



Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, February 19, 2026

Members present: Ken Keith, William Formica, Kimberly Wheeler, Michael Barnacz, Alexandra Wisser, Andrew Souchet, Corinne DeGeiso, Rosemary Buetikofer

Others present: Nicole Bauer, John Franzen, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Fran Masin-Moyer, Katie McCoy, Michelle Noga, Tom Overberger, Jenn Reed-Duka, Walt Salevsky, Michael Taylor, Christine Yardley, Megan Zweiback

Mr. Keith called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Mr. Keith announced that due to the volume of information being presented, each item would be presented and then discussed.

Superintendent Gallagher noted that he attended the Curriculum Council meeting on Friday, when the information was presented. He also noted that several faculty members were in attendance this evening. Dr. Gallagher introduced Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly.

1. Education-Personnel

1.1 High School Social Studies: Grade 9 Primary Resource

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced staff members in attendance and read the school district mission statement along with the Multiple Tiered System of Support which grounds all the work of the school district.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated the intention to add a new 9th grade resource. She explained that about two years ago working with Jen Reed-Duka and the department conversation came up about our social studies curriculum organization. It was thematically based and we received feedback from teachers, parents and students that some students may have had difficulty in understanding sequencing.

The department began conversations and Ms. Reed-Duka led the department to reorganize. Content was not changed; it was simply reorganized from theme to a chronological sequence of history.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that the information begins in middle school in 8th grade, so it's kind of like a two-part course here. When students get to high school, they're really studying units from 1865 all the way to the present.

In addition, we are recommending a new primary resource that will help students in the classroom and at home. We are recommending *History Alive!* Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that it offers well organized, standard based narrative. It helps students build a strong foundation in the historical concepts and primary resources sources are in there, as well as literary. She also stated that there are two or three copies on the dais to pass it around.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that students will have both physical copies and digital access for the content in the books. Each classroom will have a full set of books that stay in the classroom and students have access through a digital license. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly added that a purchase of this type is made typically, six years. Therefore, the licenses would last from 2026/27 to the 2031/32nd school year. The estimated cost in total for the six years is \$39,910.00.

Board members expressed praise for the reorganization and the text. A question was asked about use of textbook versus an electronic version and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly answered that she believes there is a good balance of resources.

1.2 Middle School Math Pilot

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced the Math Pilot by explaining the many conversations discussing middle school math. She noted that when looking at math achievement and math growth, achievement is not defined by any one measure. She noted that a big focus is on long term student growth that leads to college and career readiness.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also stated that a lot of things contribute to students demonstrating their proficiency, their ability, and their skills in any subject matter. So, working with all these things at the same time, we transform data into information and then we evaluate our outcomes. So that is really the whole process that we're continually doing as we're working through all our subject areas.

In acknowledgement of the process, and using data, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the department has transformed that information, that data, into a decision to pilot a new primary resource.

After conversations with middle school principals, Mr. Klimovich and Mrs. McCoy, the team decided to pilot the program now. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that by not waiting, we will ensure a smooth transition. The students are already going to be learning the standards and it's a standard aligned curriculum. So therefore, there is really no change from a student perspective other than the materials that they're using.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also spoke to the Comprehensive Plan and stated that the department wanted one continuous program that's comprehensive so that we have this vertical alignment in the materials and the resources. She also stated that the program has built in interventions that you can do right in the classroom. Teachers will be able to pull a small group and meet their needs.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that in the end this is a resource. It's not a reinvention. Our math teachers are excellent math teachers at the middle school. They have done a phenomenal job, and students are responding to their instruction. It provides additional support for responsive teaching within the platform. It provides dashboards, so if they do a quick check they can see in real time how students are learning.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the pilot program was reviewed at the recent Professional Development Day and received positively by all involved. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also stated that on the district website, we did indicate exciting changes to the math resources at middle school and because the pilot is running parallel to the comprehensive plan, we're gathering information and a math parent survey will be issued so that all stakeholders can be part of the conversation.

Positive comments were received from the Board.

1.3 Middle School Related Arts Schedule Adjustments

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced the next agenda item stating that middle school scheduling has been another area where there have been lots of conversations. She stated that about 7 years ago, the middle school schedule was revised.

Moving to the present and equipped with new data she stated that the district is proposing to change the middle school related arts schedule. Having monitored and reviewed how the current related arts schedule supports students, it is the school district's belief that the proposed adjustments will improve outcomes for all students.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that one of the areas of focus is our middle school exposure to world language. In addition, we would like to offer middle schools students the opportunity to sample Mandarin, which they can elect to continue at high school. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also stated that the district is seeking to improve French and Spanish outcomes for level 1.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also stated that the original change to the middle school schedule, to balance options for students taking either world language or STEM before they go to high school, has not created the student experience that we anticipated.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly outlined the next steps which would be in effect for the 2027-2028 school year.

She stated that students will have the opportunity to preview and explore all three world languages prior to high school and that middle school students will no longer earn high school credit for world language or for STEM.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also stated that Indian Crest and Indian Valley will have parallel schedules utilizing two full time world language teachers; one teaching French and one teaching Spanish, which would be shared at both middle schools.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained the adjustments to world language as follows. In 6th grade, there would be an exploratory world language course, not specific to any world language, not French, not Spanish, not Mandarin. It would be a general view of world language and culture, a 45-day related arts course.

In 7th grade a student would have French or Spanish as a 45-day related arts course. And in 8th grade, if you had French in 7th grade, you would have Spanish in 8th and vice versa.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also explained that the schedule change will also provide the opportunity for roughly 120 students between the two middle schools to explore Mandarin before they get to the high school. Working collaboratively with the middle schools, the Mandarin teacher will start their day at the middle school.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly thanked middle school principals Mr. Klimovich and Ms. McCoy in addition to High School Principal Dr. Varano and Assistant Principals, Ms. Noga and Mr. Miller. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also thanked Ms. Yardley for her expertise in helping to provide a better experience for all students.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that having an exploratory program is an extremely strong benefit for students because they get to try languages before they decide which language they want to pursue in high school. She also stated that the exploratory courses would build global awareness, cultural understanding, and foundational language skills to prepare students for high school pathways.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly proceeded to explain the middle school STEM schedule adjustment. She stated that the stem course in 8th grade will be reimaged into a business course and a technology education course. Two different courses.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that this adjustment is a bit of a throwback, indicating the previous change to middle school schedules, using the same schedule slides, updated for today. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that 6th graders will have the opportunity for art, business, family, consumer science, health, music, physical education, tech ed, and the exploration world language, as well as having access to performing arts for band, orchestra and chorus.

Additional schedule slides were shown for adjustments to 7th and 8th grade. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly commented that Indian Crest and Indian Valley can now have parallel schedules utilizing shared teachers in the schedule change. She noted that the parallel schedule is extremely important for collaboration conversations.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that the changes will create curriculum projects. All of these courses will be introduced to Curriculum Council and Education Personnel Committee. The new courses were listed:

- Exploratory World Language
- MS French
- MS Mandarin
- MS Spanish
- 8th Grade Business
- 8th Grade Library
- 8th Grade Technology Education

Anticipated Course Revisions include:

- 7th Grade Business
- 6-8th Grade Physical Education
- Advisory

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly summarized the proposed changes for the 2027-2028 school year starting:

- Students will have the opportunity to preview/explore all three World Languages prior to high school
- Middle School students will no longer earn high school credit for World Language or STEM
- Indian Crest and Indian Valley will have parallel schedules
- Middle School Related Arts curriculum projects for Spring-Winter 2026 will prepare for the 2027-2028 school year.
- Two Full time World Language teachers – 1 French and 1 Spanish.

Dr. Gallagher stated his support and the administrative recommendations for the proposed change to the Middle School schedule. He praised the additional time for school counselors to meet with students and the renewed energy of World Language at the high school.

Ms. DeGeiso asked about simultaneous world language courses and a response was that one language would be one semester and then the second language at a different time.

Ms. DeGeiso also asked why the middle school P.E. course required revision and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly answered that it had already been scheduled for revision, not necessitated by the schedule change.

A brief discussion occurred about the Mandarin course, and several comments were made in support of the learning of the language.

Mr. Souchet asked about potential expectations of world language participation and Ms. Yardley responded that this would allow students to have a sampling rather than simply selecting a course without any real knowledge.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that this growth would give middle school students the opportunity to sample Mandarin which they have not had in the past.

Ms. Wheeler asked about the impact on high school credits, not being able to carry a language credit from middle school. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that students could earn 32 high school credits and are required to earn 28 credits to graduate. High School Guidance Counselor Mr. Overberger answered that it would result in less high school study halls and less senior privilege. High School Assistant Principal, Ms. Noga responded that some colleges are not recognizing middle school language credits.

Ms. Wisser asked about the revision of the Technology Education course and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated the work will begin after this presentation.

1.4 E-Rate Category 2

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained that E-Rate is a program supported by the F.C.C. to provide technology services to schools and libraries. Last year there was a question about whether this funding would continue, and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the funding has been renewed for another five years.

She explained that Category 1 supports the actual internet services entering into the buildings and Category 2 supports the network. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also explained that the school district is eligible for a 50% reimbursement of services which include the WAN, switches, power supplies, and wireless access points.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that working with a consultant, the district put their bid on PEPPM (a cooperative purchasing program for technology) and the district is recommending the bid be awarded to Dauphin Data Com in the amount of \$582,000.

2. Policy

Assistant Superintendent and Director of Human Resources, Dr. Hey stated that this evening there were four policies. They are all for first reading, but three of them had been read before.

Dr. Hey recalled that at the last board action meeting there were eight policies up for second reading, three of those second readings did not pass. Therefore, those are the policies we're bringing back for first reading this time around.

Dr. Hey stated that he would go through the policies and to summarize what he understood to be the questions that were raised by board members.

2.1 First Reading of Revisions to Policy 004 - Membership

He began with policy 004 membership. He stated that this is fairly long policy that talks about membership in the board and how board members are appointed, the orientation for board members, and professional development for board members.

Dr. Hey stated that the questions as he understood it, raised by some of the board members, had to do with vacancies on the board and how the board appoints a new member to fill that vacancy. Dr. Hey stated that the policy speaks to what's covered in the law with respect to the board's responsibility to post that vacancy notice. He also stated his understanding that some board members expressed a desire to enshrine a policy or a procedure for that responsibility.

Dr. Hey stated that it was the administration's recommendation as well as that of P.S.B.A. to have the policy outline the fundamentals of the law but not enshrined in policy. Dr. Hey opened the reading for discussion.

Mr. Keith stated that first and foremost we are complying with the law. He acknowledged the comments that were made and expressed concern on any given policy that the actions that are taken can bind or not bind future boards.

Ms. Buetikofer stated her understanding that administrative regulations exist alongside the policy, and a particular board can decide as they see fit.

Dr. Hey reiterated that the policy describes the minimum and the state law. He added that there are 500 school boards in the States and some of them do this differently. A few stipulate the process for whether you're going to conduct interviews or solicit community members and people to throw their hat in the ring, He noted that those are guidelines for how that would be done. He added that it would not be administrative regulation because that would be an administration saying, here's how you should do this.

Dr. Hey added that as a board there is latitude even if the policy stays as it is to work together as a team, to decide if a vacancy occurs, what

process you're going to use. He also stated that this policy doesn't bind you to anything other than that. It just describes the minimum. So, whether it's in policy or administrative regulation or nowhere, the board can still decide how it wants to meet that goal when a vacancy occurs.

Ms. Wisser expressed concern that the discussion was going in circles. She questioned if the Board could decide to put more detail in the policy if they desired and Dr. Hey responded that in theory, the Board could add to policy, however the Board is also free to decide, how to handle vacancies as they occur.

Ms. Wisser also inquired about adding student representatives to the Board and Dr. Gallagher suggested that waiting until the new school year is a better time to implement that suggestion.

Mr. Souchet spoke about the relevancy of policy procedures if a policy fails a reading. He stated his understanding that it doesn't necessarily automatically go back to a first reading. That was an assertion made at the last action meeting. And if the answer is it doesn't go back to the first reading, then it begs the question why are these three policies that did not pass last month at the action meeting being presented today?

Mr. Souchet also stated that his reasoning to have this discussion. He stated his understanding that this Board does not have a policy on what happens if a reading fails. He also stated if a policy fails at the second motion, it must be reconsidered. He added that the second thing is we don't have a reconsidering mechanism.

Dr. Gallagher responded that in his history there had not been a time when a policy did not pass. However, he stated that if there are questions, the policy returns for discussion, which is what is occurring this evening.

Mr. Souchet asked for clarification on whether the policies would be discussed this evening or returned to first reading.

Dr. Hey responded that at the first reading last month, the recommendation was made to add the language that you're talking about to the policies here, making it a second reading. Dr. Hey acknowledged this is an imperfect system, but the intention is to adopt policies. He also reiterated it is the process followed, as Dr. Gallagher just noted, this really hasn't happened before.

Mr. Souchet stated his preference that the language on what happens when first, second or third readings fail, be reviewed. After which policies could be pursued for reading.

Mr. Keith stated his understanding that Mr. Souchet was asking about a policy that stipulates the procedure for policy readings when they fail or are edited for content.

Mr. Keith also stated that in the interest of time, all three policies 004., 006. and 006.2. that are being revisited this evening are now being tabled.

Dr. Gallagher stated that legal guidance will be sought out for additional information.

2.2 First Reading of Revisions to Policy 006 - Meetings

2.3 First Reading of Revisions to Policy 006.2 - Broadcasting Board Meetings

2.4 First Reading of Revisions to Policy 011 - Principles for Governance and Leadership

Dr. Hey spoke to Policy 011 recalling the discussion at last month's committee meeting, we recommended review of this policy. He stated that there were comments from the board that we reflected on and thought it prudent to bring forward these revisions to this policy recommended by P.S.B.A.

Dr. Hey noted that the Board adopted these principles for governance in 2010 as recommended by Pennsylvania School Board Association. The policy at that time was considered standards/code of conduct.

Dr. Hey stated that much of the language between the old policy and the new policy is consistent. The new one is more concise and the P.S.B.A. guidance is to boards across the state. The administration is recommending adoption of this policy so that the Board can speak in a unified voice, specifically with respect to legislation that affects school districts.

Dr. Hey also stated that policy is not a great word for 011 as it is really principles for governance and leadership.

Mr. Souchet expressed his understanding that there would be a second reading on the recommendation.

3. Finance

3.1 Motion to approve a Grading and Landscape Easement between Souderton Area School District and the North Penn School District for an area of land on the property of the North Montco Technical Career Center

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor stated that this evening we are asking for approval on a grading and landscape easement between Souderton Area School District and the North Penn School District for an area of land on the property of the North Montco Technical Career Center. He stated that as one of the five owners of the Technical Career Center, we are expected to vote on this

easement. He explained the easement as where the schools reside, requires this easement for the North Penn High School project to continue. This is specifically for their bus garage.

The Board agreed to move forward for Board action.

3.2 Approve Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Budget

Dr. Gallagher introduced the next item as the department services the district uses from the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit. He noted that there will also be a Special Education budget which directly supports individual student services.

Dr. Gallagher explained that this budget is for the Office of Professional Learning, and the Office of Community Government Relations and Office of Technology Services. The tech services are the biggest and the school district works in collaboration with their tech department for some of our Internet services and other things.

He also explained that the office of Community and Government Relations supports all the legislative work advocating public education and Professional Learning is their professional development division, which for example supports our administrators with Act 45 workshops.

Mr. Keith noted that the M.C.I.U. budget has been streamlined despite the same financial pressures that all school districts face.

Mr. Souchet asked for clarification on the tally voting for this budget and Dr. Gallagher explained that this item is a School Code requirement and will be voted on at the action meeting.

3.3 2026-27 Budget Update

Mr. Keith introduced Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor, and asked him to present the Budget Calendar first, in his presentation.

Mr. Taylor reviewed the Budget Calendar and noted that the one thing he wanted to reiterate was that last month the Board did pass the preliminary budget. He also reminded that we talked about that process being for the district to be eligible to apply for exceptions, particularly for special education.

Mr. Taylor noted that today the email was received that the state opened the system to apply for those exceptions and the district will need to do that no later than March 5th. He stated that we will be preparing that later this month and submitting the exceptions. A preliminary calculation based off last year's setup, it looks like the district would be eligible, potentially up to about \$900,000, based upon the worksheet provided for estimating purposes.

So that would be an update at the March meeting on March 11th. We'll share that update as far as how that goes at the April 15th at the committee meeting will be presenting the proposed final budget.

Mr. Taylor stated that the timeline affords at least 30 days prior to the final budget adoption that a proposed final that is approved and is displayed for the public to review. Review and approval will be anticipated at the April 30th meeting.

Mr. Taylor also stated that budget work would continue with additional updates in May and June and a final budget presentation and vote anticipated on June 18th. Mr. Taylor reminded us that the Act 1 Index is set at 3.5% this year and any exceptions would be on top of that percentage amount.

Mr. Taylor returned to the budget presentation and reviewed updated numbers and the release of the governor's budget proposal. Mr. Taylor stated that the Basic Education Funding reflected a 0.79% increase for the school district with a proposed total allocation of \$12,616,366.

Special Education Funding showed an increase of 2.98% in a proposed total allocation of \$4,363,613. He noted that the gap continues to widen on special education costs. He also noted that the Ready to Learn Block Grant is \$624,477 proposed total allocation for Souderton.

Mr. Taylor reviewed Local Revenues through January, looking at real estate taxes and earned income taxes as well as forecasted and projecting future returns on investments.

He noted that State Revenues do reflect the Governor's proposed budget and the expected area for change for reimbursement in the share of retirement and social security and Medicare taxes. Those would be reflected appropriately.

Mr. Taylor also reviewed Federal Revenues stating that the title numbers usually come out later in the budget process, most likely in April or May.

Mr. Taylor reviewed the Act 1 Index slide showing the peak that was had two years ago and now down to 3.5% for next year. Mr. Taylor noted that he did some research on districts that had applied for exceptions noting that in recent years there have been very few districts that applied because the indexes were 4 and 5%. He also noted that in speaking with other area business managers in surrounding districts, many were considering applying for exceptions this year.

A slide was reviewed of Expenditures by Function and Mr. Taylor stated that these have not changed much on the instruction side. He noted that the difference is in our debt service and the favorable bond issuance.

Expenditures by Object were reviewed and salaries and benefits numbers have been updated from last month.

Mr. Taylor spoke briefly on the calculation of the Act 1 Index and Referendum Exceptions as they relate to Special Education.

Mr. Taylor also reviewed a slide of Charter School Tuition Rates noting the decrease in cyber charter special education students and the estimated cost savings attributed to that in the amount of \$350,000.

Mr. Taylor reviewed Future Consideration of Revenues, which is the percentage of real estate tax collection, earned income taxes and the maximizations of allowable investment earnings.

Mr. Keith asked about Expenditures by Function and by Object, asking about the percentage increases and questioned what was driving the increase and Mr. Taylor stated that it is how it is reported.

Mr. Keith also asked Mr. Taylor to expand on the cost of special education costs and Mr. Taylor stated that the shift by our Special Education Department to move more services in-house has qualified the district to apply for exceptions.

Ms. Wisser asked about Other Objects and the increase in the amount and Mr. Taylor stated that Other is, dues and fees and interest.

Mr. Souchet asked about the revenue streams that occur after the passing of the budget in June and Mr. Taylor responded that it can be interim and transfer taxes during that time period. He also stated that investment earnings is the lowest during this time.

Mr. Souchet also asked about the per capita tax and it no longer being collected and where the funds are being held now. Mr. Taylor explained that those funds are collected after July 1 and since they have been abolished, everything that would have been collected has been received.

Mr. Formica asked about the special education expenses and inquired how much we have exceeded the Act 1 Index and Mr. Taylor responded that it is approximately \$900,000.

Ms. DeGeiso inquired about the collection of new rates for Charter School calculations and Mr. Taylor responded that it will be reconciled in the annual July or August reconciliation. Dr. Gallagher asked if the State assists in the process and Mr. Taylor stated that it typically does not get rectified until the annual reconciliation.

A question from the public asked about the retirement program and wondered if positions are replaced or eliminated and Dr. Hey responded that all positions are reviewed annually.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Michael Taylor, C.P.A.

Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs