

Bloomsburg Area School District

Policy & Academic Affairs Committee

Detailed Meeting Minutes

Meeting of July 8, 2026 | 6:00 p.m. to 7:17 p.m.

Committee members present	Sam Bidleman, Dawn Kehs Errifaiy, Amanda Orzolek, Stephanie Andreacci
Also present	District administration
Public comment	No members of the public online or present for agenda-item comment
Old business	None

The meeting was called to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no requests for public comment on agenda items and no old business.

1. Act 80 Day: Proposed Monday, August 24

During summer planning, administration determined the two scheduled opening in-service days are not enough to absorb this year's initiatives, which include mandatory trainings and a major technology rollout (Canvas and Parent Square). The end-of-year in-service days were seen as very beneficial, and Canvas in particular is a major undertaking, so the admin group proposed adding Monday, August 24 as an Act 80 day.

With a start date of August 19, this creates a three-day first week, a four-day second week, and then a five-day week (with a short week again for Labor Day). The Monday would let teachers reconvene and troubleshoot issues once all students are in seats and using the new platforms; it also avoids a full first week for kindergartners.

The day requires PDE approval, which follows board approval. The committee agreed to place it on the July 20 agenda (a work session followed by the voting meeting) and to send a district communication once approved.

2. Technology Rollout: Communication & Learning Platforms

Administration walked the committee through how the district's platforms will be used so families understand where to go for what:

- **Parent Square** becomes the single communication platform, replacing the many apps parents currently juggle (Remind, Band, Dojo, and others). It is household-based, with one login covering all of a family's children, streamlined to the relevant school/grade, supports multiple languages, and delivers instant one-call notifications (faster than Sapphire's 4 to 5 minute calls). Grandparents and caregivers can be granted access (useful for athletics pickups). Rollout happens around open house, where Christine will lead parent training; CMSU offered to help grandparents and less tech-comfortable caregivers download and use the apps.
- **Canvas** is the curriculum / learning-management platform, giving parents visibility into scope, sequence, and what students are working on. It is an *addition*, not a replacement for Sapphire, and will be used more heavily at the secondary level and at a surface level in elementary. It also gives the district a way to see how instructional technology is actually being used.
- **Sapphire** is retained for grades and attendance only.
- **Arbiter** is the new athletics scheduling app, replacing the bloomsburgpanthers.org site.

- Coaches, booster clubs, and everyone associated with the school will be required on Parent Square. Mr. Kogut is holding a meeting for coaches, with an August 15 (first day of fall sports) rollout deadline. Wendy (with Christine) will create building-level flyers explaining which platform to use for which purpose.

3. Policy Discussion: Revisions to Policies 249 and 824

The committee reviewed pre-read revisions circulated by Sam Bidleman and was broadly supportive. Both policies require two readings; the first reading is set for August 10 and the final reading with a vote for August 17, so the updates are in place before school begins.

- **Policy 249 (Bullying / Harassment):** Clarify that bullying is a repeated behavior, distinct from ordinary peer conflict; add investigation steps and documentation; allow a reasonable 5 to 10 day investigation window where outside parties are involved; and require annual student training.
- **Policy 824 (Professional Adult and Student Interactions / Social Media):** Restrict adults from using personal social-media accounts or cell phones to communicate privately with students, routing communication through a district-approved platform (Parent Square). Procedural details belong in the coaches' handbook, and changes must be actively communicated to coaches and assistant coaches.

4. Student Devices & Screen Time

Members reaffirmed that technology is meant to enhance, not replace, instruction. The district is still purchasing textbooks (two were approved for purchase), and it has moved to the electronic version of DIBELS for K to 5 reading levels, which returns scores instantly and frees reading specialists from weeks of manual grading. Programs like IXL carry usage limits (recommended no more than about 15 minutes a day). Students at both the elementary and middle levels have the option to complete assessments on paper (for example, math teachers using OneNote offer a paper copy). Canvas will also let parents see exactly what their child is doing, which helps address screen-time concerns. The broader theme was balance and preparing students for a technology-driven workforce, alongside a possible orientation blurb explaining how technology is used and that a paper option exists.

5. Federal Programs & Title I (2026-27)

Tabled and carried to a future meeting.

6. Interagency Meetings

The district will officially form a county interagency group, spearheaded by prevention specialist Kelly Ann Pegg. County agencies will meet with the school so the district can share its needs and learn what each agency offers, likely in a roundtable / resource-fair format. A first meeting is hoped for by September or October. The idea grew out of the guidance advisory meeting and community collaboration work, with partners such as United Way and CMSU.

7. Other Items for the Good of the Order

- **Chamber of Commerce / CTE:** Discussion of the Chamber's interest in schools and career and technical education, noting the district remains a college-preparatory program.
- **Attorney General cyber-safety report (Guy Moses & Mr. Neely):** Guy Moses reported on a conversation with Mr. Neely, educational liaison for the PA Attorney General, about cell phones and school safety. Neely confirmed cell phones are a real concern, citing cyberbullying, threats, and the disruption of emergency response. He offers K to 8 and high-school presentations and will be a resource as digital citizenship becomes a focus in media classes. To be revisited August 12.

- **Digital citizenship:** Wendy confirmed every middle-school student receives digital citizenship instruction.

Next meeting: August 12, 2026.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m. on a motion by A. Orzolek, seconded by D. Kehs Errifaiy.