Seneca Valley School District

SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION

Seneca Valley Intermediate High School Auditorium - 7 p.m.

Minutes

October 5, 2026

1. **CALL TO ORDER** by Mr. Tim Hester, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

   A. **Moment of Silence** – The meeting opened with a moment of silence.

   B. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Bennett Frazier – Grade 3, Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School, continued the board initiative, "I Led the Pledge" by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

   C. **Roll Call** – by Ms. Julia Benson, School Board Secretary, showed the following members in attendance: Mr. Nick Brower, Mr. Mark Gartner, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Tim Hester, Mr. Mike Jacobs, Ms. Allyson Mazzoni and Mr. Travis Savitt-Kraft. Mr. Eric DiTullio and Ms. Kari Zimmer were absent.

2. **INFORMATION REPORTS**

   A. **Student/Staff Recognition**

      1. Officials from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation recently announced Seneca Valley Seniors Mac Wilson, Albert Pimenov and Benny Johnson have been named as Commended Students in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program. The students were recognized for their outstanding performance on the qualifying test used for program entry. More information can be found at svsd.net.

      2. Ehrman Crest Elementary and Middle School has been selected by Remake Learning as one of 57 innovations that have shaped Pittsburgh's learning landscape. The '57: Remaking Learning in Pittsburgh and Beyond' features projects from classrooms, libraries, museums, parks, community centers and more that are offering a glimpse of what's possible when people rethink why learning happens. Read the entire publication HERE.

   B. **Dates to Remember** – Mr. Hunter announced the following dates to remember:

October	
October	National Principals Month
October 8	SV Homecoming Carnival (5 p.m.) and Parade (7 p.m.), Secondary Campus

October 9	SV Homecoming Court Recognition and Football Game, 6:30 p.m., NexTier Stadium
October 10	SV Homecoming Dances, 7-10 p.m., IHS & SHS
October 10	World Mental Health Day
October 12	Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
October 12	Regular School Board Meeting – 7 p.m. – IHS Auditorium
October 17	PSAT Testing – SHS
October 20	SVAOC End of First Nine Weeks, Grades 7-12
October 21	Winter Sport Drug Testing and Concussion Testing – SHS Athletic Office – 2:45 p.m.
October 21	Roblox Safety and Online Predators Presentation with PA State Police, 6 p.m., Haine Elementary and Middle School
October 22	Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School Fun Run
October 23	Act 80 Day – No School for Students
October 23	SV End of First Nine Weeks, Grades 7-12
October 27	CVE Fall Family Fun Night
October 31	Halloween
November 1	Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 1	Seneca Valley Foundation's Fourth Annual Ryan Gloyer Memorial Run/Walk presented by Westinghouse – Secondary Campus – 9 a.m. SFC Ryan Gloyer Memorial Run
November 2	National School Psychology Week Begins
November 2	School Board Work Session – 7 p.m. – IHS Auditorium

C. **Agency Report** – Vo-Tech - Mr. Brower shared that at the recent meeting, they discussed the beginning of the school year and noted that the overall enrollment is up. In addition, the financial review cycle will begin in the next few months.

Mr. Hester shared that there are 211 Seneca Valley students enrolled at BCAVTS, with some of the most popular trades being welding, sports medicine, health assistant and HVAC. There will be student tours held during the school day from October 14-28. Additionally, there will be an Open House for current students, prospective students and their parents on October 28 from 6-8 p.m.

D. **School Board Training Session Update** – Ms. Mazzoni shared that she recently attended the School Board Leadership Collective at The University of Pittsburgh with Dr. Vitale, Dr. Doggrell and Mr. Womer. She shared that as a new School Board member it was a great opportunity to meet and hear from other administrators and board members. They also received legal updates from Attorney Jocelyn Kramer. The Keynote speaker was Dr. Lee Pritzl and he focused on leadership and organizational performance of school board, working through several hands-on scenarios. Ms. Mazzoni shared her appreciation for the opportunity to attend, learn and contribute.

E. **BioTech Lab Stakeholder Group** – Request for Board Member to join the BioTech Stakeholders Group.

Dr. Vitale shared that there has been a request from the teachers who run the stakeholder group – this is not a position that the board would elect someone to, but if there is a Board Member who is interested in science, specifically biotechnology

in the Pittsburgh region, they are looking for a volunteer to join this group. As for background, the BioTech Stakeholder Group meets in the IHS one time a year. The next meeting will be held on November 20 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. and will include a short presentation from a staff member chronicling recent and future lab developments. Stakeholders will receive a behind the scenes look into the overall evolution and operation of the lab. There will also be time for open discussion, where the stakeholders will have an opportunity to offer insights and suggestions to better help the lab meet their goals and challenges.

Dr. Vitale shared that when she has attended this meeting in the past. Alumni have spoken about the quality of lab at SV versus the one that they are using in college. She continued with the importance of this lab, especially since Pittsburgh is becoming an epicenter for biotechnology. We want to ensure that we are preparing students for the future in biotechnology. Much of the lab equipment has been acquired through grants and Ms. Gildea, Director of the Seneca Valley Foundation, will continue to work with the teachers to obtain additional grants to help offset the costs for the District.

Additionally, Dr. Vitale shared what makes this classroom so different is that the students are not working for a letter grade, but counting individual research projects that they continue on for many years. Some students continue their research into their college years. The lab is a completely hands-on, research-based lab where the students are conducting hands-on experiments, often presenting their projects at conventions and to the Grable Foundation.

Dr. McCarty and Dr. Roth will be attending the meeting and are able to provide an update to the Board. If anyone is interested in becoming a stakeholder, please contact Dr. Vitale, Mr. DiTullio or Mr. Hester.

F. **Student Enrollment** – Dr. Vitale provided the October 1 enrollment data. She shared that the reason that this data is pulled on October 1 each year is due to the student movement that is seen in August and September each year. She also stated they are waiting for numbers from cyber charter schools. Every student is accounted for.

For the 2025-2026 school year, the k-12 student total enrollment was 7,538 students. For the 2026-2027 school year, the total enrollment is 7,519 students in grades k-12.

One of the items that is studied with this report is building capacity and how many students are in each classroom. For example, last year's kindergarten class was the largest kindergarten class that has come through the District. Dr. Palano and Dr. McCarty did a lot of work to ensure that we could accommodate the increase in students. This has resulted in an increase of 79 new students in first grade for the 2026-27 school year.

Dr. Vitale shared the following statistics for the 2026-27 school year compared to the 2025-26 school year:

- Decrease in kindergarten by 29 students – she mentioned that sometimes we will see an increase in this number in first grade due to not having full-day kindergarten for all students at this time.

- Decrease by 44 students in second grade – there were two teacher positions collapsed for this school year and moved to another grade.
- Each year, there are about 330-350 students that move in and out of the District – this is pretty much due to corporate jobs.
- Decrease by about 30 students in third grade.
- Decrease by about 12 students in fourth grade.
- Increase by 14 students in fifth grade.
- Increase by 28 students in sixth grade.
- Decrease by 28 students in seventh grade.
- Decrease by 1 student in eighth grade – 599 total students.
- Increase by 33 students in ninth grade - 601 total students.
- Increase by 31 students in tenth grade - 575 total students.
- Decrease by 18 students in eleventh grade.
- Decrease by 42 students in twelfth grade – compared to last year's senior class, which was one of the largest classes to come through.

These fluctuations when looking at your net are usually between 19-25, providing stable enrollment, with some years up by 10-15 and some years up by 40. Dr. Vitale shared that the biggest spikes in enrollment this year are sixth grade, ninth grade and tenth grade. In summary, this year we did not lose or gain substantial enrollment. These numbers are helpful in planning for the future. She shared that if the District continues to see smaller kindergarten classes, the Board may want to consider implementing full day kindergarten, but as a reminder, it is more than space, it will require three to four additional teachers to accommodate the rest of the class for full day kindergarten.

G. **Financial Reports**

1. Operations
2. Seneca Valley Grades 7-12 Activities
3. Athletics
4. Food Service
5. Tax Collections
6. Capital Projects Funds

3. **ACTION AGENDA**

A. **Public Comment** - Public comment was heard by Mr. Doug Boyd on the topic of proposed plumbing change order IHS/PAC project.

Mr. Hester asked Mr. John Pappas, Eckles Construction, to share about the change order. Mr. Jeremy Dwyer, Cannon Design and Mr. Brian Fulkerson, Eckles Construction, joined Mr. Pappas. Mr. Pappas explained that Mr. Dwyer and Mr. Fulkerson were more involved in the change order reviews that were done in multiple meetings and in multiple reviews. He shared that the unit prices were part of the bid documents for the project and part of the bid forms, those unit prices moving forward for the duration of the project. All project change orders that come in are reviewed by the Eckles team, The Cannon team and Cannon's engineers, which includes a full vetting process that goes through each change order of credits and adds.

Mr. Pappas commented that they will review the unit prices that were mentioned during public comment. He shared that there were multiple unit prices for multiple items, example, pipes for plumbing, and they will double check these items.

Mr. Fulkerson shared that there are price escalations that occur from the time of the bid until now and that this may be what was referenced during public comment.

B. **Change Order** – Approved the construction change order for the Intermediate High School/Performing Arts Center (IHS/PAC) at a total cost of $25,177.35.

C. **Adelphoi Education Services** - Approved the agreement with Adelphoi Education Services for the provision of educational services for enrolled student for the 2026-2027 school year. Pending solicitor review.

Mr. Jacobs thanked the construction project team and shared his appreciation for them checking on the prices listed in the change order. Mr. Jacobs asked for clarification that this would be approved subject to the review and any changes made for the change order. Mr. Hoffman, School Solicitor, stated that that can be part of the motion and that if there is reconciliation, it can be reported back to the Board. To move forward, it can be approved subject to the construction team reviewing the items mentioned.

Mr. Gartner shared that he is in favor of this and that if there are any discrepancies, for them to be rectified.

Mr. Brower motioned, seconded by Ms. Harrison, to approve the change order pending rereview, with the understanding that if there is a discrepancy, that does come back for the report change order and the Adelphoi Education Services agreement. The motion carried on a roll call vote, with those present voting in the affirmative.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. **Action Meeting** – September 14, 2026

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

6. **GENERAL FUND BILLS**
2026 – 2027 Grand Total: $4,800,158.61

7. **CONSTRUCTION FUND BILLS**
2026 - 2027 Grand Total: $1,952,936.67

8. **ADMINISTRATION**

A. **Board Policies** – Approve the following:

1. Board Policy 204 – Attendance – revised, second and final reading.
2. Boad Policy 626 – Federal Fiscal Compliance - revised, second and final reading.
3. Board Policy 704 – Maintenance – new, second and final reading.
4. Board Policy 901.1 – Social Media - revised, first reading.

B. **Research Studies** – Approve the following research studies: 5953

1. Ivan Aranha Doctoral Research Study: Approve a qualitative study, conducted as part of doctoral research at Gwynedd Mercy University and approved by IRB, examining how school-based administrators experience and respond to teacher staffing challenges. Eligible Seneca Valley principals and assistant principals serving students within the K–6 grade span may voluntarily participate in a confidential virtual interview lasting approximately 45–60 minutes.

2. Quincy Gildea Dissertation Study: "Increasing School Connectedness Amongst English Language Learners" - Through this dissertation study, Quincy Gildea will utilize the data collected following a professional development session with a focus group of educators from the Intermediate High School on effective instructional practices for supporting English Language Learners (ELLs), with an emphasis on language acquisition, school connectedness, belonging, and engagement in the general education setting. Participating educators will complete pre- and post-surveys to examine the impact of the professional development on their confidence in supporting ELL students. While the study will focus on educator learning and confidence, the findings may help inform future efforts to support ELL students across Seneca Valley. Seneca Valley School District will not be identified in the dissertation, and all participant identities will remain confidential. This study was submitted to IRB for review and acknowledged.

C. **Board Secretary** – Reappoint Ms. Julia Benson to serve as School Board Secretary for the current term ending June 30, 2028.

D. **Vo-Tech JOC Representatives** – Appoint Mr. Tim Hester and Mr. Nick Brower as Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School Joint Operating Committee (BCAVTS JOC) representatives.

E. **School Bus Drivers** - Approve the additional bus driver list for the 2026-27 school year as provided by transportation vendor of First Student Inc.

Mr. Hester mentioned that there will also be a Vo-Tech JOC Alternate Representative item on the agenda next week.

Mr. Jacobs thanked Dr. McCarty for the updated attendance policy. He shared that as the Board discusses test scores and how to get them back to pre-pandemic levels, one thing that he did not consider was attendance and that it too is not back to pre-pandemic levels. Mr. Jacobs believes that it is very well timed. He continued sharing that perhaps parents have gotten used to being more flexible with school attendance than in the past.

Additionally, he acknowledged that aligning with everything in the policy, there are procedures to support the policy once it is in place. He asked Dr. McCarty how these changes will be phased in and what can be expected.

Dr. McCarty commented that as Mr. Jacobs shared, when a policy is moved forward, it provides an opportunity to look at procedures and how we can improve on our end. This opportunity provided a way to make sure we are consistent across all our schools, not just in areas of educational trips, but also in communication with families about attendance. Parents will begin to see more

communication with gentle reminders to submit excuses in a timely manner. If excuses are not turned in in a timely manner, additional communications that need to be turned in will be sent in so the absence does not to turn into an unexcused absence. Once unexcused absences start to accumulate there are additional procedures that take place. Dr. McCarty shared that this also provides an opportunity to remind parents and educators of the importance of kids being in school. Beyond the calls that are made when students are absent, a follow up email will be sent reminding parents to add the excuse to the portal.

9. **INSTRUCTION**

A. **Conferences** – Approve conference requests.

B. **Student Trips** - Approve the following student trips:

1. The 7-12th Grade Student Council trip to Clarks Summit, PA on November 12-14, 2026, under the supervision of SHS teacher, Ms. Rebecca Mutschler, RGMS Guidance Counselor, Mr. LaVarr Stephens-Howling and RGMS teacher, Ms. Staci Hughes. Students will miss two days of instruction. The trip is at no cost to the District.
2. The Seneca Valley Girls Basketball program (Varsity & JV) trip to Tampa Bay, FL (previously approved for Orlando, FL), December 27-31, 2026, under the supervision of coaches Dorothea Epps, Julia Fornadel, Amanda Kalin and Krystal Epps. The trip is at no cost to the District.
3. The Seneca Valley Baseball program (Varsity and JV) trip to Orlando, FL, March 19-22, 2027, under the supervision of Head Coach, Mr. Eric Semega and assistant coaches. The trip is at no cost to the District.

C. **Grant Disbursements** - Grant permission to apply for and disburse, if approved:

1. The Heros & Helpers 2026 Grant in the amount of $2,000, funded by Target and requested by Ms. Gildea, Dr. Wilcher and Ms. Kress. Funds will be used to support Haine's "Shop with a Cop" event with the Cranberry Township Police Department.
2. The Holocaust Education Grant in the amount of $1,000, funded by Schonwetter Holocaust Education Foundation and requested by Ms. Russo and Ms. Gildea. Funds will be used to support Holocaust Education events and projects offered through the IHS Light Center and 10th grade English classes.

D. **School at McGuire Memorial** - Approve the agreement with the School at McGuire Memorial for Extended School Year (ESY) program and services for ESY 2027. Pending solicitor review.

E. **Butler County Community College Agreement** – Approve the agreement with Butler County Community College for the Seneca Valley School District to serve as an American Heart Association Training Site to provide training to students and staff.

10. **BUSINESS/FINANCE**

A. **Joint Purchasing Agreement AIU** - Approve the Joint Purchasing Agreement Resolution for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit for the 2026-2027 school year.

B. **Greentrail Solutions** - Approve a one-year agreement with Greentrail Solutions to provide software for tracking food purchases from sources outside of the United States, including food products and ingredients. This tracking is required by the United States Department of Agriculture. Pending solicitor review.

11. **PERSONNEL** – Approve resignations, appointments, contracted service, leaves, tenure and retirements.

12. **LETTERS SENT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD** – The following constituents communicated through the SVSD school board email account after posting the September 14, 2026, public agenda:

a. Doug Boyd
b. Julie Jones
c. Erin Wroblewski
d. Nancy Duerring
e. Amanda Razzano-Latham
f. Tharina Impellizzeri
g. The Herrick Family

Dr. Vitale shared that she makes an effort to read something positive each day. She read a letter from Korean War Veteran, Mr. Paul Schessler, where he shared his apperception for the Veteran's Recognition event on September 11, 2026.

13. **ADJOURNMENT** - With nothing further to come before the board, Mr. Savitt-Kraft motioned, seconded by Mr. Jacobs, to adjourn the meeting at 8 p.m. The motion carried on a voice vote with those present voting in the affirmative.

14. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – An executive session was held prior to this meeting to discuss personnel items.

Mr. Eric DiTullio, President

Ms. Julia Benson, School Board Secretary