

Seneca Valley School District



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION SESSION Seneca Valley Senior High School Auditorium - 7 p.m.

Minutes

March 9, 2026

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mr. Eric DiTullio, President, called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.
 - A. **Moment of Silence** - The meeting was opened with a moment of silence.
 - B. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Lincoln Boehm – grade 4, Haine 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: Mr. Nick Brower, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Mr. Mark Gartner, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Tim Hester, Mr. Mike Jacobs, Ms. Allyson Mazzoni, Mr. Travis Savitt-Kraft and Ms. Kari Zimmer.
2. **INFORMATION REPORTS**
 - A. **Student/Staff Recognition**
 1. A total of 18 Seneca Valley students in grades 7–12 presented independent research projects at the 69th Annual Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science Region 9 competition held Feb. 21 at Slippery Rock University. Fourteen students earned first-place awards and four more earned second place.

First Place:
 - Paige Chesler (7) – *How Does Temperature Affect Plants?*
 - Anaya Kandikuppa (7) – *Effect of Air Pollution on Plants*
 - Lucia Parise (7) – *How Plants Respond to Their Environment – Touch*
 - Cam Swope (8) – *How Flywheel Characteristics Affect Energy Conservation*
 - Maryn Zupancic (8) – *How Long Do Batteries Really Last?*
 - Maddalyn Beichner (9) – *How Does Gray Water Affect Our National Parks? (Perfect Score)*
 - Cruz Sanders (11) – *Aquatic Moss and the Pollution of Water*
 - Everly Harrell (11) – *The Effect of Host Bacteria on pGLO Plasmid Growth*
 - Abby Huppert (11) – *Identifying Radiation Types Using a Cloud Chamber*
 - Mariana Marino Escobar (11) – *Classical Conditioning, Hear and Act*
 - Peyton Mounty (11) – *Does the Color of Your Dish Affect the Taste of Food?*

- Mac Wilson (11) – *Filter Size Impact on Soil eDNA Extraction and Purification*
 - Teagan Hmel (12) – *Using Geneious to Advance Salamander Metabarcoding Studies*
 - YukKwan (Wilson) Li (12) – *Using Low-Cost Sensory Device for Assistive Technology*
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Second Place:

- Alyssa Mossor (7) – *Coin Composition*
- Emily Schweitzer (7) – *Biology Project*
- Imogen Culley (10) – *When One Choice Leads to Infinity*
- Ziva Schmitt (11) – *Pollinator NGS Metabarcoding*

Special awards:

- Cam Swope (8) received the Ernst P. Hall Award in Junior High Physics for “How Flywheel Characteristics Affect Energy Conservation.”
- Anaya Kandikuppa (7) earned the PJAS Region 9 Director’s Award in Junior High Biochemistry for “Effect of Air Pollution on Plants.”
- Maddalyn Beichner (9) received the SRU Junior High Biology Award for “How Does Gray Water Affect Our National Parks.” She also earned a perfect score on her project.

We would like to commend these students, along with Science Department Chair and Science Honor Society advisor Ms. Kelly Weston.

- Two SV Jazz students, Camden Armstrong – Alto Saxophone – and John Rieger – Trumpet – were selected to the PMEA All-State Jazz Ensemble. To earn a position in the All-State Jazz Ensemble, students must prepare an audition consisting of five components: scale proficiency, improvisation, lead playing, section playing and a technical etude/transcription. This material must be audio and video recorded and submitted to the state in January for evaluation and scoring. Camden is one of only two alto saxophonists and John is one of only five trumpeters selected from across Pennsylvania. The All-State Jazz Ensemble will perform at the PMEA All-State Festival in April at the Poconos Resort Conference Center.
- Ten Seneca Valley chorus members in grades 11-12 recently participated in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Region Chorus held February 19-21, at the Scottish Rite Cathedral in New Castle. The chorus festival comprises students from Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, Mercer, Washington and Westmoreland counties.
- Last month, 24 Seneca Valley band students were selected by solo audition to perform in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District Jazz Festival, held February 13-14 at Slippery Rock University. The festival consists of three auditioned jazz ensembles comprised of students from Beaver, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties. Seneca Valley had the most students of any district represented at this festival.

5. The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 Band Festival featured 17 SV Band students last month. Held at Sharon High School from Feb. 4-6, the festival brought together students from all schools in PMEA District 5. It is the first step in the state-level music festival system, where students have the opportunity to advance to the regional level.

B. **Dates to Remember** – Mr. Ian Hunter announced the following dates to remember:

March	
March 12-15	SV All School Musical, "Disney's Frozen the Musical" will be held in the SVIHS; <u>Tickets are available for purchase on ShowClix by visiting: Tickets for Disney's Frozen, the Musical in Harmony from ShowClix</u>
March 13	Report of Student Progress Release Grades K-6
March 14	SAT Testing – Seneca Valley Senior High School
March 16	Snow Makeup Day #2
March 19	Eid al Fitr Begins
March 19	SVAOC End of Third Nine Weeks, Grades 7-12
March 20	Spring Begins
March 21	ACT Testing – Seneca Valley Senior High School
March 24	End of Third Nine Weeks, Grades 7-12
March 29	Palm Sunday
March 30-April 3	Spring Break, No School for Students and Staff
April 1	Paraprofessionals Appreciation Day
April 1	Passover Begins
April 3	Good Friday
April 5	Easter
April 6	Act 80 (Professional Development) Day, No School for Students
April 10	Orthodox Good Friday
April 11	ACT Testing – Seneca Valley Senior High School
April 12	Orthodox Easter

- C. **All-Star Award, Winner, March 2026** – Ms. Jessica M. King, Security, was presented the All-Star Award by Officer Jason Young, Director of Safety and Security. Mr. Young shared that Ms. King is dedicated and demonstrates extreme professionalism. He commented that Ms. King consistently approaches each assignment with a positive attitude and strong sense of responsibility. The experience that she has gained prepared her for her current role where she directly oversees contracted security officers while working closely with District staff. Ms. King consistently goes above and beyond in all that she does. Mr. Young thanked her for her commitment, leadership and service to the District.

Mr. Savitt-Kraft thanked her for all that she does for the school community and shared his appreciation.

Mr. Jacobs shared his appreciation with Ms. King for creating a safe, warm and welcoming environment.

Dr. Vitale thanked Ms. King for her loyalty and professionalism. In addition, she shared the challenges this year with the start of construction on the main campus and that Ms. King has been dependable and professional through all of it.

- D. **Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV Proposed Budget** – Ms. Brenda Marino, Interim MIU IV Director, shared that the MIU IV represents 27 school districts in Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties.

Ms. Maureen Werwie, Business Manager, explained that the general operating budget includes administrative costs, building operations and basic service areas. Some of the services that are included are continuing professional education, curriculum instruction and assessment, educational planning, state and federal liaison and technology and information services.

The general operating budget is 4.6% of the total budgeted grants and programs. The general operating budget expenditure is \$4.6 million. This is funded by administrative fees (for example from fingerprinting), continuing education programs, curriculum services and from an indirect cost on other grants and programs that they do. The district contribution is 4.3% of that budget and the amount that the districts are required to contribute.

The total proposed general operating budget is \$4.5 million with an increase of \$110,000 over last year. The total district contribution is \$649,135 and this amount has been unchanged for over 34 years. Each year Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) does a calculation based on student membership and district wealth causing it to change slightly from year to year, but they are pretty consistent. The key cost drivers are healthcare, and salary increases as per their contract. In addition, they set aside \$125,000 for unexpected expenses.

The MIU IV Board approved the budget on January 28, 2026 before being sent out to each of the school districts for their approval.

Mr. DiTullio highlighted that the district contribution has been unchanged for 34 years. He clarified that the District's portion can change based on the PDE calculation (due to an increase in homes built, etc.) His recommendation is that the Board approve the budget.

E. **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. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – There was no public comment.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. **Work Session** – February 2, 2026
- B. **Action Meeting** – February 9, 2026

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

5877

6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS**

Grand Total: \$1,511,790.36

7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS**

Grand Total: \$1,049,386.98

Mr. Brower motioned, seconded by Mr. Hester, to approve the minutes, treasurer's report, general fund bills and construction fund bills. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

8. **ADMINISTRATION**

- A. **Kennywood Picnic** – Approved Friday, June 19, 2026, as the Kennywood picnic date for 2026.
- B. **Research Study** – Approved Doctoral Candidate, Megan Oldenski, Teacher of Gifted Programming at the Intermediate High School, to conduct a dissertation study on gifted education. Specifically, researching distributions of project domains, technology integration, and how gender, grade level, and prior participation in the enrichment group influence domain selection.
- C. **School Bus Drivers** – Approved the additional bus driver list for the 2025-26 school year as provided by transportation vendor of First Student Inc.

Mr. Hester motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to approve the Kennywood Picnic, research study and school bus drivers. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

9. **INSTRUCTION**

- A. **Conferences** – Approved conference requests.
- B. **Grant Disbursements** – Granted permission to apply for and to disburse, the following:
 - 1. Chemical and Genetic Analysis of a Local Waterway Grant in the amount of \$900, funded by the Grable Foundation and requested by Mr. Tom Lavelle. Funds will be used for the biology class and students from the biotech lab to work together to delineate our campus waterway in terms of fish inhabitants and water quality.
 - 2. Traverse Climbing Wall for the Inclusion of Students Grant in the amount of \$7,500, funded by Highmark Foundation and requested by Ms. Ashley Salman and Mr. Tyler Mesisca. Funds will be used for a traverse climbing wall.
 - 3. SVAOC Functional Fitness Lab Grant in the amount of \$7,500, funded by Highmark Foundation and requested by the SVAOC Physical Education Teachers. Funds will be used to purchase additional exercise equipment.

- C. **Book Disposal** - Approved the sale, donation, or recycling of obsolete books from Connoquenessing Valley Elementary, Ehrman Crest Elementary, Ehrman Crest Middle School, Haine Elementary, Haine Middle and Rowan Elementary Schools.
- D. **Student Trips** – Approved the following student trips:
 - 1. Approved the Academic Decathlon Team to travel to Hershey, Pennsylvania, from March 12-14, 2026, under the supervision of Mr. David Reichard. Students will miss two days of instruction. The trip is at no cost to the District.
 - 2. Approved the Pennsylvania Junior Classical League Club (PAJCL) to travel to the PAJCL state convention in State College, from May 23-24, 2026, under the supervision of Latin teachers Ms. Amy Seelbaugh, Ms. Sarah Deeds and Mr. Zach Cene. Students will miss two days of instruction. The trip is at no cost to the District.
- E. **Pittsburgh Art Region Agreement** - Approved the affiliate partner agreement with the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, Inc. for administration of a Scholastic Art & Writing Awards regional program for the term of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. Pending solicitor review.

Ms. Zimmer shared about the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, and that they are equivalent to choral regions and districts, but it is for artists. She shared that it took place the prior weekend at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU). She is in favor of the partnership that the District has for this program. She highlighted that Ms. Bonistalli organizes this program and the selected pieces of art are then put on display at CMU. Ms. Zimmer shared her appreciation for all Ms. Bonistalli and Mr. Woolslare do behind the scenes to make this possible for our students.

Mr. Brower motioned, seconded by Mr. Hester to approve conferences, grant disbursements, book disposal, student trips and Pittsburgh Art Region Agreement. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

10. BUSINESS/FINANCE

- A. **Budget Transfers** – Approved budget transfers.
- B. **Naming Rights Agreement** – Approved an addendum to the existing agreement with the Khara Family for naming rights of the baseball field for Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000), payable in ten annual installments of Twenty-Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) each year, effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2035.
- C. **Security and Safety Equipment** - Approved the sale of any security and safety equipment that is deemed to have resale value and the disposal of any items that are not suitable for resale in a responsible manner.

Mr. Jacobs motioned, seconded by Mr. Brower, to approve budget transfers, Naming Rights Agreement and Security and Safety Equipment. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

- D. **Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School (BCAVTS) 2026-2027 Budget** – Approved the BCAVTS proposed budget with budgetary reserve for the 2026-27 school year in the amount of \$7,571,783.

Ms. Mazzoni asked for clarification regarding the vote that the Board members completed at the March 2 meeting and how it differs from the vote that is on the March 9 agenda. Mr. DiTullio explained that BCAVTS requires a vote from the Board and from the individual votes as per their Joint Operating Committee bylaws.

Mr. Jacobs motioned, seconded by Mr. Hester, to approve the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School (BCAVTS) 2026-2027 Budget. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

- E. **2026-2027 MIU IV General Operating Budget** – Approved the 2026-27 Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV General Operating Budget in the total amount of \$4,552,816 with Seneca Valley's contribution being \$161,240. The official amount of the contribution is calculated on October 2026 PIMS information.

Mr. Jacobs motioned, seconded by Mr. Savitt-Kraft, to approve the 2026-2027 MIU IV General Operating Budget. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

- 11. **PERSONNEL** – Approved the following personnel items that were discussed in executive session held prior to the meeting:
 - A. **Appointments** – *Professional Substitutes* – Ana Hamm, *Classified* – Ashley Burns, Dawn Laurienzo, Krista Davis, *Supplementals* – Matt Wheeler, Jennifer McMurray, David Lowe
 - B. **Leaves** – *Professionals* – Rachel Roll, Jordan Sadley, *Classified* – Richard Duff, Megan May, Ku Kartini Tuan Yusoff
 - C. **Retirements** – *Professional* – Sandy Thompson, Bobi-Jean Alexander, Jason Shorr

Ms. Zimmer motioned, seconded by Mr. Hester, to approve appointments, leaves and retirements. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

- 12. **LETTERS SENT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD** - The following constituents communicated through the SVSD school board email account after posting the March 2, 2026, public agenda:
 - a. Jason Shorr
 - b. Doug Boyd
 - c. Sandy Thompson

Mr. DiTullio shared that a Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting was held prior to the School Board Meeting. Items that were discussed include 2025 completed projects, 2026 capital projects, an IHS construction project update and planning for the future.

Ms. Zimmer shared that she had the opportunity to join Dr. Vitale and Mr. Hunter at Sherwood Oaks. She shared that Dr. Vitale presented information about the District and how rewarding this time was.

Dr. Vitale highlighted that Sherwood Oaks presented her with a donation for the SV Foundation and shared her appreciation for it.

13. **ADJOURNMENT** - With nothing further to come before the board, Mr. Hester motioned, seconded by Mr. Savitt-Kraft, to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 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