BOARD EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 16, 2026
Tredyffrin/Easttown Administrative Offices, Room 200
7:00 p.m.

Attending all or part of the meeting:

Board Committee Members: Dr. Roberta Hotinski (Chair – by phone), Maryann Piccioni, Nicole Scherer, Rachel Weil

Other Board Members: Dr. Julie K. Mesaros, Sue Tiede, Dr. Henry Zink

TE School District Representatives: Wendy Towle (Administrative Liaison), Richard Gusick, Patrick Gately, Nicole Roy, Chris Groppe, Mike Szymendera, Lisa Lukens

Community Members: Spoke Reporter

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Public Comment: None.

Committee Discussion and Recommendations:

The Committee reviewed the minutes from March 12, 2026.

The Committee received the **Special Education/Student Services Report** from Dr. Chris Groppe, Director of Safety and Student Services, and Ms. Nicole Roy, Director of Special Education. Dr. Groppe shared an overview of the Student Services continuum of supports and information about regular education pre-referral interventions and the Multi-tiered Intervention Teams at the elementary, middle, and high schools. Dr. Groppe shared the number of secondary students engaged in the multi-tiered intervention process at the middle schools and the high school. Dr. Groppe also shared information about 504 accommodation plans and nursing services across the District. Dr. Groppe explained the role of the School Psychologists, detailing the increase in the number of evaluations completed by the Psychologists, which has risen from 473 in the 2023-25 school year to 528 in the 2024-25 school year to 653 so far in the 2025-26 school year.
Ms. Roy provided an overview of the Special Education program in the District, beginning with information about the percentage of students with IEPs, the total number of students with active IEPs each year since 2025-16, Special Education primary disability categories for 2025-26, and the 10-year growth of Special Education students by disability category. Ms. Roy detailed the state caseload limits for Special Education programs offered in TESD and explained the preschool Special Education (early intervention) program offered in partnership with the Chester County Intermediate Unit, and the number of students in the early intervention program over the past four years. Ms. Roy reviewed the current Special Education staffing numbers, along with the proposed addition of one elementary Special Education Teacher and the reduction of 0.5 FTE in Special Education at the middle school level for 2026-27. Ms. Roy explained the Chester County Intermediate Unit contracted services for TESD students, as well as the number of students in out-of-District programming so far for the 2025-26 school year. Ms. Roy covered the per student expense cost range for the previous two school years, with the new cost categories for 2024-25, and the number and annual cost range of current Educational Service Agreements.

Ms. Roy concluded her report with an explanation of Special Education costs over the past three years, historical Special Education spending at the District level for the past three years, as well as the Conestoga High School class of 2025 outcomes for graduates with IEPs.
Dr. Groppe and Ms. Roy answered questions from Committee and Board members. The Committee recommended that the additional Student Services staffing proposal move forward, pending full School Board approval of the final budget in June.

The Committee received the **1:1 Technology Update** from Dr. Mike Szymendera, Director of Educational Program. Dr. Szymendera relayed information regarding community and teacher concerns about screen time for students at the elementary level, and shared background information about the District's 1:1 Technology Initiative. Dr. Szymendera provided K-4 instructional technology use examples, including the fact that, beginning with this school year, all Pennsylvania school districts are required to administer the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) electronically. Dr. Szymendera proposed the following changes for K-4 for the 2026-27 school year: iPads no longer assigned individually to kindergarten students (iPads will be available in kindergarten classrooms for instructional use at teacher discretion), iPads assigned to all students in grades 1-4 for use only in school meaning devices will not go home with elementary students and will be stored in a central location in each classroom when not in instructional use at teacher discretion. Dr. Szymendera explained the implications of the proposed model, including reduced screen time, no individually assigned iPads for Kindergarten students, device usage focused on times where the use of technology provides instructional benefit, restricted access to devices during student drop-off, dismissal, indoor recess, and other unstructured times, changes to Flexible Instructional Days at the elementary level (see below), and students maintain familiarity with devices in preparation for mandated online PSSAs. Dr. Szymendera detailed the financial considerations, with a net cost to the District for the current model of approximately $30,000 per year and a net cost to the District for the proposed model of approximately $24,000 per year, emphasizing that the change to the proposed model is not a financial decision but an educational and instructional decision.
Dr. Szymendera answered questions from Committee and Board members.

The Committee received information on the **Flexible Instructional Day (FID) Plan 2026-2029** from Dr. Wendy Towle, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning. Dr. Towle provided background on Flexible Instructional Days and Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements for the updated 3-year FID Plan, including the new opportunity for the District to add a contingency plan to the FID Plan to help with more extreme weather events. Dr. Towle explained that, due to the change in iPads not going home with elementary students, the proposed FID Plan includes an asynchronous component for elementary students with FID materials going home with students ahead of time and support offered to parents and students via the District's phone system. Dr. Towle explained that the proposed FID plan also coincides with Conestoga High School's block days schedule, and that the new contingency plan includes an asynchronous option for middle and high school students. Dr. Towle emphasized the importance of having the FID Plan in place, but that the District does not have to use FIDs for emergency closing purposes and that FIDs do not have to be made up later in the school year.
The Committee recommended the Flexible Instructional Day (FID) Plan 2026-2029 move forward for full School Board approval at the April 27, 2026 TESD School Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Next meeting: May 14, 2026