

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Palmerton, PA

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

	An executive session was held today, May 20, 2026, after the board meeting for personnel and litigation 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 Wednesday, May 20, 2026, and called to order at 5:31 p.m. President Haas presided. The meeting was viewable via livestream. Pledge of Allegiance
ROLL CALL	Present: Directors Connell (from 5:31 p.m. to 5:48 p.m. present via telephone; and from 6:19 p.m. present via telephone and present in person from 6:41 p.m. until end of meeting), Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, Schaible (from 5:31 p.m. to 5:48 p.m. only present via telephone), and Snyder Absent: Director Moyzan
OTHER ATTENDANCE	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: <u>Elementary</u> – select students were recognized for their leadership skills in the Leader in Me program with a certificate signed by the Assistant Superintendent for Academic Programs & Technology and Principal: Charlotte Zeky, Elias Cinamella, Carolyn Beaumont, Emma Lewis, Wesley Moore, Kendra Santee, Colby Hauck, and Taylor Santee at Towamensing Elementary; Matthias Laster, Thiago Baez, Eva Ruff, Declan Hoffman, Annora Pacheaco, Elliott Graver, Gavin Guereca, and Mikayla Allen at Parkside Education Center/S. S. Palmer Elementary. <u>Junior High School</u> – Benjamin Henery-Amorim, grade 8 • PSSA testing – teachers saw maturity in students who embraced the new online format • End-of Year – planning PBIS activities such as STEM Day, reward parties, and field day • Sixth Sense team – celebrated a 1st place finish • ACE team – 3rd place win • Student Council – sponsored skating night at LaRosa’s for all students on May 6 • NJHS – volunteered at the STEAM K-6 celebration hosted at the DaVinci Center • Carbon County Envirothon – four teams competed on May 6; 7th grade “5 High Flyers” earned 1st place; team: Arabella Yost, Charlie Wismer, Nick Zulic, Jackson George, and Layla Abel • Band & Chorus – presented their spring concerts on May 12 and 18 • Music – looking forward to “Music in the Parks” field trip to Dorney Park on May 30; chorus and marching, jazz and concert bands will perform for judges and receive a rating and critiques <u>High School</u> – Antonio Oller, grade 11 • Drama Club – on April 23-25 performed in <i>Legally Blonde</i> • NHS – volunteered to help with activities for the biannual Spring Day event; assisted with Raising the House 5K Run on May 9 • NHS & Gifted field trip – seniors and gifted students went to Longwood Gardens on May 8 • Scholastic Scrimmage – members continue to practice; most successful four-year senior member group in school history • PYEA – working and teaching in their mentors’ classrooms • Mental Health Awareness Month – social worker, Annette Trittenbach, reminded students mental health is just as important as physical health

- Envirothon – state competition held today; participants are Kate Fritz, Ezra Green, Antonio Oller, Hunter Sell, and Jacob Walkowiak
- Senator for a Day – last week, Mr. Paul McArdle traveled to Penn State Schuylkill Campus with students to participate; met with Sen. David Argall; attendees are Chase Sebelin, Jacob Shafer, Ashlyn Anthony, Harper Lake, Ruthie Hook, Leanna Sanchez, and Hailey George
- Athletics – Tennis: congratulations to Colton Ruzicka for finishing 4th in league singles tournament, team finished 9-3 and qualified for district tournament; Track & Field: league medalists – 2nd place, Emma Rex, javelin, Rylee Roman, pole vault, and Aubrey Frable, triple jump, 3rd place, Ruby Walters, 300m hurdle. Congratulations to individual district medalists, Emma Rex, for 3rd place, javelin, and 4th place finishers, Aubrey Frable, triple jump, Jacob Walkowiak, pole vault, and Vincent Taglieri, triple jump at district competition; Baseball: 12-8 record, qualified for both league and district playoffs; Softball: 17-3 record, qualified for league and district playoffs, received league silver medal; College athletic signings: Mackenzie Ferber, King's College for softball, Emma Rex, Susquehanna University for track and field, Peyton Fornaro, PennWest University, cross country and track and field, and Cassidy Merkel, Lackawanna College, wrestling
- Graduation is on June 4 at 7 p.m. in stadium
- Fall sports – signups have begun, registration available on website, under Athletics

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS:

- *Dr. Heaney* – PreK Counts partnership with Lehigh Valley Children's Center received perfect score on the program review instrument, earning "fully meets" compliance rating; attended the JHS academic awards banquet on May 13, congratulations to all recognized students; attended the Carbon County School Safety Meeting at the county EMA building in Nesquehoning, topics included county's migration to digital communications, law enforcement, EMA visits to county districts, and risk and vulnerability assessments. Hiring update: scheduling interviews for elementary teaching positions, building and guidance secretaries, and art teacher with many applicants having applied for all positions
- *Mr. Kish* – Budget: proposed budget is built with index increase of 4.7% or 3.01 mills, available for public inspection and will forward Act 1 timeline as dictated by PDE. Bond: Under PA DCED requirements, district must establish a "not-to-exceed" borrowing limit within parameters resolution to provide flexibility during bond sale process which allows underwriter to structure and price bonds in the most favorable way; estimated borrowing amount is increased by approximately 20% maximizing interest rate savings and adjusting individual bond maturities as needed during final pricing; will only issue amount of debt necessary to fund project costs; bond counsel will file appropriate documentation with DCED after bonds are finalized, removing any unused borrowing authority. Feasibility study: motion on for district-owned, 32-acre property on Fireline Road that we're looking to see if it can be built upon. Donation: accepting \$2,761 from Giant Food Stores, Walnutport, from their Round Up program; will be creating the district's first on-site food pantry; social workers will run pantry; thanked Mrs. Roling and Mrs. Husar for their support in this project
- Mr. Kish also read a statement where he defended the administration against recent criticism and personal attacks, praising their hard work, commitment to transparency, and dedication to the community. The public protests stem from a personnel matter involving athletics. The public narrative is incomplete and emotionally driven. Administration cannot legally or ethically respond to the public's claims regarding personnel matters, as we are bound by strict confidentiality requirements; he supports the administrative team's decisions, expressing confidence that they were made in the best interests of students and district; while constructive feedback and disagreements are welcomed, personal attacks and disrespect are not. He urged the community to move forward with mutual respect and a shared focus on supporting students.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

- Director Danielle Paules – *PSBA*: guide on website for student representation on Board; Bill 375 passed requiring CPR training for designated staff and AEDs to be present at PIAA events

- Director Haas – CLIU: will attend Palmerton student graduation ceremony; Library: coming events are historical society presentation, Hawk Mountain Raptor, Community Services for Children, Honeybee program, USA history presentation, Bossard's Board Works, Roger Latsgo concert; details available on their website

OLD BUSINESS:

Director Earl Paules stated Director Haas, Ryan Kish, Dan Heaney, Trahn Thompson, and himself met with the Palmerton Borough and Palmerton police on May 15. The borough wants to use the four acres the district owns, known as 7th Street field, to build their new police station, and in return, Director Paules said if the district gives the land to them, then he proposed that the borough would build a recreation center there as well. Mr. Paules said this setup gives the community a year-round spot for sports and walking, keeps local fields intact, and hands all maintenance chores completely over to the borough. The borough already has a \$1.5 million grant available, and while the project is about two years out, the borough plans to share full sketches to the district and keep everything transparent.

Director Haas clarified that the discussion was a casual, round-robin brainstorming session with both the borough manager, police, and the district team sharing ideas across the table. No official decisions were made, and nothing can happen until there is a formal proposal to look at and vote on.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- Connie Banko – asked why Director King was not present to vote on the building project last month; also asked why Directors Connell and Moyzan previously supported securing the high school entrance but now voted "no" on the project

MEETING MINUTES

Director King moved, seconded by Director Snyder, to approve the board meeting minutes from April 21, 2026.

Aye Votes: Directors Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder.

Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA w/abstention

Director Mazepa moved, seconded by Director Snyder, to approve the consent agenda with an abstention from Director Snyder of Item #2 Personnel, Letter E, Kayleigh Snyder line only due to a conflict of interest.

Aye Votes: Directors Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder with an abstention as noted above.

Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

FISCAL REPORTS

Approved accounts payable reports

Approved treasurer's reports

BUDGET TRANSFERS

Approved budget transfers

DONATIONS

Accepted the following donations:

Giant Company, Walnutport-Feeding School Kids Initiative	to the PASD food pantry	\$2,761.80
Palmerton Holiday Lighting Committee	to High School Art Club in recognition for designing pamphlet/map	\$ 100.00
Softball Parents Club	20.5cu refrigerator for softball concession stand	--

TUITION REIMBURSEMENTS	Approved tuition reimbursements	
MAINTENANCE	Approved Michael Nemeth as Maintenance employee at an annual salary of \$36,061 prorated effective May 21, 2026	
PT CUSTODIAN	Approved Jennifer Opdyke as Part-Time Custodian at an hourly rate of \$15.85 effective May 21, 2026	
ADD'L FALL COACHES 2026-2027	Approved the following additional Fall Coaches for the 2026-2027 school year:	
	Lily Kershner	Volleyball Head Coach \$4,347.00
	Jillian Frank	Field Hockey Assistant Coach \$2,854.00
	Abigail Wortmann	Field Hockey Volunteer Assistant Coach --
COACH RESIGNATION	Accepted the following resignation:	
	Jillian Frank	Field Hockey Volunteer Assistant Coach Effective May 20, 2026
EVENT WORKERS 2026-2027	Approved the following as Event Workers at a rate of \$30.00 per event for the 2026-2027 school year:	
	Pamela Andrews	Amy Negley
	Lacey Barachie	Alexander Orr
	Katherine Baumgardt	Christine Owens
	Suzanne Black	Michael Papay
	Craig Borland	William Papay
	Jessica Cohen	Nellianne Parr
	Heather DeReamus	Michael Pascoe
	Julia Dougherty	Andrew Remsing
	Darlene Dugan	Christine Rodrigues
	Robert Everett	Kimberly Seiler
	Robert Falkenstein	Kristoffer Silfies
	Travis Fink	Holly Skrimcovsky
	Randi-Jo Freed	Thomas Smelas
	Michael Gombert	David Smith
	Jyneal Green	Kayleigh Snyder
	Jarrad Hedes	Matthew Solt
	Jodi Hedes	Scott Stahler
	Kelly Heinrich	Brian Stevko
	Mary Herrmann	Nicole Swartz
	John Hrebik	Kevin Wertz
	Alexander Knoll	John Wilk
	Miriam Krzton	Analise Yacone
	Paul McArdle	William Zeky
	Vicki McHugh	Mary Beth Zulic
	Sage Nalesnik	Robert Moyzan-volunteer only (unpaid)
GAME MANAGERS	Approved the following Game Managers at a rate of \$30.00 per hour for the 2026-2027 school year:	
	Alexander Knoll	Kimberly Seiler
	Vicki McHugh	Matthew Solt
	Andrew Remsing	Robert Moyzan-volunteer only (unpaid)
SUB	Approved the following Substitute at prevailing substitute rates effective May 21, 2026:	
	Connor Dickey	Substitute Teacher

SUB REMOVAL	Removed the following from the current Substitute list effective May 21, 2026:		
	Andrea Anfuso	Substitute Teacher	
	Terry Sebelin	Substitute Nurse	
CLUB FORMATION	Approved the formation of What’s So Cool About Manufacturing? Club as an extracurricular club at the Junior High School effective for the 2026-2027 school year		
BHA	Approved the contract for services with Behavioral Health Associates for the 2026-2027 school year		
CLIU TRANSPERFECT	Approved the TransPerfect Remote Interpreters Products and Services agreement with the CLIU #21 for the 2026-2027 school year		
CLIU CRISIS RESPONSE POOL	Approved the Crisis Response Pool Member Agreement with the CLIU #21 for the 2026-2027 school year		
CLIU OVERDRIVE/ SORA CONSORTIUM	Approved retroactively the CLIU#21 Overdrive/SORA Consortium agreement for the 2026-2027 school year in the amount of \$2,300.00		
BAYADA HOME HEALTH	Approved the contract with Bayada Home Health Care, Inc., for in-school nursing services for the 2026-2027 school year		
LEHIGH LEARNING ACADEMY	Approved the Program Placement Agreement with Lehigh Learning Academy for the 2026-2027 school year		
POLICE MOUs	Approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Pennsylvania State Police and the Palmerton Area School District		
	Approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Palmerton Borough Police and the Palmerton Area School District		
SSKW LEGAL AGREEMENTS	Approved the standard agreement for legal representation with Sweet Stevens Katz Williams for the 2026-2027 school year		
	Approved the Legal Services Consultation Agreement for special education with Sweet Stevens Katz Williams for the 2026-2027 school year		
KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY	Approved the School-Based Internship/Affiliation Agreement with Kutztown University of PA valid through May 2031		
FIELD TRIPS	Approved the following field trips:		
	Music Department-JHS/HS	Washington, DC	May 2027 (final dates to be determined)
	FBLA National Leadership Conference	San Antonio, TX	Retroactively approved for June 27, 2026 through July 2, 2026
SETTLEMENT	Approved the settlement agreement and release for student #32168 effective May 21, 2026		
FOREIGN EXCHANGE- ASSE	Approved the School Administrator Letter with ASSE International Student Exchange Programs for accepting a foreign exchange student for the 2026-2027 school year		
PSBA VOTING DELEGATES	Appointed Directors Schaible and Haas as voting delegates to the 2026 PSBA Delegate Assembly at Cumberland Valley School District, Mechanicsburg, PA, on November 7, 2026		

2nd READINGS & ADOPTION 140-221-325-332-619	Approved the second reading and adoption of the following policies: 1) Policy #140 Charter Schools 2) Policy #221 Dress & Grooming 3) Policy #325 Dress & Grooming 4) Policy #332 Working Periods 5) Policy #619 District Audit END OF CONSENT AGENDA
PROPOSED BUDGET 2026-2027	Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director King, to approve the proposed final budget for 2026-2027 with 3.098 mill index increase and expenditure totals of \$43,765,764. The 2026-2027 Real Estate Tax mills will be set at 69.0130. The final budget is set to be approved at the June 16, 2026 board meeting. Aye Votes: Directors Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.
BOND RESOLUTION for construction projects	Director King moved, seconded by Director Snyder, to approve the Resolution incurring nonelectoral debt to be evidenced by one or more series of general obligation bonds in the maximum aggregate principal amount of \$18,000,000 for the acquisition, design, construction, furnishing and equipping of renovations and improvements to the school district's high school facilities, and to pay costs of issuance of the bonds; accepting a bond purchase agreement; setting forth the parameters, substantial form of and conditions for issuing the bonds; pledging the school district's full faith, credit, and taxing power to secure the bonds; appointing a paying agent and a sinking fund depository; creating a sinking fund for the bonds; creating a construction fund; and authorizing related actions and documents. Aye Votes: Directors Haas, King, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: Director Mazepa. Motion Carried.
S. S. PALMER LIBRARY RENO	Director Mazepa moved, seconded by Director Snyder, to approve the S. S. Palmer Elementary library renovation in the estimated amount of \$71,466.00 to come from the restricted fund balance donation provided by former teacher Elizabeth Bray. Aye Votes: Directors Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.
MOTION TABLED INDEFINITELY-KCE study of land	Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director King, to table indefinitely the sketch layout and feasibility study for future use of the district-owned property located along Fireline Road, Parcel ID: 29-33-3905, as presented by Keystone Consulting Engineers in the estimated amount of \$8,500.00. Aye Votes: Directors Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.
RETIREMENTS	Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director King, to accept the retirement of Susan Deem as Fifth Grade Teacher at Towamensing Elementary effective June 9, 2026. Aye Votes: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried. Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director Danielle Paules, to accept the retirement of Lori Cebrosky-Smith as Second Grade Teacher at Towamensing Elementary effective June 8, 2026. Aye Votes: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

ST. LUKE'S YESS! PROGRAM 2026-2027	Director Mazepa moved, seconded by Director Snyder, to approve the Amendment to Services Agreement with St. Luke's Physician Group's YESS! Program for the 2026-2027 school year in the amount of \$32,000.00. Aye Votes: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.
TREASURER 2026-2027	Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director King, to approve Stacey Connell as Treasurer of the Palmerton Area School Board effective July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027 at the rate of \$400.00 per year. Aye Votes: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: • Richard Banko – township must have the feasibility study for land; agrees with getting cheaper rate on bond; asked why we need a security guard at meetings; consider changing format for public participation portion and allow questions answered • Mary Farquhar – asked Board to focus on giving answers about finances and policies; Mr. Kish's statement was touching; stated meeting minutes don't convey tone of comments; public disagreements are healthy • William Acierno – stated township should have existing property documentation due to current presence of cell phone tower and prior feasibility studies conducted for a proposed middle school; locating these records could save money FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: • Director Earl Paules attended the awards banquet and sat next to his former teacher who he talked with about charter school funding; district's deficit is \$1.7m and we pay charter schools \$2.4m each year; thanked Dr. Heaney and Mr. Kish for doing an amazing job and feels district is headed in the right direction • Director Haas thanked faculty and staff for being invited to many end-of-year events as she had a great time. • Director Mazepa reminded us that mental health awareness is something we should be checking on with others and ourselves all year long • Director Haas stated there will be an executive session held after this meeting for personnel and litigation issues.
ADJOURNMENT	Director Snyder moved, seconded by Director King, to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. Aye Votes: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Mazepa, Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, and Snyder. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried. Respectfully submitted, Jacqueline McCandless Board Secretary