run if the district chose to proceed. He added the calendar would be presented to the Board in the coming months and that the Board could consider expanded FID use beginning in the 2026-27 school year. The district is permitted up to five (5) FID days, with flexibility beyond that if weather conditions require.

Mr. Ammarell requested teacher input on potential FID use for the current and upcoming school years and expressed interest in reviewing how other districts implement FID plans.

December 5<sup>th</sup> Fieldhouse Meeting:

Mr. Rossi provided update on the December 5 Fieldhouse meeting, noting that final details related to the building design, finishes, and layout are being completed in preparation for bidding. He stated there were no major issues to report and that the goal is to ensure accurate bid numbers so the District has a clear understanding of project costs. He also reported that a kickoff meeting was held for Phase I work, which includes relocation of the softball field and jumping pits. While weather has caused minor challenges the project team is closely monitoring the schedule to remain on track. The existing jumping pits will remain in use until the end of construction to avoid disruption of use. Mr. Rossi noted that the middle school softball field presents additional complexities, but the District will monitor the situation closely and make alternate arrangement if necessary. The project is expected to remain on schedule.

Snow Removal and Ice in the Parking lot:

Mrs. Weyandt commented on icy and unsafe parking lot conditions.

Mr. Rossi noted the District had a limited window to treat lots before temperatures dropped, adding that extreme cold reduces the effectiveness of salt and that conditions may not have improved overnight.

Mr. Ammarell inquired about the District's snow removal equipment and staffing capacity.

Dr. Winters explained that the District transitions from contractor services to in-house snow removal at the end of last winter after reviewing costs. The District purchased bulk salt at a favorable price and now uses District personnel for plowing and treatment. He reported that roads throughout the community were clear based on feedback from local municipalities. Dr. Winters stated the District currently has three (3) plow-equipped vehicles (one her building), a dump truck, a pickup truck and a tractor, along with push salters and hand tools for sidewalks. Four (4) supervisors (three custodial and one maintenance) are trained to operate plows, while other custodial staff handle sidewalk treatment. He noted it took approximately 2.5 hours to clear one (1) building and acknowledged contractors could work faster due to larger crews, but in-house approach was more cost-effective. Calcium chloride is available for sidewalk if needed.

BCTC Tech Advisor (5-year term)

Mrs. Weyandt asked if this had been filled as the current appointment expires at the end of 2025.

Dr. Winters stated the district was reaching out to Mr. Miller to see if he would continue being the appointee.

Emotional Support Classrooms:

Mrs. Weyandt requested the district continue to investigate this for future discussions.

Cost to train Mr. Campbell:

Mrs. Weyandt asked if there had been follow-up regarding the cost of training Mr. Campbell for pool operations.

Dr. Winters stated that during Mr. Yagers' absence, another staff member completed the required training, passed the certification exam, and is now licensed, ensuring the District is adequately covered. He noted he did not have the exact cost. He expressed concern about training a coach for pool operations, explaining that this responsibility has historically been handled by custodial supervisors and shifting it could create operational and staffing issues. He stated that if additional personnel are trained, his preference would be to train additional custodial supervisors or custodians.

Mr. Moll agreed that training custodial staff was more appropriate, as it would not interfere with coaching responsibilities.

Mr. Rossi added that if a coach were to be trained, the coach's job description would need to be revised to include pool operation duties and to ensure proper liability and insurance coverage.

Update on the Education Center:

Dr. Kuehner provided an update on the Education Center following last week's incident. He stated that Berks Fire and Water had been onsite nearly continuously since the incident. Current classrooms are located on the second floor in an area unaffected by flooding. Students are currently using paper and pencil due to the lack of internet access. Mr. Sobczak reviewed contingency options should internet service remain unavailable for an extended period, including the possibility of installing temporary Wi-Fi access. A return to the original classrooms is anticipated by Wednesday, pending acceptable moisture level readings. He noted there was damage to the camera system wiring, which is required for continuous student monitoring. County maintenance staff were onsite addressing wiring repairs. The center typically serves approximately 10 to 12 students.

Mrs. Weyandt inquired if the board would like to schedule a Board tour of the Education Center.

Dr. Winters stated he would coordinate with Dr. Kuehner to arrange possible dates.

Mrs. Steinke shared she previously toured the center at its opening and suggested the space could be made more cheerful and welcoming for students, noting its importance as a school environment.

BCTC:

Mr. Moll stated it had been many years since the board had toured BCTC and noted that BCTC had the opportunity to run board meetings with their facility plus the students provide a dinner as part of their training that they'd like to do. He stated if the board was interested in that to try to schedule something at that location. He added that the BCTC also does a house project which garnered a lot of interest from around the country besides the state, so they do a lot of tours. This is over in the east area in Oley campus. He asked if any board members would be interested in getting a house tour sometime to see what that looks like, that's another option.

Concert:

Mrs. Lash commended the concert held last Tuesday night. She added Williamsburg was a nice event to do with the fifth graders.

Reorganizing the Gym for events:

Mr. Ammarell stated he had received some concerns from the community regarding the Basketball Competition. He noted that some of the things that were done were done for good reason. He stated he was not a fan of change for the sake of change but also not necessarily in favor of leaving everything the way it was just because that's the way it was so he would like to see if Mr. Hansen would be willing to give a brief presentation on his thoughts on reorganizing the gym for some of these events so that they can be processed and so the public could get an idea of why some of those changes were made. He felt that would be beneficial.

Policy 707:

Mr. Ammarell raised concerns regarding Policy 707 and the process of scheduling and allocating district facilities for athletic organizations, including school and youth groups. He suggested the Board review the current workflow, noting that requests currently move from Buildings and Grounds to Athletics and then back to Buildings and Grounds. He stated that recent issues with youth basketball may have been avoided if the process flow had been structured differently and recommended evaluating whether a revised sequence would be more effective.

Girls' Wrestling Tournament:

Mr. Ammarell thanked Mr. Hansen for putting together a Junior High Girls Wrestling Tournament and the feedback from parents and athletes that they were very grateful for this. He noted girls wrestling tournaments are not easy to find and a lot of schools from far away attended.

SV Cheer:

Mrs. Matthews congratulated the SV Cheer for winning second place in the District 3 Competition.

Building Accessibility for student activities:

Mr. Ammarell inquired about building access for student activities, specifically ensuring that doors are unlocked for parents and students attending practices or activities. He noted that in the past, doors were unlocked 15 minutes before and after activities, but he had recently experience issues with doors being locked.

Dr. Winters stated he would look into this and that the doors should be accessible 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after student activities.

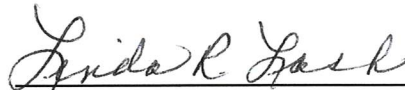
**8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved by Frank Ammarell and seconded by Alfonso Rossi, there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned.**

**Yeas: Ammarell, Brown, Lash, Matthews, Moll, Rossi, Steinke, C. Weyandt, D. Weyandt**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.



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Linda R. Lash, Secretary  
Board of School Directors