

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Palmerton, PA

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

An executive session was held March 3, 2026 after the board workshop for personnel matters and today, March 17, 2026, after the regular meeting for personnel matters.

The regular board meeting of the Palmerton Area School District Board of School Directors was held in the High School Library, 3525 Fireline Road, Palmerton, PA, on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, and called to order at 5:30 p.m. President Haas presided. The meeting was viewable via livestream.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Present: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Moyzan, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, Schaible and Snyder

Absent: Director Mazepa

OTHER ATTENDANCE

Angela Friebolin – Superintendent, Ryan Kish – Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities, Daniel Heaney – Assistant Superintendent for Academic Programs and Technology, Jacqueline McCandless – Board Secretary, and David Conn – Solicitor

STUDENT REPORTS:

Elementary – select students were recognized for their leadership skills in the Leader in Me program with a certificate signed by the Superintendent and Principal: Peighton Wenrich, Gideon Gillen, Micheal Bressler, Wade Serfass, Maximus Gillen, Carson Escarfullett, Kayden Kuehner, and Gavin Meixell at Towamensing Elementary for February; Logan Meyers, Bentley Flores, Johnna Anthony, Amelia Haas, Emmersyn O’Donnell, Maxwell Raub, Emmalynn Dana, and Makayla Allen at S. S. Palmer/Parkside Elementary for February.

Junior High School – Cecelia Geissinger, grade 8

- Life Skills –taking field trip to DaVinci Science Center tomorrow
- Chorus – 7 students attended District 10 festival on March 9
- ACE Team – 8 members held a practice scrimmage, moderated by Dr. Friebolin, competition is on March 16-17
- After-School Escape Room – Mrs. Hoffman and Mrs. Seiler continue to see high attendance; will be planning summer program which will include 6th grade students
- STEM – Mr. Zeky’s class awarded a grant from Raising The House to purchase a 3D scanner
- Carbon County America250 PA Essay – participants in contest were Kylee Wagner and Arabella Yost, sponsored by PA Association of School Retirees; artwork will also be submitted

High School – Sadie Gair, grade 12

- Personal Finance competition – 8 students competed this year with one team qualifying for state finals
- Student Council – hosted Spirit Week with themed days and dance
- LEO Club – conducting a spring food drive for Valor House
- PYEA –begun mentoring in classrooms; will lead small and large-group instruction
- Scholastic Scrimmage – hosted the Carbon County Academic Competition on March 6, finishing second
- NHS – senior trip will be to Longwood Gardens with gifted program
- Athletics – *Girls’ basketball*: qualified for state tournament; *Boys’ Wrestling*: qualified for regional tournament with Dillon Anthony and Connor Messinger participating; *Spring*: season underway; *National Athletic Training Month* – recognized Dave Smith, Shannon McVicar, and Trent Perkins for their dedication to our student-athletes
- FBLA – selling pizzas as their last fundraiser before state competition, 68 members qualified with the top 4 advancing to nationals at end of June

- Drama Club – members preparing for full run-throughs next week for their show, *Legally Blonde*, which runs April 23-25

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

- Ezra Green, grade 12, has been named a National Merit Scholarship finalist which is for a high-achieving high school senior who advances from the semi-final stage. Mrs. Husar introduced him and spoke highly of him and his many accomplishments.
- Thank you to St. Luke’s who held a biomedical symposium in the district on March 12
- Our junior high “What’s So Cool About Manufacturing?” team’s video was shown highlighting Fuller Technologies; voting is now open; students involved are Mya Lengel, Charlie Borger, Elizabeth Remaley, Owen Fox, and Lainey Lucykanish
- Best of luck to our 8th grade ACE team members who made it to the final round tomorrow night; members are Lucas Beahn, Geovanny Castillo Andrade, Alex Delich, Jace Farcas, Harper Hahn, Matt Jahelka, Sophia Hedes, and Emma Hirt

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS’ REPORTS:

- *Dr. Heaney* – held Pre-K Counts Spring PRI meeting on March 2 at Parkside, review went well which ensures the program remains in compliance with requirements; Mr. Knoll and students did an outstanding job with the Carbon County Academic Competition; Elementary Scheduling Committee met March 12, led by Mrs. Beblavy, and comprised of administrators and teachers who are reviewing schedules and opportunities to better align practices across buildings; Mrs. Beblavy and science teachers are rewriting the curriculum to align with STEELS standards; remember to vote in the “What’s So Cool about Manufacturing?” contest
- *Mr. Kish* – looking at other school districts to provide broader context on our preliminary budget projections of \$1m deficit, nearby districts such as Northern Lehigh and Lehigh are projecting deficits of \$2m and \$3.5m respectively, citing healthcare as the primary cost drivers; continuing to evaluate any internal cost-savings measures and will follow up with our health care trust; will have proposed budget presentation at May’s workshop; the Lower Towamensing Planning Commission has recommended Preliminary and Final Conditional Approval for the construction project, on their meeting agenda on April 7 for final authorization; pre-bid meeting on March 5 had a turnout of 20 contractors, optimistic this will result in competitive, favorable bids when we open the formal submissions in three weeks

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

- Director Danielle Paules – *PSBA*: Act 47 requires seniors to complete the FAFSA or can opt out, no penalty for not applying; stated board member attendance at school-related events where five or more board members are present is allowed, however, no business can be discussed; would like emails sent regarding school fundraisers in addition to website posting
- Director Snyder – *CCTI*: hope to hire a new principal soon
- Director Haas – *Library*: trip to Longwood Gardens on May 16; Reading with Remi, a service dog, offered; game night first Mondays; new senior social club starts April 22
CLIU: IDEA celebrating 50th anniversary, created and showed video at IU gathering; biggest fundraiser golf tournament on June 16, website has information
- Director Schaible completed PSBA training focused on policy updates that might need looking at annually and every three years

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- Lori Nemeth – questioned wording of field trip approval on consent agenda

MEETING MINUTES

Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director King, to approve the board meeting minutes from February 3, 2026 and February 17, 2026.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA	<p>Director Moyzan moved, seconded by Director Snyder, to approve the consent agenda.</p> <p>Aye Votes: All Directors Present. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.</p>												
	<p>CONSENT AGENDA:</p>												
FISCAL REPORTS	<p>Approved accounts payable reports</p>												
	<p>Approved treasurer’s reports</p>												
BUDGET TRANSFERS	<p>Approved budget transfers</p>												
CAPITAL RESERVE TRANSFER	<p>Approved the Capital Reserve transfer of \$28,065.00 from the General Fund to pay for Change Orders #1-4 approved at the February 17, 2026 board meeting</p>												
AUDIT REPORT-Gorman	<p>Accepted the Single Audit Report dated fiscal year ended June 30, 2025 as presented by Gorman & Associates, P.C.</p>												
EXONERATE TAX COLLECTORS	<p>Approved retroactively to February 17, 2026, to exonerate the following current tax collectors from the collection of the 2025-2026 school year delinquent per capita taxes effective January 1, 2026</p>												
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="329 835 800 871">Bowmanstown Borough</td> <td data-bbox="808 835 1084 871">Maria Smith</td> <td data-bbox="1092 835 1287 871">\$ 1,760.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="329 873 800 909">Lower Towamensing Township</td> <td data-bbox="808 873 1084 909">Maxine Scherer</td> <td data-bbox="1092 873 1287 909">\$ 6,660.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="329 911 800 947">Palmerton Borough</td> <td data-bbox="808 911 1084 947">Raquel Lutton</td> <td data-bbox="1092 911 1287 947">\$15,390.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="329 949 800 984">Towamensing Township</td> <td data-bbox="808 949 1084 984">Susan Marques</td> <td data-bbox="1092 949 1287 984">\$ 6,950.00</td> </tr> </table>	Bowmanstown Borough	Maria Smith	\$ 1,760.00	Lower Towamensing Township	Maxine Scherer	\$ 6,660.00	Palmerton Borough	Raquel Lutton	\$15,390.00	Towamensing Township	Susan Marques	\$ 6,950.00
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PER CAPITA EXONERATION	<p>Approved retroactively to February 17, 2026, the per capita tax exoneration list</p>												
TAX COLLECTOR-Berkheimer	<p>Appointed retroactively to February 17, 2026, Berkheimer Associates, Bangor, PA, as the delinquent tax collector of the 2025-2026 school year per capita taxes effective January 1, 2026. There is no fee assessed to the district for this service; the fees are assessed to the taxpayer.</p>												
CSIU RATES	<p>Approved the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) Computer Service Rates Agreement providing the district’s accounting, payroll, personnel, and inventory software for the 2026-2027 school year</p>												
PROM DJ	<p>Approved the event services agreement with Lehigh Valley Events & Productions, LLC, for DJ package for the High School Class of 2026 prom on May 1, 2026 in the amount of \$1,750.00</p>												
PROM 2027-Stroudsmoor	<p>Approved the event contract and addendum with Stroudsmoor Country Inn, Stroudsburg, for the High School Class of 2027 Prom on May 7, 2027</p>												
METZ AMUSEMENTS	<p>Approved the rental contract with Metz Amusements & Concessions, LLC, for Spring Day on May 7, 2026 in the amount of \$723.69 paid from funds from Student Council Activity Fund</p>												
HERSHEYPARK	<p>Approved the group catering agreement with Hersheypark Group Sales in the amount of \$4,274.03 paid by FBLA Club student fees and fundraising</p>												
TUITION REIMBURSEMENTS	<p>Approved tuition reimbursements</p>												
LTS SPEC ED	<p>Approved Lisa Heffernan as Long Term-Substitute Special Education Teacher at the high school at Bachelor’s, Step 1, with an annual salary of \$52,301 prorated for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year through approximately the first semester of the 2026-2027 school year effective March 18, 2026</p>												

HORIZONTAL MOVEMENT

Acknowledged the following horizontal movement effective the second semester of the 2025-2026 school year:

Suzanne Black	From Master’s +15 to Master’s +30
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SUB

Approved the following Substitute at the prevailing substitute rates effective March 18, 2026:

Christopher Rutz	Substitute Custodian
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PROSPECTIVE TEACHER SUB

Approved Chase Reph as Prospective Teacher Substitute (Act 86) at the prevailing substitute rate for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year effective March 18, 2026

BASEBALL COACH

Approved the following Coach for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year effective March 18, 2026:

Kaleb Eitner	Baseball Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
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FALL COACHES 2026-2027

Approved the following Fall Coaches for the 2026-2027 school year:

FOOTBALL:		
Christopher Walkowiak	Head Coach	\$6,609
Michael Falcone	Assistant Coach	\$4,327
Freddie Leshner, Jr.	Assistant Coach	\$4,327
Mark Versuk	Assistant Coach	\$4,327
Patrick Morgans	Assistant Coach	\$4,327
Christopher Frace	Assistant Coach (1/2)	\$2,163
Shawn Leadbetter	Assistant Coach (1/2)	\$2,163
Jagan Bruce	Assistant Coach (1/4)	\$1,082
Kevin Booth	Assistant Coach (1/4)	\$1,082
Logan Leshner	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
James Hunsicker	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
Jordan Nelson	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
CROSS COUNTRY:		
Michael Noyola	Head Coach	\$4,347
Michael Gombert	Assistant Coach	\$2,854
FIELD HOCKEY:		
Megan Leadbetter	Head Coach	\$4,347
Tyzahnae Klotz	Assistant Coach	\$2,854
Jillian Frank	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
Zoe Hathaway	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
Janessa Ortiz	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
SOCCER-BOYS:		
Caleb Loew	Head Coach	\$4,347
SOCCER-GIRLS:		
Jonathan Perloni	Head Coach	\$4,347
Dylan Fejes	Assistant Coach	\$2,854
Lucas Maggipinto	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
Bryce Yacone	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--

<i>GOLF:</i>		
Alexander Knoll	Co-Head Coach	\$1,307
Joseph Trimmel	Co-Head Coach	\$1,307
Kevin Wertz	Volunteer Assistant Coach	--
<i>VOLLEYBALL:</i>		
Brandyn Miller	Assistant Coach	\$2,854
<i>CHEER:</i>		
Joy Devino	Co-Head Coach	\$2,661
Christine Ruzicka	Co-Head Coach	\$2,661
Christina Wilson	Assistant Coach	\$1,331

SPRING EVENT WORKER Approved Christine Rodrigues as additional Spring Event Worker for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year at a rate of \$30.00 per event effective March 18, 2026

RESIGNATION Accepted the following resignation:

Michael Noyola	Track Volunteer Assistant Coach	Retroactively effective January 22, 2026
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CLIU INT'GOVT-SPEC ED Approved the Intergovernmental Agreement for Special Education Services with Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 for the 2026-2027 school year (enclosure)

CLIU POLICIES & PROCEDURES Approved the Notice of Adoption of Approved LEA Policies, Procedures & Use of Funds by School District with Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 for the 2026-2027 school year (enclosure)

MISERICORDIA Approved the Clinical Education Experience Agreement with Misericordia University effective March 18, 2026 with automatic yearly renewal (enclosure)

FOLLETT-FACILITIES SUITE Approved the subscription services proposal with Follett Software-Facilities Suite for facilities scheduling and athletic integration software (enclosure)

FIELD TRIP Approved the following field trip request:

PIAA Track Championships	Shippensburg University	May 21, 2026 through May 23, 2026
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PUBLIC PERFORMANCES Approved the following public performances, per policy 230:

Band-HS	County Band Festival, Panther Valley HS, Lansford	Retroactively March 10, 2026 through March 12, 2026
Jazz Band-JHS/HS	Conrad Weiser HS, Robesonia	Retroactively March 13, 2026
Jazz Band-JHS/HS	Delaware Valley HS, Milford	May 2, 2026

CONFERENCE Approved the following conference:

Angela Friebolin	PDE Summit, Hershey	March 30, 2026 through April 1, 2026	Estimated cost of \$814.24
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END OF CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- Mary Farquhar – stated her previous remarks last meeting were a critique of teachers’ unions; stated political and ideological concerns in educational standards and testing; called for greater transparency

- Lea Schaible – spoke about girls’ wrestling program’s success and growth; spoke in favor of Coach Jamie Tomsic and requested a third-party investigation into accusations
- Tiffany Jennings – girls’ wrestling coaches have been supportive of team; believes Coach Jamie Tomsic not being rehired is detrimental to program; targeting Jamie while ignoring reported other misconduct by staff; intends to escalate her request for an independent investigation
- Nicole Jennings – defended Coach Jamie Tomsic against recent accusations and credited him as the reason she wrestles; spoke of his role as a mentor; stated that many teammates would refuse to play for the team if he is not rehired
- William Jennings – said he is frustrated with the school board for not protecting students and ignoring truth regarding allegations against a coach; criticized lack of thorough investigation
- Bo Rodrigues – spoke in favor of renewing Coach Tomsic, citing his impact on his daughter; urged Board to prioritize the influence a coach has on students' growth over district differences
- Abigail Baker – urged Board to retain Coach Tomsic as girls’ wrestling coach
- Nicole Baker – wants transparent investigation into non-renewal of Coach Tomsic
- Cassidy Merkel – spoke in favor of Coach Tomsic and his effect on team; asked Board to reject hearsay
- Jamie Tomsic – stated he is not being rehired as wrestling assistant coach in retaliation for reporting another assistant coach; requesting transparency from Board; feels administration’s behavior is retaliatory and a conflict of interest; handed copy of Title IX claim to the Board
- Jessica Merkel – wants Coach Tomsic rehired; has made a positive impact on student-athletes
- Skylar Benninger – credited Coach Tomsic with providing support and mentorship that led her to a college scholarship
- Danielle Jones – spoke of behavior by Earl and Danielle Paules directed at former board member, Alyson Krawchuk-Boschen; served Earl Paules with legal papers

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

- Director Earl Paules said he is honest and has spent \$50k of his money to fight criticism and investigation; admitted he was wrong about success of girls' wrestling program; stated Board must act as financial checks and balances rather than a “yes machine”; denied any misconduct and will not apologize; the Board declined to censure him
- Director Schaible stated she is unable to comment on Coach Jamie Tomsic due to her position on Board; spoke of student-athletes and their individual wrestling accomplishments; said she will continue fighting for girls’ wrestling team
- Director Haas praised girls’ wrestling team; thanked Mr. Alex Knoll for the academic competition; enjoyed participating in Reading Across America

ADJOURNMENT

Director Schaible moved, seconded by Director Danielle Paules, to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline McCandless
Board Secretary